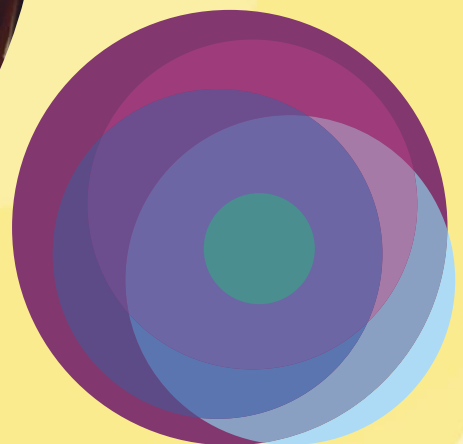


# Inter Faith Week 2021

## A widening impact



# The Inter Faith Network for the UK

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) leads on Inter Faith Week, in consultation with the Inter-faith Council for Wales/ Cyngor Rhyng-ffydd Cymru and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum in their respective nations. 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, inter faith organisations, and academic and educational bodies with a focus on inter faith or multi-faith issues and working with them to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. It carries out its work through raising awareness within wider society of the importance of inter faith issues, creating opportunities for linking and sharing good practice, and providing advice and information to help the development of new inter faith initiatives and the strengthening of existing ones. Working with its member bodies is an important part of this. Each of those makes its own contribution to inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. One of IFN’s best known programmes is Inter Faith Week, on which it leads.

## Cover photographs

Front cover:

- Rochdale Mind
- West Midlands Interfaith Hub leading a community kitchen, photo, Ruby Ali
- Imam Hafiz Ahmed welcoming Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE, Bishop of Bedford, to Central Mosque, Luton

Back cover:

- Laxton Junior, Oundle, Mandir visit
- Dr Hari Shukla CBE being made Honorary Life President of Newcastle Council of Faiths at Newcastle Reform Synagogue, photo Initiatives of Change UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK closed in 2024, with outward facing operations ceasing in April.

In order to ensure that the material in IFN's publications remained available to the public, to inter faith practitioners, and to scholars after IFN's closure, the copyright status of publications has been changed.

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# Inter Faith Week 2021

## A widening impact



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# Foreword

## from the Trustees of the Inter Faith Network

Inter Faith Week continues to go from strength to strength.

The 2021 Week was diverse and energetic with an amazing range of activities: faith trails and open days at local places of worship, faith leader meetings and inter faith events, school activities and events held by local authorities, sports organisations, chaplaincies, cultural institutions such as museums and libraries, universities and colleges, police and fire services, the NHS, hospices, media organisations, voluntary groups, businesses, the Armed Forces, and many others.

Why is Inter Faith Week such an important time in the UK's social calendar? As the then Communities Minister Kemi Badenoch MP put it, "Inter Faith Week is a perfect opportunity for people of all beliefs to reach out to and learn from different communities. It's a Week when people who might not usually get involved in such activities and learning have a chance to do so – a week which stimulates and accelerates positive change".

The 2021 Week was also one which, as our Co-Chairs said in the post-Week news release, "encouraged and sparked conversations, projects and partnerships which will further strengthen good inter faith relations and social cooperation for the common good between those of different faiths and beliefs".<sup>1</sup>

That power of inter faith cooperation was highlighted in special messages from faith leaders, which you can see on page 32. As reflected in a number of these, COP26 had just taken place and the theme of joint response to climate change was a prominent one. The report devotes a special section to that.

At the Inter Faith Network, Inter Faith Week is our biggest programme and it is a year-round one: getting ready for the Week in November, publicising

and supporting it, and working with those taking part to help them make the best use of the fantastic platform it provides for creating and strengthening relationships, and new learning and initiatives. This is all part of IFN's work towards our 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".

We thank everyone who has helped the 2021 Week take place: our funders, including Government, faith communities, trusts and individual supporters and the organisations who have helped cascade information about the Week and encourage their members and the public to get involved. Thank you also to the staff and volunteers of IFN and, of course to the thousands of people who took part in the Week!

We hope that you will be inspired by this report to take part in Inter Faith Week 2022 which will take place from 13–20 November.

**The Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK**  
[www.interfaith.org.uk/about/people](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/people)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/press-release-IFW-2021-thousands-take-part>

# 1. Introduction

twitter.com/GreenheadCo/status/1460997830332534789



Greenhead College with Kirklees Cohesion, Inter Faith Week Roses for Peace

## Telling the story of Inter Faith Week

After Inter Faith Week each year, a list of activities that have taken place is drawn together, supplementing those listed on the website during the Week. These can be seen at [www.interfaithweek.org/resources/reports](http://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/reports). However, the Inter Faith Network also undertakes deeper analysis of the Week as part of developing it to be an ever more useful platform for celebrating and strengthening inter faith relations, learning and cooperation in the UK. The reports draw on a mixture of sources: information submitted to the Inter Faith Week website about activities; an annual survey by IFN of activity holders; further information researched online across the period following the Week, including reports by some activity holders; and traditional and social media coverage of the Week.

The report on the first year of Inter Faith Week<sup>1</sup> in 2009 was an in-depth one, gathering data that could be a benchmark for Weeks in years to come. In

subsequent years, while still including analysis of key data, reports been shorter and have focused on types of activities that took place, identifying popular themes and concerns.

The 2020 Week, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, was marked with a unique report which focused on inter faith connection, learning, and cooperation in the context of the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Widely circulated, it has served not just as an inspiration for the following Week, but also a tribute to the faith and inter faith response to those in need during COVID, and a significant historical record.

## 2021: reporting on a widening pattern of participation and partnerships

The 2021 Inter Faith Week Report takes a different approach. It is structured around the widening pattern of organisations taking part in the Week and the patterns of partnership which help contribute to that.

1. [www.interfaithweek.org/uploads/ifweek2009report.pdf](http://www.interfaithweek.org/uploads/ifweek2009report.pdf)

2. [www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-2020-connection-learning-and-cooperation-at-the-time-of-covid](http://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-2020-connection-learning-and-cooperation-at-the-time-of-covid)





facebook.com/ncauk/photos/pcb.6912491715442717/6912488392109716

Nishkam Centre “COVID Keeps” Inter Faith Week event

The report celebrates the wide variety of organisations taking part. It lifts up the ways that faith and inter faith bodies are using the Week, and also the growing participation of schools and their pupils – among the most enthusiastic participants in the Week!

The report also highlights the growing participation of secular bodies taking part. It shows how an increasingly broad range of organisations – such as hospitals, voluntary organisations and businesses – are finding that they can benefit from participating in the Week and are using it as an opportunity to strengthen their faith community links and their work with clients and staff of different backgrounds.

Such bodies are also using it to promote inter faith cooperation and understanding, as part of a cohesive and integrated society, in contexts from policing to sport to medical care. Through the Week, they are, for example, connecting with local faith communities and raising awareness of the importance of faith diversity, equality and inclusion for their staff and service users.

Lastly, the Report highlights the power of partnership: how the Week sees many new partnerships and forms of cooperation and acts as a seedbed for these to grow.

This report has been put together by the office of the Inter Faith Network for the UK which leads on Inter Faith Week. It conveys a sense of the wide range of organisations that held activities and of the nature of these. The report can only cover some of the many activities held but a full list of all those of which IFN is aware can be seen at [www.interfaithweek.org/reports](http://www.interfaithweek.org/reports).

**Harriet Crabtree OBE**  
Executive Director



Church of England Diocese of Leeds

## 2. About Inter Faith Week



Sunderland Peace Walk

This section looks at how Inter Faith Week began and has developed and the ways in which the Inter Faith Network works to help it happen successfully. It gives an insight into how 2021 activity holders have found the Week benefitted them and their areas in terms of deepening and strengthening inter faith understanding, cooperation, and religious literacy.

### The story of Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week was established in 2009 by the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN), in partnership for the first year with Government. It drew its inspiration from Scottish Interfaith Week which began in 2004 and is led by Interfaith Scotland. Its aims are to:

- Strengthen inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which they make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The term 'inter faith' in Inter Faith Week is used to describe interaction between different faith communities and traditions and their members. It is used in this context as inclusive of non-religious beliefs (while recognising that not all would use it in this way).

Participation in Inter Faith Week has widened throughout its history. Many thousands of people and hundreds of organisations participate every year. In recent years, millions of people have encountered the Week and its positive messages through social media.

Some cities and towns such as Birmingham and York regularly run full Week programmes. The Week is also popular in less diverse areas such as Cumbria and Devon. Some constituencies such as schools and workplaces have seen particularly strong growth.

Inter Faith Week has in recent years been timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday, encouraging remembering together of the service of people of different faiths and beliefs and reflection on peace. IFN has benefitted from input to the programme by

facebook.com/sunderlandinterfaithforum/posts/pfbid02PuT5fZraCvW5CdwPMwFwDWz8V8e85mYmpn2KJtghv7Rz;4Gc9tNcnqE82g5AVP8l

the Royal British Legion, with which it has worked to support the continued broadening of the inclusion of Remembrance.

Inter Faith Week has had, since its outset, a close working relationship with Mitzvah Day – which usually happens on the first or last Sunday of Inter Faith Week – with each adding value and impact to the other. Mitzvah Day is a special day of social action led by the Jewish Community, but with many activities held on an inter faith basis. At other times in the year, IFN profiles Sadaqa Day and Sewa Day.

## **The role of IFN in supporting and developing Inter Faith Week**

Enabling and supporting Inter Faith Week is a big part of IFN's work each year. It promotes and publicises the Week in the months leading up to it through its dedicated website, [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org), and Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts, as well as through targeted mailings to a wide range of organisations. The Inter Faith Week logo and branding are made available through the Inter Faith Week website.

Each year, IFN updates the Inter Faith Week website and creates new resources for the Week, such as activity ideas for particular types of organisations. It also sends a registration pack to those who list their activities on the website to publicise their own events and boost the Week's profile further.

From April through to October, IFN staff reach out to a wide variety of organisations to encourage them to use the Week as a platform for increasing religious literacy and awareness of the contribution of faith groups to society, promoting good inter faith relations, and celebrating and highlighting their own work.

IFN staff members contributed to a number of Inter Faith Week events. For example, during the 2021 Week, they attended dialogues and vigils, spoke at conferences, and took part in workshops. On pages 25 and 39 are blogs by two members of IFN's team who attended events during the Week.

Inter Faith Week activities are held by independent organisations, and they are encouraged to register them on the Inter Faith Week website. As details on

planned activities come in, they are added to an interactive map on the website which enables users to search by area, topic and date. During the Week, the team continues to add events as they come in and also to source and add details for activities that were not preregistered. This enables people to find activities near them or that they can join online. It also helps ensure that the media can easily find information about the Week and its activities.

In the run up to the Week and during it, the IFN office works to ensure maximum social media impact – for example to ensure that tweets have as wide a reach as possible – and to respond to media enquiries. This increases the impact of the Week and adds to positive narratives about faith and belief groups and the generally good relations that exist in the UK.

**In 2021, Inter Faith Week related tweets reached an audience far beyond those who participated directly in activities. Tweets about Inter Faith Week appeared on the feeds of 13 million Twitter users ('potential reach'), a total of 42 million times ('potential impressions') during October, November and December**

Each year, IFN surveys activity holders and draws on reports by them to gauge how helpful they have found the Week and how it helps accomplish its goals. Feedback from 2021 activity holders shows that they have found Inter Faith Week a positive and productive platform to build on and to spread greater awareness of their work, build new partnerships, improve outreach with their local communities, and engage better with a diversity of faiths and beliefs within their organisations.

Answers to the annual survey, together with media coverage, reports from individual activity holders and reflections offered at subsequent IFN events, help tell the story of the Week. They also help IFN develop the Week to ensure that its impact grows.



Registration packs were sent to those who registered their activities on the website, including promotional materials as well as checklists and guidance for planning, running, and evaluating activities. The packs helped organisations to run successful activities, promote their activities, and raise the profile of Inter Faith Week.

The Inter Faith Week website includes an activities calendar and an activities map and location search. These features helped people to find activities taking place in their area and keep track of the scale of the Week.



**Outreach**

From April through to October, the IFN team reached out to a variety of sectors, raising enthusiasm about the Week and spreading awareness about its role as an excellent platform for engaging in dialogue, celebrating diversity and increasing religious literacy.

IFN carried out email campaigns at different ‘milestones’ in the run-up to the Week, marking 6 months, 150 days, 100 days, 60 days and one month to go. These mailings, which served as reminders about the Week, included details about how to get involved and links to IFN resources. IFN also encouraged participation from different sectors through targeted email campaigns.

IFN also aims to provide two internships a year with a focus on Inter Faith Week, giving young people an opportunity to gain skills and knowledge for their future careers and to benefit their communities. We thank our 2021 and 2022 interns for their role in the Week, including their help in creating this report.

The Inter Faith Network promoted and publicised the Week in the months running up to it, through social media, the website, and targeted mailings.

***“I appreciated hearing from the IFW team personally to talk about our activities which helped us to see how our activities were feeding into the overall campaign”***  
 – A PUBLIC FIGURE’S STAFF TEAM MEMBER

## Social media

Social media is central to spreading positive messaging about the Week and inter faith activity in general, including to those who do not organise or directly take part in Inter Faith Week activities.

In 2021 The Inter Faith Network shared a variety of posts to Twitter, Facebook and Instagram leading up to and during the Week. These included links to resources, updates on the Inter Faith Week map, and posts and graphics offering ideas for activities. It also shared weekly posts aimed at particular sectors, providing inspiration by sharing photos of past activities.

IFN also shared posts from other organisations to highlight the variety of initiatives that took place throughout the Week.

Tweets about Inter Faith Week appeared on the feeds of 13 million Twitter users ('reach') a total of 42 million times ('impressions') – an increase of 18%

Follow us on Social media:

-  [facebook.com/IFWeek](https://facebook.com/IFWeek)
-  [twitter.com/ifweek](https://twitter.com/ifweek)
-  [instagram.com/ifweek](https://instagram.com/ifweek)
-  [Linkedin.com/showcase/ifweek](https://Linkedin.com/showcase/ifweek)

and 21% against figures of 11 million and 35 million in 2020.

The annual Inter Faith Week social media campaign encouraged participants to write messages on #InterFaithWeek branded message boards. Many wrote messages about what inter faith and Inter Faith Week means to them, and uploaded photos of these to social media.

The official Inter Faith Week tag, #InterFaithWeek was used over 5,000 times across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



Bluecoat School Coventry

twitter.com/BlueCoatCoE/status/1461609015499235333



Rochdale and District Mind

twitter.com/RochdaleMind/status/1460607207863685121



British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences EDI AG

twitter.com/basesuk/status/1446101959048585216



Race Equality First Cardiff

twitter.com/REFCardiff/status/1460585743781445633



BATCA multifaith peace ceremony at Tooting Broadway tube station, London



Northampton Inter Faith Forum chair and co-chair lay wreath

## Remembering together

Inter Faith Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday, encouraging remembering together of the service of soldiers and civilians of different backgrounds and inspiring people to think about peace.

Local authorities and places of worship – such as Kirklees Council, St Mary’s Church in Cardiff and Halifax Minster – organised and sponsored Remembrance services with an inter faith or multi faith component. Remembrance activities other than services and vigils also took place, such as a multi faith Remembrance display in Stockport Hospital chaplaincy centre, and a wreath-making workshop with the University of Westminster Interfaith Team.

Beyond Remembrance Sunday, some organisations arranged activities themed on ‘peace’. These included two ‘Festivals of Peace’ for schools in Huddersfield, coordinated by Kirklees Council. There was also a multi faith peace ceremony led by Balham and Tooting Community Association, a ‘peace walk’ around the quad by students from Strabane Academy, and a ‘gathering for peace’ with Ashford Interfaith Group, which took place next to one of the last remaining World War I tanks on public display.

***“It is poignant that #InterFaithWeek 2021 begins today on Remembrance Sunday & ends on Mitzvah Day (UK’s largest faith-led day of social action). Each enshrine sacred paradigms - remembrance, charity, compassion, love, respect & the hope for peace...”***

– RUTH-ANNE LENGA, UCL CENTRE FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION



twitter.com/stmarysCF10/status/1458709195419795456

twitter.com/Orchard\_Growth/status/1457618642187621059

# Inter Faith Week a reminder of just how far town has come | Burnley Council leader Afrasiab Anwar column

Each year, Inter Faith Week begins on Remembrance Sunday to encourage people to remember the contributions of all faiths and none, and to consider how best to create a just, peaceful, and harmonious world.

By Afrasiab Anwar  
Thursday, 25th November 2021, 12:30 pm



Burnley Council leader Afrasiab Anwar

Inter Faith Week provides a focal point to open up inter faith activity to a wider audience.

Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society.

Building Bridges in **Burnley** organised activities across the borough this past week to bring people together from different backgrounds to celebrate diversity and commonality.

The week started with the Remembrance Service in the Peace Gardens followed by a Faith walk, taking in the United Reformed Church on Bethesda St, Shah Jalal Islamic Centre in Stoneyholme, the Olive School on Ormerod Road and the Central Methodist Church in Burnley town centre.

**Volunteers** delivered assemblies all week at Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic College and over a hundred people from local community organisations attended the annual fundraising dinner at the Usha.

Celebrating 10 years of Near Neighbours projects being delivered across Lancashire, it was wonderful to hear local grassroots groups sharing their inspirational stories of how they had broken down barriers and got to know their neighbours.

There were a number of events throughout the week but the highlight for me was the annual Interfaith Football Tournament organised in partnership with **Burnley FC** in the Community, bringing together young people from across Burnley, at the Spirit of Sport in a friendly tournament.

The participants, parents and volunteers then attended the Burnley v Crystal Palace game at Turf Moor courtesy of Burnley FC.

For many, this was their first experience watching a game at Turf Moor and the joy on their faces when Maxwell Cornet scored the equaliser was priceless.

There is still lots to do but the work Burnley FC in the Community are doing to engage local communities with a range of innovative projects is fantastic.

I was delighted to see the great work that was taking place, not only bringing people together but also showcasing the best of our communities.

The work in Burnley has not gone unnoticed, with regional and national organisations using it as an example of good practice.

Our faith communities must be commended for the way they stepped up at the height of the pandemic and continue to work in collaboration regardless of race, religion, or culture to support the most vulnerable. Proof that we have much more in common than that which divides us.

Inter Faith Week is a reminder of how far we have come as a town.

Thanks to the great work of organisations like Building Bridges in Burnley and in particular the strong relationships between communities and grassroots organisations we have changed perceptions of our borough and will continue to do so.

Just like our football team we continue to punch above our weight as a town and change hearts and minds.

It is this welcoming approach that allows us to move forward as a borough.

Afrasiab Anwar | Burnley | Burnley Council | Burnley FC | Volunteers

**Cllr Hina Bokhari AM** @HinaBokhariLD

#InterfaithWeek is ending for me at St Saviours Church #WestBarnes. Honoured to speak at the Rededication of the Raynes Park War Memorial to honour the "The Men of Raynes Park" who gave their lives for this country.

Thanks to all who made sure their names are not forgotten.



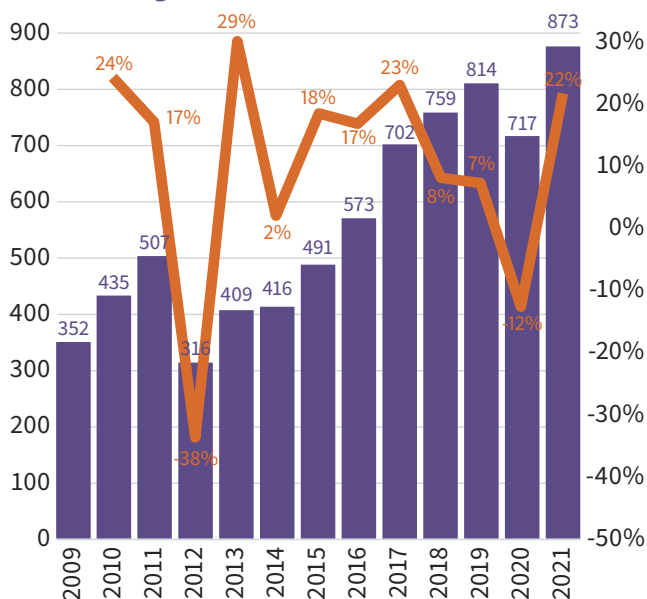
# 3. Inter Faith Week 2021: Some key facts

## Getting ‘back on track’ after COVID

Inter Faith Week 2021 was the biggest Inter Faith Week so far, with 873 activities held by 861 different organisations, and thousands of people taking part. 11% of survey respondents said that the 2021 Inter Faith Week was the first year that they had arranged an activity

The impact of COVID-19 meant that activity numbers dipped slightly for Inter Faith Week 2020 as – despite the amazing digital response – numbers were affected by lockdowns and other restrictions. This year’s increase of 156 activities, or 22%, suggests that the Week is getting ‘back on track’ after the impact of COVID-19!

### Inter Faith Week – number of activities each year and % change



A number of organisations took the opportunity to return to in-person activities. These included faith trails and pilgrimages, discussions and seminars, shared meals, in-class school activities, and exhibitions.

2021 saw a growth in ‘hybrid’ activities with both a virtual and in-person component. These were primarily in-person talks, seminars and services or vigils that were also livestreamed through services like Zoom, Teams and YouTube.



Fermanagh and Omagh Zoom Baha’i celebration

**“This was our first face-to-face meeting since January 2020 and we were very pleased by the number of people from different groups who attended.”**

– LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUP”

## Returning to in-person activities

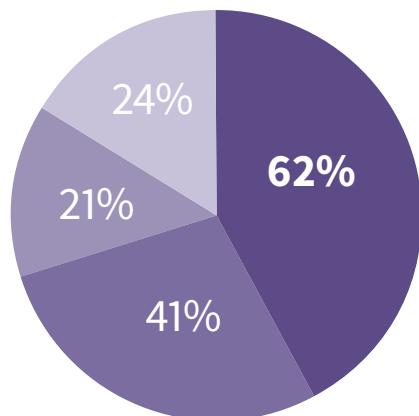
A number of the respondents to our Inter Faith Week survey cited the return to in-person activities as something particularly positive about Inter Faith Week this year - some describing it as the ‘best aspect’ of their own Inter Faith Week activity:



twitter.com/BenitaWishart/status/146367032935259136



Inter Faith Week this year took place in a context where the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have some impact on activities. What kinds of activities did you run?



- In person activities without an online component
- Online only activities (such as discussions, training, raising awareness of the week)
- Hybrid activities with both an in person and online component (eg a live streamed event)
- Other

***“People interacting in person after what’s been a difficult year.”***

– CHARITY

***“Being able to have an Inter Faith Service at the end of the week and then sit down for a lunch together was such a lovely feeling after almost two years without being able to do so.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“This was our first face-to-face meeting since January 2020 and we were very pleased by the number of people from different groups who attended despite the cold weather.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“The possibility of meeting again in person, with sensible precautions in place.”***

– UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

***“As we recover from the pandemic it was the first opportunity to engage people on the ground and this has helped to improve generally people’s wellbeing.”***

– LOCAL AUTHORITY

***“The pleasure of a face-to-face gathering.”***

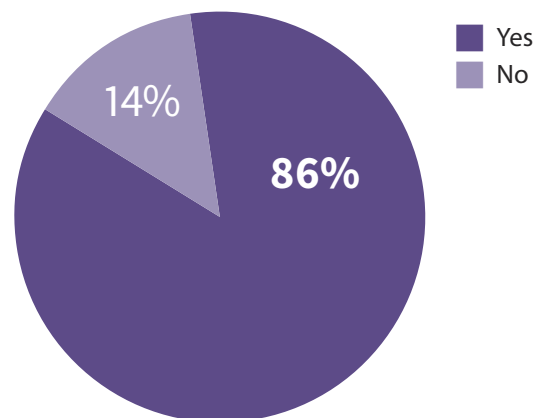
– LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUP

***“Meeting again after so long.”***

– INTER FAITH GROUP

Inter Faith Week provided a fantastic platform to bring people together in the COVID-19 context. Inter faith activities highlighted the importance of community cohesion and of celebrating the contributions that faith communities, working together, can make towards the common good.

Given the COVID-19 context, did you find that the Week provided a focal point for making or celebrating positive connections between people of different backgrounds this year?



[www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)

Survey respondents were asked whether anything that they did differently because of COVID-19 would have a longer-term impact on the ways that they pursued inter faith activities. These are some of their answers:

***“The online element will continue for certain activities, they help to reach a bigger audience.”***  
 – LOCAL AUTHORITY

***“We are looking at more ways of connecting with our faith communities and members through Zoom and our website.”***  
 – FAITH GROUP

***“We will have more webinars and blended events in the future.”***  
 – LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“We have attended many online events hosted by other inter faith groups in Surrey and the South East and this has brought people in who no longer wish to travel around to attend conferences and public meetings.”***  
 – LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUP

***“Next year we hope to do [our activity] in the office and virtually to maintain [a] wider catchment.”***  
 – WORKPLACE

## COVID-19

Despite the lessened impact of COVID-19 on Inter Faith Week, the pandemic was still a strong theme in a number of activities.

Remembrance, and marking the lives lost to the pandemic, was central to many activities. In Woking, a prayer vigil organised by Woking People of Faith featured prayers from the Baha’i, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu and Quaker faiths, with LED candles. Memorial plantings of trees, bulbs and wildflowers also took place. Middlesex Inter Faith Network and Barnet Multi Faith Forum led two separate memorial tree plantings: one in Hendon



Nishkam Centre COVID event

facebook.com/ncauk/photos/pcb.6912491715442717/6912488392109716

with the Woodland Trust, and another in Edgware with UNITAS Youth Zone and Ultimate Achievements Academy. Solihull Faiths Forum and Solihull Council led a bulb and wildflower planting sessions at Hope Coppice, a new COVID-19 memorial woodland in Solihull.

Talks, panel discussions and workshops also took place, exploring the impact of COVID-19 and the work of faith and belief groups to support local



Solihull Faiths Forum and Solihull Council planting

twitter.com/SolihullUpdates



Unitas 20 Youth Zone memorial tree planting

communities. For example, in Leicester, a workshop on ‘New relations of stigma and mutuality during the COVID-19 pandemic’ was hosted by the St Philip’s Centre. The workshop drew on a research project conducted in the city of Leicester, exploring the impact of COVID-19 on different communities. For 2021, Calderdale Interfaith Council’s annual Inter Faith Week event was based around the theme of COVID-19. It included contributions from agencies like Halifax Academy, Halifax Community Fridge, Halifax Opportunities Trust, Community Foundation for Calderdale and the chaplaincy at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust; sharing their work supporting local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nishkam Civic Association hosted an activity called ‘COVID Keeps’, which featured dialogue and discussion reflecting on what attendees had learnt to value most during the pandemic.

A coalition of faith organisations, faith-based health initiatives and healthcare organisations hosted a webinar raising awareness of the COVID-19 vaccine among faith communities: British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO), the Department of Health and Social Care, FaithAction, Hindu Council UK, Muslim Doctors Association, NHS England, South Asian Health Action and Strengthening Faith Institutions.

***“This year was undoubtedly FaithAction’s busiest Inter Faith Week so far. Each evening of the week we found ourselves out and about speaking at or organising one event or another, mostly hearing about the great work local groups did to serve local communities throughout the pandemic, how they came together to multiply their impact, and what steps they are taking to secure that momentum beyond the crisis.***

***Seeing people in person was certainly a welcome change from 18 months of virtual events. It was also proof enough to us of the unrivalled power that coming together in person has on creating true connection, developing relationships and casting a shared vision for future work.”***

– FAITHACTION



## A wide range of activities

A wide variety of activities took place: exhibitions and cultural activities; social action and volunteering; conferences and seminars; charity fundraisers; sports activities; faith trails and pilgrimages; open door days at places of worship; radio broadcasts and podcasts; debates and dialogues; shared meals and cooking sessions; school events; and more.

Activities took place in many different settings: places of worship; libraries and museums; schools, colleges and universities; hospitals and hospices; community centres; government and civic buildings; train stations, public parks and woodlands.

Virtual activities were held via Zoom, Skype and Teams and broadcast live via YouTube, Facebook, SoundCloud, local radio, and digital radio. Podcasts were posted on Anchor FM, Spotify, and on organisations’ own websites.

A full list of the Week's activities can be found at: [www.interfaithweek.org/resources/reports](http://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/reports)

For information on Scottish Interfaith Week activities, visit [www.scottishinterfaithweek.org](http://www.scottishinterfaithweek.org)

## A Week of partnerships

The 2021 Week was an excellent time for cooperation, collaboration and partnership working across different organisations and types of organisations; 'secular', faith-based, and inter faith. 33% of all activities for 2021 were organised by two or more organisations, compared to 28% of all activities for 2020. 54% of survey respondents said their organisation had worked with another organisation or organisations with which they had not worked before

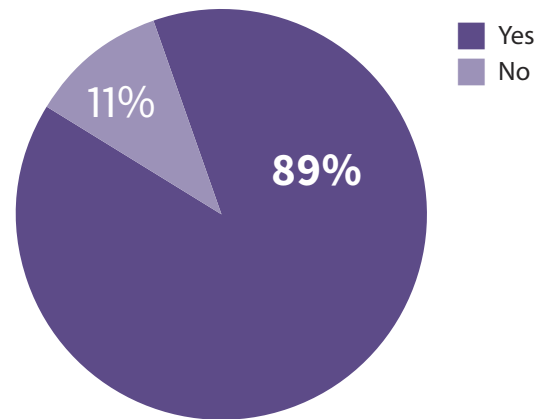
Many activities are examples of more 'traditional' partnerships, such as those between different faith communities or with inter faith groups. However, there were also many partnerships between faith communities and faith-based bodies, inter faith groups, and secular organisations such as museums, emergency services and Students' Unions.

Around 46% of partnership activities were between 'faith-based' (including inter faith) and secular bodies.

Some secular organisations took Inter Faith Week as an opportunity to reach out to local faith communities, whether for dialogue, visits to places of worship, or to volunteer together for Mitzvah Day. Other organisations like local police, local authorities, and schools also partnered with local inter faith groups. Together, they organised talks about important issues relating to faith, society, and the local community; set up learning opportunities for young people; and hosted civic receptions and celebrations.

Developments such as the widening of networks, opportunities for future collaboration and increased interest in the work of their organisation were cited as some of the greatest benefits to these new partnerships by survey respondents.

Did your Inter Faith activity help you to engage with new people/groups?



***"...have made new contacts – I hope now to be able to get them involved in other activities – and so increase the size of our network and influence."***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***"Increase social mobility to get community involved in matters important to them and improve their local area. When people feel connected and work together the solutions will come from the community. Faith centres in particular are strong assets in their community so opening the potential for more collaborative work."***

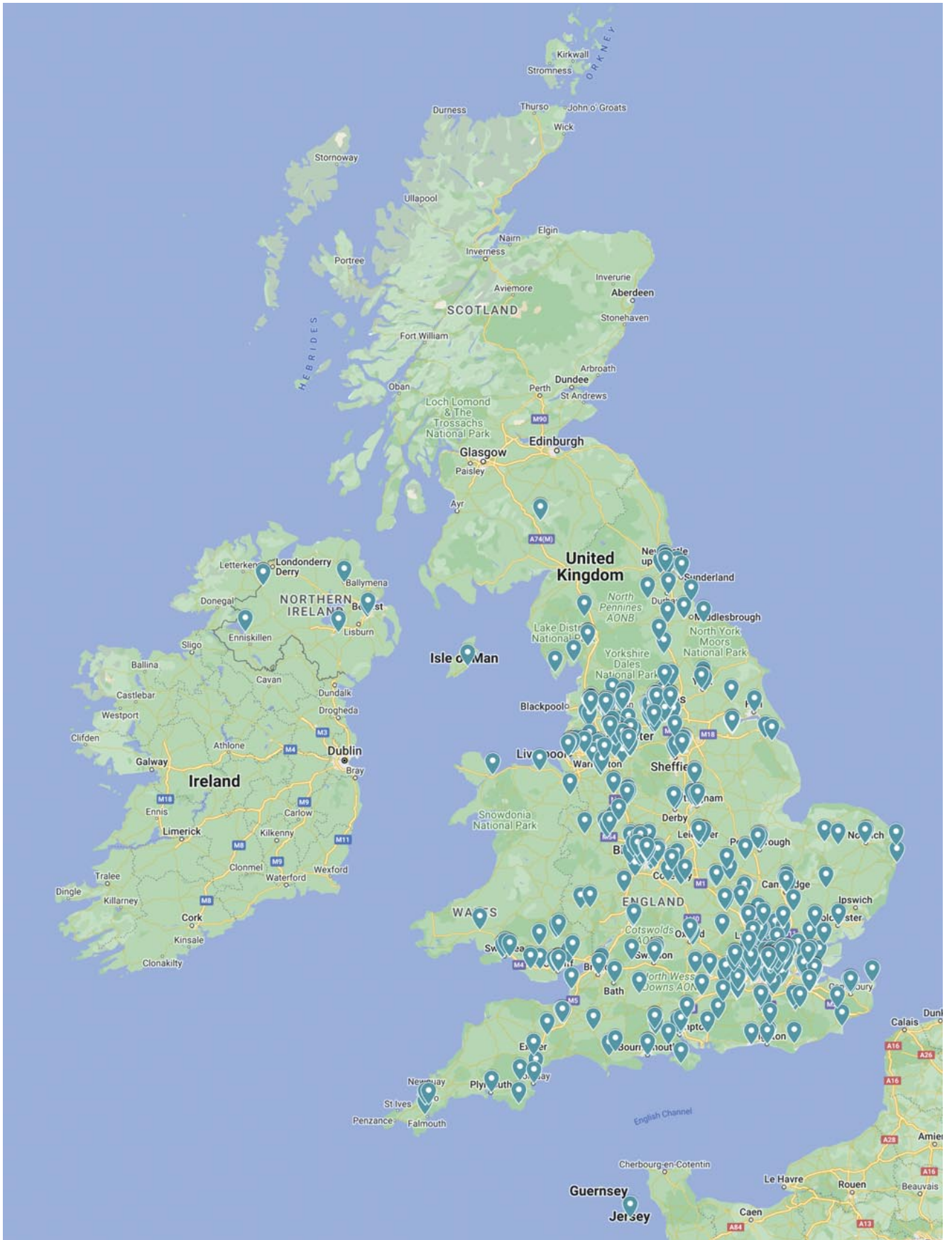
– LOCAL AUTHORITY, YORKSHIRE

## Religious literacy and breaking down barriers

For many, Inter Faith Week offers a chance to learn more about the faiths and beliefs of friends, neighbours, co-workers, and classmates and to engage with faith and belief related issues in the workplace, the community and wider society. As such, it makes a powerful contribution towards tackling ignorance and prejudice, and building a culture of understanding, respect and cooperation rooted in shared values.

In 2021, 31% of all activities were explicitly identified by organisers as having an education or learning component. These included activities at schools, universities, and further education colleges; as well as talks and seminars hosted by local inter faith

# Inter Faith Week activities map



groups, charities and others. Many other activities, while not described primarily in terms of learning, also had a significant educational benefit.

Feedback shows that engaging with Inter Faith Week has an overwhelmingly positive effect in this regard, helping people to engage with people with different faiths, beliefs, and cultures to their own – including those they have never encountered before. The majority of organisers feel that their Inter Faith Week activities have helped to improve religious literacy and encourage greater knowledge and understanding of different faiths and beliefs.

***“We had almost 300 people attending events during the Week and many of these were people who were new to attending any inter faith events at all. These especially opened up their knowledge about faiths within the city.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION, YORKSHIRE

***“A number of students commented that they’d never met a Jew, Muslim or Hindu before. So, meeting others in a relaxed and informal way allowed barriers to be broken down and assumptions challenged.”***

– UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN, DURHAM UNIVERSITY

***“Hopefully a development and broadening of the scope of [our organisation] locally and further abroad, with which we can proceed to attract new membership and interest.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION, WEST SUSSEX

## Strengthening and extending inter faith initiatives

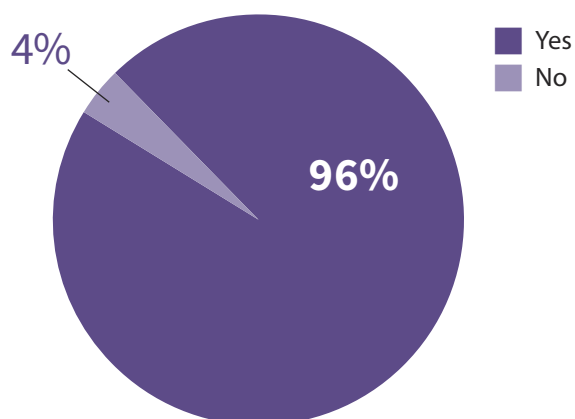
Organisations taking part regularly comment on how the Week helps their year-round activities, including through getting new people involved and raising their profile.

93% of survey respondents said that participation in the Week added value to the work that they do. Reasons included: giving a focus to the year and something to work towards, providing a structured platform to bring people together, and raising the profile of their work.

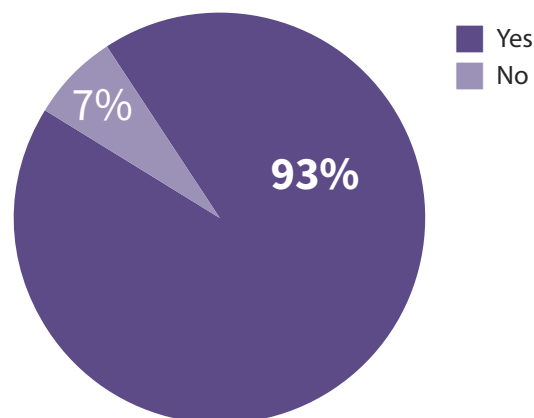
***“... Inter Faith Week is a reminder that – whoever we are and whatever our heritage or beliefs – we share our planet, and our lives, with people with different and diverse perspectives and we owe it to one another to air and share and celebrate the things that are important to us.”***

– UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN, UNIVERSITY OF KENT

Do you think your Inter Faith Week activity helped participants to learn more about different faiths?



Does Inter Faith Week add value to the work that you do?



## The importance of Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week survey respondents were asked what they saw as the two most important things about Inter Faith Week as a national initiative. Here are some of their responses:

***“Getting people to understand more about people of faith and seeing what they have in common. Learning about what unites them rather than what divides them.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“It helps people to understand the range of faiths and beliefs in the nation and through engagement and information helps to reduce suspicion and/or scapegoating.”***

– HOSPICE

***“It shows that people of different faiths can be friends, work together and support each other, at a time when religion is often portrayed as a divisive force.”***

***“It brings people of different backgrounds together.”***

– FAITH COMMUNITY

***“Bringing people together creating a greater understanding of diversity.”***

***“Brings a focus to interfaith activities around the UK. Raises awareness for the general public.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION.

***“A vehicle to engage new people in activities. Growing resilience in our communities and celebrate diversity.”***

– LOCAL AUTHORITY

***“People interacting with someone of a different faith/ belief to them. People learning something new about a faith/ belief different to their own.”***

– FAITH-BASED CHARITY

***“Promoting interfaith activities and community cohesion by celebrating what we have in common and setting aside our differences.”***

– FAITH COMMUNITY

***“It’s a [t]ime to build relationships, to demonstrate respect and love for one another, a time to learn and teach others the core values of different religions and their similarities and differences.”***

– FAITH COMMUNITY

# 4. Who took part?

## A Week of widening participation

A total of 861 organisations are known to have organised activities for Inter Faith Week 2021. The chart opposite shows these by type.

Schools, hospices and hospitals and staff networks were the categories with the greatest increases in participation, with increases of 26%, 79%, and 100% respectively. The increase in school participation comes on top of an increase of 92% between 2020 and 2021.

Many of the organisations that took part had a multi faith basis, such as local inter faith organisations (LIFOs), national and regional inter faith organisations (NRIFOs) and inter faith staff networks. Others, such as local faith communities, national faith communities, university chaplaincies and faith-based charities, had a basis in a specific faith or beliefs. The ‘schools’ category encompasses faith schools both within and outside the state sector, other state schools, and independent schools.

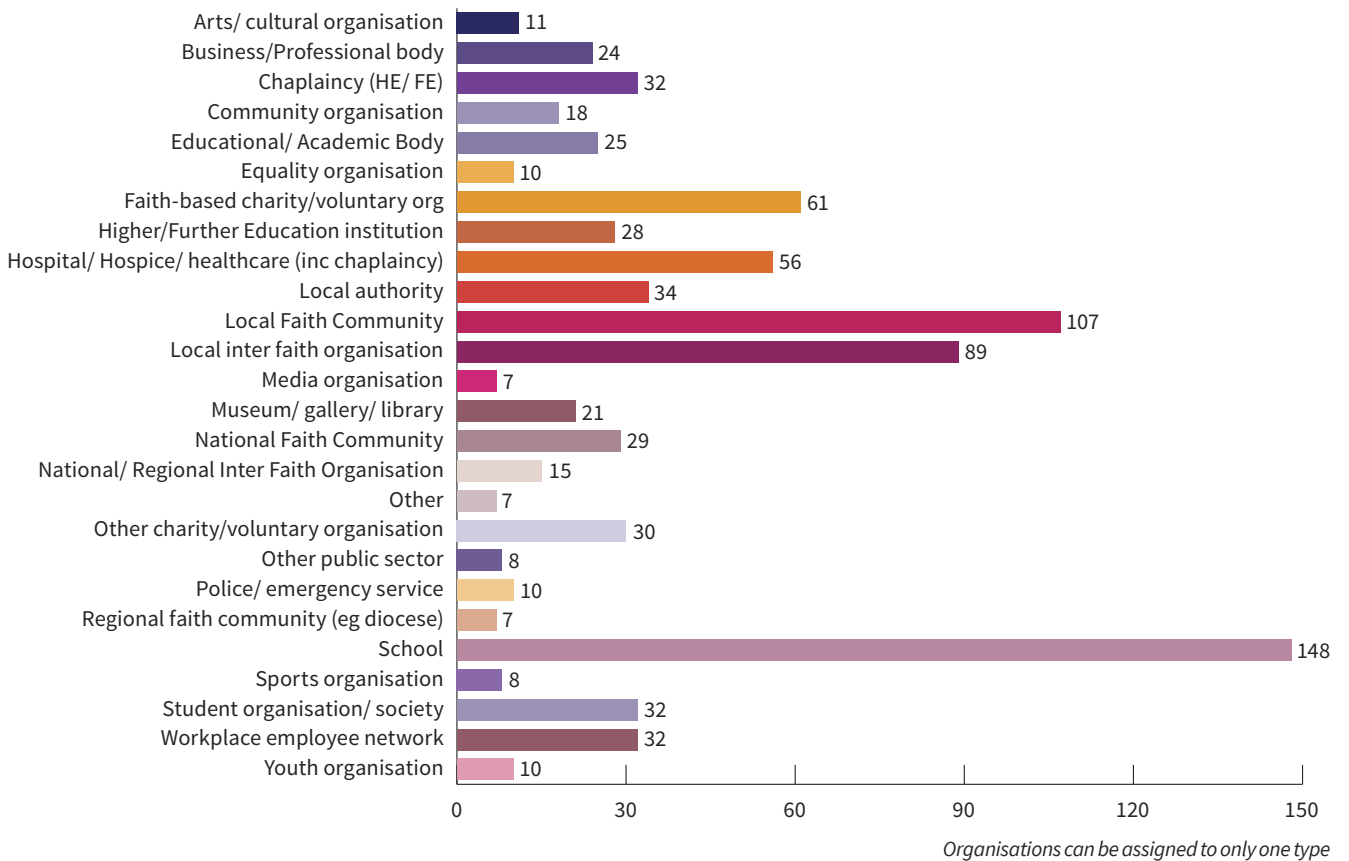
Many activities were also organised by secular organisations such as local authorities, museums, sports organisations, and hospitals. A number of these were in collaboration with faith communities or inter faith groups as well as other types of organisations.

The majority of activities – 49% – were organised by secular bodies only, whilst 38% were organised by faith-based/ inter faith bodies only. 13% of activities were organised through a partnership between secular and faith-based/ inter faith bodies. This demonstrates the widening participation in Inter Faith Week, and that secular bodies are becoming increasingly enthusiastic about engagement with the Week. They are also seeing Inter Faith Week as a great opportunity to collaborate with faith and inter faith groups, learning from one another and forming partnerships.

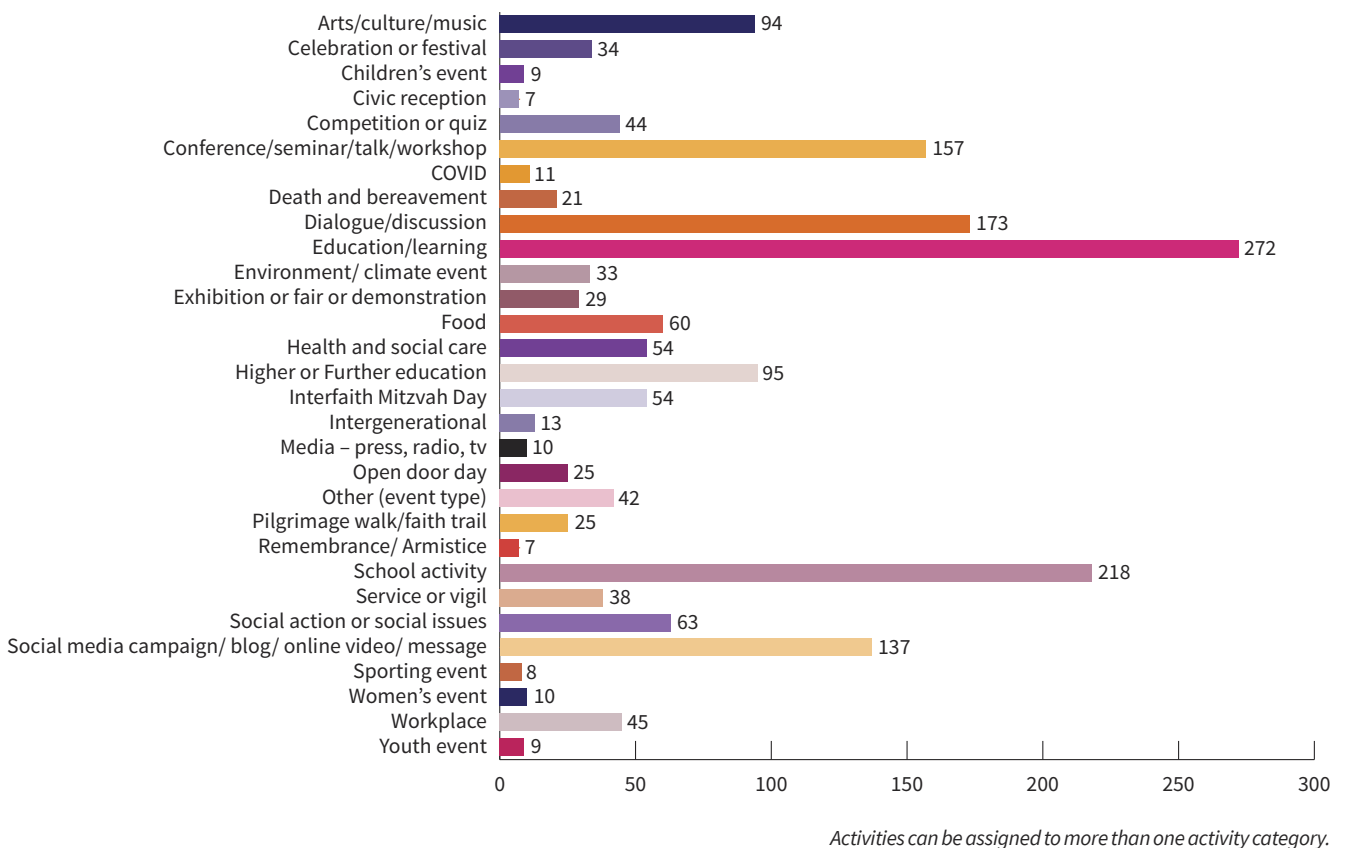




## Inter Faith Week 2021: Organisations by type



## Inter Faith Week 2021: Activities by type



# 5. A wide range of activities

873 activities are known to have taken place as part of Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. The chart overleaf gives a breakdown of activities by type, based on the categories provided on the Inter Faith Week activity submission form. The category 'Other' includes activities which did not fit into any categories: for example, trips to places unrelated to faith.

Some organisations hold annual Inter Faith Week events, such as York Unitarians' annual inter faith service, Sunderland Inter Faith Forum's 'Walk of Friendship', and Interfaith Wolverhampton's yearly Inter Faith Week conference.

55% of survey respondents for 2021 used the Week as an opportunity to do something that they had not done before, like trying a new kind of activity, reaching out to a different audience, or launching a new resource or initiative.

The lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, and the lessened impact of the pandemic on everyday life, brought a significant increase in activities that benefit from an in-person element: for example, an increase in pilgrimages, walks and faith trails from 8 to 25; an increase in exhibitions, fairs, and demonstrations from 11 to 29; and an increase in place of worship 'open door days' from 8 to 25. Correspondingly, it saw a sharp drop from 2020 in the number of Inter Faith Week activities with COVID-19 as a theme – a decrease of 87% from 82 activities to 11. It also seems to have contributed to a shift away from purely online activities, for example a 38% decrease in the number of social media campaigns, blogs, and online videos (from 221 to 137).

Full-week programmes of activities were held in some places, coordinated by local inter faith organisations (LIFOs) such as Birmingham Council of Faiths, York Interfaith Group, Preston Faith Forum, Swindon Interfaith Group and Medway Inter Faith Action Forum. Local authorities such as North Lincolnshire Council and Kirklees Council also sponsored full-week programmes, and a full-week programme was also organised by South Lakeland



Equality and Diversity Partnership (South Lakeland District Council). The Week was at the same time as Living Wage Week and some activities were held for both, such as a Living Wage Mass and coffee morning arranged by Birmingham Citizens.

## A platform for new initiatives

A number of organisations used Inter Faith Week 2021 as an opportunity to launch new initiatives. Barts Health NHS Trust and Community Council for Somerset (CCS) both launched inter faith staff networks. Some inter faith groups launched new initiatives: the Faith & Belief Forum launched the ENGAGE Network for youth organisations, Religions for Peace UK (RfP) Women of Faith Network launched their 'Let Earth Breathe, Plant Trees, Restore Biodiversity' project, and Footsteps (of Birmingham Council of Faiths) launched project '4F', which provides sustainability advice to faith communities.

# 6. Spreading the word: publicity and coverage of the Week



## Social media

Many activity holders used social media to publicise their activities prior to the Week, and to post updates and photos.

Twitter was the most popular form of social media to share about the Week, with 7,200 mentions, a reach of 13 million users, and 42 million impressions. Instagram was the second most popular platform, with 480 mentions (not including Instagram 'Stories'), and a reach of 218,000 users.

LinkedIn was used by a number of businesses, professional bodies, and staff networks. It was used to post photos and updates about the Week, and also as a platform for Inter Faith Week social media campaigns. TikTok was also used by a small number of people.

## Radio and podcasts

Radio-hosted discussions and podcasts about faith and inter faith and gave platforms to voices from faith and inter faith organisations. These activities both celebrated Inter Faith Week and raised awareness of the Week, expanding its platform to a wider audience.

The Week was highlighted by local radio in a number of areas. For example, BBC Radio Kent marked Inter Faith Week during their Sunday Breakfast programme.

Unity FM Radio 93.5 interviewed the Secretary of Birmingham Council of Faiths which coordinates the city's Inter Faith Week programme.

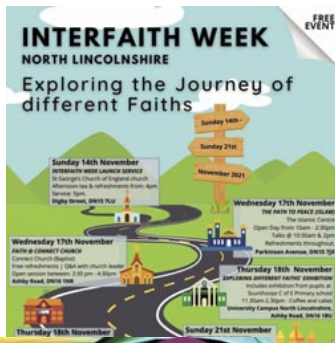
Voice of Islam dedicated its 'Drive Time' show to Inter Faith Week, discussing the importance of inter faith and interviewing a staff member from Faith & Belief Forum as well as IFN's Project Director.

The Naked Scientists hosted a podcast on the topic of 'Does Interfaith Work?', presented by the Founder Director of the Woolf Institute with contributions from the Woolf Institute and the Inter Faith Network for the UK [www.thenakedscientists.com/podcasts/naked-reflections/does-interfaith-work](http://www.thenakedscientists.com/podcasts/naked-reflections/does-interfaith-work)

In a first for Inter Faith Week, an Inter Faith Week radio station called 'GB4IFW' was set up by Halifax Amateur Radio Society and aired from the Blackley Centre.



twitter.com/RoyalAirForce/status/1460238657940439048



## Traditional publicity

Flyers and posters were a popular way to advertise the Week. Many of these were posted on social media.

## In the News

A number of national and local news outlets, particularly online newspapers, picked up on the Week. These included both faith-based media such

as Jewish News, and non-faith-based media such as Telegraph and Argus, and the Lancashire Telegraph.

Mainstream news coverage of Inter Faith Week helps to spread positive messaging, spreading awareness of the importance of inter faith to a wider audience. It contributes towards the Week's goal of tackling prejudice and increasing understanding, by telling positive stories of the work of faith communities and inter faith organisations.

### Peterborough Interfaith Week launched with Faith Walk

On Sunday Inter Faith Week started in the city with a Faith Walk starting at Peterborough Cathedral.

### MPs, Jewish Westminster staff give insight into faith in Parliament for exhibition

MP Robert Halfon and staffer Abi Samuels speak about their religious identity alongside Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh participants in the Speaker's Roots To Parliament exhibition

### Telegraph & Argus

News Sport Business Opinion What's On Nostalgia

### Poets come together to highlight interfaith week

24th November 2021

GOV.UK

Home > Defence and Armed Forces

News story

### Avanti House School showcases their Combined Cadet Force

Defence Minister Baroness Goldie has visited the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) at Avanti House, an inclusive Hindu Faith School in Stanmore, as part of Inter Faith Week.

### Lancashire Telegraph

News Sport Rovers Clerics Stanley What's On Video News Announcements More

### Young people re-create Blackburn Cathedral and Noorul Islam mosque

17th November 2021

### WirralGlobe

News Sport Rovers What's On Events E-Edition Announcements More

### 'Interfaith week' exhibition at Birkenhead Library

13th November 2021

### SCHOOL NEWS

### Brighstone Primary School inter faith week explores religions

30th November 2021

## INTER FAITH WEEK BLOG FROM IFN INTERN JOSEPHINE DUMBRELL



Inter Faith Week 2021 was a jam-packed and exciting week, filled with a number of interesting and innovative initiatives that showed the importance of inter faith cooperation and dialogue.

As an IFN intern, I assisted on preparation for the Week: contacting organisations such as Students' Unions and museums to encourage participation in the Week; undertaking online research to find any activities that had not been registered and adding them on the Inter Faith Week website; and drafting posts to promote the Week on social media – you may have seen my regularly updated screenshots of our activities map! I feel proud to have played this important role in maintaining the Week's presence online, and to have encouraged participation in the Week by those who may not have previously considered getting involved.

I also had the opportunity to attend some of these activities myself. I am particularly interested in the role that inter faith can play in social action, and so attended four separate activities relating to this theme.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Inter Faith Week 2021 took place in the wake of COP26. Many Week activities reflected recognition of climate change as a timely and important issue around which faith communities can cooperate.

On Saturday I was honoured to attend Interfaith Wolverhampton's conference on the theme of climate change. Speakers from six different faith communities – Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian – discussed their own faith's perspective on nature and the role of humankind in relation to the environment. Whilst their perspectives differed in relation to some of the broader religious ideas, a common

idea that arose was the spiritual need or duty for humanity to take care of the earth. For example, Dr Asim Yusuf, who provided a Muslim perspective, talked about how caring for the Earth is a moral imperative and part and parcel of being human, whilst Christian speaker the Reverend Joe Smith highlighted the importance of protecting the environment as a means of 'loving your neighbour as yourself'.

Political and scientific perspectives were also provided courtesy of MP for Wolverhampton South East Pat McFadden, Councillor Steve Evans, and University of Wolverhampton lecturers Dr Komali Yenneti and Dr Hamid Pouran. These included discussions of climate science and climate justice, as well as reflections on how faith communities can get more involved in climate action, even if just through small changes – such as the Gurdwara changing their windows!

It was enlightening – and at moments very moving – to hear different faith reflections on the environment. It was also encouraging to see attendees recognise similarities between their faiths during the Q&A, and to understand how, despite their differences, faith communities can unite around common principles and fight for a common cause.

On Thursday, I attended the virtual launch of the 'Let Earth Breathe, Plant Trees, Restore Biodiversity' project, headed by RfP UK Women of Faith Network. The launch was a call to action for people of faith to plant trees, get involved in local conservation and restoration projects, divest from areas that contribute to or fund deforestation, and get involved in campaigns to hold governments accountable.

It was particularly interesting to hear about the role of environmentalism in different faiths. Karen Maxwell of Nisa-Nashim – Jewish Muslim Women's Network and The Board of Deputies of British Jews spoke about the faith commitment to the environment in Judaism and the festival of Tu B'Shevat; the 'New Year of the Trees'. Zarina Ahmed, climate change communicator and PhD

researcher at the University of Manchester, provided some insight into the main themes that people of faith refer to as motivation for their environmentalism, such as stewardship and non-dominance of the planet. Restoration ecologist Dr Leland Werden also provided scientific insight into restoration and conservation, including how we can make practical contributions to these efforts.

In our breakout rooms I was paired with Alison Judd, the President of World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. She told me about the Eco Church project of A Rocha UK, which encourages churches to make their buildings and grounds more sustainable. The importance of inter faith and faith coalitions as vehicles for climate action was also discussed.

It was encouraging to see such a drive for faith communities to become active participants in social action, particularly in a way that centres on their faith.

#### **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Other social issues were also the focal point of various activities throughout the Week. On Tuesday it was my privilege to attend a webinar hosted by Faiths Forum and Women's Interfaith Network on 'The Inter Faith Communities' Responsibility to Tackle Domestic Abuse' that also served to launch Faiths Against Domestic Abuse Week.

It was fascinating to hear panellists' perspectives on the importance of specialist, faith-based domestic abuse initiatives, such as the work of Jewish Women's Aid and Faith&VAWG Coalition, as well as how secular initiatives like the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 can integrate faith perspectives into their work. Likewise, to hear discussion about the nature of spiritual abuse.

Panellists also signposted a number of important actions for faith communities and domestic abuse support practitioners to take going forward. These included: working within faith communities to effect cultural change; helping faith leaders to become frontline practitioners; and making sure that secular political responses to domestic violence become 'spaces for faith' that address the role of faith both in abuse itself,

and in the healing process for survivors.

#### **ASPECTS OF DIALOGUE**

A number of higher education and research institutions hosted talks and lectures during the Week. On Tuesday I attended a Parkes Institute lecture by Dr Yulia Egorova with responses by Professor Brian Klug and Aiman Alzetani, exploring important questions about Muslim and Jewish identities in the UK, and how Jews and Muslims can relate to each other in dialogue settings. There was also discussion of more general questions such as how inter faith dialogue can provide opportunities to foster solidarity, particularly in the face of shared discrimination; and the importance, in dialogue, of not assuming that all members of a particular tradition are the same ('essentialising').

#### **AN AMAZING WEEK**

Inter Faith Week was an eye-opening and inspiring experience. Researching the activities taking place, and attending some of them myself, provided me with a first-hand understanding of how productive inter faith can be, not only in terms of fostering understanding and helping us to embrace diversity, but also in terms of uniting people of different faiths around a common purpose and encouraging them to pursue a fairer and more just society (and world!). I am in awe of the dedication and passion that has gone into every activity, and I hope that the momentum for change continues beyond the Week!

# 7. Inter Faith Week, climate change and the environment: partnership for change

Inter Faith Week 2021 took place just after the COP26 climate conference, which was hosted by the UK Government in Glasgow.

A number of Inter Faith Week activities built on this momentum with activities about faith and the environment, sharing faith perspectives on climate change and exploring how faith communities are responding and what more people can do.

Climate change is a shared concern not only across faiths, but across different types of organisations both faith-based and secular.

Many types of organisations used Inter Faith Week as a platform to also highlight COP26, and to engage with faith perspectives on the conference, working with a range of partners. Inter Faith Week climate-linked activities therefore provide a very good lens through which to study how Inter Faith Week inspires and fosters partnership working, in many cases across different sectors.

COP26 had seen a number of faith-based and inter faith initiatives such as ‘Camino to COP’ and the Young Christian Climate Network Relay to COP with its multi faith visits along the way; joint advocacy campaigns by faith groups; and the Glasgow Multi-Faith Declaration. Faith for the Climate played a key role, as did Interfaith Scotland. Scottish Interfaith Week was brought forward to lead into the COP, with a special opening vigil co-organised by Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Glasgow.

## Coming together to explore faith perspectives on climate change

A significant number of the talks, seminars, panels, conferences, and dialogue opportunities organised for the Week were dedicated to discussing faith and climate issues.



Some of these focused on understandings of nature and the environment in particular faiths. For example, Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group hosted a talk and discussion about Pope Francis’s *Laudato Si’: On Care for our Common Home*; the St Philip’s Centre in Leicester invited a contribution from a local Baha’i inter faith practitioner on ‘Faith in the Climate’; and Goldsmiths University of London hosted a presentation by a Buddhist environmentalist and chaplain on ‘Faith, Climate and Justice’.

The majority of Inter Faith Week discussions about the environment took a cross-faith approach and brought together different faith voices – and sometimes voices from other contexts, such as the scientific community and government.

King’s College London chaplaincy arranged a Scriptural Reasoning session exploring the theme of ‘Ecology and Theology’ through sacred texts from Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions; and Platform Housing Group in Birmingham held a lunchtime SR session for staff on ‘Ecology and Environment across Faiths.’

facebook.com/WolverhamptonandShrewsburyDistrictChair/posts/pfbid0359PXkXoRdksmNuEgk6oexu4B4yqk0sAwAD7UzVQm9mMmXoXUNc9N6qe7qgmWRYGJl

Pupils at Eden Boys' Leadership Academy in Bradford were visited by representatives from different faith communities, who led discussions on faith responses to the climate crisis. At Blue Coat School in Coventry, Year 9 pupils learnt about the idea of stewardship of nature and shared messages on the school's social media platforms. St Mary's University hosted a talk on 'Our Common Journey – What Happened at COP26?'

Bath Inter Faith Group hosted a conversation about COP26 between representatives from Hindu Climate Action and from Christian Action for the Environment in Bath and North East Somerset (CAFE BANES) about similarities and differences between perspectives on the environment and on climate action.

The Women's Federation for World Peace with Universal Peace Federation invited attendees at their 'Caring for the Environment, and Our Home, Mother Earth' event to share reflections from their faith traditions on the environment and COP26. The Cities Faith and Community Forum hosted a panel with different speakers discussing themes around environmentalism, eco-[inter]faith action, faith values and stewardship, and humanitarianism and clean energy.

A number of the discussions saw scientists, academics and climate activists taking part alongside faith representatives as part of partnership work on Inter Faith Week events. For example, the Isle of Man Interfaith Group and Zero Waste Mann hosted a talk from a local activist and a display at the Christian Science Church in Douglas on, 'Perspectives on Climate' Preston Faith Forum. Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network launched their 'Let Earth Breathe, Plant Trees, Restore Biodiversity' project, with a seminar that included input from an expert in climate science.

An Interfaith Wolverhampton conference featured speakers from different faiths talking about the role of nature in their own faith traditions and also academics discussing the science of climate change, and local civic figures speaking about civic and political responses to the climate crisis. You can read more about this in Josephine Dumbrell's blog on page 25. Preston Faith Forum invited a contribution from an Advisor to the UN and member of the Baha'i



talk slide

Community on 'Uniting the World to tackle Climate Change: What can COP26 teach us?'

Two separate events were hosted on the topics of climate change and the environment within the civil service: a panel discussion with the Civil Service Muslim, Hindu and Jewish networks on the topic of 'Environment, Sustainability and our Responsibility as per our Scriptures', and a talk on 'Faith and the Climate: Environmental Faith Perspective, Imperatives and Resources', led by the Treasury Faith and Belief Network.

Birmingham Council of Faiths Footsteps for a Low Carbon Future were part of a Unity FM Radio 93.5 discussion about their Faiths For a Fair Low Carbon Future (4F) project.

## Calls to climate action

Calls to action were at the heart of some Inter Faith Week climate-focused activities, with dialogue about the practical contributions that people of faith can make to tackling climate change. For example, Crawley Inter Faith Network invited faith community representatives to share and discuss practical suggestions for climate action; the Blackley Centre



twitter.com/RuralSomerset/status/1460155669307432962




and Sheffield Interfaith hosted a discussion on 'Faith Action in the Climate Crisis' and Canterbury and District Interfaith Action (CANDIFA) held a Zoom meeting, 'Repairing the World', with speakers from Humanism, Christianity, Buddhism and the Pagan tradition and had a general discussion on how social action today might help 'repair the world' (a phrase translating the Jewish concept of 'tikkun olam').

Birmingham Faith Leaders Group and BCF Footsteps held a conference, 'Action not Words: What can Birmingham do after the Climate Conference?', with speakers from the Bahu Trust, EcoSikh, EcoBirmingham and EcoBirmingham and workshops to explore topics such as:

- Transport – how do we get people out of their cars?
- Food – how do we offer hospitality in a sustainable way?
- Buildings – how can we make them sustainable?
- Collective responsibility – how do we develop our ability to act together?

In South East London four churches and Old Kent Road Mosque had a discussion about climate change



BIRMINGHAM FAITH LEADERS GROUP & FOOTSTEPS INVITE YOU TO

# ACTION NOT WORDS

what can Birmingham do after the Climate Conference?

SUNDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2:30-5:50PM  
AT CARRS LANE CHURCH CENTRE, B4 7UG  
& STREAMED ONLINE

Following COP26, this is a conference, open to all faith communities and individuals concerned about what to do next for climate justice.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER VISIT  
[FOOTSTEPSBCF.ORG.UK/ACTION](https://FOOTSTEPSBCF.ORG.UK/ACTION)



Exhibition at Birkenhead Library

and made commitments to take individual and collective action.

The University of Westminster Interfaith Advice Team hosted a panel discussion about how to raise awareness of the climate crisis in faith communities and encourage engagement with the cause and the Sustainability Team at De Montfort University in Leicester led a talk with members of different faith communities on how to support a sustainable future.

One innovative partnership involving both faith-based and secular organisations was a schools art competition followed by a community exhibition at Birkenhead Central Library, co-organised by Birkenhead Library, the Wirral Deen Centre's newly formed Education Group, and Wirral Council. There was an exhibition of local school children's work, as well as displays of information on the three Abrahamic faiths' responses to the natural world. There was also an opportunity for attendees to make a climate pledge and attach it to the 'Inter Faith Tree'. Wirral Council donated tree saplings, which were given away to attendees to take away and plant at home.

*"The Inter Faith Week competition involved children from local primary schools and engaged them in discussion about what actions we can take to save our environment. This is an issue that affects everybody. The inter faith angle and the concept of stewardship across all faiths and backgrounds need to work together"*

– PIARA MIAH, OUTREACH OFFICER AT WIRRAL DEEN CENTRE



Birkenhead Library community art exhibition curated by Wirral Deen Centre

Local authorities also supported or took part in a number of environment-focused Inter Faith Week activities, working in partnership with faith communities and others. For example, Sandwell Council’s involvement with the ‘Sandwell Breathes’ event at the Balaji Temple which included children’s activities, a nature walk, yoga and a workshop to look at how the community and Temple would work together around air quality issues.

### Volunteering and social action for the environment

A number of environmental volunteering activities took place during the Week.

Tree-plantings were particularly popular. They were organised by a number of bodies such as North Herts Interfaith Forum, Wakefield Interfaith Network, York Interfaith Group, and Lajna Ima’illah. At the Sandwell Breathes event (see column opposite) the Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands spoke about The Queen’s Green Canopy programme, which is seeing trees planted across the Commonwealth to mark the Platinum Jubilee. Sandwell Council councillors also planted the first of more than 400 trees and saplings planned for the grounds of the Temple.



Bluecoat School Coventry



Sandwell Breathes tree planting – Sandwell Council newsletter



York Interfaith tree planting



CANDIFA Woodland walk



London Wildlife Trust Walthamstow Wetlands

Wakefield District Metropolitan Council and Solihull Council also co-organised community tree and bulb plantings in their respective areas.

Some environment-focused volunteering activities marked both Mitzvah Day (21 November in 2021) and Inter Faith Week. They included tree-planting and gardening activities led by organisers such as Shenley Park Trust, Friends of Harrow Weald, and

St Saviour's Church St Albans; and litter picking activities with groups such as Jewish Action for Mental Health and Nottingham Liberal Synagogue. There was also a day of 'practical conservation volunteering' with London Wildlife Trust and Walthamstow Wetlands, in which participants chopped back invasive trees, scythed meadows, and created bat boxes.



facebook.com/wirralcouncil/posts/pfbid02GAbJb9H5J6r93Ka6izk5x8B82VJPntngfttPwId7f5bzPAMSmKzLGW9HJsaTGLPI

### Services, vigils and devotionals

A number of faith and inter faith groups held services, vigils and devotionals with an environmental focus. For example, Cardiff Baha'i community, supported by the Inter-faith Council for Wales, held an inter faith devotional featuring sacred verses from different faiths in Welsh; and CANDIFA led a woodland walk featuring sacred and spiritual texts relating to trees.

Bangor Interfaith Group ran a week of prayer and devotion on the theme of 'Hope for the Environment', with services led by representatives from different faiths, an inter faith service, a devotional from the Inter Faith Police Chaplain, and open house for prayer and readings.

# Inter Faith Week messages from faith leaders

## Highlighting the power of inter faith cooperation

Faith leaders from across the UK posted messages highlighting the importance faith communities working together. The reflections can also be read here:

[www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-faith-communities-and-their-leaders-2021](http://www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-faith-communities-and-their-leaders-2021).

**Archbishop of Canterbury** @JustinWelby

Working with other faith communities at COP26 has reminded me how much more of a voice we have when we join together.

Let's reflect during #InterFaithWeek on the importance of co-operation for the good of everyone on earth, and for the future of the earth itself.

10:00 AM · Nov 15, 2021 · Sprout Social

**SNU Spiritualism** @SpiritualistSNU

It's @IFWeek and SNU President Minister David Bruton shares a message with you about the value of faiths working together #Spiritualism #InterFaithWeek

youtube.com  
Interfaith Week 2021  
Minister David Bruton, SNU President, shares a message for Interfaith Week 2021. For more information on Interfaith ...

9:00 AM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**Chief Rabbi Mirvis** @chiefrabbi

My recent experiences at #COP26 reinforce my conviction that interfaith can play an indispensable role. Within our own ranks and through joint action with other faith groups, we must strive to galvanise our adherents to successfully tackle the climate crisis.

#InterFaithWeek

Office of the CHIEF RABBI

"It is my fervent hope that interfaith endeavours will make a substantial contribution at this defining moment for our planet."

Inter Faith Week  
14-21 November  
www.interfaithweek.org

8:09 PM · Nov 16, 2021 · Canva

**Qari Asim MBE** @QariAsim

#InterFaithWeek provides an opportunity to celebrate #faith communities' immense contribution to serving humanity, and working together to build a more compassionate & just world #COP26

See list of activities at [interfaithweek.org](http://interfaithweek.org) & start your own conversations & initiatives

interfaithweek.org  
Inter Faith Week  
13-20 November 2022

9:15 AM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

**churchofjesuschristuk** 6,506 followers

Inter Faith Week  
14-21 November  
www.interfaithweek.org

"Inter Faith Week is a positive focal point and a blessing for all who get involved."

Martin Turvey, Area Seventy

#ChurchofJesusChristUK

View more on Instagram

50 likes  
churchofjesuschristuk

This week, we're celebrating #InterFaithWeek along with our friends from the UK's faith communities. Faith minister, Elder Martin Turvey shares this statement on reaching and connecting with other faiths:

"This past year has provided us with many opportunities to serve and help those in need in our communities.

Some of those opportunities have occurred in an Inter Faith setting, where we have been privileged to work alongside our brothers and sisters from another faith.

As a faith minister for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints I see such value in reaching out in friendship and promoting harmony between our faiths. There is so much which unites us, especially in bringing relief to those who are suffering.

Inter Faith Week is a positive focal point and a blessing for all who get involved."

Martin Turvey  
Area Seventy  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

**The Pagan Federation** 15 November 2021

A message on solidarity from our President, Sarah Kerr, for #InterFaithWeek

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvYKEBf\\_E&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvYKEBf_E&t=3s)

**Network of Sikh Orgs** @SikhMessenger

'The aim for all faith communities is to work for the common good through individual and collective effort.'

Lord Singh of Wimbledon #InterFaithWeek

"THE AIM FOR ALL FAITH COMMUNITIES IS TO WORK FOR THE COMMON GOOD THROUGH INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE EFFORT. WHILE THE DELIBERATIONS OF COP26 UNDERLINED A COMMON RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL NATIONS AND PEOPLE OF ALL BELIEFS TO WORK TOGETHER TO COMBAT THE SERIOUS EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, THERE ARE ALSO OTHER URGENT CHALLENGES IN COMBATING HUNGER AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. SIKHS SEE OUR DIFFERENT RELIGIONS AS PATHS TO A MESSAGES TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND ULTIMATE REALITY IN THE PAST OUR COMMON ENDEAVOUR IS TO FOLLOW AFTER OUR PLANS AND THE WELLBEING OF SOCIETY WAS ENHANCED BY AMICABLE AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONS. BEING BETTER THAN THAT OF OTHERS, LEADING TO ENLIGHTENMENT AND A GUIDANCE TO BEING MORE EFFECTIVE. TODAY PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK TOGETHER TO SOLVE OUR WORLDWIDE WITH FRUITION, STRIFE AND RESPONSIBLE LIVING."

LORD (BARON) SINGH OF WIMBLEDON  
FOUNDER MEMBER AND PREVIOUS CO-CHAIR  
INTER FAITH NETWORK UK.

Inter Faith Week  
14-21 November  
www.interfaithweek.org

Inter Faith Network and 9 others

10:15 AM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**MCB** @MuslimCouncil

@IFWeek 2021 | 14 - 21 November

"This is interfaith work at its best, understanding & celebrating what makes us unique & coming together to seek positive change for the benefit of all."

@ZaraM01, Secretary General MCB, shares a message to mark the start of #InterFaithWeek

"At a time when the world is still in the midst of a pandemic, faith communities continue to play a vital role in serving humanity for the common good. From delivering thousands of hot meals and care packages to giving much-needed pastoral care and bereavement support, faith communities strive to ensure no one is left behind.

Faith leaders have also strengthened the call for climate justice at COP26, highlighting the need to protect our environment for future generations. This is interfaith work at its best, understanding and celebrating what makes us unique and coming together to seek positive change for the benefit of all.

I hope Interfaith Week 2021 serves as a time for reflection, prayer and further strengthening the ties that bind."

Zara Mohammed, MCB Secretary-General

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

Zara Mohammed and 8 others

12:25 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**Imam Ismail DL** @imamismail

The benefits of faith organisations working with each other are obvious. Eg. during #Covid19.

#InterFaithWeek is very important for all faith communities to highlight their good work in the community. Thanks to @IFNetUK for organising events throughout UK. @KAICIID @IFWeek

7:11 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter for Android

**The Druid Network** 13 November 2021

Statement from TDN for Interfaith week 2021 #InterFaithWeek #interfaithnetwork

<https://druidnetwork.org/druidry-and-interfaith/>

DRUIDNETWORK.ORG  
Druidry and Interfaith - The Druid Network

**The Methodist Church**  
@MethodistGB

"Let the table be plentiful and wide enough for all to be welcomed. Let hope overcome despair and divine light shine in times of need and gloom."  
- Presidency writes for [#InterFaithWeek](#)  
[ow.ly/9j0B50GNyz3](https://www.methodist.org.uk/interfaithweek)



11:40 AM · Nov 15, 2021 · Hootsuite Inc.

**Paul Parker**  
@RCQuaker

The interfaith presence at [#COP26](#) was a powerful example of how faith communities can make a difference when we stand together, as at this vigil in Glasgow's George Square a few days ago.  
[#InterFaithWeek](#) @IFWeek @luhc @BritishQuakers



10:38 AM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter for Android

**HinduCouncilUK**  
@hindu\_counciluk

HCUK fully supporting interfaith week Throughout 2021 despite our own fears, we supported each other, encouraged each other, and stood with each other Interfaith week will help us to promote & continue excellent collaboration and partnerships of working in unity. [#InterFaithWeek](#)



Inter Faith Network and 7 others

2:14 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

**MINAB - info@minab.org.uk**  
@MINAB\_UK

[#InterFaithWeek](#) is about celebrating our shared humanity, commonality and diversity. It is about people of all [#faiths](#) & beliefs coming together to make the world a better place- by either feeding others, helping neighbours & [#Refugees](#) or raising awareness about [#ClimateChange](#).



Inter Faith Week

2:27 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter for Android

**The Buddhist Society**  
@buddhistsociety

The Buddhist Society supports Inter Faith Week, 14-21 November 2021.

[#InterFaithWeek](#)  
@IFWeek @IFNetUK @luhc



3:02 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Hootsuite Inc.

**UK Bahá'í OPA**  
@UKBahaiOPA

Interfaith Week 2021 🌟  
A Message from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

[publicaffairs.bahai.org.uk/single-post/in...](https://publicaffairs.bahai.org.uk/single-post/in...)

@IFWeek

[#InterFaithWeek](#) [#Solidarity](#) [#Faith](#) [#Bahai](#) [#Action](#)



Inter Faith Week and UK Bahá'í OPA

3:42 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**London Buddhist Vihara**  
@lbvihara

"Let thoughts of infinite love pervade the whole world – above, below & around – without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity."  
~The Buddha's Discourse on Loving Kindness  
[#InterFaithWeek](#) @luhc @IFNetUK @buddhistsociety @B\_B\_Burnley @SportingEquals @sarojpathi

**#InterFaithWeek**

Building good relationships and working partnerships between people of different faiths and beliefs is part of the year-round work of many people and organisations across the UK.

**@IFWeek**



Inter Faith Week and 9 others

3:21 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**Network of Buddhist Organisations UK**  
15 November 2021

To mark InterFaith Week this week, the Committee of the NBO has released this statement: "Central to the Buddha's teachings is our interdependence with all life and our dependence on the earth. The current threats to our wellbeing, of the global pandemic and climate change, are both demonstrations of this interconnectivity. None of us is safe from these until we all are. As the committee of the Network of Buddhist Organisations UK we are filled with gratitude for the noble efforts of people of all faiths and none in addressing these global threats and reducing the suffering arising from them. We are honoured to work alongside all of you, as best we can."

[#IFWeek](#)  
[www.interfaithweek.org](https://www.interfaithweek.org)



INTERFAITH.ORG.UK  
The Inter Faith Network  
The Inter Faith Network for the UK works to promote understanding, cooperation and good...

**Jain Centre London**  
@Jain\_Centre

The new Jain Centre in Colindale will provide a Multifaith Centre that will be a permanent resource centre for faith communities. [#Interfaith](#) week highlights the solidarity of different faiths for the common cause of understanding of the human values.  
[@IFNetUK](#)

4:53 PM · Nov 16, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**Reform Judaism**  
@ReformMovement

This week is [#InterfaithWeek](#) when we celebrate the differences between faiths, learn from each other while acknowledging the unity that underlies creation. The Reform Movement supports these efforts with so many of its rabbis, leaders and members involvement in this vital work.

Inter Faith Week @IFWeek · Nov 16, 2021  
It's Day 5 of [#InterFaithWeek](#)! You can browse the list of today's activities at [interfaithweek.org/events/day/2021...](https://interfaithweek.org/events/day/2021...), and search for activities near you on the map at [interfaithweek.org/map](https://interfaithweek.org/map)

**The Unitarians**  
@UKUnitarians

[#RemembranceSunday](#) brings together our country's leaders - political, military and religious - in remembering the dead. It also marks the beginning of [#InterfaithWeek](#), when we work together as people of faith to make the world a safer, better and more peaceful place (2/2).

2:35 PM · Nov 16, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**Jonathan Wittenberg**  
@RabbiWittenberg

Coming together across faiths takes us to our deepest common denominators: awareness of the sacred in all life, wonder, responsibility, kindness, compassion, justice & the importance of living from the heart.  
[@IFWeek](#) @CCJUK @BoardofDeputies

6:30 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

**#InterFaithWeek**

**Day 5**



[www.interfaithweek.org](https://www.interfaithweek.org) @IFWeek

2:04 PM · Nov 16, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**Jainpedia.org**  
@Jainpedia

The UK [#faith](#) communities contribute immensely towards our society. By working together, we achieve even more. This [#InterFaithWeek](#) let's resolve to work even harder for humanity and our environment.  
[@IFWeek](#) [#Jain](#)

5:00 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

# 8. Faith communities

Faith communities and their local members and places of worship are at the heart of Inter Faith Week. It is an annual opportunity to highlight and strengthen the growing links and patterns of cooperation on social issues between the different communities and to shine a light on how faith communities contribute to society.

In 2021, 29 national faith communities are known to have marked the Week in some ways. Additionally, many encouraged their members to do so. National faith community organised activities were somewhat lower in number than usual because these bodies had been focused heavily on COP26, which had just taken place and which had a strong inter faith dimension. At local level, 107 local faith groups are known to have organised activities, including as co-organisers alongside other bodies. Between them they organised 102 activities, up from 81 in 2020 – an increase of 26%.

*“It has been so inspiring and humbling to see our community, our deputies, our members, friends, allies and staff all working together for the common good during this year’s #InterFaithWeek and #MitzvahDay.”*

– BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS

## A time to reflect

Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha and the London Buddhist Vihara held an inter faith session of chanting, prayers, blessings and reflections on the theme of ‘Altruism in each Religion’.

## Launching new resources

The United Reformed Church and Baptist Union GB used Inter Faith Week as an opportunity to launch their new resource for local churches who might be approached by other faith communities seeking premises where they can hold worship or events: ‘The use of church buildings by people of other faith communities’.



twitter.com/lbvihara/status/1327702758087127041?s=20&t=6bcVgZgxiFYQQNisnyWqQA

## Working in collaboration

The week saw many faith bodies at both national and local level working in partnership with secular partners as well as faith-based ones. For example, at a time when Covid was still a significant concern, the Hindu Council UK worked with NHS England, the Department of Health and Social Care,









twitter.com/hindu\_counciluk/status/1463450539585413121/photo/1

**IMAM AL-KHOEI FOUNDATION**  
مؤسسة الامام الخوئي الخيرية

Presents an Interfaith event on:

# Bereavement & Grief

Featuring a distinguished panel of experts:

 <b>Ansa Eisa Ahmed</b> CEO & Founder Hope Bereavement Support	 <b>Trisha Curtis</b> Manager Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service	 <b>Rosalyn Magowan</b> Counselling Senior Manager Caribbean & African Health Network
 <b>Jasvir Singh OBE</b> Chair City Sikhs	 <b>Sheikh Nuru Mohammed</b> Minister of Religion Al-Abbas Islamic Centre	 <b>Rajnish Kashyap</b> General Secretary Hindu Council UK

**A LOOK INTO HOW ORGANISATIONS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING BEREAVEMENT AND GRIEF**

**Thursday 18th November**  
1:00 - 2:30 pm GMT

To register, please visit:  
<https://tinyurl.com/FaithandBereavement>

South Asian Health Action, Muslim Doctors Association, BAPIO, Faith Action, and Strengthening Faith Institutions on a webinar to encourage take up of the COVID-19 vaccine among faith communities, with opportunities for question and answer with leading experts.

The Imam Al-Khoei Foundation arranged a talk on ‘Bereavement and Grief – Support Through Faith Communities’ with contributions from bereavement organisations and faith leaders.

The Anglican Diocese of Worcester, with Top Church Dudley, Dudley Council and Dudley Inter Faith Network, co-sponsored a meeting of Dudley’s religious leaders. This provided an opportunity for religious leaders to network and discuss the challenges of re-emerging from COVID-19 lockdowns.

Columbans in Britain held an online session on ‘We Are the Same We Are Different’. That brought together a group of people from diverse communities who had met a number of times during September to discuss the challenges and opportunities of living together with ‘differences’. It was the result of a collaboration by the Columbans with the Archdiocese of Birmingham Commission for

Inter Faith Week  
@IFWeek

#InterFaithWeek has seen two special events in Bradford and Southall (London) to mark the 10th Anniversary of @nearneighbours, which has done so much to support local #interfaith activity in a number of areas of England. @luhc @churchofengland @churchurbanfund @pres\_and\_eng

4:42 PM · Nov 17, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Inter Religious Dialogue. Faith and Belief Forum, and Focolare Movement.

In Blackburn, a workshop for faith leaders on the topic of knife crime was co-sponsored by Blackburn Diocese, Blackburn Cathedral and Lancashire Forum of Faiths. It was linked to the visit of the Knife Angel sculpture, which was displayed outside Blackburn Cathedral during November.

The Church of England’s Near Neighbours programme celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2021, and a number of celebrations took place with regional groups around the UK, including a celebration in Manchester also with Greater Together Manchester, a celebratory meal in Burnley also with Building Bridges in Burnley, and celebrations in Bradford and Southall (see Kirsty’s Healey’s blog on page 39)



## A time to come together

At local level, there were many visits and chances for conversation. For example, the Bishop of Bedford joined Grassroots Luton on visits to places of worship across Luton and the Bishop of Leicester visited Masjid Al Falah with representatives from the St Philip's and met with the President of the Masjid to discuss experiences of the pandemic and speak with members of the congregation.



## Open door days, discussions and other activities

A number of faith community bodies arranged discussions about issues of common interest and concern. For example, the British Sikh Consultative Forum Interfaith Group held an online webinar 'Dharam and Diversity: A Sikh Perspective' and Leeds Church Institute hosted a coffee, cake and conversation morning with discussion about Inter Faith Week and recent research on the role of faith in caring for disabled World War I veterans and how Christian and Jewish charities responded in Leeds.



A variety of places of worship hosted 'open door days', welcoming visitors from different faiths and beliefs and none. Places of worship like Powerhouse International; Harmony Christian Centre Dagenham



**Newcastle Cathedral**  
@nclcathedral

The @deanofncl welcomed guests from Newcastle Council of Faiths' Faith Coach earlier today, as part of #InterFaithWeek. The coach tour also stopped at the UHC Synagogue in Gosforth, the Central Mosque, the Hindu Temple and the Gurdwara. ❤️@IFWeek @NclDiocese



and Al Madina Mosque Barking; Gurdwara Singh Sabha London East, Preston Mosque, Connect Church in Scunthorpe and United Synagogue Sheffield opened their doors to the public. Visitors were able to tour the buildings and speak to members of the faith community.

A new Jain temple, Kenton Jain Derasar that had opened in Kenton welcomed other communities, with featured prayers led by the President of the Mahavir Foundation and a visit from the Chair of Harrow Interfaith.

Many open door days were accompanied by talks and Q&A sessions, aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of different faiths. Some open



*Kenton Jain Derasar, welcoming other communities for Inter Faith Week*



*Inter Faith Network Trustee speaking at Islamic Centre Scunthorpe*

door days were based on particular themes, and included activities for families or children. For example, the Islamic Centre in Scunthorpe hosted an open day with talks on the topic of 'The Path to Peace' and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Swindon also hosted a youth activity as part of their open evening. The Lajna Ima'illah women's auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK hosted activities in a number of places such as Hounslow North Branch of Lajna Ima'illah's art session for women and children on the theme of 'What Does Inter Faith Mean to You?'

Some places of worship also held services, vigils or prayer meetings during Inter Faith Week, with guest contributors from different faiths. For example, the Luther King Centre in Manchester held a Unitarian ritual of Flower Communion, to celebrate the diversity of the local community and its different faith groups.

Some services and meetings focused on different issues or themes. An inter faith service on the theme of 'Changing World' was hosted by Kendal Unitarian Chapel, featuring contributions from members of South Lakeland Interfaith Forum. Similarly, York Buddhist Network led a talk on 'Loving Kindness in an Uncertain World – a Buddhist Approach'. In Swindon, an inter faith devotional film night on the theme of 'prayer' was led by Swindon Baha'i community, with Swindon Interfaith Group. The Khutbah (sermon) at Rumi Mosque's Jumu'ah prayer also focused on the importance of inter faith cooperation.

Sunday Assembly London, a belief group, themed their open Sunday service on ‘The Beauty of Struggle’, featuring songs, poetry and talks. Regional branches of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Faith-based charities held a number of activities.

At both national and local level there are many organisations which are not faith community bodies but are ‘faith-based’: rooted in their particular faith tradition and inspired in their work by it. Many such organisations also take part in Inter Faith Week. This year saw a wide range of contributions from them. For example, the Safe programme of the Community Security Trust (CST) and the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Charity Commission held a Security Awareness webinar for faith charities, in particular places of worship. World Vision UK, a Christian-based charity, posted on LinkedIn to celebrate the work that they have achieved with their faith partners, particularly to mark COP26. Many other examples can be found in other sections because they were working in partnership with other types of body which led on those.



twitter.com/CAFODSalford/status/1460952107704627205



twitter.com/SAFE\_CST/status/1458412533287632904

twitter.com/CAFODSalford/status/1460952107704627205

**On the opposite page is a blog from Project Officer Kirsty Healey who visited a number of faith and inter faith events during Inter Faith Week.**

## AN INTER FAITH WEEK 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](https://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 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/UCx4VjoKUNSYBc1lY7\\_UAVyQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCx4VjoKUNSYBc1lY7_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: <https://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.

# 9. Inter faith organisations

For inter faith organisations and initiatives, Inter Faith Week offers an excellent opportunity to spread even more widely the message of the importance of inter faith understanding and cooperation, to shine a spotlight on their year-round work, to launch new projects and to get even more people involved

15 national and regional inter faith bodies took part, holding 33 activities. This was a slight drop of 12% on 2020 (where 17 took part); a number of them had just taken part in activities to mark COP26 and given that their focus. 89 local inter faith organisations are known to have taken part in the Week – an increase of 16% on 2020. They held 162 activities, a slight increase on the 160 held in 2020.

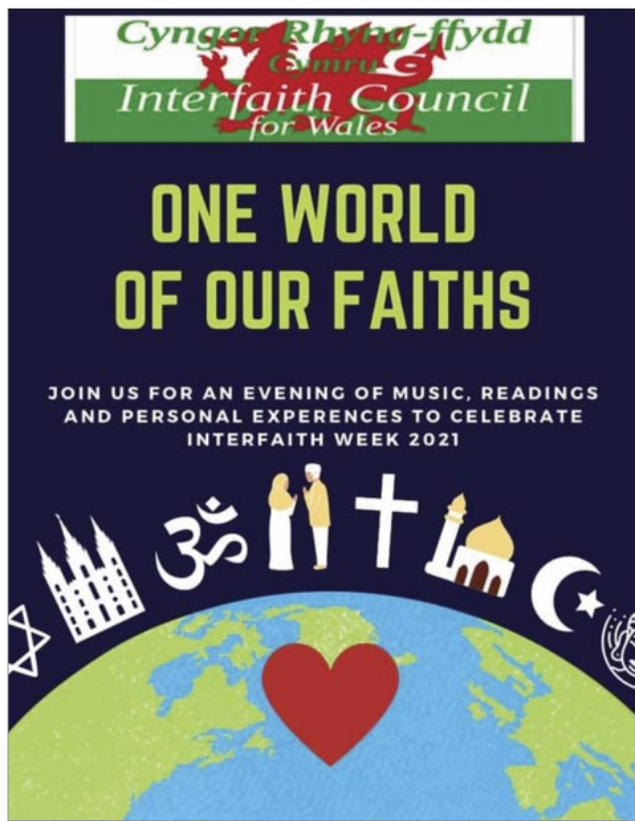
A number local inter faith organisations, such as Birmingham Council of Faiths, Medway Inter Faith Action Forum, Preston Faith Forum, York Interfaith Group and Swindon Interfaith Group held week-long programmes of activities for Inter Faith Week.

## National and regional inter faith organisations

The Interfaith Council for Wales/Cyngor Rhyng-ffydd Cymru marked the Week with a number of initiatives including a talk on faith and policing with Gwent Police, highlighting the need for police to listen to communities, learn about other cultures, and develop their understanding. They also set ‘three challenges’, inviting people to take part in meat-free week as part of sustaining the environment (sharing online spiritual reflections and recipes); to plant a fruit tree; and, for Mitzvah Day, to collect items for refugees.

Each day in the Week, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum hosted reflections via Zoom about key individuals who have contributed to inter faith understanding. A number of their members also attended a special reception for faith leaders hosted by the US Consulate.

Celebrations were a feature of a number of national inter faith organisations’ activities. For example, the All Faiths Network hosted an inter faith concert in





partnership with Central Gurdwara (Khalsa Jatha), London, with music, prayer and short talks from different faiths.

An LGBTQ+ inter faith social, discussion and celebration was organised by The Faith & Belief Forum and its LGBTQ+ Network.

***“This was the 5th year of these events and one of the many events F&BF have held this year with our LGBTQ+ Interfaith Network. This event was designed as a safe space for LGBTQ+ people and allies of different faiths, religions, and non-religious beliefs, to celebrate together. We were delighted to partner with London Queer Muslims, House of Rainbow, Sarbat and OneBodyOneFaith to host over 30 LGBTQ+ individuals and allies for this inspiring event.”***

**The Interfaith Communities Responsibility to Tackle Domestic Abuse- Online Webinar**

For this year's Inter Faith Week and to launch Faith Against Domestic Abuse Awareness Week (22nd-26th Nov), Faiths Forum for London and Women's Interfaith Network are hosting an online webinar to discuss faith communities responsibility in tackling domestic abuse.

**Speakers include:**

- Naomi Dickson, CEO Jewish Women's Aid & Board Member, Women's Aid
- Dr Maryyum Mehmood, Associate Director, Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion & Trustee, Women's Interfaith Network
- Aasifa Usmani, Faith & Communities Programme Manager, Standing Together
- More speakers TBC.

**Date: 16th November**  
**Time: 15:00-16:00**  
**Register:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/Abuse-Webinar>

## Inter Faith Week – collaboration on social issues

Faiths Forum for London held three dialogues on key social issue and worked with a wide range of partners on this:

- A faith awareness training session with the Crown Prosecution Service and CPS Faith Networks on the topic of ‘Why Faith Matters in the CPS’ with panellists from faith organisations and the criminal justice system, addressing issues such as faith in the workplace and the relevance of faith literacy to the criminal justice system.
- With the Women’s Interfaith Network, a webinar on ‘The Inter Faith Communities Responsibility to Tackle Domestic Abuse’, with a panel of women from organisations working to end faith-based domestic violence and support women of faith.
- With the Mayor of London, a dialogue on the role of faith groups in London’s COVID-19 Recovery Programme.

There was also a demonstration in Birmingham against violence against women and girls (VAWG), hosted by the West Midlands branch of Nisa Nashim.

Religions for Peace UK’s Women of Faith Network launched their ‘Let Earth Breathe, Plant Trees, Restore Biodiversity’ project, which includes a Peace Grove of 50 trees and their UK Youth Interfaith Network took part in a number of activities covered in the youth section.

A number of national inter faith organisations arranged opportunities for learning. For example, the Christian Muslim Forum hosted a talk on the topic of ‘Mary/Maryam: Gender and Piety in Catholic and Islamic traditions’. The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) facilitated a shared Shabbat meal between Kehillah North London and St Andrew’s Church, where members of the latter were invited to share in the Shabbat prayers and meal and to learn more about the Jewish faith. Christians Aware



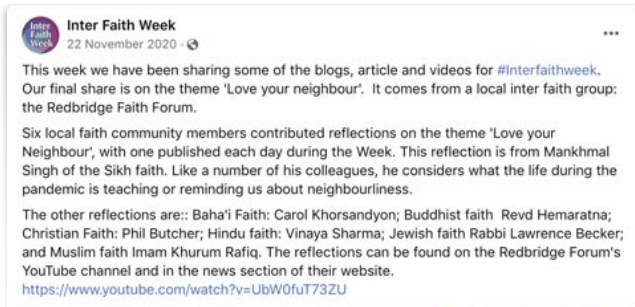
Nisa-Nashim West Midlands against VAWG

hosted a presentation on ‘Momentum for Change in the Christian Understanding of its place in a World of Many Religions’. In the case of the St Philip’s Centre, Leicester, poetry was the medium for learning with a talk on ‘Keeping Faith: Poetic Reflections on War and Religion’ and a workshop about how those who have experienced war have used poetry to explore the role of religion and the place of faith in the context of it.

Several national and regional inter faith bodies used social media to mark the Week. For example, the Faith & Belief Forum used social media to share clips of Forum staff and supporters speaking about the importance of inter faith.

### Local inter faith organisations

Many local inter faith organisations marked Inter Faith Week through social media and blogs, using them to share messages about faith and inter faith. For example, Redbridge Faith Forum posted daily



YOUTUBE.COM  
Loving Your Neighbour - Thought for the Day, Wednesday 11th November 2020  
Daily Reflection - Interfaith week Nov 2020; Sikh Faith - Mankhmal Singh

video clips to the blog on their website on the topic of ‘recovering and reconnection’, with members sharing reflections from different faith perspectives. Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum shared inspirational quotes from different faiths to their social media, and Greater Yarmouth Inter Faith and Belief Network posted a series of contributions from different faiths.

Partnerships with different types of body were very much in evidence during the Week, from formal events with local authorities such as reaffirming local ‘faith covenants’, to co-organising of faith trails and learning events and commemorating those lost to COVID.

### Faith in action: volunteering to help the local community

Inter Faith Week is a time when many local inter faith groups and members of local faith communities swing into action to carry out a special project or assist an ongoing one to help those in need. For example, members of Northampton Inter Faith Forum (NIFF), accompanied by the Mayor, served hot meals at the Hope Centre and Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council helped with breakfast support at Leegomery Community Centre and with delivering parcels to vulnerable residents.

In a number of cases, the volunteering was linked also to marking Mitzvah Day – a Jewish-led day of







social action which usually happens at the same time as the last day of Inter Faith Week. For example, Worcestershire Interfaith Forum collected donations for local refugees and Leeds Faiths Forum joined Mitvah Day, Leeds Diocese and the Leeds Jewish Representative Council in boxing up donated items for Leeds Women’s Aid and Staying Put in Bradford.

In the context of COP26 and climate change, a number of LIFOs such as Bath Interfaith Group, BCF Footsteps and Birmingham Faith Leaders Group, Crawley Interfaith Network and Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group arranged talks and dialogues about faith and the environment. For example, Medway Inter Faith Action’s ‘COP26: Better Late than Never’ held with Medway Sikh Community. More examples can be found in the section on the climate.

Community engagement was at the heart of a number of activities. For example, North Kirklees Inter Faith held A ‘Roses for Peace’ activity with Kirklees Council, handing out roses to the local community with words of peace and friendship from the Bible and Qur’an. Building Bridges in Burnley hosted an inter faith football tournament with Burnley FC, Near Neighbours, Blessed Trinity RC College and Daneshouse FC; Birmingham Council of Faiths and Clifton Road Mosque hosted an inter faith football match, and Building Bridges Pendle held a



Mayor and NIFF members at Northampton Hope Centre



community event to highlight local religious and cultural diversity, featuring live music and entertainment and a shared meal.

A range of other activities also took place, from cookery sessions (Preston Faith Forum) to film nights (Waveney Interfaith Circle), many competitions and quizzes, and story telling events such as that held by Forest Women’s Interfaith Network, WF Faith Forum, East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue marking both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day, where stories of unity were shared over soup.

Local inter faith organisations also helped schools mark the Week. For example, Wellingborough Inter-Faith Group produced a film for primary schools. Some also engaged with Further and Higher Education institutions. For example, York Interfaith Group co-sponsored a talk on ‘My Faith – Its Role in the University and the City of York’ with the University of York; and Swansea Interfaith Forum co-sponsored a lecture with Swansea University. Further examples can be found in the sections on schools and HE and FE.

**Faith trails, walks and pilgrimages and ‘open doors’**  
Inter Faith Week is a great time to learn about places of worship and their importance in the lives of local communities. Faith trails and open door days are very popular during the Week.



The 2021 Week saw a number of different kinds, from largescale walks such as Sunderland Inter Faith Forum’s Walk of Friendship (pictured on page 6) to specially organised group visits such as one by the women’s group of Calderdale Interfaith which travelled to visit to a synagogue and Hindu temple in Bradford. Some, such as Newcastle Council of Faiths’ faith coach trip took in places of worship of a number of faiths; others, such as the faith trail run by Burnley Building Bridges, supported by Near Neighbours, focused on places of worship of two faiths – in that case, Christian and Muslim.

Newcastle’s trip was called ‘Faith Coach – Friendship through Faith’. Walks and trails are not just about learning; they are also about the conversations along the way and at the places visited; they are a chance to meet new people and strengthen existing links and friendships.

Bromley Three Faiths Forum Group hosted an ‘Inter Faith Invitation Weekend’, with members invited to visit services at a mosque, a synagogue, and a church.

**Outreach and celebration**

The Week is a particularly good time for local groups to highlight their work, draw in new people and plan for the future. For example, Bolton Interfaith arranged a chance for people to meet its council members and share both concerns and ideas for the future; Rotherham Interfaith Group held a tea-party for people to come and have informal conversation about its work; and North Kent Interfaith held a



‘curry evening’ at a Gravesend restaurant ‘for any curry-lovers interested in building local inter faith relationships’.

Faiths Together in Croydon held its first AGM as it transitions from a Council funded to a ‘ratified’ group and used it to celebrate Inter Faith Week and also ratify its new constitution. It invited speakers from different faiths to talk about the importance of working together and invited sharing of ideas to benefit the local community.

The North Wales Inter Faith Forum explored ‘What shared values unite all faiths and beliefs?’ and ‘How can we support our local faith centres to host more inter faith activities?’ Reading Interfaith Group hosted an event in the Mayor’s Parlour for faith leaders interested in inter faith engagement to meet and discuss ways to support that in Reading, and



Presentation by Mayor of HFOF members.



Harrow Interfaith held an online celebration with the Mayor and inputs from nine faiths.

These kind of meetings often had a strong celebratory dimension. For example, Swindon Interfaith held an event to ‘celebrate and reflect on our successes over the last 30 years as well as looking forward to the future’. Hounslow Friends of Faith (HFOF) held a networking get together with other local supporters with a vegetarian buffet; a quiz and the launch of an inter faith calendar for 2022 and a booklet with information contributed by individual HFOF members about their faith and religious symbol. It used the occasion also to honour two longstanding members of HFOF for their inter faith work through the presentation to them by the Mayor of certificates marking their becoming Patrons of HFOF. Luton Council of Faiths celebrated completing 20 years as a Charity and 25 years since its original founding as the Inter Faith Forum, as well as its receipt this year of the Queens Award for



Voluntary Service (QAVS). It used the event to acknowledge the contributions of several volunteers, faith and community leaders, supporters and partner organisations in building peace and reconciliation in Luton.

Newcastle Council of Faiths also chose the Week to recognise the work of two of its members.

### Dialogue and exploration of issues

Year-round, local groups provide a place for discussion of issues of common interest and concern. However, Inter Faith Week provides an opportunity to invite special speakers and explore new issues.

2021 discussions ranged across a wide range of issues, from the role of faith in healing (Bracknell Forest Interfaith Forum) to 'Forbidden food in our faith' (Havering Inter Faith Forum), personal perspectives on human flourishing and 'living well in challenging times, (County Durham Faiths Network) and 'Faith, Freedom and Equality: Do They Go Together?' (a youth debate organised by Islington Faiths Forum, Islington Youth Council and London Borough of Islington Targeted Youth Support, Copenhagen Youth Project).

Some talks and discussions had a historical perspective, for example Manchester Muslim-Jewish Forum's 'Languages of Manchester's Jews and Muslims' and Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship's talk on '12th century monks on Leeds: A spirituality

for today?' Others explored the diversity of today's UK, for example North Herts Interfaith Forum's talk by the Director of Research at the Woolf Institute, exploring such questions as 'How religiously diverse are we?', 'What does the British public think about diversity in the UK?'

There was a multi-group 'Get-Together' for dialogue and discussion with Inter-Faith Group for North West Essex, Inter-Faith Group for North East Essex, Inter-Faith Group for South West Suffolk, Inter-Faith Group for South East Cambridgeshire and Inter-Faith Group for North East Hertfordshire. In Bolton, a 'Stories of the Soul' event marked the first of several informal community meetings organised by Bolton Interfaith Council and Bolton Council of Mosques as part of the Bolton Unity Project.

Some talks focused on particular aspects of a speaker's faith, for example, the significance of Zakat as one of the 5 pillars of Islam (Norwich Interfaith) or tackling stereotypes of Islam (Preston Faith Forum and Sisters4Sisters). Others looked from different faith perspectives at a particular issue. For example, Lancashire Faith Forum held a discussion about the common good. It described this as: "Exploring the values that we bring to our relationships with people from other faith backgrounds and so to better understand the values that we share with those from other faith backgrounds", saying that it "hoped that this better understanding of our shared values can contribute to a clearly defined common purpose and deepening relationships".

Cornwall Faith Forum used the Inter Faith Network for the UK's Inter Faith Buddies dialogue scheme [www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-buddies](http://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-buddies) as a framework for pairs of participants to share, across a number of weeks leading up to Inter Faith Week, their thoughts on topics such as: How does your faith shape your daily life? What, in your faith encourages service to others in society?

One of the aims of Inter Faith Week is increasing dialogue between those of religious and those of non-religious beliefs. The Week saw a member of Preston's Baha'i community and Preston Faith Forum entering into an Atheism and Theism debate through the Philosophy in Pubs Southport Group.

### Social issues and social action

Many of the discussions and workshops arranged by local interfaith organisations focused on social issues. For example, Hertsmere Forum of Faiths visited Borehamwood Foodbank at St Teresa's Church, with a tour of the base and storage and a presentation on the experiences of the foodbank during lockdown, its Fuel Poverty alleviation scheme, and its future plans.

In the context of the recent pandemic, COVID was a focus for a number of panels and conferences. For example, Sheffield Interfaith, Sheffield City Council and FaithStar LLP held an event to explore and showcase how a diverse range of faith communities in Sheffield had provided a wide range of support for a variety of communities throughout the peak of pandemic to the present day. Calderdale Interfaith brought together a wide range of agencies – such as Halifax Academy pupils, Halifax Community Fridge, Halifax Opportunities Trust, Hospital Chaplaincy Service and Community Foundation for Calderdale – to share the work that they had been involved with which had helped support local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. InterFaith MK and Milton Keynes Islamic Arts and Culture (MKIAC) hosted a 'Healing for Inter Faith Week' event, with music and performance from local communities, a shared meal and talks from faith representatives, the High Sheriffs representing the four counties, and their patron, sharing their thoughts on how communities have come together over the last year.

Lancashire Forum of Faiths held a meeting for faith leaders about partnership working with local authorities and the health sector and Leicester Council of Faiths hosted a meeting on the theme of 'Policing Challenges and the Role of Faith Communities' with the local Police and Crime Commissioner.

Workshops were also hosted by some organisations. For example, Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group organised three separate workshops with Brighton Quakers, on the themes of reincarnation, bereavement.

### Services and vigils

The week saw a number of local inter faith devotions, services and vigils. In Woking, a prayer vigil was organised by Woking People of Faith to

remember and celebrate the lives affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with reflections from the Lord Mayor and Lord Lieutenant. Bangor Interfaith Group held a multi faith Week of Prayer and Devotion on the themes of Hope for the Environment. Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum and Surrey Faith Links held a service with presentations from the Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh and Bahai contributors on the theme 'Humanity's awakening, rebuilding our World' and Kendal Unitarian Chapel, with South Lakeland Interfaith Forum contributors, held a service on the theme 'Changing World'.

A session of contemplation on 'Coming to Rest' was organised by Herefordshire Interfaith Group, and an online meditation session on the theme of 'Solitude' was led by Braintree District Interfaith Forum. Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action (CANDIFA) did a woodland walk, with readings of sacred and spiritual texts relating to trees and woodland.

Enfield Faith Forum and Southgate Methodist Church organised a prayer walk round a local park. At each stop, a different faith group led with 'words of hope'.

**If you are in the UK, you can find the local inter faith organisation nearest to you at:**  
[www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/groups](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/groups)



# 10. Workplaces



linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6686936168130543616

*Curral Lewis and Martin staff get-together for coffee, cake and quiz*

The 2021 Week saw significant growth in involvement of workplaces. A major factor driving this may be the growing recognition of the importance of religious literacy and good relations in the workplace, and of the strength that diversity brings to companies. It may also reflect increased awareness of the importance of employees being able to 'bring their faith and belief' to work as part of their whole selves.

Inter Faith Week is seen by employers and staff networks as a great opportunity to get these messages across and actively to provide opportunities for mutual learning, awareness raising, and strengthening good relations. It is also a great way to showcase their commitment to diversity and inclusion.

49 activities are known to have been held by staff networks for Inter Faith Week 2021. This was an increase of 206% on figures for the previous year. Some were organised by employers, some by professional bodies, others by staff and professional faith, inter faith, multi faith or other equalities networks and a small number by HR support organisations. The activities celebrated diversity, encouraged dialogue and understanding,

highlighted the need to respond positively to faith and belief in the workplace and offered the opportunity to explore a wide range of topics of interest to staff. The Week saw the launch of two new staff inter faith networks.

34 workplace staff networks took part in the Week, over double the number which participated in 2020. There were also many activities held by different types of employer. Some of these activities were held also for customers, clients, service users, patients or the general public and are covered in other sections of this report.

In a number of cases, while an employee network may have led or provided content, the employing organisation itself took such ownership of the activity that both can be viewed as taking part. For example, there were a number of examples where the Chair of an employee multifaith network or a chaplain wrote a blog or created a podcast but this was publicly published by the organisation or shared on its social media.

# INTER FAITH WEEK GUEST BLOG FOR QUALITIES NETWORK ON EQUALITY AND INCLUSION (ENEI)

## **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 Muslim and Jewish network, on issues of common interest
- Set up occasional online talks – for example about particular topics like faith festivals such as Easter, Wesak or Vaisakhi, or highlighting some of the perhaps less well know traditions such as Baha'i, 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.

Many of the activities included outside speakers and outreach to local faith and belief groups, for which the Week provides a great opportunity.

## HR support and advice bodies

The Employers' Network on Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) invited the Inter Faith Network for the UK (which leads on the Week) to provide an Inter Faith Week guest blog for its website with 'top tips' for employers on faith and belief in the workplace and building good inter faith relations.

[www.interfaithweek.org/news/inter-faith-week-pointers-for-employers](http://www.interfaithweek.org/news/inter-faith-week-pointers-for-employers). This is reproduced on page 51.

Inclusive Employers held a webinar highlighting the importance of faith for some employees; why it is important to understand their beliefs; how to improve faith inclusion in the workplace; and other practical steps designed to move employers from a position of tolerance of faith to one that celebrates and empowers faith.

Pavilion Recruitment Solutions posted a presentation giving recommendations on how employers can encourage the inclusion of faiths in the workplace.

## Employers

Several employers posted on social media and their company websites about the importance of diversity and inter faith understanding in their workplace or their field.

For example, DV Solicitors in Bedford and Nimla Insurance posted about the importance of diversity within their firm, and diversity of their staff teams.

RSM UK encouraged staff to post reflections to their LinkedIn pages on 'Why Faith is Important to Me'. [linkedin.com/posts/andrew-robinson-b2384044\\_lifeatrsm-interfaithweek-diversityandincl-usion-activity-6865948693879644160-q-Hs/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/andrew-robinson-b2384044_lifeatrsm-interfaithweek-diversityandincl-usion-activity-6865948693879644160-q-Hs/)

A number of other employers also encouraged their employees to share thoughts and stories about their faith or belief and its importance in their lives. For example, the Operations Team at British Airways encouraged staff to use BA's social feed to share about their faith and why it is important to them, as well as a photo that best represented their faith and



**Abbaas Shakil** · 3rd+  
Accounting and Business Advisory Assistant at RSM UK  
11mo · Edited · 🌐

Inter Faith Week is a time to reflect, engage and increase our understanding about the different faith communities around us. With this in mind, I thought I'd share why my faith is important to me.

My faith, Islam, is not just a set of rules I try to follow but a guide I use to live my daily life to build a stronger connection with God. My faith allows me to be the best possible version of myself by embracing what is good and rejecting what is evil. These are important duties given to Muslims by God from our holy book the Quran and from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Practising my faith consistently and fulfilling my religious obligations like praying five times a day helps me maintain a positive attitude to my work, studies, and my relationships, both inside and outside the workplace.

#LifeAtRSM #InterFaithWeek #DiversityAndInclusion | RSM UK

Inter Faith Week 2021

### Why faith is important to me



RSM

From LinkedIn post of RSM employee



**YABA**  
@yabasocial

For the upcoming Interfaith and Cultural Awareness Week, YABA partnered with @northernassist to help discover and find an understanding of the Sikh, Hindu and Muslim faiths.

Keep your eyes peeled for a more detailed article from us coming soon!



2:16 PM · Nov 12, 2021 · Twitter Web App

twitter.com/yabasocial/status/1459163116701466626

the healthcare company Sanofi held 'Sanofi Inter Faith Day' for its employees, to promote awareness and understanding of different faiths across the organisation.

The House of Commons is both an employer and the home of Parliament. It saw a specially curated exhibition as part of the Speaker's 'Roots to Parliament' programme. That celebrated the Week by sharing reflections from a range of MPs and staff of different faiths.



***“For some of us, faith is at the core of everything we do – it is our guiding light, our discipline, and brings us comfort in good times and bad. It is a deeply personal part of who we are, yet it also bonds us with others nearby and around the world. 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 week 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 a 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

CBRE (Global Commercial Real Estate Services) has a number of Employee Business Resource Groups designed to “accentuate the value of a diverse employee base”. Its Faith Network hosted an Inter Faith Week client roundtable, bringing together panellists from the industry.

***“In celebration of #InterFaithWeek, our Faith Network hosted a client roundtable last week, bringing together panellists from industry leaders sharing their experiences of faith in the Workplace...”***

***“It was an inspiring session that highlighted the unique challenges that faith communities face at work and the common ground often discovered via interfaith discussion. Key themes were the importance of a prayer room, interfaith dialogue, collaboration and inclusion of faith as part of the wider DE&I agenda.”***

– CHAIR OF THE CBRE FAITH NETWORK CHAIR OF THE CBRE FAITH NETWORK, LINKEDIN POST [LINKEDIN.COM/POSTS/CHRISTREGILGAS\\_DIVERSITY-EQUITY-INCLUSION-ACTIVITY-6869572774277505024-VUG0/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/CHRISTREGILGAS_DIVERSITY-EQUITY-INCLUSION-ACTIVITY-6869572774277505024-VUG0/)



Photo@ Anthony Gold Solicitors

A number of employers hosted talks and discussions centred on different issues relating to faith, some of which also related to their company’s own work. For example, Anthony Gold Solicitors organised a webinar, discussing proposed reforms to ‘weddings law’ and the impact of these on faith communities [twitter.com/AnthonyGoldLaw/status/1451514347172290565](https://twitter.com/AnthonyGoldLaw/status/1451514347172290565).

Stockport NHS Foundation Trust and Stockport Hospital Chaplaincy hosted an event on the topic of ‘My Faith and My Work’, with staff sharing stories about how their faith supports them in their role at the hospital. [twitter.com/StockportPtExp/status/1460595559614529541](https://twitter.com/StockportPtExp/status/1460595559614529541) and Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice published a blog by one of their nurses talking about her Pentecostal Christian faith and her work. [www.communityhospice.org.uk/about-us/case-studies/12481/](http://www.communityhospice.org.uk/about-us/case-studies/12481/)

Yorkshire Asian Business Association (YABA), with Northern Railway, hosted a places of worship tour for Northern Railway staff, visiting a gurdwara, a Hindu temple and mosque to provide a ‘brief understanding’ of the three different faiths. Northern Rail senior leadership joined the faith trail and YABA’s Director, presenting at the 2022 National Meeting of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, commented that the trail was very successful in creating bridges between religious leaders and the Northern Rail leadership.



***“It was not only the [faith trail] visits, but the ability to ask questions during those visits. We had a space to ask difficult questions and get helpful advice. For example, we discussed how to better meet the needs of colleagues who were fasting during work. I grew up in Bradford, which is very diverse, but many of our other managers are from much more rural communities that are not nearly as diverse and having the opportunity to learn and ask questions was very important for them.***

– REGIONAL COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER, NORTHERN RAIL

***“Working at Health Innovation Manchester, I’ve met a lot of people, some who I work with and others who I interact with in our communities, and faith and belief has never really factored into any of our conversations, and you may ask “why should it”? Well, to me learning about different faiths and beliefs, builds understanding and strengthens knowledge which can aid us in our work by providing us with an opportunity to co-create solutions that are acceptable to and work for everyone as well as working in partnership with faith leaders to help us get key and important messages across to communities to support people with their health needs.”***

– HEALTHINNOVATIONMANCHESTER.COM/  
CELEBRATING-INTER-FAITH-WEEK-2021

## Staff and professional networks

Individual faith and belief, inter faith and multi faith employee networks also organised a number of events, providing opportunities for staff of different faiths and non-religious beliefs to connect and learn from each other. A number of networks linking other groups – such as LGBTQI networks – and pan-equalities networks also took part.

In a couple of cases Inter Faith Week was used as a launch pad for new staff networks. Barts Health NHS Trust hosted a celebration to launch their new Inter Faith Staff Network, featuring music performances, speeches, and food. Somerset Diverse Communities introduced their new Interfaith and Belief Network, alongside the new staff role of Interfaith and Belief Coordinator.

The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) posted a blog by the Co-Leader of its Faith and Religious Diversity Group, discussing the importance of religious diversity in the scientific community and linking to an article titled ‘Recognising Religious Diversity in Physics’ and the Multifaith Network of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hosted a ‘Faith in the Workplace’ webinar.

Some staff networks held webinars, talks and discussions about faith in the workplace. For example, the Nursing and Midwifery Council Employee Network held a webinar titled ‘All in Good Faith’. It was the first time an Inter Faith Week event had been held at the NMC. Hosted by its Assistant Director, it had a panel of six staff members from different religious and non-religious beliefs.

***“The essence of interfaith dialogue is constructive and positive interaction between people of different beliefs. It was truly fascinating to hear from each of the panellists about their experiences and the impact their belief has on their life in and out of work. From having the right prayer facilities in the office, to colleagues showing interest in each other, it was clear that showing respect and a willingness to learn is the best way for an organisation to support colleagues with different beliefs***

***It was also really moving to hear the panellists’ reflections about the impact the pandemic has had on their expression of belief, from the closure of places of worship, to finding comfort in the sense of community that the crisis fostered – whether that community stemmed from a religious belief or not.”***

– CO-CHAIR OF THE NMC EMPLOYEE NETWORK

Others produced special Inter Faith Week blogs. Featured [overleaf] is one from the Chair of Cafcass Faith Network.

In some cases, staff came together on an informal basis. For example, staff at FMCB Chartered Accountants in North London donated food for Child’s Hill Food Bank and staff at OGR Stock Denton Solicitors in London did a toiletry drive for Separated Child Foundation. In both cases they were marking both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day.

# WHY FAITH IS IMPORTANT IN OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

19 NOVEMBER 2021

**For Inter Faith Week, Chair of Cafcass Faith Network Louise Jones describes what faith means to her and why it's important to think about faith as part of a person's uniqueness.**

When life is hard, when disappointment hits, when the struggles we face seem overwhelming, my faith gives me something to hope for. I take rest and reassurance in knowing my place and my purpose in life, and I take inspiration and hope from my friends, community and colleagues from different faith backgrounds whose beliefs and support systems are so similar to mine.

We have shared experiences. We have faith in a higher purpose. Whilst the name and shape and story behind our religions and beliefs may differ, the values are rooted in love, in service to others and our communities and in our sense of hope.

I am constantly reminded of the stories of people from different faith backgrounds who experience discrimination and judgement. People who live with anxiety and fear that those they meet may judge them because of their faith or religion.

Assumptions are made, and people look at us and treat us differently. Many people feel uncomfortable talking about their faith or belief – partly because it's a private matter and partly because in doing so, they might open themselves up to the preconceptions of other people or have to justify their beliefs in some way. Equally, asking other people about their faith can also feel difficult – questions about faith can risk feeling intrusive or patronising, or even ignorant.



So during Inter Faith Week, the Cafcass Faith Network challenges everyone and especially professionals working with children and families to think about faith as a part of a person's story, part of their uniqueness.

It is important. It shapes our behaviour, our attitudes and our actions. Our faith or belief shapes how we make sense of the world and everything in it.

For the children and families with whom we work, faith matters. It is important to take the time to ask and understand what faith means to that child or young person, including how it shapes their day-to-day life and also how it shapes their thinking.

Take some time to consider the potential adversity, discrimination and judgements that they may face from those they encounter as a result of their faith. Some may feel shame and fear when asked to talk about their faith and religion because of their experiences.

For some children their faith is so integral to their thinking and day-to-day life that they may not realise that the way they think or practise their faith may be different to others. Take the time to ask "what does it mean to you?" "What does it look like?" Take time to understand that person's world.

Let's commit to increasing our awareness of different faiths and beliefs so that we can better understand and support our colleagues and the children and young people with whom we work.

[www.cafcass.gov.uk/2021/11/19/why-faith-is-important-in-our-work-with-children-and-families/](http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/2021/11/19/why-faith-is-important-in-our-work-with-children-and-families/)



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

An exhibition at King's Cross railway station was set up by Network Rail's Multi-Faith Network with a number of boards displaying facts about some of the different faiths and beliefs in the UK.

The Pride Network at Allianz Insurance, with Marsh Commercial, hosted a conversation around the lived experiences of different LGBTQ people of faith, with a Q&A session.

Quizzes were a popular part of activities, for example at ICIS (Independent Commodity Intelligence Services), with its ICIS Religion Employee Resource Group and Curral Lewis and Martin construction in Birmingham (pictured on page 50).

The Working Parents Network and Faith, Belief and Religion Network at John Lewis Partnership met up for a conversation around faith and what this means to families in the partnership. This included how parents navigate the balance of introducing their faith to children and allowing them to explore faith for themselves.

Civil Service staff networks were particularly active during Inter Faith Week, hosting a number of talks, seminars and dialogue opportunities. Just a few examples are below:

- The Diversity and Inclusion at the Department of Health and Social Care hosted a panel on 'Faith in the Workplace', where staff shared reflections on the role of faith in their daily lives and the

Department's Faith and Belief Champion spoke about the importance of accommodating faith in the workplace.

- The Crown Prosecution Service Sikh Society organised a talk on the theme of 'Faith in Success', inviting participants to discuss how their faith values and identities support their role at work. With the Jewish Network at the CPS it held a panel on the topic of 'Faith and Justice – How Religion Can Impact on a Modern Day Career in the Criminal Justice System', featuring speakers from the CPS and the Metropolitan Police.
- The Cabinet Office Faith and Belief Forum organised a dialogue between civil servants from the Cabinet Office, Crown Commercial Service and Food Standards Agency on the theme of 'Faith and Belief – Not Walking on Eggshells' about living and working with faith and belief in the Civil Service.
- The Department of Education Interfaith Network hosted a talk on 'Women, Faith, and Leadership', with women of different faiths and none discussing how their convictions have helped them in their leadership journey and in helping the communities that they serve.
- The Department for Education Interfaith Network hosted a discussion 'Building Communities in and Around Faith Schools' with representatives from different faith schools.
- The Faith and Belief Network at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities led a talk on 'How our communities fought back against

COVID', with presentations about the work done by local communities.

- To mark both Inter Faith week and Islamophobia Awareness Month, a member of Civil Service Race Forum hosted a presentation providing personal reflections on being Muslim in Britain.
- The Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Hindu Networks with the Department for International Trade co-organised a dialogue about spirituality across different faiths.
- A panel discussion on 'Faith and Death' was organised by the Department for Transport Faith Networks with the Bereavement Network, with discussion about the similarities and differences in response to death and grief by those of different faiths.
- A 'myth-busting' session about Islam was led by the Department for Education Interfaith Network, giving participants an opportunity to learn more about Islam and the impact of Islamophobia in the UK. The same network, in collaboration with the Department for Education Hindu Network, also led a 'Learn About Diwali' session. This featured music and dance performances alongside presentations and a panel discussion. It also included a 'Poetry and Connection' event where staff were invited to share poetry that gave them a sense of connection and to hear a special reading by the Department's Permanent Secretary.

## Lenovo Faith in Kind Cities

As part of Lenovo's Kind City Project, four leaders of community projects with a faith context took part in a podcast discussing the role that faith-based communities can play in creating a kinder city.

The projects were: Open Table Network; Mitzvah Day; Salaam Shalom Kitchen; and The Sikh Food Bank.

<https://kindcity.com/contributors/>

The panel discussed how faith-based values have motivated positive change in their communities, how they have worked with other faiths, what kindness means for them and how their projects have encouraged kindness.

They also reflected on what role faith can play in creating a kinder city, and how spiritual connection can make communities kinder, the challenges they face and the changes needed to encourage social action and foster spiritual connection.

twitter.com/CitizensUKBham/status/1458493580364947458



twitter.com/SpiritSorcha/status/1461339284833804293

# 11. Hospitals and Hospices

Many hospitals and hospices held activities for Inter Faith Week. They used it to increase understanding about the different faiths and beliefs of their staff and patients, to highlight the work of their chaplaincies and make that better known to the public, and to strengthen links with local faith communities.

There was greater involvement overall from both hospices and hospitals as a combined category from 29 in 2020 to 52 in 2021: a 79% increase. The number of activities they held rose from 31 to 60, a 94% increase on 2020.

## Hospitals

Inter Faith Week was used by a number of hospitals as an opportunity to increase inter faith understanding amongst both staff and patients. For example, the Medway NHS Foundation Trust Medway Maritime Hospital held an education session about Sikhism led by the President of the Gurdwara in Gillingham with a display and a stall with religious artefacts.

King's College Hospital London ran information stalls and a 'Faith and Belief Trail', which gave a tour of faith and belief information zones in its different hospitals' chapels. There were also quizzes, as there were at the Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust and Royal Bolton NHS Foundation Trust.



Bolton NHS Inter Faith Week quiz



Gillingham Gurdwara President at Medway Maritime Hospital

During the week, chaplains arranged numerous opportunities to engage with them and learn about the resource they offer. For example, at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust hospital, staff and volunteers were invited to visit the hospital chapels for coffee and conversation, to speak to a chaplain to learn more about the service, how it is growing, and changes being introduced to adopt a more multi faith approach. Stockport NHS Foundation Trust's chaplains went out and about all week at one of their Units, to hear about staff pledges on how they would support the spiritual care of patients. At the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, chaplains held a Q&A. The Solent NHS Multi Faith Resource Group hosted a coffee and cake break for staff to connect, with a halal and vegan-friendly feast shared over coffee and conversations raising awareness around diversity and acceptance.



Staff at Southamptom's Western Community Hospital with Solent NHS Trust Multifaith Resource Group

Some hospitals took the opportunity of Inter Faith Week to engage with local communities, and to hold activities in partnership with outside organisations. Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust worked with Denbigh School and Watling Academy to create an exhibition of work by school pupils reflecting different world views held across Milton Keynes with posters, poems, written pieces and artwork. Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care at Croydon University Hospital NHS Trust celebrated Inter Faith Week by holding a reception hosted by the Bishop of Croydon with representatives from the Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh and Christian faiths. Also, its chaplaincy hosted a webinar to



engage stakeholders within the hospital and the local community, exploring the value and potential of local faith communities working together to support patients, relatives and staff.

The Week saw one hospital, Barts NHS Trust, launching a new faith and belief network.

While this year many Inter Faith Week activities were once again in person, social media was also key in promoting inter faith engagement. For example, The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust chaplains shared messages about 'what interfaith means to us'. Barts shared some videos for Inter Faith Week, for example, one where a senior anaesthetic practitioner, talks about what Hinduism means to him. A number of other hospital workplace blogs and posts are covered in the Workplaces section.

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust shared wisdom from people of different faiths on their social media pages and North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust Chaplaincy created a social media series sharing some of the objects chaplains use week by week with patients of different faiths. Meanwhile, South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust marked the Week by exploring 'light' in different faiths, including a video from a consultant from a Muslim perspective.

## Hospices

Hospice involvement in Inter Faith Week spreads awareness of the importance of spiritual care and chaplaincy in a hospice setting and the role of faith and belief in end-of-life care.

Some hospices used social media to highlight the spiritual care that they provide for patients. For example, Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice in London posted a video of its hospital chaplain speaking about spiritual care, what it means and how the hospice chaplaincy can further help families during their time of need.



The chaplain for both St Barnabas House in Worthing and Chestnut Tree House children's hospice and the chaplain at Arthur Rank also spoke about the importance of spiritual care. The chaplain at Dougie Mac Hospice in Stoke-on-Trent posted about the importance of religious care as part of holistic care the lead chaplain at Weston Hospice care penned a special blog.

Other hospice chaplaincies took Inter Faith Week as an opportunity to engage with local faith communities. For example, the Jersey Hospice Care chaplaincy team used the Week to reach out to the island's different faith communities, strengthening existing friendships and developing new ones.

A number of hospices organised activities for staff, patients, and their families. At Hospice in the Weald in Kent, chaplains created inter faith prayer stations on the theme of 'light', which were set up in the hospice quiet room for staff, volunteers and visitors to visit. The Donna Louise children's hospice got involved in Inter Faith Week for the second year running, with a day of fun activities. Children and staff decorated World Faith Symbols and created a World Map and Treasure Chest for an inter faith display.

Staff at Arthur Rank Hospice Charity used #InterFaithWeek message boards to share messages about what Inter Faith Week means to them in their roles at the hospice.

youtube.com/watch?v=GbmAT-j6BhI



Nayan Upadhyay, senior anaesthetic practitioner at Barts, talking about what Hinduism means to him

https://twitter.com/SaTH\_patientexp/status/146166419638349094







**Dougie Mac**  
13 November 2021 · 🌐

#InterFaithWeek 2021 starts tomorrow and we'll be celebrating to support the faith needs of our patients and their families.

Religious care is an important part of the holistic care we offer our patients; We are committed to ensuring that patients from all faiths, cultures and backgrounds feel comfortable and reassured in our care.

The aims of the week are to strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels, increase awareness of the different faith communities in the UK, celebrate and build on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society and increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

A number of hospices highlighted the important role that members of faith and belief groups, as well as inter faith organisations, play in caring for patients. For example, St Catherine's Hospice in Crawley used Twitter to thank Crawley Interfaith Network, which assists them in their care. The Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice in Farnham also used social media to acknowledge the role of volunteers from local faith communities, who help them to provide supportive end of life care.

Hospices also used the Week to reach out to local communities. For example, Bedford Daycare Hospice welcomed representatives from some of Bedford's faith groups and discussed how they could come together in service of their community. St Margaret's Somerset Hospice in Taunton arranged a visit from the recently appointed Interfaith and Belief Coordinator for Somerset Council Council – the holder of a new role created in response to feedback

**Dudley Group NHS Charity**  
16 November 2021 · 🌐

It's Inter Faith Week this week, and our charity has been working with The Mary Stevens Hospice spiritual team, No Barriers Here, and Elisha Frimpong, who is part of the NBH team, to explore where faith can be important in end of life care and how our Chaplaincy department at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust can support this.

### Inter faith week - 14th-21st November

"As the Lead Chaplain, I am responsible for co-ordinating all of the spiritual, religious and pastoral care that our brilliant, multi-faith chaplaincy team provide.

I work from a Humanist perspective which means I'm not very religious but focus on the pastoral and spiritual needs of people on a human-to-human basis first. What I love most about this job is being there for patients and families at the key moments in life." - **Madeleine Parkes, Lead Chaplain at DGFT**

**Arthur Rank Hospice**  
@ArthurRankHouse

All this week, our amazing staff have been helping us to celebrate & highlight #InterFaithWeek by telling us what it means to them in their roles at the hospice. What does Faith mean to you? To learn more about Inter Faith Week visit > [interfaithweek.org](https://interfaithweek.org) @IFWeek

4:05 PM · Nov 21, 2021 · TweetDeck

from communities, faith groups and belief groups that the Council have supported throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some hospices partnered with hospitals and local inter faith organisations on activities. The Heart of

**St Catherine's Hospice**  
@StCHospice

Happy Inter Faith Week! 🍷  
We care for families of all faiths & none, so #InterFaithWeek is an opportunity to celebrate our diverse community & recognise the shared values between us.  
Our thanks to #Crawley Interfaith Network who support us to be collaborators in #EOLC for all

At the heart of interfaith engagement is **our need for one another.**

When we encounter our "others" we learn what we could not have known if we had stayed isolated.

We accomplish what is impossible without collaboration, grow in ways we could not grow by ourselves.

**RABBI NANCY FUCHS KREIMER, PH.D.**

4:39 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**Bedford Daycare Hospice**  
@Bedford\_Hospice

Thank you to all the representatives from faith groups across Bedford who visited us @Bedford\_Hospice yesterday evening. We were delighted to welcome you and to discuss how we can come together in service within our community

#InterFaithWeek  
#holistichealth  
#CareInTheCommunity



84 views 0:00 / 0:16

7:02 PM · Nov 18, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**HeartofKentHospice**  
@heartofkenthosp

Today our Hospice hosted a fascinating #InterFaithWeek discussion on how different religions deal with death. A huge thanks to @tracey\_crouch for chairing the conversation and to our knowledgeable panel. We all learned so much about how different faiths view dying and grieving.



4:49 PM · Nov 19, 2021 · Twitter for Android

**The Mary Stevens Hospice**  
@MSHospice

We are supporting @IFWeek, working with partners @DGNHSCarity and our @NoBarriersHere team to explore faith & palliative care.

Today, we are sharing some words from one of our spiritual care volunteers, Awen Clement, about pagan beliefs.

#InterFaithWeek



Awen Clement

4:20 PM · Nov 18, 2021 from Dudley, England · Twitter for iPhone

Kent Hospice, in collaboration with Maidstone Interfaith Network, held a round table discussion, chaired by their local MP. People of different faiths and beliefs came together to share their perspectives on the subject of 'death and bereavement'. Mary Stevens Hospice worked with Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust to raise awareness of faith and palliative care, using social media to share views from the spiritual care and chaplaincy teams at both organisations.

## Health and wellbeing organisations

A number of health and wellbeing organisations also marked the week, using it to reaffirm and extend their engagement with faith communities.



NHS Blood and Transplant was among those which uses it to further particular campaigns and NHS Digital held a number of events.

Some care homes, such as Echelforde Care Home in Ashford also took part, engaging their residents in arts and learning activities.



# 12. Universities and Colleges of Further Education

## Inter Faith Week in Higher and Further education institutions

In 2021, 11% of activities held to mark the Week had a Higher or Further Education link. In addition, 28 HE or FE institutions, 32 chaplaincies, and 32 student societies or organisations (including Students' Unions) took part in the Week.

Universities and many Further Education colleges have very diverse student and staff populations. Inter Faith Week provides a valuable opportunity for a deepening of engagement through discussion and learning experiences in a context where people feel comfortable asking questions and where encounter is framed positively.

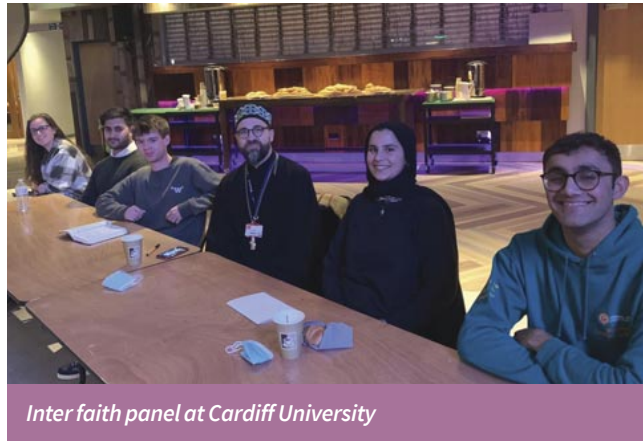
Inter Faith Week activities in HE and FE institutions are usually organised by one or more of the following types of body, often in partnership: Students' Unions; faith, belief and inter faith societies; chaplaincies; staff inter faith networks; university units; and academic centres and departments. National student faith and belief bodies also play a role in encouraging and supporting student engagement with the Week.

Inter Faith Week is also a valuable opportunity for building ongoing relationships between different societies as well as between societies and chaplaincies and the wider institution. In 2021, collaborative working was very much in evidence, with internal partnerships as well as some beyond the institution. These partnerships will be explored in this section.

## Organisations taking part

### Students' Unions

Students' Unions led on arranging activities in a number of universities. For example, Birmingham City University Students' Union invited students to join its Multi-Faith Society for a roundtable with leaders of its faith societies as an opportunity to



Inter faith panel at Cardiff University

learn, listen and talk about questions such as 'What do you love about your religion?' Liverpool John Moores SU held an inter faith fair for students to meet members of the university's six faith societies and learn about them. Cardiff University Students' Union BAME Champions held an online event to increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities among Cardiff University students, celebrating and building on the contribution that they make to the University and wider society.

Students' Unions also worked with others to hold activities. For example, 2021 saw a packed week at St Mary's University organised jointly by its SU and the SMU staff Inter Faith Network.

Inter Faith Week is not just about faith communities and relations between people of different faiths; it also fosters dialogue between people of religious and non-religious beliefs. That was reflected in an 'Inter Faith Café' event held by the University of the West of England SU, which offered 'an opportunity to share food and learn about other faiths, talking freely to others about your faith or lack of faith.'

SU events also ranged more widely. For example, the Liverpool Guild of Students arranged a discussion with members of Liverpool Guild of Students LGBT+ Society, and a guest speaker from Open Table Network (a network of LGBT+ inclusive Christian churches), to share their experiences.

James Walters  
@LSEChaplain

Great start to #InterFaithWeek at @LSEnews with a buzzy coffee morning in @LSEFaithCentre #BuildingRelationships #TransformingAttitudes



Liverpool John Moores University Students' Union Inter Faith Fair

## Interfaith Week Roundtable



A flyer for Birmingham City University Students' Union's roundtable event

### Religion and belief societies

A number of individual religion and belief societies ran activities. For example, Sunderland Islamic Society held a University Masjid Open Day and exhibition and Durham University's Hindu Society hosted a talk on 'The Divine Feminine in Hinduism'.

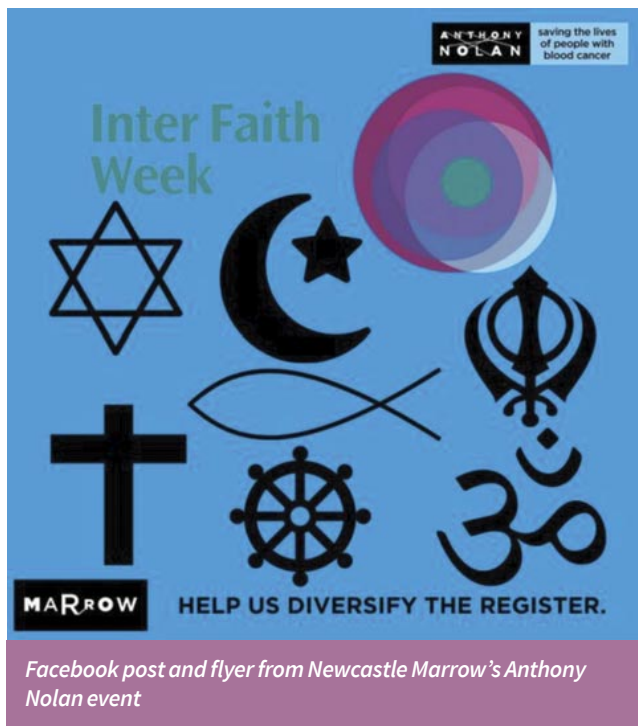
National student faith bodies often play a role in encouraging and supporting their societies to hold activities. In 2021 Inter Faith Week saw an ambitious week-long national programme from the Union of Jewish Students, including encouraging events on campuses around the UK.

*"On campus, we had stalls, ate food, had socials, and everything in between. From an interfaith breakfast at LSE to interfaith bowling in Liverpool, students all over the country spent the week engaging with other faith societies. After a uniquely challenging and isolating year, it was great to see our students out on campus working with others to promote understanding and empathy, and having fun while doing it!"*

- UNION OF JEWISH STUDENTS (UJS)]

Strikingly, this year, many religion and belief societies chose to work jointly on events – generally supporting SU activities (see above) or working with their university or college's chaplaincy (see below). For example, a bring and share meal and discussion was held by Cambridge University Baha'i, Islamic and Sikh Societies, the Student Christian Movement and the Fisher Society (Catholic students). University of Newcastle student faith societies helped with a drive to encourage people from minority ethnic backgrounds to join the Anthony Nolan register for stem cell donation.

Student inter faith societies – many of which included students from non-religious belief groups – also got involved. For example, Leeds Beckett University's Faith, Belief, and No Belief Forum created a reading list of faith and belief-related texts.



*“Inter Faith Week is really good because it’s at the start of the year, so it enables the new exec to get to know other society execs and then sort of form a new connection, which is really helpful. So it’s quite early in the academic year for us. ... because of those connections that we made during Inter Faith Week with the other societies it enabled us more easily to get together later in the year and have other events.”*

–STUDENT INTERVIEWED AFTER IFW 2021

### Chaplaincies

University and college chaplaincies held 49 activities and were vital to the arrangements of many others.

A few chaplaincy activities focused particularly on the work of the chaplaincy or were ones run solely by them. For example Salford University’s Chaplaincy arranged a tour of its Faith Centre; York St John University Chaplaincy invited people to join the chaplains in the Chapel kitchen for refreshments and to chat about celebrating unity and diversity during Inter Faith Week; Aston University arranged a drop in session for faith societies; University of Brighton Faith and Spirituality Team brought different faith societies together to share a meal and talk about what it means to live out one’s faith as a student today; and at Falmouth University and University of Exeter, chaplaincy drop-ins included an opportunity for students and staff to contribute details about festivals to be added to the universities’ inter faith calendars. At St Hugh’s College Chapel, University of Oxford there was an inter faith choral evensong with a talk by the Jewish Chaplain about the role of faith communities in protecting women from sexual violence and domestic abuse.

Sheffield Hallam’s Chaplaincy invited students and staff to come, enjoy tea/coffee and biscuits and chat with Sheffield Hallam faith advisers. It also arranged other activities, such as an opportunity to visit United Synagogue Sheffield and learn about the local Jewish community and to the Grand Mosque to learn about the local Muslim community. King’s College London Chaplaincy also arranged a tour of local places of worship. At the University of Sunderland Interfaith Chaplaincy Centre there was ‘positive pebble painting with an Inter Faith Week theme’. The Chaplaincy and Faith Support team at



The usefulness of Inter Faith Week in helping building relationships between the different faith and belief societies was commented on:

[www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)



University of Sunderland Interfaith Chaplaincy Centre's 'positive pebble painting' activity

Nottingham Trent University held an art competition on the theme of 'religion or faith and' one of the following topics: Mental Health; Climate and Environment; Racial Justice; The Media. De Montfort chaplaincy held two masterclasses about challenging bias and respecting difference.

Swansea University chaplaincy, called the Faith@Campuslife Team, held a full week of events, including a Faith Walk to visit places of worship around the city; a mindfulness meditation session; a faith-themed quiz and social night; a film night and discussion centred on the experiences of Hindu students; an open service of Christian contemplative prayer; and a social for LGBTQ+ people of faith to discuss their experiences in a safe and supportive environment. In addition, in conjunction with Swansea Interfaith, the Faith @Campuslife Team hosted a lecture on Daisaku Ikeda's 2021 Peace Proposal to the United Nations ('Value Creation in a Time of Crisis'), with a speaker from Soka Gakkai International.

The role of chaplaincies in Inter Faith Week also goes far wider, with many supporting, encouraging and working with SUs and different societies as well as with different parts of the university or college. This is well illustrated by activities at the University of Hertfordshire where its chaplaincy put out a week-long social media series of prayers/quotes from different faith traditions as well as a video talking

**King's College London**  
**Chaplaincy**  
 Interfaith Week 2021

**Faith Crawl**  
 Wednesday 24th  
 Great Hall Foyer

**Interfaith Tea**  
 Thursday 18th, 14:30  
 Waterloo Chaplaincy Room

Join us for tea, chatter and cake from all around the world!

**Scriptural Reasoning**  
 Wednesday 17th, 16:00  
 The Old Committee Room

Wrap up warm for a tour of Central London's places of worship!

**Inter Faith Week**  
 14-21 November  
 www.interfaithweek.org

Exploring sacred texts from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions.

Newman University  
 @Newman\_Uni

For #InterFaithWeek, @nuchaplaincy & #Newman Islamic Society invite students & staff of all faith & no faith to join them, for an hour of fast-paced conversation around #faith on Zoom. On 17th November, 5pm. To book your place & for a Zoom link, please email: d.begum@newman.ac.uk

**Newman Islamic Society and Chaplaincy invite you to**

**SPEED FAITHING**

Join us on zoom  
 to book your slot and for the link email Dilwara, Muslim Chaplain at d.begum@newman.ac.uk

**5pm, Wed 17th November 2021**

Whether or not you belong to a faith, this event is for you! Come and join us to talk about what faith means to different people.

NTS  
 Chaplaincy

10:00 AM · Nov 14, 2021 · Hootsuite Inc.

about the importance of inter faith activity; collaborated with the University's Equality Office to hold an online discussion on the importance of inter faith dialogue in promoting respect and diversity; and also joined with the Students' Union in an activity to find out what wearing a hijab means and how to put one on and jointly held a 'Pick Up a Prayer' event where they challenged people to look at a prayer from a tradition other than their own.

In some cases, chaplaincies worked with particular religion and belief societies, for example, Newman University Chaplaincy with the University's Islamic Society to host a Speed Faithing event.

Oxford Brookes University's multifaith chaplaincy arranged an online talk and discussion about activism and intersectionality with Oxford Human Rights Festival and Centre for Development and Emergency (CENDEP).

### Staff networks

A few university staff networks hosted activities as well. St Mary's University's Staff Interfaith Network ran an ambitious programme of events for staff and students featuring a dance class and discussion of the cultural significance of Bhangra; a community Langar and celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday; workshops on turban tying, wearing a hijab, and henna art; and several online and in-person talks.

### University Units

In some universities and colleges, particular units highlighted their institutions' commitment to equality and good relations and, in some cases, signposted useful resources and events happening for the Week locally. Leeds University's Equality and Inclusion Unit, for example, flagged the Week and its aims and said "Inter faith cooperation and understanding between staff and students of different religious and non-religious backgrounds are vital to the development of a diverse community at the University of Leeds. We encourage this through specialist guidance and support for inter faith and faith groups." ([equality.leeds.ac.uk/events/inter-faith-week-2021/](http://equality.leeds.ac.uk/events/inter-faith-week-2021/))

York University Equality and Diversity Office hosted an activity for Inter Faith Week in partnership with York University Chaplaincy and York Interfaith, featuring a talk on the relationship between science



and religion and a panel discussion with representatives from the Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh faiths. The panellists discussed the role faith plays across the university and city of York.

### Academic centres and departments

Academic departments and research centres also took part in Inter Faith Week, leading lectures, seminars, discussions and debates on a number of issues relating to faith, society and politics.

Some activities saw academics and researchers speaking about some of their work. Southampton University chaplaincy jointly hosted a talk with The Centre for Transnational Studies, part of the Modern Languages department, on 'Solidarity and Jewish-Muslim Dialogue.' Also in collaboration with the Southampton University Chaplaincy, Professor Tony Kushner of the Parkes Institute launched his book 'Southampton's Migrant Past and Present' at an afternoon event at Southampton City Art Gallery. This event, which included performances, a film screening, and talks from different refugee organisations, was organised in partnership with City Life Education and Action for Refugees, Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group, City of Sanctuary, and the Southampton Institute for the Arts and Humanities.

There were a number of other examples of academic bodies working in partnership with local inter faith bodies, charities, and others. For example, the University of Gloucestershire's talk 'The Shape of Things to Come?' was organised in collaboration with Cheltenham Inter Faith and Cheltenham Borough Council. Members of different faith communities contributed their experiences of COVID-19, and how they have been changed by the pandemic.



The Director of Research at the Woolf Institute gave a talk on religious diversity as part of North Herts Interfaith Forum's AGM, asking questions such as 'how religiously diverse are we?' and 'what do the British public think about religious diversity in the UK?'

The Woolf Institute also used the Week as a platform to launch 'How to Measure Success: a Toolkit for the Evaluation of Interfaith Engagement', a toolkit designed to help inter faith organisations measure their impact at the grassroots level.

### Further Education

Several further education institutions also got involved in Inter Faith Week, hosting activities for their students and staff. Cambridge Regional College held a 'discovery boxes' session for students, in which students picked a box containing items related to a religion and then discussed the objects and information within as an exciting and interactive learning experience.

Blackburn College hosted a discussion activity for students and staff to discuss their faith, and Bluecoat Sixth Form students created a themed display showcasing the different faiths in their community.

Truro and Penwith College held a 'Week of Kindness' activity to emphasise the role of kindness in many religions and to encourage students to perform acts of kindness themselves.

### A cooperative endeavour

Although we have focused in on how particular types of organisation got involved, one of the strongest messages from the Week in HE and FE is about the power of interconnection and collaboration.

Multiple activities saw chaplaincies, students' unions, individual societies and others working together. This created vibrant and interesting programmes and also enabled relationships within the institutions to develop. As explained by an LSE student: 'in the end with the network that we created in that week... we were able to do other inter faith activities together later in the year.'<sup>1</sup> Leeds Trinity's experience reflects this.

<sup>1</sup> IFN is grateful to the LSE Faith Centre, Bath University Chaplaincy and Durham University chaplaincy and student faith societies for post-Week structured conversations about Inter Faith Week and HE.



Cambridge Regional College's Discovery Boxes activity

### Leeds Trinity University Events

Leeds Trinity University's Inter Faith Week events demonstrated the value of partnerships between the Students' Union, Chaplaincy, and other departments within the university. Their programme, largely hosted by the Students' Union, featured an inter faith film night, a social media campaign highlighting different faiths and beliefs, and an event jointly run with the chaplaincy called 'Coffee and Conversations' focused on discussing students' beliefs in a casual, welcoming environment. The university library also curated a collection of faith-related reading material, which was displayed at the library help desk for students to view.

### Partnerships beyond the institution

There were also examples of partnership with external bodies. Some were with faith and inter faith bodies. For example York University and York St John University each worked with York Interfaith on Inter Faith Week activities; respectively, an Interfaith Campus and City Cohesion event and a Hindu/Sikh contemplation evening.

University Campus North Lincolnshire partnered with community groups to host an Inter Faith Exhibition featuring displays from a variety of faiths and art from children at Scunthorpe Church of England Primary School. The event also raised funds for the North Lincolnshire Sanctuary Group, which works with newly arrived refugees in the local area.

## Durham University: An Inter Faith Week case study

Durham University's Inter Faith Week programme for 2021 was a broad, student-led effort that shows both the range of involvement from different groups and also exemplifies collaboration between student faith and belief societies and the important role of a chaplaincy. This case study draws on reflections that participating students shared with the Inter Faith Network for the UK's Inter Faith Week team.

There were a variety of events, each contributing to greater inter faith understanding and sense of community.

These included a Shabbat meal/Friday Night Dinner hosted by the Jewish Society, a Tea and Cake afternoon hosted by the Catholic Society and Joint Anglican-Methodist Society, and a talk on the topic of 'The Divine Feminine in Hinduism' hosted by the Hindu Society. The Durham Interfaith Student Network also jointly hosted these events with the leading societies.

These events were interactive and informal, and students stressed the importance of providing a space where attendees felt welcomed. For the faith and belief societies, this meant including food at all of their events, as explained by a student from the Jewish Society: "Free food tends to be...as university students the most enticing thing, and food is something that has brought people together, that's why I think - across all three of our societies - we have made it a feature of every event that we've led." In the case of the Shabbat meal, that food was part of a very carefully prepared experience: "We do [a Shabbat meal] every year, that's the Jewish Society's contribution to Inter Faith Week... [W]e had issues with being able to have actual candles, so I brought electric tealights, and gave every person a tealight. And I wrote out the phonetic prayers - because obviously we say the prayers in Hebrew so I made sure it was accessible - and then I got grape juice so

everyone had grape juice instead of the wine, and everyone had a bit of challah as well, and I put the prayers out and put translations and things."

It was also important to the students to create a casual, social atmosphere, rather than hosting a more formal lecture or panel discussion, as a student from the Catholic Society noted: "We found approaches like going into 'this is what Catholicism is' and having a big lecture tends to scare people off, so a more tea and cake thing is more relaxed, and people can form friendships and talk about faith in a more relaxed way and not have another lecture after a day of lectures. We had a display of different Christian items - so Catholics brought some statues and the Bible in Latin, things like that that you might not necessarily see every day as Christians, I think Methodist students brought some Methodist prayer books and hymns and things like that. So we had these out on a table that people could go and look at and sort of start conversations as well - but obviously people gravitated towards the cake more than the Biblical objects!"

A student from the Hindu Society also emphasised the need for interactive events: "We tried to make our event interactive. It was taking place during a time when Hindus celebrated...the feminine forms of divinity. So for that we discussed the various practices that Hindus from different parts of the world have for this particular festival, and I demonstrated one of the traditional dances that we do and got everyone to get involved."

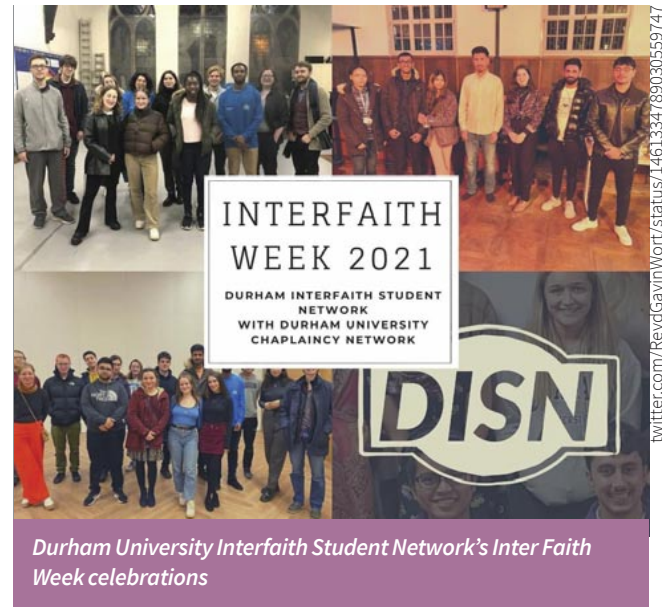
The students also spoke about how helpful the Week was in building mutual connections and opening the way to involvement in future activities, as well as, for example, volunteering in contexts such as Mitzvah Day. Benefits to the individual societies were also mentioned. The

Hindu rep commented “For me, Inter Faith Week’s been really helpful in the sense that I’ve been able to make really good friends from all the different religious societies in Durham. But also, it’s allowed me and the other people in my team to really develop themselves as far as managing and organising a society is concerned.”

All the student society members noted the tremendous support for the Week that came from the university chaplain. “[He] is amazing, it makes such a huge difference... He did push for us to have events, and it was really great to have that support from someone who does it every year, so told you ‘This is the event that’s been put on in the past, you can do that, this is the date that it will have to be done by.’” The Chaplaincy’s support was instrumental in helping students to collaborate and providing them with resources to host their events. The Hindu rep commented their society does not have a location in Durham for hosting Hindu Society events, and the chaplain “was really helpful this year – especially as we had some very strict rules regarding hiring venues during the Covid period – ... put[ting] us in contact with a particular person.”

The chaplain commented: “where the chaplaincy can ... help is that I’m around every year and so things are passed on through the societies but also through me so I’ll be in touch with the new execs and particularly with officers – if there’s an outreach officer or whoever it is with a particular society – who have a responsibility for inter faith engagement. So being around every year and being able to facilitate meetings and so on, bringing people together.”

The exhibition was hosted on the university campus, which is centrally located, to encourage community participation, and was attended by the children whose art was displayed. This event is an example of the role universities can play in bringing together the wider community by providing space and support for events.



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# 13. Schools

School pupils learn about religion and worldviews year-round through RE (religious education) – a key contributor to religious literacy. They also develop vital skills for dialogue and living together well in our diverse society. Inter Faith Week provides a special opportunity to highlight this within schools and to highlight values such as ‘respect’, ‘tolerance’ and ‘kindness’. The values dimension is strengthened by the fact that the UN Day of Tolerance, the International Day of Kindness, and Anti-Bullying Week are at the same time of the year.

Schools are now Inter Faith Week’s largest constituency. The number of schools involved in Inter Faith Week has increased every year, rising 143% between 2019 and 2021. In 2021, 57% of the schools were primary, 38% were secondary, and 5% were schools with both primary- and secondary-aged pupils. 2021 saw an 87% increase over 2020 in the number of secondary schools taking part.

Whole school activities as well as classroom activities are a feature of Inter Faith Week in many schools. Whole school activities often see schools

drawing on links with local faith communities and belief groups, for example inviting in community leaders for special Q and A panels. In England and Wales, the link with SACREs (Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) is also important.

In some cases, external partnerships and consultancies are at the heart of Inter Faith Week activities. Links with local inter faith bodies are also important. For example, St Matthew’s Primary School in Telford, which took part this year, comments on its website: “Each November, Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council visit our school to support us during Inter Faith Week. They also support us in making links with different faith organisations who provide us with workshops or allow us to visit their place of worship.” [www.stmatthewscofe.com/the-school/our-church-school/church-school-partnerships/telford-and-wrekin-interfaith-council](http://www.stmatthewscofe.com/the-school/our-church-school/church-school-partnerships/telford-and-wrekin-interfaith-council)

So, how did schools mark Inter Faith Week 2021? Just a few of the hundreds of activities are shared below!



St Aidan’s CE Primary, Gateshead

## Primary schools

### Classroom learning and visits

Classroom learning was a popular way for primary schools to mark the Week by encouraging children to learn about different aspects of faiths and beliefs. Some schools, like St Aidan's CE Primary School in Gateshead, arranged full-week programmes of learning where each year group learnt about a different faith and different years blogged about this, creating a video about their activities. <https://staidansprimary.co.uk/blog/2021/11/19/interfaith-week-in-year-6/>

A number of primary schools welcomed visitors from different faith communities and belief groups. Visitors contributed to lessons, workshops and assemblies, covering topics like belief and ritual, places of worship, religious clothing and objects, and religious festivals.

### Visiting places of worship

In addition to inviting visitors from different faiths and beliefs and local inter faith groups, many primary schools organised visits to places of worship. Pupils toured buildings and enjoyed talks with faith leaders, learning more about different faiths and

their roles in their communities. For example, pupils from Laxton School near Peterborough visited a local mandir to learn more about Hinduism and Christ Church CE Primary School in Birmingham organised a week-long programme of visits, with each year group visiting a different place of worship in Birmingham.

### Arts and crafts and music

Arts and crafts activities were a popular way for primary schools to encourage religious literacy and inter faith understanding among young children. Pupils created artwork portraying festivals, important figures, artefacts, symbols, and stories from different faiths. For example, pupils at Llansannor Primary School in Cowbridge explored Hinduism through creating elephant masks linked to learning about Sri Ganesh and created Kalgi designs in the context of learning about Sikhism and at Highcliffe Primary in Guisbrough learned about Hinduism while creating rangoli patterns.



twitter.com/LaxtonJunior/status/1461418124297879564

QUICK LINKS LANGUAGE ALDBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## NEWS

### INTERFAITH WEEK 2021

DECEMBER 2ND 2021

We were visited by three members of different faith communities during Interfaith Week 2021. Aldborough children had the opportunity to meet with Helen from the Christian Education Project, Rabbi Wollenberg from Woodford Forest Synagogue and Sidra Javed from The Penny Appeal.

Helen spoke to the children about the theme of 'treating others as you would like to be treated.' Using quotes from six major faiths- Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, she demonstrated how each faith has common ground in today's world.

Our guest, Rabbi Wollenberg conducted an assembly based on Judaism. He talked about where Jewish people pray, the clothes they wear, how often they pray, Kosher food and Jewish celebrations. The children were enthused by his assembly and listened attentively as he blew the rams horn (Shofar), to demonstrate how it is blown during celebrations.

Sidra Javed from The Penny Appeal conducted a presentation about the work the charity does locally and internationally. The talk linked well with Aldborough's social action projects on homelessness, access to clean drinking water and food poverty. She gave the children real life examples of how charities support local communities with food donations and housing and international charities with development of basic needs such as building water wells in remote areas.

To celebrate Diwali- the festival of lights, Chef made a delicious Indian meal at lunchtime. Children and staff were served vegetable curry and rice, with samosas and a firework cake.

#### PAGE GALLERY

www.aldborough.net/917/news-1/post/20/interfaith-week-2021#

At Green Fold Special School in Bolton, pupils learnt about different faiths by creating glass windows, handprint Menorahs, Mendhi hand decorations and prayer mats. Green Fold is a great example of how schools worked to ensure an accessible and inclusive Inter Faith Week.

twitter.com/CorpusChristiRC/status/1460938947912253440



Y3 are enjoying Interfaith week by visiting a Gurdwara!



11:52 AM · Nov 17, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone



Artwork from St Laurence Junior, Northfield

twitter.com/StLaurenceJnr/status/1463062547872067584/

twitter.com/CorpusChristiRC/status/1460938947912253440



A few examples of fantastic Inter Faith logos designed by the children across the school. A huge well done to the children that took part in Inter Faith logo competition! #interfaithweek @RE\_Today



5:03 PM · Dec 1, 2021 · Twitter for iPad

**“Attention Autism is a specialist SALT intervention model which aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities – our huge thanks to Mrs.Wrigley for creating and incorporating faith based resources into the sessions and making #InterFaithWeek accessible to all of our learners – amazing! #inclusion #AmazingLearners #AmazingTeam #GreenFold “**

[WWW.GREENFOLD.BOLTON.SCH.UK/2021-2/3/](http://WWW.GREENFOLD.BOLTON.SCH.UK/2021-2/3/)

A number of primary schools, organised exhibitions of their pupils’ artwork, for example Clitheroe Pendle Primary School, Krishna Avanti Primary School in Harrow, London, and St Laurence Church Junior School in Birmingham.



Clitheroe Pendle Primary School



***“At Krishna Avanti Primary School (KAPSH), we celebrated Art and Interfaith Week focusing on the theme “Art matters for people of all religions”. Through carefully planned cross-curricular lessons, children across the school learnt about one of the seven main religions of the world and the connections between that religion and what we follow here at school.”***

www.pennwood.slough.sch.uk/news/detail/interfaith-week/



Dance and music also featured, for example dhol drumming and dancing workshops at Penn Wood Primary and Nursery School in Slough, led by the Dancing Nikita Company, High Rated Drummers and Baja Beats UK. Pupils also explored Arabic writing. [www.pennwood.slough.sch.uk/news/detail/interfaith-week/](http://www.pennwood.slough.sch.uk/news/detail/interfaith-week/)

Polegate Primary promoted a curriculum link between RE, Art and Literacy by holding an art and poetry competition for children to submit a piece of art or poetry representing inter faith beliefs or a religion of their choice.

### **Food as a route to learning**

Food and cooking activities were also popular at primary schools. For example, pupils at Fairfield Primary School in Widnes made potato latkes to help them learn about Chanukah.

### **Whole school learning and Collective Worship**

Inter Faith Week learning in some schools extended beyond RE lessons. For example, at St Martin’s

School in Mill Hill in London there were inter faith themed activities for subjects across the curriculum.

Collective worship at West Ham Church of England Primary School also had an inter faith theme during the Week. Visitors from local places of worship – a Buddhist Centre, a synagogue, a church, and a mosque – led collective worship on each day of the Week. Many other schools included a special assembly, for example Harlow Green Primary School in Gateshead whose assembly featured six faiths and Humanism.

In North Kirklees, local faith leaders came together for an online school assembly for Inter Faith Week 2021; this was recorded, and provided a school assembly that could be used in any setting. St Luke’s Primary School in Beeston, Leeds, hosted an inter faith assembly to celebrate the diversity of faiths in the city. Faith leaders from various religious institutes came and answered questions from school pupils and teachers.

### **Values**

Some lessons focused on the importance of respecting religious and cultural diversity, such as a special lesson at Hazelbury School in Enfield, London, about how to respect the views and beliefs of others. At St Helen’s Catholic Infant School in Brentwood, Reception learnt about respecting one another by taking part in a special role playing activity and pupils at Scunthorpe Church of England Primary expressed through art their experience of “what it is like to be at an inter faith school”. Inter Faith Week coincided with Kindness Day, and some school activities focused on both: for example, pupils at Bidborough Church of England Primary School read ‘The Proudest Blue’, sparking in-class conversations about respect and tolerance, and created ‘Boats of Kindness’.

### **Secondary schools**

Religious literacy and learning was also a focus of secondary school activities, but often with a particular focus on inter faith dialogue rather than in-class RE lessons and also a greater emphasis on student presentations.

## A time of mutual learning

The Week provided an opportunity for some enjoyable mutual learning. For example, students at St Damian's RC Science College in Ashton-Under-Lyne got together to debate 'The Big Questions' and at Walderslade Girls' School in Chatham, students discussed the importance of understanding between different religions. At Woldingham School, students discussed "How is Woldingham welcoming of all faiths and none?"

'Speed-faithing' events, where pupils and staff could discuss their faiths with one another, took place at Carmel College in Darlington and Fellside Community School in Wickham.

Pupils led Inter Faith Week assemblies at a number of schools such as Philips High School in Manchester, Lady Eleanor Holles Senior School in Richmond, Trinity School in Devon, and Haberdashers' Boys' School – where the Jewish and Muslim assembly committees hosted an inter faith assembly for pupils.

## Faith visitors

As with primary schools, many secondary schools invited visitors from different faith communities and belief groups to engage in inter faith dialogue with pupils. The City of Leicester College hosted a 'Human Library' for its Year 7 pupils. Visitors from different faith communities sat at tables, and pupils could 'visit' in order to ask questions and learn more about their faith.

In Stratford, pupils from Stratford School Academy travelled to Student SACRE, a programme run by RE Matters, to meet local faith leaders and ask questions. Their findings – which came from conversations with Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, Hindu, and Humanist leaders – then formed the basis for an RE lesson which pupils presented at a local primary school.

Eden Girls' School in Waltham Forest invited faith and community leaders, including the Mayor of Waltham Forest and the Chair of Waltham Forest SACRE, to attend an Inter Faith Breakfast. Pupils, staff and guests delivered presentations on the importance of good inter faith relations and took part in a group discussion.



twitter.com/CarmelCollege/status/1461346547002609673



twitter.com/habsboys/status/1463889910096617474

## Integrating the Week with other activities

As Inter Faith Week coincided with Anti-Bullying Week, a number of schools such as Reddish Vale, Stockport, marked both together.

Pupils at Brinsworth Academy in Rotherham made goody bags as acts of kindness, for Anti-Bullying Week and Inter Faith Week and shared them with others across the academy. As Inter Faith Week is timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday, there were also Remembrance linked activities and, in the case of Strabane Academy, a pupil peace walk.

## Competitions and quizzes

Competitions and quizzes were another popular way for secondary schools to mark the Week. For example, City of Leicester College held a variety of competitions for students throughout the week, based on the theme ‘Respect for All’.

St Wilfrid’s C of E Academy in Blackburn organised a House Quiz about different religions featuring a picture round, a scavenger round, and a ‘complete the proverb’ round. At Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School, inter faith posters were displayed in different department areas and students were invited to find the letter clue on each poster and solve the anagram in response to the question: ‘What do all these faiths have in common?’ Richard Lander School in Truro challenged students to look out for posters in each subject area during the Week. Each poster featured a famous person with links to religion and had a letter on the bottom. Pupils were asked to collect all the letters and unscramble them to find a word that linked to the subject.



Stratford School Academy,



Dauntsey’s School

## Arts

Schools invited pupils to create drawings, posters, photographs, poems and more on different themes relating to faith and inter faith. These included a poster competition at Lismore Comprehensive School in Craigavon, a ‘faith in art’ competition at The Grange School in Aylesbury, a photography competition at Finham Park RE, and a ‘religious buildings’ photography competition at Madni Academy in Dewsbury. At Jack Hunt School in Peterborough, pupils were challenged to create art, music, research, presentations and poems on the theme “we have more in common with each other than that which divides us”, taken from a speech made by the late Jo Cox MP.

Exhibitions and fairs were also set up by secondary schools, with contributions from pupils. Strabane Academy created an exhibition of pupils’ artwork, alongside quotes and challenging faith questions, and invited pupils, parents and local religious leaders.

twitter.com/edengirlsWF/status/1461729990169579522

facebook.com/reddishvalehs/posts/4173451356091973/

**Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest**  
@edengirlsWF

We welcomed The Mayor of Waltham Forest Cllr Elizabeth Baptiste @ElizabethBapti4 to our #Interfaith breakfast. #InterfaithAwareness

**Reddish Vale High School**  
9 November 2021

Next week we will be celebrating Anti-Bullying, Diversity & Interfaith week, with lots of activities on offer for pupils to get involved in, which you can see the event programme below.

#Antibullying #Diversity #Interfaith #RVHS

**Anti-Bullying, Diversity & Interfaith Week 2021**  
15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November 2021

This year we are going to be combining some national awareness weeks to celebrate the Reddish Vale High School 'anti-bullying, diversity & interfaith week'. The aim of this week is to recognise and celebrate each other's differences, use kind words to one another, and learn more about our staff & students at RVHS and the world around us. We are also going to be raising money for two important charities; The Diana Award anti-bullying charity and Children in Need.

See Mrs Morrison, Miss Lees or Miss Rockey if you have any questions about the week!

Day	Event	Location
Monday	Culture & Diversity Fair	Theatre
Tuesday	Dance workshops	Performing Arts
Wednesday	One Kind Word tree	Canteens
Thursday	Compliments activity	Canteens
Friday	Odd socks day & cake sale (bring change!)	Canteens



Lismore Comprehensive

Social media was another popular form of engagement. Brinsworth Academy in Rotherham and Blue Coat School and Music College, Coventry posted photos of their pupils with #InterFaithWeek message boards. Oldham Hulme Grammar also posted reflections from staff and students on 'keeping the faith' during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils in the Ethos Group at Bolton St Catherine's Academy created a video about their different faiths and beliefs [www.instagram.com/p/CWlnX3cK7ZR/](http://www.instagram.com/p/CWlnX3cK7ZR/).

### Partnerships

While many Inter Faith Week school activities were internal, some schools partnered with one another to work together on Inter Faith Week projects. For example, pupils from the ten schools in the Yeading Cluster worked together to create a video about celebrating diversity and respecting different faiths, which was posted on social media [www.instagram.com/p/CWX4XRnIBgc/](http://www.instagram.com/p/CWX4XRnIBgc/).

Schools also partnered with other types of organisations, such as SACREs and local inter faith groups – for example, Stratford School Academy's trip to meet faith leaders at Student SACRE. Faiths Together in Croydon and The Dialogue Society also led a special virtual event across the borough's primary and secondary schools, inviting children and their RE teachers to present stories, dances, songs, or artwork.



twitter.com/StambroseC/status/1464278992932986883

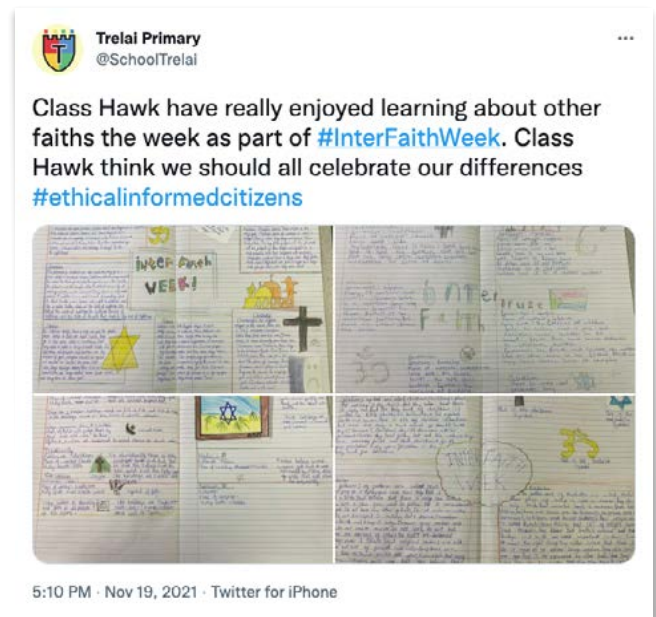


twitter.com/FinhamParkRE/status/1449005400859234306

Aylesford School worked in partnership with Maidstone Inter Faith Network, arranging for members of the network of different faiths to deliver assemblies and workshops to pupils.

Much of the growth of Inter Faith Week participation is due to the efforts of educational bodies, which facilitate partnerships as well as providing resources. Educational and academic bodies such as the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE), the Welsh Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (WASACRE), the National Association of Teachers of RE, and the Religious Education Council of England Wales work year-round to strengthen the provision of RE and to encourage more schools to prioritise improving children's religious literacy. A number of other types of body such as the Faith and Belief Forum and the School Linking Network also helped schools mark the Week in 2021. The Stand Up! team have reported that, to support Inter Faith Week, it delivered 18 sessions reaching 430 students. Local inter faith groups also assisted. For example, Wellingborough Inter Faith Group produced a film for use in Primary schools with a grant from Northamptonshire Community Foundation.

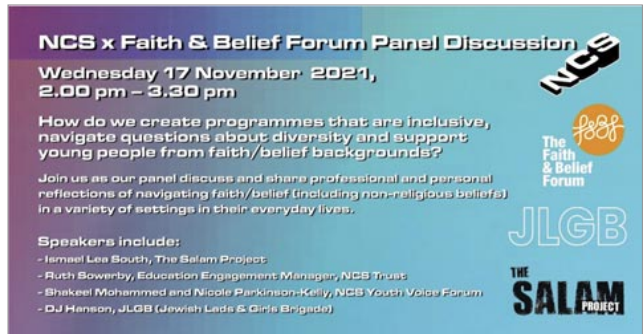
In April 2021, IFN launched its new teacher resource for secondary school pupils [www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-activity-in-the-uk-a-teacher-resource-for-secondary-pupils](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-activity-in-the-uk-a-teacher-resource-for-secondary-pupils), and this was promoted in the run-up to the Week in addition to its companion teacher resource for primary schools [www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource). IFN also launched, during Inter Faith Week itself, a series of video resources for use in assemblies/ collective worship [www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/school-assemblies-collective-worship](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/school-assemblies-collective-worship).



# 14. Youth organisations

Young people's involvement in Inter Faith Week is of great importance. It takes many forms, including in schools, colleges and universities, and through participation in activities organised by other types of body, such as local faith, belief and inter faith groups. Youth organisations, too, organise a range of activities for the Week.

Islington Youth Council, LBI Targeted Youth Support and Copenhagen Youth Project with Islington Faith Forum and Islington Council held a youth debate on 'Faith, Freedom and Equality: Do They Go Together?'



***“For National Inter Faith Week, NCS hosted a panel discussion that brought together a fantastic group of speakers including myself. I was thrilled to share my personal reflections on how youth organisations can support young people when navigating questions about faith and belief.”***

– SHAKEEL [QUOTE FROM NCS WEBSITE]

Aik Saath, a youth organisation based in Slough, hosted a virtual quiz night with Breaking Boundaries. Young people aged 11-18 answered questions about different faiths, with the opportunity to win high street vouchers.

Activities were also organised by the youth initiatives of various inter faith organisations. The West Midlands Youth Interfaith Hub, an initiative of the Faith & Belief Forum, led an activity called 'Feeding People in Need'. They cooked a shared meal

National Citizen Service and the Faith & Belief Forum hosted a panel discussion with speakers from The Salam Project, NCS Trust, NCS Youth Voice Forum and the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade. Panellists discussed how organisations could create programmes that are inclusive, navigate questions about diversity and support young people from different faith and belief backgrounds.

The Institute for Youth Work and Youth Race Equality Network held a session for youth work practitioners and interested individuals and parties within communities to discuss how to support and deliver inter faith youth work.



together, which they served to asylum seekers and refugees from the local community. In Blackburn, as part of project to celebrate Inter Faith week, young people from Blackburn Youth Zone and IMO Charity visited the Making Rooms to create models of the Noorul Islam Masjid and Blackburn Cathedral. The project was linked to Blackburn with Darwen Council's Our Community Our Future plan.

Religions for Peace UK Interfaith Youth Network visited St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace where it celebrated the one-year anniversary of its Steering Committee and shared a meal in the 'inter faith tent'. It also piloted its Interfaith Field Visits to Places of Worship, visited some local places of worship, and took part in a quiz. They also took part in one of a number of videos on the topic of friendship and social action for Inter Faith Week that the Inter Faith Network for the UK had commissioned

for the Week. Organisations that work with young people, such as the Mosaic LGBT+ Trust, were also very much involved with the Week.

### A note on youth participation

Youth activities made up 39% of the activities held for the Week (337 activities). This is an increase on 2020, where such activities made up 33% of the (smaller) total number of activities held. The increase in number between 2020 and 2021 is 44%. However, as the charts presented earlier in this report show, a relatively small number of youth organisations (as opposed to schools and universities) held activities. The low number of 'youth organisations' is linked to the fact that each participating organisation may only be assigned to one category and a best-fit approach is therefore used. There are a number of categories that are likely to align with youth involvement, including 'school', 'higher/ further education institution', 'student organisation/ society', 'HE/FE Chaplaincy' as well as 'youth organisation'. This means that only those youth bodies that are not captured by those designations are classed as 'youth organisations'. While activities can be assigned to multiple categories, many of those submitting details also take a 'best fit' approach, so the chart also shows a relatively small number of 'youth activities'. The number given here is based on activities assigned to at least one of a number of relevant categories.

twitter.com/UKIYN1/status/1459946645488119810

UK Interfaith Youth Network  
@UKIYN1

In response to Inter Faith Week 2021, group of UKIYN Steering Committee members are piloting a plan to visit places of worship, marking the start of an effort to increase understanding of faiths other than our own, thus providing a better cooperation environment for the future.

Religions for Peace  
UK INTERFAITH YOUTH NETWORK

Inter Faith Week  
www.interfaithweek.org

WE ARE CELEBRATING  
**Interfaith Week!**

We will make exciting plans for the year ahead, and pilot educational visits to places of worship, starting with London Buddhist Centre, and St Ethelburga's!

The UK IYN is starting the journey of religious literacy. We hope to bring activities like this to our networks soon!

6:09 PM · Nov 14, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Institute for Youth Work  
@iyw\_tweets

Please join us for this upcoming event as part of #InterfaithWeek 2021: DEVELOPING INTERFAITH YOUTH PRACTICE. Taking place on 17/11/21 @5pm - 6.30pm

Get more info & register here:  
[eventbrite.co.uk/e/developing-i...](https://eventbrite.co.uk/e/developing-i...)

Youth Race Equality Network

Institute for Youth Work

Developing Interfaith Youth Practice  
**INTERFAITH WEEK**  
Wednesday 17th November '21

6:00 PM · Nov 10, 2021 · CONTENIVE

https://twitter.com/IFForum1/status/1461064667103731723

# 15. Local Authorities

Inter Faith Week is used by many local authorities to take forward their goals of integration and cohesion: celebrating and developing their relationships with local faith communities and promoting good inter faith relations.



*Plymouth Mayor, councillors and faith leaders*

34 local authorities organised activities for Inter Faith Week in 2021. They did so through hosting 53 activities themselves or doing so in partnership with other organisations and projects in their communities, such as places of worship, inter faith groups, community organisations, museums, schools and police. This was a 10% increase on 2020 figures of both numbers of local authorities participating and activities. Some, like Kirklees Council and North Lincolnshire Council, sponsored full-week programmes of activities by different groups. This level of direct participation was comparable to that in recent years - a 10% increase on 2020. In addition to the formal sponsorship of activities by authorities, many individual Mayors, councillors and officers spoke at local events held by faith communities, inter faith organisations, schools and others.



*Barking and Dagenham Council raising Inter Faith Week flag with faith representatives*

twitter.com/lbbdcouncil/status/1460257121161854976

## Marking the Week and celebrating together

Inter Faith Week flags were raised by Leeds City Council and by Barking and Dagenham Council.

Some councils took part in Week launches. For example, the launch of Birmingham's extensive Inter Faith Week programme took place at Birmingham City Council House and was organised by Birmingham Council of Faiths (BCF). It was officially opened by the Deputy Lord Mayor who is also the Honorary President of BCF.



twitter.com/RBKCMayor/status/1460704151416020993





*Birmingham's Inter Faith Week launch*

One of the other ways that local authorities marked Inter Faith Week was by organising and participating in civic receptions and celebrations. The Office of the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, for example, hosted a reception with representatives of different faith groups in the Borough. In Plymouth, councillors and faith leaders assembled with the Mayor.

### **Building relationships with local faith groups**

2021 saw a push by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society and Faith Action to highlight the 'faith covenant', which helps local authorities and faith groups set principles for joint working. Barnet Council and Barnet Multi-Faith Forum renewed its covenant in a public ceremony during the Week and Brent Council and Brent Multi-Faith Forum also came

together to celebrate the Faith Covenant and plan how to work together in the future.

The faith covenant was also featured in an event in Essex for faith-based organisations and public services to connect, explore, and learn together. The event was hosted by Havens Hospices. In addition, information was shared focusing on the wider activity of the Covenant, and there was an opportunity to network with other faith-based and public service organisations from across Essex and Southend. In Coventry, the Together in Action Trust and Faith Action held a discussion about the faith covenant, as well as the Government's faith compact.

Local authorities also partnered with local faith groups and inter faith groups on activities. For example, Kirklees' wide-ranging programme included events at Guru Nanak Gurdwara Huddersfield, Zakaria Education Centre and Huddersfield Hindu Mandir.

Barking and Dagenham Council partnered with Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum and with places of worship to enable them to host open door days during Inter Faith Week. These included Gurdwara Singh Sabha London East, Al Madina Mosque, Powerhouse International and Harmony Christian Centre. Each of the open door events were open to the public and included opportunities to explore and learn more about the places of worship.

www.barnet.gov.uk/news/barnet-council-and-barnet-multi-faith-forum-renew-faith-covenant



*Barnet Faith Covenant renewal*



Health Commissioners at Birmingham City Council led three separate consultations in partnership with Solutions 4 Health and Birmingham Council of Faiths. These looked at: Mental Wellbeing and Faith-Centred Support in Birmingham; Women’s Health and Wellbeing in Birmingham Faith Communities; and Physical Wellbeing and Faith-Based Support in Birmingham.

Cheltenham Borough Council worked with Cheltenham Inter Faith and the University of Gloucestershire to hold an event called ‘The Shape of Things to Come?’, which looked at where communities and individuals now found themselves as they learned to live with Covid-19. It aimed to bring together different faith and non faith communities and to strengthen good relations.

Dudley Council worked with Dudley Inter Faith Network, Top Church Dudley and the Diocese of Worcester on an event for religious leaders to network with one another and discuss the challenges of re-emerging following lockdowns. Tower Hamlets Council also took this as a focus, working with FaithAction and Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum on an event called ‘Bridge over Troubled Water’ which aimed to celebrate the work of local faith groups, to build resilient communities post Covid, and to highlight the unique offer that faith provides society.

Colchester Borough Council partnered with two local inter faith groups – the Inter-Faith Group for North East Essex and the Inter-Faith Group for North West Essex – to host an inter faith coffee morning over Zoom.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council with Fermanagh and Omagh Interfaith Group jointly held an online celebration of the life of Abdul-Baha.

A range of other partnerships are highlighted in other chapters on education and environment.

### Arranging cultural and religious learning activities

Leicester City Council organised a walk around Highfields and Spinney Hills, pausing outside different faith buildings to learn more about their history and their role in the community.

Kirklees Council’s Women’s Together Group led a women-only ‘cook and eat’ session for women to share traditional family recipes and the stories behind them.



### Supporting the Week online

Many local authorities took to social media, sharing information about faith in the local area, celebrating the Week and expressing their commitment to its aims.

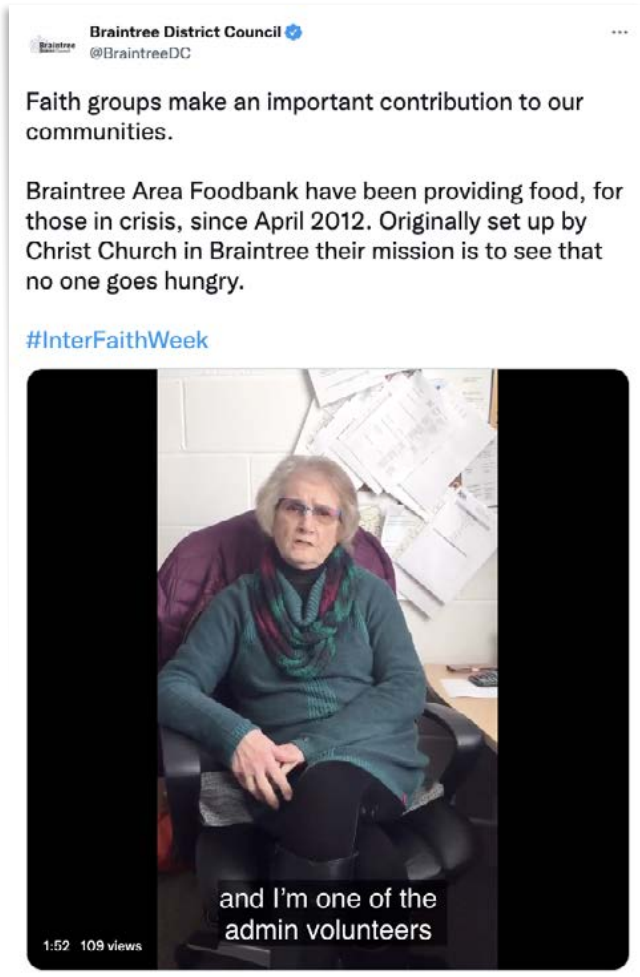
Braintree District Council posted videos of staff from various faith-based community organisations speaking about their work. Southampton City Council Cultural Services posted a time-lapse video to their Twitter account, showing how a Methodist Chapel became Nanaksar Gurdwara.

Bridgend CB Council, Neath Port Talbot Council and Swansea Council jointly organised a photography competition, challenging people to photograph where they feel most connected to their faiths.

Central Bedfordshire Council posted a verse of a hymn on behalf of the Superintendent Minister of the North Bedfordshire Circuit of the Methodist Church and the Chair of Churches Together in Bedfordshire.

Blackburn with Darwen Council's social integration programme posted a quote from an ESOL student, with an article about local Christian charity RE: Source Blackburn. Maldon District Council encouraged people to post photos of themselves with #InterFaithWeek message boards, and shared an article about the Essex Faith Covenant.

/twitter.com/BraintreeDC/status/1460270938315014153



twitter.com/BridgendCBC/status/1458943731178917890



# 16. Police, fire and ambulance services

Inter Faith Week is a time when police and fire services often reach out to local faith groups to strengthen connections, through social media campaigns and taking part in a variety of activities and sometimes hosting their own events.

It is difficult to quantify the extent of participation and partnership for these services, and for ambulance services as reports do not always find their way into social media or other coverage. 10 services are known to have taken part, with a total of 14 activities.

## Positive messaging through social media

A number of services used social media to mark the Week. For example, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at Cheshire Fire and Rescue posted photographs of staff holding #InterFaithWeek message boards, with statements about learning more about faith and culture. Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service posted 'Throwback Thursday' photos, showing Luton firefighters enjoying food donations from the local Muslim community and a video of



twitter.com/CheshireFireEDI/status/1460925969020108800?s=20&t=PpFABwwHrbGehIXyQEUIFA

twitter.com/FrLiamB/status/1461699653032976387



their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager speaking about the importance of EDI and how their team supports staff of different faiths.

The Metropolitan Police used their 'MPS Communities' social media account to share information about faith in the police service, as well as reflections on faith and inter faith. This included a series of short videos, showing people of different faiths speaking about inter faith relations in their communities. They also posted a tweet signposting the details of the Faith Engagement Officers for each Basic Command Unit around London.

### Engaging with diverse communities

Forces engaged through a number of routes, For example, Dyfed-Powys Police organised an Inter Faith Week 'Dial In', with two of their chaplains, giving members of the public an opportunity to call in, chat about faith, and ask questions.

In the London Borough of Newham, the Faith Officer and colleagues from MPS Newham went on the road, taking part in a tour of places of worship with members of different faith communities. The Faith Officer also led a talk on knife crime at a local Mosque.



Police also participated in talks and seminars, speaking about issues related to faith and policing. For example, officers from the Crime Prevention Inclusion and Engagement (CPIE) team at the Metropolitan Police and dedicated faith officers joined with faith leaders for a discussion at New Scotland Yard about how police can work together to build trust and confidence with all communities. In



Leicester, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland took part in a hybrid meeting with Leicester Council of Faiths on the topic of 'Policing Challenges and the Role of Faith Communities'. Some also invited special speakers, for example Merseyside Police Community Engagement Unit which invited a presenter from the Wirral Deen Centre and Mosque.

Gwent Police took part in a talk with faith leaders and representatives from the Interfaith Council for Wales/Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru. Participants highlighted the need for police to listen to communities, learn about other cultures and develop their understanding.

Many organisations also invited local police to speak at or attend their Inter Faith Week activities. For example, Bedfordshire Police and the National Sikh Police Association, alongside Grassroots Luton, attended the launch of Luton Sikh Soup Kitchen at Guru Nanak Gurdwara. Representatives from South Wales Police contributed to the Inter Faith Week exhibition at Cynon Valley Museum, providing information on hate crime awareness.



# 17. Libraries, museums and galleries

Each year a number of libraries, museums and galleries arrange or host activities for Inter Faith Week. This year also saw some school and university libraries participating.

The number of libraries, museums and galleries involved in the Week increased in 2021 by 163% to 21 organisations and the activities that they held rose from 9 to 23, an increase of 156%. The end of COVID restrictions and targeted encouragement to libraries to participate may have been factors in this.

Some, such as Birkenhead Library and Cynon Valley Museum, worked in partnership with a number of local faith communities and other types of bodies such as the police. One, Engelsea Museum and Chapel near Crewe, mounted a week of activities of a variety of kinds.

## Exhibitions and displays

A number of museums, galleries and libraries hosted inter faith exhibitions and displays themed on faith and inter faith.



twitter.com/ltulibrary1/status/1460318875690708994



twitter.com/CentreDeen/status/1461077550751531009

twitter.com/uksla/status/1460940798615298052



Birkenhead Library, with Wirral Deen Centre and Wirral Council, hosted an exhibition of local school children's artwork, as well as displays on the three Abrahamic faiths' responses to the environment. Visitors were also given the opportunity to make a climate change pledge for the library's 'Interfaith

Tree' and were gifted saplings to plant at home. Botwell Green Library in Hillingdon organised an exhibition of children's artwork, featuring work by pupils from schools Minet Junior, Hayes Park and Yeading Junior Schools on the theme of 'inter faith'.

twitter.com/Hillingdon/status/146028527877412359



twitter.com/eppingforestdc/status/1468271789151301638



Epping Forest District Museum Inter Faith Week display

facebook.com/efdmmuseum/photos/a.525022130846428/6183271555021439

Epping Forest District Museum used Inter Faith Week as an opportunity to launch a three month display on 'Faiths in the Forest' with Epping Quakers, Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation, and BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir. This featured objects selected by faith groups in the district, which groups felt reflected key attributes of their faith practice and community.

Englesea Brooke Chapel and Museum hosted a visiting exhibition called 'Weaving Women's Wisdom' displayed woven rugs, accompanied by stories about the inter faith groups of inter faith women. The exhibition was curated by Touchstone in Bradford.



www.touchstone-bradford.org.uk/9-uncategorised/114-weaving-women-s-wisdom-a-creative-rug-making-project-and-touring-exhibition

Kirklees Libraries, Canterbury Libraries and Leeds Trinity University Library were among those that set up book displays with books about faith.



## Learning and creating together

Arts and crafts workshops were also popular. At Eccleston Library, part of St Helens Libraries, participants were invited to take part in a 'lantern crafts' workshop. A similar workshop at Moss Bank Library, also of St Helens Libraries, offered the opportunity to create paper candles, as well as look at a display of faith books. St Helens Library also led a mosaic art workshop.

The New Art Gallery Walsall posted a virtual 'Many Hands, Many Faiths' workshop on their YouTube channel and social media, showing how to create a banner displaying hand gestures from different faiths.

Please supply Youtube URL



## Learning and celebrating with local communities

Some museums held celebrations, talks and day events. For example, at an event at St Helens Library, local faith leaders delivered readings and inspirational messages and there was a performance by young people at MD Creatives.

***“Libraries are a neutral and safe space for people to come together – no matter their race or religious beliefs – that’s why it was so moving to see so many people turn out and hear in such a respectful way about the different faiths practised here in our borough by people who make such a high difference in our communities.”***

– COUNCILLOR ANTHONY BURNS, CABINET MEMBER FOR WELLBEING, CULTURE AND HERITAGE, ST HELENS METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



Cynon Valley Museum led a day’s event with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Community Safety Partnership. The day included: outreach from local authorities and police on anti-hate crime awareness; vaccine promotion; an ‘exploring different religions’ trail activity around the museum; and displays of information about faith and religion in Wales and the Cynon Valley. It also included a prize-giving ceremony for a children’s poster competition that ran throughout the Week, featuring posters on the theme of ‘faith and belief’. You can read more about this event in a presentation given by a museum staff member to an Inter Faith Network for the UK National Meeting in March 2022: [www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/National\\_meeting\\_report\\_2022.pdf](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/National_meeting_report_2022.pdf)



Leeds Museums and Galleries organised an event called 'Light for Leeds' at Kirkstall Abbey. This reflective exhibition explored the shared importance of spiritual and physical light to different groups through objects and film. The day included representations of different faiths, musical performances, stalls on the theme of environmental action, and a 'Tree of Hope'. There was also a silent walk to Chapter House, and a talk on 'Light Upon Light' with Leeds Mindfulness, Wellbeing and Spirituality Centre.

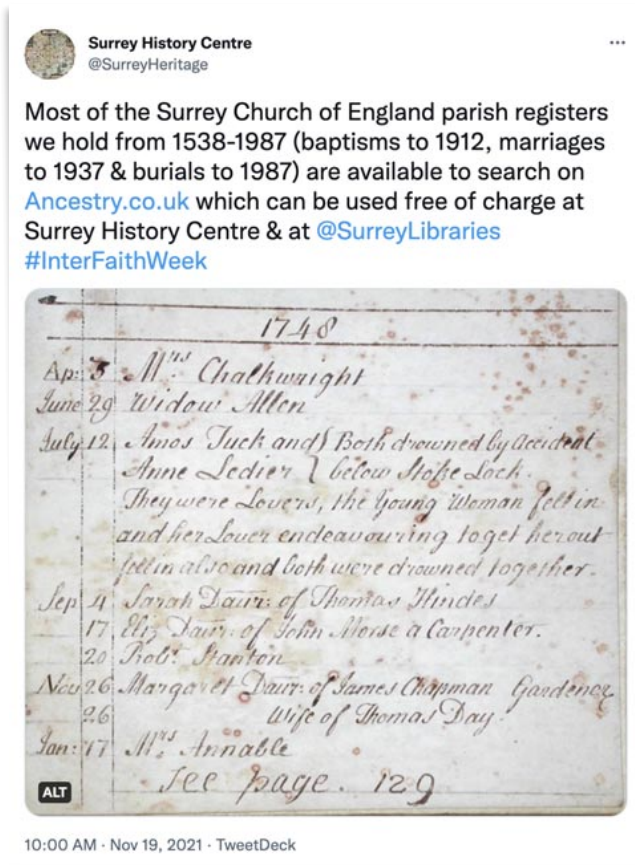
Birmingham Museums Group For #InterFaithWeek presented a new film exploring Faith In Lockdown, with contributions from Birmingham Faith Communities.

A number of other Museums and galleries such as Bristol Museums, Surrey History Centre, the Museum of Norwich, and Windsor & Royal Borough Museum used social media to share items from their

collections, relating to faith. As part of its week of events, Englesea Brook Museum and Chapel ran a social media series exploring old Primitive Methodist chapels used by other faiths & denominations, celebrating that they still offer worship, community and learning. Watford Museum kicked off Inter Faith Week by featuring the Peace Garden of the Watford Interfaith Association.



twitter.com/LeedsBK/status/1462711600297746432



https://tinyurl.com/26vej1hf

twitter.com/SurreyHeritage/status/1461635365870075907

# 18. Other organisations

As well as the kinds of organisations covered in the preceding sections, the Week saw involvement from many others, from arts and cultural initiatives to equality organisations and media bodies. Here we share just a few of their activities.

## Arts and cultural organisations

Batley Poets hosted their annual Inter Faith Week open-mic poetry session at Batley Library, which was also their first in-person poetry session since the start of the pandemic.

One Voice Community Choir in Croston held a choir performance with the pupils of Bretherton Endowed CofE School and a live concert of Persian music and traditional dance was organised by Maulana Music Academy, Liverpool Iranian Institute and Rumi Music School.

ArtSikh curated a series of images created by artists from diverse communities, aimed at celebrating faith and belief unity and community cohesion. The images were posted on ArtSikh social media.

StoryHour UK, which is part of Puranas Ltd, screened their Ramayana puppet show to the residents of Sandringham Jewish Care, showing the story of Diwali.

## Equality bodies

A number of equality bodies marked the week. Some, such as Cardiff's Equality First, ran social media campaigns.

The week was also marked by bodies which support and advocate for particular groups, such as older people or those of the LGBT+ community. For example, the Proud Trust in Manchester did social media posts relating to both the Week and TransAwareness Week which fell at the same time.



## Advocacy and support organisations

A number of advocacy and support organisations took part. For example, Birmingham City of Sanctuary held a workshop with Birmingham Council of Faiths designed for places of worship exploring what is involved in becoming a Faith Place of Sanctuary.

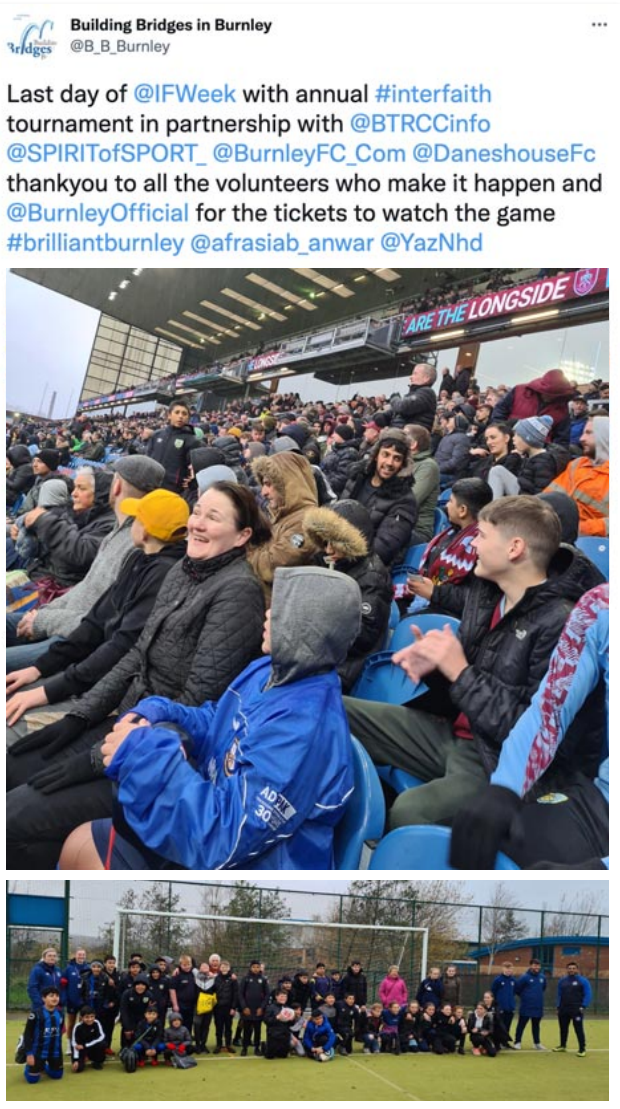
## Media

During the Week, the Religion Media Centre held two 'Creating Connections' events in Nottingham and Plymouth, a series designed to improve links between religious groups and journalists in England.

# 19. Sports organisations

After a 2020 Inter Faith Week that was very quiet on the sports front due to COVID, a number of sports organisations returned to hold activities in 2021. 8 organisations held a total of 7 activities. Burnley FC were able again to hold their annual Inter Faith Week tournament with Building Bridges in Burnley. Sponsored by Near Neighbours, it involved 40 young people of different faith and belief backgrounds.

twitter.com/B\_B\_Burnley/status/146212671072854022



Active Black Country launched their new Get Out Get Active toolkit as part of Inter Faith Week. The Toolkit for Faith Centres provides faith leaders with the information and motivation to take a lead role in improving health and wellbeing in their communities.



twitter.com/GetActiveGOGA/status/1460921305100869632



Watford FC with Watford Community Sports and Education Trust organised an online webinar on ‘Celebrating Interfaith Organisations Within Our Communities’, featuring speakers from One Vision and the Frank Soo Foundation. Active Oadby and Wigston led a discussion on health and wellbeing with local faith leaders and faith-based groups and organisations. Participants discussed the role that they could play in challenging health inequalities across the borough.

Archery GB posted an article about Archery and Islam, with quotes from members of Leicester Archery Academy discussing their faith and their

involvement in the sport. There were also social media posts, such as that from BASES (British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, pictured on page 9 encouraging involvement in the week.

Sporting Equals shared, through a series of blogs, its work with Muath Trust; Muslimah Sports Association; Lady Aisha Academy; and Salvation Army Barking through the Breaking Boundaries project. The project seeks to build social cohesion and community ties across faith groups and ethnic groups through the power of sport.

Active Oadby and Wigston team invited faith leader and faith based groups to a conversation a challenging health inequalities across the Oadby and Wigston borough. This had inputs from faith groups in the borough about what they are doing to support the well-being of their members and the wider community.

Sport Roehampton arranged a table tennis tournament for students at Southlands College and Digby College in Roehampton.

Many sports activities were held by organisations that use sport as part of wider work, for example Dewsbury's Kumon Y'all which engages young people, empowering them to identify and tackle problems and issues faced by the community.

twitter.com/KumonYall/status/1461080926134448141

**Kumon Y'all**  
@KumonYall

Our **#celebration** of **#InterFaithWeek** carries on with a **#favourite** and one **#annual** event that promotes **#unity** and **#fun** for all the **#community** It's always been about **#serving** others and setting aside **#differences** to **#helpothers** always. Everyday. **#grassroots #startlocal #actglobal**



9:16 PM · Nov 17, 2021 · Twitter for Android

**Breaking Boundaries**  
@bboundariesuk

Today we will be reflecting on the work we do to deliver community cohesion and greater **#InterFaith** empathy through sport in honour of **#InterFaithWeek** by shining a light on **@MuslimahAsso!** **@IFWeek**

[sportingequals.org.uk/news-and-blogs...](https://sportingequals.org.uk/news-and-blogs...)



Breaking Boundaries and 3 others

11:27 AM · Nov 20, 2021 · Twitter Web App

twitter.com/BMTEngage/status/1460670515010580481

**Aik Saath**  
@AikSaath

Final moments of preparation for our hosts, Louise and Ananya, for our **#InterFaithWeek** Quiz, in partnership with **@bboundariesuk!** Ananya is also an **@iwill\_movement** Ambassador - and this is a fantastic way for the girls to give their time to the community. **#iwillweek**



6:17 PM · Nov 20, 2021 · Twitter for Android

twitter.com/BMTEngage/status/1460670515010580481

# 20. Inter Faith Week 2021 Participation Executive Summary

Inter Faith Week 2021 was a Week of widening participation which saw an increase in engagement from a range of different organisations from libraries to hospitals. Following on from a year affected by lockdowns and other restrictions, the Week for many marked the return of in-person inter faith activities.

The activities which took place successfully highlighted the importance of community cohesion and of celebrating the contributions that faith communities, working together, can make towards the common good. The following is a summary of key facts and figures from this report.

**873 activities are known to have taken place as part of Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.**

**This year's increase of 156 activities, or 22%, suggests that the Week is getting 'back on track' after the impact of COVID-19.**

**Activities were organised by 861 different organisations, with 33% of activities organised in partnership.**

**Around 46% of partnership activities were between 'Faith-based' (including inter faith) and secular bodies.**

**54% of survey respondents said their organisation had worked with another organisation or organisations with which they had not worked before and 89% of respondents found that their activity helped them to reach new people or groups.**

**34 workplace staff networks took part in the Week, over double the number which participated in 2020.**

**49 activities are known to have been held by staff networks for Inter Faith Week 2021: an increase of 32% on figures for the previous year.**

**The number of schools involved in Inter Faith Week has increased significantly, rising 143% between 2019 and 2021.**

**There was greater involvement overall from both hospices and hospitals as a combined category from 29 in 2020 to 52 in 2021: a 79% increase.**

**The known number of libraries, museums and galleries involved in the Week increased in 2021 by 163% to 21 organisations and the activities that they held rose from 9 to 23, an increase of 156%. The end of COVID restrictions and targeted encouragement to libraries to participate may have been factors in this.**

**15 national and regional inter faith bodies took part, holding 33 activities. This was a slight drop of 12% on 2020; a number of them had just taken part in activities to mark COP26 and given that their focus.**

**89 local inter faith organisations are known to have taken part in the Week – an increase of 16% on 2020.**

**The official Inter Faith Week tag, #InterFaithWeek was used over 5,000 times across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.**

**34 local authorities organised activities for Inter Faith Week in 2021 hosting 53 activities themselves or in partnership with other organisations: a 10% increase on 2020 figures.**

**In the post-Week survey 93% of survey respondents said that participation in the Week added value to the work that they do and 82% of respondents said that taking part in Inter Faith Week helped raise the profile of their work.**

**In 2021, 31% of all activities were explicitly identified by organisers as having an education or learning component. These included activities at schools, universities, and further education colleges; as well as talks and seminars hosted by local inter faith groups, charities and others. Many other activities, while not described primarily in terms of learning, also had a significant educational benefit.**

29 fully completed surveys were received from a wide spectrum of types of body. Desk research into individual report events, correspondence with activity holders, in-depth discussions with university chaplaincies and student bodies as well as information shared at subsequent IFN meetings, enable the themes to be explored more widely.

**55% of survey respondents for 2021 used the Week as an opportunity to do something that they had not done before, like trying a new kind of activity, reaching out to a different audience, or launching a new resource or initiative.**

**Tweets about Inter Faith Week appeared on the feeds of 13 million Twitter users, a total of 42 million times.**

# 21. Building on Inter Faith Week 2021, looking to 2022

People used to the 2021 Week in ways that have helped them build for the future, developing longer term projects and programmes and broadening involvement as a result of taking part. 79% of survey respondents said their organisation was planning a follow-up activity in the coming months.

Just a few of the comments offered:

***“I’m incredibly proud of what we’ve achieved and the impact we’ve had as an employee forum. Regardless of a person’s religious or non-religious beliefs, everyone should be proud of who they are and be respected. Whilst the #AllInGoodFaith event was such a positive experience, it is just the beginning and there is so much more to be done to continue the discussion. I can’t wait to see where we take it next.”***

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL

***“We are organising our annual programme that involves us meeting for our monthly Interfaith sessions. We are also planning to take part in other events within the City to help raise our profile even more and to also organise an inclusive festival in the summer involving other organisations as well as the City of York Council.”***

YORK INTER FAITH GROUP

***“We invited people to contribute short passages from their Scriptures on the topical theme of Faith & environment, which they could read, in Welsh. Not only did this bring different faith communities together it also engaged Welsh speakers particularly.”***

FAITH GROUP

***“It was an inspiring session that highlighted the unique challenges that faith communities face at work and the common ground often discovered via interfaith discussion...”***

***Thank you to all the panellists for your openness in sharing your stories – a great step in breaking down barriers and opening the lines of communication across sectors, within the faith community and beyond. We hope to work with these partners again for future events.”***

CBRE D AND I

***“Inter Faith Week is really good because it’s at the start of the year, so it enables the new exec to get to know other society execs and then sort of form a new connection, which is really helpful. So it’s quite early in the academic year for us. ... because of those connections that we made during Inter Faith Week with the other societies it enabled us more easily to get together later in the year and have other events.”***

STUDENT INTERVIEWED AFTER IFW 2021

***“...have made new contacts – I hope now to be able to get them involved in other activities – and so increase the size of our network and influence.”***

LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

## Looking to 2022

97% of the of respondents to the survey said that they would either ‘definitely’ or ‘probably’ be organising an Inter Faith Week activity again in 2022 and the Inter Faith Network for the UK is working to broaden the reach even further.



The Inter Faith Network will be working towards a 2022 Inter Faith Week which draws on learning from the 2021 Week to enable even more people to get involved and, through this, to learn about the contribution of faith groups to society and to strengthen and deepen inter faith understanding and good relations, including with those of non-religious beliefs.

If you would like to take part, visit [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org) where you will find a host of activity ideas; branding items such as flyer, poster and downloadable logo; and details on how to register your activity for a free registration pack.

If you are in Scotland, check out: <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

# 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

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

[www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)

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## Inter Faith Week

13–22 November 2022

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](http://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](http://www.interfaithweek.org) for resources and to register and publicise your activity. And don't forget to share your activities on social media! #InterFaithWeek

Note: Scottish Interfaith Week, led by Interfaith Scotland also runs 13–20 November 2022. [scottishinterfaithweek.org](https://scottishinterfaithweek.org)

The Inter Faith Network is grateful to all whose support for its work helps make this very special Week happen. To support Inter Faith Week and our wider work, visit: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate>. Thank you.

Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK  
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 ifnl@interfaith.org.uk  
[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

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Images in descending order, front and back: Staff at Southampton's Western Community Hospital with Solent NHS Trust Multi-faith Resource Group – IFW 'coffee and cake' diversity and acceptance awareness raising break; Stratford School Academy, Newham Student SACRE, with local faith leaders; Lower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum IFW celebrating faith communities building resident communities (Image: FaithAction); Inter-faith panel at Cardiff University, 'Positive pathways for Inter-Faith Week, Sunderland Interfaith Chaplaincy Centre; Rochdale and District Mind staff with IFW message; Chanting prayers and blessings for IFW, London Buddhist Vihara.






ABERDARE ALTRINCHAM AMBLESIDE ARUNDEL ASHBURTON ASHFORD ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE  
AYLESBURY AYLESFORD BALLYMENA BANGOR BARNLEY BARROW-IN-FURNESS BASILDON  
BASINGSTOKE BATH BATLEY BEDFORD BELFAST BENFLEET BIRKENHEAD BIRMINGHAM  
BLACKBURN BOLTON BOREHAMWOOD BOURNEMOUTH BRACKNELL BRADFORD BRAINTREE  
BREAMORE BRENTWOOD BRIDGEND BRIGHTON BRISTOL BROCKENHURST BROMSGROVE  
BRYNMAWR BURNLEY BURY BURY ST EDMUNDS BUSHEY CAMARTHEN CAMBERLEY  
CAMBRIDGE CANTERBURY CARDIFF CARTMEL CATHERINGTON CATTERICK GARRISON  
CHATHAM CHELTENHAM CHORLEY CLITHEROE COLCHESTER COVENTRY CRAIGAVON  
CRAWLEY CREWE CROSTON CROYDON DARLINGTON DARWEN DERBY DEVIZES DEWSBURY  
DORCHESTER DORSET DOUGLAS (ISLE OF MAN) DUDLEY DURHAM ECCLES ELLAND ELSTREE  
ESSEX EXETER FALMOUTH FARNHAM FERMANAGH FORDINGBRIDGE GATESHEAD GRAVESEND  
GREAT YARMOUTH GRIMSBY GUILDFORD GUISBOROUGH GWENT HALIFAX HARLOW  
HARMONDSWORTH HARROGATE HARTFORD HARTLEPOOL HATFIELD HAWKSHEAD  
HAYWARDS HEATH HEREFORD HEREFORDSHIRE HIPSWELL HITCHIN HOLMFIRTH  
HUDDERSFIELD HULL ILFORD KENDAL KETTERING KINGSBRIDGE KIRKLEES LAKESIDE LEEDS  
LEICESTER LISS LITTLE HADHAM LIVERPOOL LLANSANNOR LONDON LONDON (BARKING AND  
DAGENHAM) LONDON (BARNET) LONDON (BARNET) LONDON (BRENT) LONDON (BROMLEY)  
LONDON (CAMDEN) LONDON (CITY OF LONDON) LONDON (CITY OF WESTMINSTER) LONDON  
(CITY OF WESTMINSTER) LONDON (EALING) LONDON (ENFIELD) LONDON (GREENWICH)  
LONDON (HACKNEY) LONDON (HAMPSTEAD) LONDON (HARINGEY) LONDON (HARROW)  
LONDON (HARROW) LONDON (HAVERING) LONDON (HENDON) LONDON (HILLINGDON)  
LONDON (HOUNSLOW) LONDON (ISLINGTON) LONDON (KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA)  
LONDON (KINGSTON) LONDON (LAMBETH) LONDON (LEWISHAM) LONDON (MERTON)  
LONDON (NEWHAM) LONDON (PUTNEY) LONDON (REDBRIDGE) LONDON (RICHMOND)  
LONDON (SOUTHWARK) LONDON (SOUTHWARK) LONDON (SUTTON) LONDON (TOWER  
HAMLETS) LONDON (WALTHAM FOREST) LONDON (WANDSWORTH) LOWESTOFT LUTON  
MAIDENHEAD MALDON MALMESBURY MANCHESTER MANSFIELD MARGATE MEDWAY MILTON  
KEYNES NELSON NEWCASTLE NEWPORT NORFOLK NORTHAMPTON NORTHWICH NORWICH  
NOTTINGHAM OADBY OLDBURY OLDHAM OMAGH ONLINE/ VIRTUAL ACTIVITY ONLINE/  
VIRTUAL ACTIVITY ORPINGTON OXFORD PARTICIPATE AT HOME PENDLE PENDLE  
PETERBOROUGH PLYMOUTH POLEGATE POTTERS BAR PRESTON RADIO SHOW/PROGRAMME  
RADLETT READING RIPON ROCHDALE ROMFORD ROMNEY MARSH ROTHERHAM RUGBY  
RUNCORN SAFFRON WALDEN SALFORD SCUNTHORPE SHEFFIELD SHEFFORD SHREWSBURY  
SLOUGH SMETHWICK SOLIHULL SOUTHAM SOUTHAMPTON ST ALBANS ST ASAPH ST HELENS  
ST HELIER STAFFORD STEVENAGE STOCKPORT STOCKTON-ON-TEES STOKE-ON-TRENT  
STOURBRIDGE STRABANE SUNDERLAND SURREY SUTTON COLDFIELD SWAFHAM SWANSEA  
SWINDON TAUNTON TEIGNMOUTH TELFORD THE BOLDONS TIVIDALE TORQUAY TRURO  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS UFFCULME UK WIDE (EG MEDIA OR ONLINE CAMPAIGN) UK WIDE  
(EG MEDIA OR ONLINE CAMPAIGN) WAKEFIELD WALSALL WALTHAM ABBEY WARE  
WARRINGTON WARWICK WATFORD WELLINGBOROUGH WESTON-SUPER-MARE WHISTON  
WIDNES WILMSLOW WINCHESTER WINDSOR WINDSOR WOKING WOLDINGHAM  
WOLVERHAMPTON WORCESTER WORTHING WREXHAM YEovil YORK

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