



2019/2021

A REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK THROUGH A TIME OF COVID





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Front cover photos

- IFN Trustees at a Board meeting. Trupti Patel, President, Hindu Forum GB in foreground.
- Children planting trees at the 'Ahimsa' Peace Forest in Harrow during Inter Faith Week 2019. (Photo: Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur)
- Watford Interfaith Association's Chair, Harjit Singh, speaking at Watford and District Synagogue at its annual Inter Faith Week pilgrimage, 2019.
- IFN Trustees Esmond Rosen (Barnet Multi Faith Forum) and Leonie Lewis MBE (Faiths Forum for London) at an inter faith vaccine drive with Markaz in London.
- Slide from Hetvi Parekh's presentation at the IFN National Meeting 2021, on Sewa Day's COVID-19 response in Nottingham.
- An IFN webinar for inter faith organisations on 'Preparing for Inter Faith Week 2020'. Left to Right: Ashley Beck, IFN; Penny Faust, Oxford Council of Faiths, Co-President of Oxford Jewish Congregation and Chair of Oxford Interfaith Friendship Walk; Narendra Waghela, IFN Co-Chair and member of Leicester Council of Faiths; the Revd Richard Martin, Chair of North Kent Inter Faith Relations Council; Kaneez Khan MBE, Near Neighbours West Yorkshire; Yogesh Joshi, Vice Chair, Watford Inter Faith Association; Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director; Dr David Hampshire, IFN; and Ed Petersen, Chair of Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum.

Back cover photos

- A winning entry from IFN's Social Media Photography Competition, featuring Shamim and Jenny from Touchstone Bradford.
- Attendees at 'A Day of Building Bridges and Valuing Visions', hosted by Devon Interfaith Forum for Youth and Devon Faith and Belief Forum for Inter Faith Week 2019.
- Lamin Konate of Muslim Council of Britain and Imam Qari Asim OBE, Chair of MINAB at IFN FCF meeting.
- Venerable Kalugamuwe Kassapa (Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB) at IFN FCF meeting.
- IFN youth inter faith roundtable, 2020.
- Lynne Mitchell and Emily Odudo at a celebration for Inter Faith Week 2019, organised by Lancashire Forum of Faiths and Near Neighbours East Lancs.

THIS REVIEW

This Review reports on the work of the Inter Faith Network for the two operating years from the July 2019 AGM to the July 2021 AGM. The unusual span of two years reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020. The Review complements the formal Trustees' Annual Reports published with the accounts, which are available on the Charity Commission website. Photographs in this Review were taken by IFN except where indicated.

INTER FAITH COOPERATION AT A TIME OF NATIONAL CHALLENGE

A MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

This is a Review unlike any previous one published by the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN): it covers two years, rather than one, and it tells the story of a contribution to inter faith understanding and cooperation at an unanticipated time of public emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the moment that the likely impact of COVID-19 became clear early in 2020, IFN moved at speed to help faith and inter faith organisations respond to this. It became a hub of helpful information and enabled people to connect at the most difficult of times. It achieved, despite all the circumstances, a major national meeting exploring the COVID response; two successful Inter Faith Weeks, the second of which in 2020 was largely virtual and which offered badly needed opportunities for connection; and a consistent and increasingly widely followed social media narrative of faith response which helped with cohesion and built morale.

Throughout this time its main work was sustained, despite remote working, funding challenges and the additional pressures of the pandemic. Meetings of its different member bodies continued: national faith communities; local, regional and national inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies. These meetings went online during the disruption of COVID and IFN worked nimbly and effectively to adapt to the changing dynamics and to help faith communities and inter faith bodies also to do so.

We are proud of IFN's work during this period – and of the sustained work of faith communities and inter faith bodies across the UK. Faith communities make a major contribution to society and rarely more so than at such times of crisis.

2019–2021 was a period when there were also impacts on society from terror attacks and continuing hate crime; growing public awareness of racial justice issues highlighted by Black Lives Matter following the murder of George Floyd in the USA; and also recognition of inequalities in matters such as health. Through meetings, statements and other routes, IFN sought also to engage with these and to help its members do so.

One of IFN's key aims relates to improving religious literacy and during this period IFN has produced two important resources to help primary (KS2) and secondary (KS3) pupils learn about inter faith activity in the UK and develop skills for dialogue and inter religious encounter.

IFN seeks always to widen the circles of those involved in working for inter faith understanding and cooperation. During this period, our new website section for young adults has contributed to that aim, with many suggestions for getting involved, as has outreach to college and universities. Inter Faith Week – IFN's largest programme – took place very successfully in 2019 and 2020 and involved thousands of people of different faiths and beliefs, many for the first time.

We pay tribute to the commitment and hard work of IFN's staff and volunteers during this challenging period and express our appreciation for the engagement and support of IFN's member bodies.

We would like to thank those whose grants and donations have helped enable IFN's work during these two years: faith communities, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (at that time the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government), trusts and individual donors and legators.

We encourage all readers of this Review to learn more about the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. Details of how to support this are in the box below and we close by expressing the hope that you may make a gift to support IFN's vital work to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Gifts at all levels are carefully used to make a real difference. Thank you.

The Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

March 2022

Trustees for the two years can be seen at pages 66–67

PLEASE SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

Please would you help us grow our vital work and help even more people get involved in working for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. You can make a gift at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate>.

Alternatively, you can make a gift by cheque, sending it to:
The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!



Trustees at a Board meeting

ABOUT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) was founded in 1987 to “advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and their common ground and to promote good relations between persons of different faiths.”

IFN’s role is unique – linking national faith community representative bodies, local, regional and national inter faith organisations, and academic and educational bodies with a focus on inter faith or multi-faith issues. IFN works with its member bodies and with others to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation as part of working towards its vision of “a society where there is understanding of the diversity and richness of the faith communities in the UK and the contribution that they make; and where we live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.”

The work of IFN, including Inter Faith Week, is wide-ranging, touching the lives of many thousands of people directly and through the organisations and initiatives with which it engages. The reach of its membership and its hundreds of informal links with other organisations enable it to make a powerful difference to inter faith engagement and integration across the UK.

It carries this out through sharing good practice, provision of resources, and empowering the type of interaction which promotes understanding and sparks cooperation for the wellbeing of all.

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

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019–2023

IFN’s current Strategic Plan runs from April 2019 to March 2023. Its Strategic Aims during the period are to:

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

These aims were pursued for the public benefit throughout the 2019–21 operating period through the activities detailed in this report.

COVID-19: IFN RISES TO THE CHALLENGE

The period of this Review covers the ‘normal’ period of activity from July 2019 to February 2020 and the period from March 2020 to July 2021 when COVID-19 made its presence felt on every front and IFN swung into action to help faith and inter faith bodies respond to the unprecedented challenges brought by this coronavirus.

On 31 December 2019, Chinese authorities notified the World Health Organization (WHO) of an outbreak in Wuhan City, Hubei of what was later classified as a new disease in the coronavirus family: COVID-19. On 12 January, WHO confirmed that this new coronavirus had affected a number of people there. On 30 January 2020, it declared the outbreak a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” (PHEIC). On 11 March, it declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

By 1 March, cases had been detected in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland (subsequently evidence emerged of earlier infections). March saw the UK Government and the governments of the devolved nations publish action plans and begin to put these into action. On 26 March the Coronavirus Act 2020 was passed into law. In each nation, there have been successive adjustments to plans to respond to the evolving pandemic, with the NHS and other key structures playing leading roles.

Across the 15 months that followed the first reported infections in the UK to the end of the period covered by this Review, almost every aspect of life was affected by the pandemic: physical and mental health and wellbeing; family interaction; religious observance; rituals and experiences associated with birth, marriage and death; social care; chaplaincy; education; work; commerce; the work of charities; volunteering; social activities; cultural activities and sport; travel and tourism; governance structures; the justice system; and more.

IFN responded across the full spectrum of its work: through briefings, sharing good practice and providing fora for addressing together the pressing issues of common concern. In doing so, it helped add strength to the work of faith organisations and other bodies such as health agencies and emergency response organisations which have been assisting millions of people in communities around the UK at a time of isolation and need.

Sharing vital information and supporting inter faith response

The impact of COVID-19 had many implications for faith communities:

- the need to provide guidance to their members, including signposting relevant Government guidance;
- operating with places of worship closed, necessitating use of online and telephone worship and pastoral services;
- restrictions on attendance at funerals and postponement of some other rites;
- potential difficulties in cremation or burial requirements being met;
- putting service into action on behalf of the vulnerable and those in need, especially with incomes reduced and supply chains interrupted; and
- significant operational and financial issues.

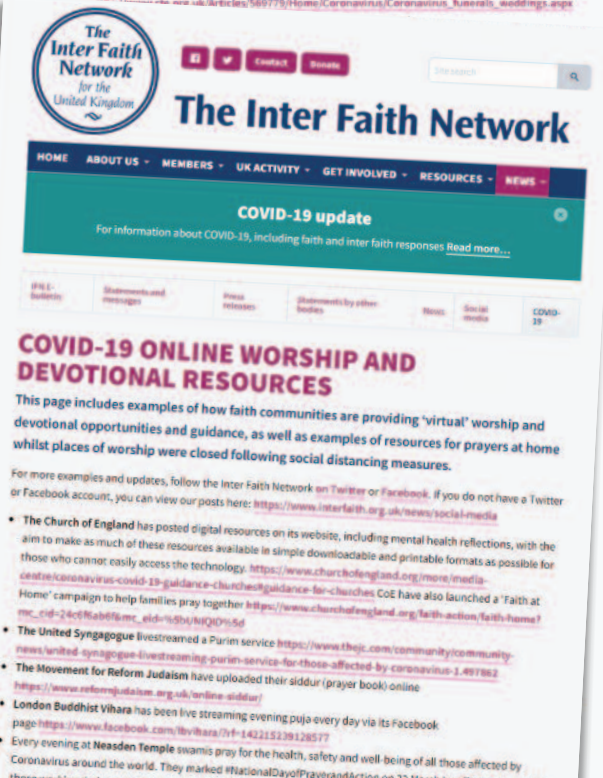
They also needed to respond to the vaccination programme: to encourage take up and counter misinformation; and provide vaccination centres and volunteers.

“The Institute of Jainology has over the past 12 months, worked tirelessly to ensure that the Jain community and its places of worship were both safe and contributing to supporting the wider community. In this effort, we are grateful for the support and advice we have received from IFN.”

From the start of the crisis IFN shared faith and inter faith responses on social media and sent regular updates by email to its member bodies which gave the key information on regulations in the different nations of the UK. Detailed information was provided in Circulars and IFN’s e-bulletin about those which covered places of worship and marking of festivals. When the vaccines became available, IFN focused many social media messages on that and its Board of Trustees put out a message of encouragement to be vaccinated.

IFN CREATED AND UPDATED REGULARLY A SPECIAL COVID-19 INFORMATION SECTION ON ITS WEBSITE [HTTPS://WWW.INTERFAITH.ORG.UK/NEWS/COVID-19](https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19)

- COVID-19 Government guidance
- COVID-19 Sharing messages and prayers from faith leaders
- COVID-19 A time to learn – religious literacy
- COVID-19 Pastoral and spiritual care for the sick
- COVID-19 Charities/voluntary organisations
- COVID-19 Civic engagement and information sharing
- COVID-19 Keeping existing projects going online
- COVID-19 Special initiatives
- COVID-19 Recovery and phased return
- COVID-19 Online dialogue and other inter faith activity
- COVID-19 Online worship and devotional resources
- COVID-19 Acts of kindness and service
- COVID-19 Funerals
- COVID-19 IFN member faith community organisations’ guidance



Examples of IFN social media during the pandemic

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Regulations on safe use of **#placesofworship** have varied within the different nations during the **#pandemic**. Being able to visit and **#worship** at them is a vital part of the life of devotees of many faiths. @CentralGurdwara @InterfaithScot @InterfaithGlasg #Sikh #gurdwara @SikhPA

Wattie Cheung @wattie7 - Mar 28, 2021

A young girl plays with her wee brother as their mother sits quietly at the Central Gurdwara in Glasgow. Today is the first Sunday that it has been open to worshippers since covid 19 lockdown rules were relaxed by the Scottish Government! #gurdwara #COVID19 @CentralGurdwara



Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

The multi faith nature of a city's fight against **#COVID19** and the contribution of **#BAME** communities captured in this vivid mural. lambirmingham.co.uk/2020/05/29/stu... #Birmingham #COVID19 #Art #health #murals @NHSuk @team_greenhalgh @DCMS @FaithLeadersGrp @BhamFaiths @BhamCityCouncil



lambirmingham.co.uk

Stunning new charity mural unveiled in Brum depicting the battle against COVI... A dramatic new mural depicting Birmingham keyworkers battling against COVID-19 against the backdrop of the city's skyline has been painted for charit...

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Starting the day with another positive story of how local **#interfaith** groups are helping support those affected by **#covid19UK** #Bristol @MultiFaithBRIS @mhclg

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum @MultiFaithBRIS - Mar 26, 2020

BMFF offers community support for the stranded, isolated and homeless. Please contact Chairman Mayor Tom Aditya chair@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk or 07852456283. Let's protect each other and save lives. We are in this together and we will get through this together.



STAY AT HOME
PROTECT THE NHS
SAVE LIVES

CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY SUPPORT EFFORT
We're in this together

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

"We are seeing the beginnings of people supporting each other in very simple local ways. This response is not like anything I've seen before." **#Croydon** Central MP Sarah Jones. Image: the Faith Together **#foodbank** Croydon @covid19uk swlondoner.co.uk/croydon-reside



UnitedReformedChurch @UnitedReformed

A **#community** service set up at **#Buxton** **#URC** to distribute surplus food during the **#pandemic** has just served up its 5,000th parcel. "It's amazing to have got this far," said Cath Sterndale who helped create the project with her son. ow.ly/bKJu50DJCMM #covid19 #coronavirus



Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Aylsham Parish Church **#Norfolk** & @BlicklingNT using creative way to provide a community pantry to help those in need. **#Covid19** @DioceseNorwich @churchofengland @ChurchesEngland @nthnorfolknews @team_greenhalgh @FaithActionnet @nationaltrust #phoneboxes northnorfolknews.co.uk/news/blickling...



Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

1000s of **#faithbased** **#voluntary** bodies in the UK play a key role in their local communities year-round, helping on many fronts from homelessness to tackling food poverty & now **#COVID19**. A key resource now & for the future; some urgently need support to survive. **#NeverMoreNeeded**.

Our unique role and services are invaluable right now and will be essential when our country begins to heal and re-build.

#NEVER MORE NEEDED

#NeverMoreNeeded

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

#Food initiatives to help those in need during the **#COVID19** **#pandemic** continue. **#Volunteers** from many different communities are involved. Here, **#Sikh** volunteers in **#Northampton** @SikhMessenger @SikhPA @mhclg



bbc.co.uk

Northampton Sikh food bank answers 'huge need' in pandemic: Northampton's Gurdwara Sahib is helping more than twice as many people as last year.


Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Part of a series of videos from @hfbritain encouraging continued vigilance and care re **#COVID19**, following Government guidelines and taking up the offer of **#vaccination**. **#Hindu** #vaccine @DHSCgovuk @mhclg @PHE_uk @NHSuk

Hindu Forum Britain @hfbritain - Apr 29, 2021

Question 9: How can we keep safe from Covid-19?

Dr Bhavina Pandya advises following all the government guidelines and taking the **#CovidVaccine** to protect yourself from **#Covid19**. [Show this thread](#)



79 views, many more on other people's profiles 0:34 / 1:28

Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK


For many faith communities, choral music & playing of instruments together are a central part of worship & devotion. Online harmony is taking the place at this time for some, as this @JewishNewsUK story reflects. #music #choirs #religion #COVID19 #Jewish



jewishnews.co.uk
LISTEN: Mish Hal alih records live ensemble performance remotely. Instead of producing individual recordings of each ensemble member a musical line, the group used specialist technology to perform live together.

Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

Guidance from #faith communities about #COVID19 #vaccination & stories of their practical responses - links in @ifnetuk website CV19 section. interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-... nhs.uk/conditions/cor... - links to government information on the issue. Photo: Daniel Schludi @unsplash



Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

Mosques and places of worship of other faiths continuing to work to counter inaccurate news about #COVID19 & #vaccines. This eg from @AlMustafaCentre #Middlesbrough @MbroCouncil @BBSOnline @mhclg @NHSuk @PHE_uk @MINAB_UK @MuslimCouncil #placesofworship middlesbrough.gov.uk/news/mosques-f...



Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

Reflections from #NorthernIreland on #faith and #COVID19. belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/features/... @BelTel



Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

Faith communities continuing to respond to #COVID19 with practical acts of kindness, as reflected in this assistance from St Mark's Church #Wrexham @ChurchinWales @StAsaphDiocese @CytunNew leaderlive.co.uk/news/18630480... #churches



leaderlive.co.uk
How a Wrexham church is keeping people safe amid local coronavirus spike. A CHURCH in Wrexham, close to the location of recent coronavirus mobile testing units, has issued more than 600 face visors to those in need.

Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

One of a number of roundtables being held by @team_greenhalgh @mhclg linked to the recently published guidance on reopening of #worshipplaces. #Covid19UK #PentecostalCharismatic @ChurchesEngland

Stephen Greenhalgh @team_greenhalgh · Jul 1, 2020
Excellent roundtable with Pentecostal and Charismatic Church Leaders discussing recently published @GOVUK #Covid19UK places of worship guidance. Thanks to all including @charleskod @k_dipo @JacquelinePeart @AdeOmooba @NigPat @rccuk



Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

During the #COVID19 pandemic, many places of #worship have been streaming services & devotions. Individual members have also used social media to share their devotions - as this piece by @minkaur5 for @ReiMedCentre reflects. tinyurl.com/y7yn8ftt #Sikh #Kirtan @MankamalSingh



Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

#London Borough #Hackney's first united day of prayer, with powerful reflections on hope, #faith, justice, caring and community at this time of #Covid19UK and a minute's remembrance of those lost. Arr #HackneyFaithsForum youtube.com/watch?v=y_t74P... @mayorofhackney @Ettisade



youtube.com
Hackney Day of Prayer

Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

A number of local #interfaith organisations have been playing an important role in the #COVID19 #Vaccine roll out. #London #faith @LGACOMMS @DHSCgovuk @mhclg @nadhimzahawi @team_greenhalgh @IslingtonBC @NHSEngland @ucih @HWIslington @LondonAssembly @LondonFaiths @ArchdeaconLuke

IslingtonFaithsForum @IFFForum1 · Mar 16, 2021
IFF worked with the NHS and Islington Council on this amazing multi faith event at the Business Design Centre on 15th March - to give a blessing to the new vaccination centre - our huge thanks to all who supported!!! @IslingtonBC @ucih @HWIslington



Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

An example from #London of #faith community leaders putting out a joint message about the importance of #vaccination against #COVID19. #interfaith



youtube.com
Our community faith leaders share an important message &... Watch our faith leaders share their important messages about the vaccine.

Inter Faith Network
@IFNetUK

#Muslim and #Jewish #doctors launch London's first mobile #COVID19 #vaccination unit. jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/muslim-and-jew...



“I just wanted to thank you for this and other timely communications (via social media too) which have proved extremely useful. There is so much information coming from the Government, news broadcasts and other sources as the situation changes week by week and even day by day at the moment, and it can be difficult to keep up. Your email today has helped me in both of my current roles, as chair of an interfaith forum, and as a local authority ‘community champion’ to disseminate up to date information, about the QR codes needed in places of worship for example.”

LOCAL INTER FAITH FORUM CHAIR, WEST
MIDLANDS

External engagement

IFN staff provided input and information to a wide range of COVID consultations including those hosted by: the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; the National Council for Voluntary Organisations; Public Health England; the National Crime Agency; the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Cabinet Office. Its Assistant Director also participated in a series of meetings arranged by a

COVID-linked faith leader grouping called Faiths United, drawn together by Maurice Ostro.

IFN meetings – from in person to online as pandemic hits

Until February 2020 IFN continued to hold its usual face to face meetings: two regional link meetings for Local Inter Faith Organisations; a meeting for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies; and two meetings of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum. (See pages 14–25 and 32–34.)

Following the arrival of COVID-19 the local inter faith practitioner day due to be held in Reading in late March 2020 was cancelled; a Faith Communities Forum meeting at the end of March 2020 moved online; and IFN switched from that point to holding all its meetings virtually for the remainder of the period covered by this Review.

IFN then held extra meetings, with a special focus on COVID-19, of its Faith Communities Forum and for its member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies. It was also in touch with Local Inter Faith Organisations, offering help and support, and it continued holding its local link meetings for the latter virtually.



Supporting and digital upskilling

During this period, there were regular phone calls to local inter faith groups to learn how COVID was affecting their work and how well they were managing to adjust to a largely digital mode of engagement. Quite a number were struggling, particularly during the earlier period, to get to grips with technology. IFN offered direct support and advice on this through a number of ‘digital surgeries’.

IFN also held a session for Faith Communities Forum members (see page 12) on using social media.

National Meeting and AGMs

All IFN’s member bodies usually come together each year at a National Meeting to explore a particular theme of importance to the development of inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. The meetings are practically focused, with an emphasis on sharing good practice.

IFN’s Board of Trustees decided to postpone the 2020 National Meeting until the following March. The 2020 AGM, which was due to have been held in

July was moved to September and held virtually, in keeping with the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020.

The National Meeting took place in March 2021 and the 2021 AGM was held in July, as a ‘hybrid’ AGM. More about the National Meeting can be found on pages 35–40.

Inter Faith Week 2020

Inter Faith Week, covered at pages 46–64, moved almost wholly online for 2020. The office developed materials to support online events and held a webinar on ‘Getting Together at a Time of COVID-19’ (see page 11) with ideas for participating virtually.

A full report on the 2020 Inter Faith Week can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-week-2020-connection-learning-and-cooperation-at-the-time-of-covid>.

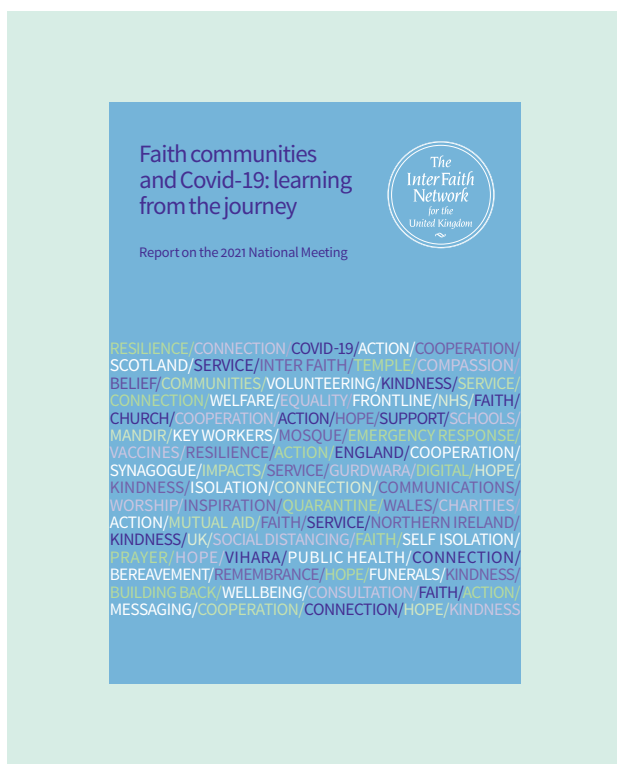
COVID-19 related statements

A number of COVID-19 related statements were issued during the period by IFN’s Co-Chairs and its Faith Communities Forum Moderators. An example of one of the statements issued, on 13 January 2021, can be seen overleaf and at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-covid-responding-together-at-a-time-of-need-a-statement>

On 31 March 2020, the Co-Chairs and FCF Moderators issued <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus-a-statement>

On 10 February 2021 IFN’s Board of Trustees issued a statement on COVID-19 vaccination. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-vaccination-a-statement>

A statement was also issued by IFN’s Co-Chairs and FCF Moderators at IFN’s National Meeting on 23 March 2021 in the context of a National Day of Reflection, led by Marie Curie UK. [See Page 35] <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-issued-at-ifn-national-meeting>



Faith communities and Covid: responding together at a time of need – a statement by the Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators of IFN

We stand at the outset of this new year at a point of both greater hope and greater danger in the COVID-19 pandemic: hope, with the arrival of vaccines; danger, with the accelerated transmission of the virus in its recent mutation.

We express anew our profound gratitude to all working to tend to the health of those affected by COVID-19 and to respond to its wider impacts: NHS and other health and care workers; emergency response services; providers of food, medicine and other vital goods; teachers, transport workers and those in public service; other 'key workers'; faith leaders in local communities; and all others who make such a difference to our daily lives at this time.

Faith communities have, since the outset of the pandemic, continued to provide a vital spiritual and pastoral framework for their members. They have also provided a powerful resource for wider society through their social welfare programmes and the outstanding volunteering initiatives of their members throughout the nations of the UK. We stand together at this time of need.

As vaccine programmes are rolled out, faith leaders and scholars are providing guidance that provides reassurance of the vaccines' acceptability in terms of religious requirements – and the religious and moral bases for choosing vaccination. Members of faith communities are also providing volunteer support to assist the rollout in a number of areas.

We know that the faster transmission of the recent mutation of the virus brings a need for the greatest of care in terms of abiding by requirements for distancing, wearing of masks, cleaning of hands and surfaces and ensuring replacement of air through ventilation. Since the most recent lockdowns, restrictions have closed a wide range of facilities such as 'non-essential' shops. The nations within the UK have taken varying positions on whether places of worship may open for communal worship. Where they are permitted to meet, faith communities are redoubling efforts to ensure safety. Some who are permitted to open are doing so. Others are choosing not to do so, on the basis of judgements about such factors as the demographic and age bracket of their worshippers and the size of their buildings. Where opening for communal worship is possible, whatever the approach taken, we encourage continued high attention to community safety.

During 2020 we saw outstanding responses from faith community volunteers. We know that this will continue in 2021. As before, it is crucial that volunteering takes place within the official guidelines. We have been heartened to see the inter faith dimension of a number of initiatives, for example joint drives for food banks and use of each other's premises for distribution of supplies. In adversity, and in service of others, new bonds of understanding and friendship are being forged.

We have also welcomed the important conversations and mutual learning about COVID-19 response that have taken place between national faith communities – and continue to take place – through the Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the inter faith structures of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Important to note also are temporary Government instruments such as the Places of Worship Task Force in England; as well as COVID-related initiatives such as Faiths United and a number of area specific initiatives. Locally, faith groups are playing, together, a very significant role alongside local authorities and others in responding to the pandemic.

Faith communities and their volunteers remain a very important part of the response of society overall to the pandemic, alongside others.

It is vital that all within society respond in ways which can enable us all to move forward together: the vulnerable and those in need arm in invisible arm with those who at this time are stronger; the old and the young; people of all backgrounds.

We are only as strong as our common bonds. Moving forward together in this way can give us our strongest chance to build together a renewed common life and a healthy and positive future for all.

13 January 2021

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-covid-responding-together-at-a-time-of-need-a-statement>

INTER FAITH GOES DIGITAL: HELPING PEOPLE CONNECT IN NEW WAYS

The arrival of COVID-19 threw into sharp relief the divide between people who were able to use digital communication and those who were not.

There was a rapid scramble to learn how to use platforms like Zoom and Teams and to figure out the best ways to engage in the new world of online meetings and events. IFN helped its member bodies get up to speed – and also learnt from them.

Learning how to use digital communications

DIGITAL ‘SURGERIES’

IFN offered online and by phone ‘surgery’ slots for local inter faith groups to have a conversation about their use of digital communications and how they might strengthen this.

WEBINARS

In June 2020 IFN held a webinar for local inter faith organisations, marking the Great Get Together, ‘Getting Together at a Time of COVID-19’.

Facilitated by IFN’s Development Officer, Ashley Beck, this included opening reflections from Jay Anderson, IFN Trustee from the local inter faith category (Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship and Leeds Faiths Forum), about the Great Get Together, and four presentations from local practitioners:

- ‘Using digital technology to bring people together for dialogue and consultation and to widen and strengthen our work’ by Himanshu Jain, Chair, Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum;
- ‘Taking your local inter faith programme digital and responding to current needs’ by Shabaz Ahmed, Community Development Officer, Building Bridges Pendle;
- ‘Sharing prayers, poems and readings at this time of COVID-19’ by the Revd Anthea Ballam, Co-chair, Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group; and
- ‘Using virtual meetings for the regular getting together of local inter faith bodies’ by Avtar Singh Matharu, Chair, York Interfaith Group.



There were closing reflections from two of IFN’s Trustees from the local inter faith membership category: Esmond Rosen (Barnet Multi Faith Forum) and Patricia Stoa (Nottingham Inter Faith Council).

A recording of the webinar can be watched at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/getting-together-at-a-time-of-covid-19>.

IFN offered to familiarise local inter faith organisations with Zoom so that they could easily attend webinars and regional link meetings (see below).

IFN also held a webinar in July 2020 with ideas for taking part in a largely virtual Inter Faith Week. This was facilitated by IFN’s Inter Faith Development Officer, Ashley Beck. Introductory reflections were offered by Narendra Waghela, IFN’s Co-Chair drawn from the local inter faith category and for many years an active member of Leicester Council of Faiths. 3, Coordinator of Near Neighbours West Yorkshire, spoke about widening involvement and being open to honest interaction and IFN’s Assistant Director, Dr David Hampshire provided practical pointers and ideas for marking the Week at a time of COVID-19.

Yogesh Joshi, Vice-Chair of Watford Inter Faith Association, offered reflections on considerations



Webinar on preparing for Inter Faith Week

that local inter faith organisations may want to bear in mind when considering whether to hold physical meetings and events such as walks; and Penny Faust – member and former Chair of Oxford Council of Faiths, Chair of the annual Oxford Interfaith Friendship Walk, and Co-President Oxford Jewish Congregation – spoke about practical aspects of organising a successful online inter faith walk, taking in a number of local places of worship.

The Revd Richard Martin, Chair of North Kent Inter Faith Relations Council, spoke about how its committee commissioned a local video maker to create a special Inter Faith Week video including clips of people of different faiths from North Kent talking about ‘hope’ – in the context of COVID-19 but also more generally. Closing reflections were offered by Ed Petersen from the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and by IFN’s Executive Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree.

In December 2020 a webinar for local inter faith organisations on ‘Using Zoom Effectively’ was facilitated by IFN’s Executive Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree. This included reflections from Es Rosen and Jay Anderson, Trustees of IFN; an overview of Zoom from Ashley Beck; and presentations from members of Aberdeen Inter Faith Group, Building Bridges in Burnley and Southampton Council of Faiths about how they have used Zoom to good effect in their work.

A recording of this special webinar can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/webinar-on-using-zoom-effectively>.

FCF special social media session

In January 2021, IFN held a session on social media for the Faith Communities Forum. Members explored the pros and cons of platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and also key issues such as: whether/when/how to address prejudice and hate posts; using social media alongside traditional forms of communication to encourage engagement; implications of individual personnel having separate social media accounts from their organisation and COVID-19-specific issues such as tackling disinformation and promoting volunteering initiatives.

The session included a practically focused overview presentation from IFN, and peer to peer learning – with inputs from Hassan Joudi, Deputy Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain; Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary of Hindu Council UK; and Paul Parker, Recording Clerk (CEO) of Quakers in Britain as well as others through roundtable discussion.



Prof Avtar Singh Matharu, York Interfaith Chair, whose reflections appear on the facing page

A LOCAL INTER FAITH CHAIR'S REFLECTIONS ON THE USE OF ZOOM

York Interfaith is a relatively small organisation but we do talk with all the major faith groups in York. Across the last year many of us have become well-versed in using Zoom. I'll be talking about some of its pros and cons that we've found as a group. And then finish with how we'll move ahead as an organisation.

To begin with, the positive aspects of Zoom and similar technologies:

- They bring people together, albeit virtually. It's an enabling technology. You see people, you hear voices, and you observe backgrounds. Ultimately we just have a conversation, and that can bring positive mental and wellbeing benefits. It's really interesting that as I'm sat here, even though I'm talking to a screen, I feel a strong relationship which I otherwise sometimes don't have in a large room. I'm only about 50cm away from the screen and it's almost as if everyone is with me rather than when I'm 5m away in a large seminar room. That's an interesting fact that I've observed.
- You don't have to be on video. You can attend in your pyjamas if you want to!
- You don't have to travel. This has in the past been a restriction for York Interfaith Group because our meetings are held once a month in the evening and there have been issues with travelling in the winter, especially for families.
- We are all in a comfortable venue. We're all in the privacy of our own four walls.
- There are no geographical restrictions. We've had visitors and guests joining us from Spain regularly for our meetings. We regularly get about 40 attendees in our meeting now which is quite good.
- There are lots of whizzes and bangs with interactive technology! Sometimes it's a challenge just for most of us to connect, so we tend to use it as a chat medium rather than for breakouts or electronic boards.
- A huge success of Zoom for us has been Inter Faith Week. We had record numbers attending our events during the Week because of Zoom and all the benefits I've just mentioned. Dee Boyle, the group's Vice Chair, had a counter and noted that over 350 attendees took part during the Week. For a community as small as York that's impressive.

And now, some of the limitations, which I'm sure we've all encountered:

- Security is a big issue. We post our Zoom invites only to our members with a strict message not to share with any third party. If anyone wants to join they have to email York Interfaith Group to get the link. That has worked well. We also keep attendees in a holding room. Only when people can recognise a name are they allowed in. Obviously the person in charge has got control of the meeting so it's really important that they know how to use Zoom. If there are any rogue entries that person can then quickly react.
- Technophobia can also be a problem.
- Poor internet connection is an issue.
- Accessibility is also an issue. We held a seminar on faith and disability, and within that we asked the question, "How does Zoom work"? We are not making full use of subtitles or closed captions which we should do more.

A lot of has already been said about the importance of communicating and that must continue. The road ahead for York Interfaith Group is a blended model. A blended model of life, virtual, but also virtual live. Virtual live is a model we're exploring with the City of York Council where we hope to have a live event with speakers and an audience that is then also livestreamed for anyone who wants to watch.

Professor Avtar Singh Matharu, Chair, York Interfaith Group talking at an IFN meeting.

NATIONAL FAITH COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC LIFE

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

Faith Communities Forum

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

The modelling of positive inter faith engagement by senior figures within the national faith community bodies is an important dimension of the Forum and

one which IFN social media coverage of its meetings helps amplify.

Our membership of the network not only aligns with our teachings of tolerance and compassion, but also allows us to work together with other faiths, especially during these difficult times.

THE INSTITUTE OF JAINOLOGY

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

In person meetings

In-person meetings of the FCF were held on 3 October 2019 and 12 February 2020. The following items were on the agendas for those meetings:

- Exiting the EU, with officials from the former Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) and from the Engagement, Integration and Communities Directorate Brexit Team of the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) speaking about different aspects of EU Exit planning with a particular reference to faith communities, followed by a wider discussion about faith communities and EU Exit, including their role at this time of transition and the potential impact of it on them
- Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, with a presentation from an official from the Department for Education
- Speaking together peacefully to counter extremism and hate crime
- Inter faith engagement and joint work of faith communities
- Freedom of religion and the safety of faith communities





Faith Communities Forum meeting in 2019

- Other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities, including a short presentation from a staff member of Keep Britain Tidy about its Annual Spring Clean, and how faith communities can get involved

At its February meeting the FCF also agreed a statement on 'Cooperation and positive coexistence: Faith communities in the UK'. This focuses on their commitment to respectful and positive engagement. It can be found at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/cooperation-and-positive-coexistence-faith-communities-in-the-uk>.

The meetings also give a chance for participants to learn about each other's traditions and at each meeting there is a short reflection relating to the main agenda theme from one of the representatives. At the February 2020 meeting reflections were offered from the Revd Philip Brooks, United Reformed Church, on the theme of relationships and education in the Christian tradition.

Moving online and increasing frequency of FCF meetings as the pandemic began

Following the implementation of the first full lockdown in March 2020, meetings of the FCF moved online. They were held more frequently to enable faith communities to respond together to COVID-19 in a timely way. Virtual meetings of the FCF were held in 2020 on 30 March, 30 April, 27 May, 25 June, 28 July, 21 October and 2 December and in 2021 on 18 February, 26 April and 21 June.

Immediately following the 30 March 2020 meeting the Co-Chairs, Jatinder Singh Birdi and the Rt Revd Jonathan Clark, and FCF Co-Moderator, Mr Malcolm Deboo wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

At each of the virtual meetings there was extensive discussion on matters relating to COVID-19 and faith communities. Topics discussed included:

- closure and re-opening of places of worship
- providing online worship, pastoral and educational resources
- burial, funerals and cremation
- financial impacts and management matters
- providing guidance
- providing pastoral and practical support to members
- the 'digital gap'
- encouraging voluntary action to aid those in need
- ethical principles and decisions on care
- the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people from BAME backgrounds
- faith community/Government engagement
- community assistance work and responding to needs
- financial impact on places of worship and faith institutions
- 'building back'



Rabbi Morchechai Wollenberg at FCF meeting

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
11 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AB

30 March 2020

Dear Chancellor,

We write to you following a meeting today of national faith community organisations linked in membership by the Inter Faith Network for the UK.

Their first thoughts are, as you will imagine, with all those affected by Covid-19 and their prayers are for their wellbeing. Their communities are each working to support their membership at this time and also to reach out to all in service to help the vulnerable and those in need.

It was noted at today's meeting that the Government is taking significant measures to tackle Covid-19 and to ensure maximum stability of the structures of our society and our economy.

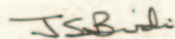
We understand that consideration is currently being given to a package of measures that might undergird the work of charities and other voluntary organisations at this particularly difficult time.

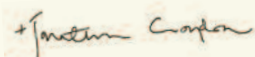
The work of charities is vital for the long term wellbeing of society. We are hearing that many faith-based charities are among those in jeopardy of closure or looking likely to suffer long term damage to their valuable work. This is as a result of a number of factors such as loss of income from cancelled lettings and undeliverable services and drop in donations. This at the same time as many are working as hard as they can to help those affected by COVID-19.

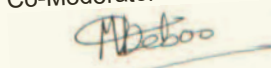
We very much hope that resources can be found so see through to the far side of this terrible pandemic as many charities as possible, including faith-based charities. It will be important that such funding as may be available to charities does not exclude faith-based bodies and places of worship which are registered charities.

We close by wishing you and your fellow Ministers and MPs good health and every success in the crucial endeavour of helping us all come through this testing time and we thank you for all you are doing.

Yours sincerely,


Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair, Inter Faith Network for the UK


Rt Revd Jonathan Clark, Co-Chair, Inter Faith Network for the UK and
Co-Moderator IFN Faith Communities Forum


Mr Malcolm Deboo, Co-Moderator IFN Faith Communities Forum



Promoting mutual respect
and understanding between
the faith communities
of the UK

Co-Chairs

Mr Jatinder Singh Birdi
The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark

Honorary Treasurer

Rabbi Maurice Michaels



Miss Jay Anderson
Mrs Josephine Backus
Mr Keith Bishop
The Revd James Breslin
Mr Mohinder Singh Chana
Mr Malcolm M Deboo
Professor Brian Gates MBE
Mr Pejman Khojasteh
Ms Sabira Lakha
Mrs Miriam Levene
Mrs Edit McCathie
Mrs Trupti Patel
Mr Ed Petersen
Mr Esmond Rosen
Dr Natubhai Shah MBE
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- the vaccination rollout and vaccination passports
- faith communities and communications during the pandemic
- documenting and learning from faith communities' response to the pandemic
- thinking about the road ahead for faith communities
- the pandemic and inter faith relations

There were also Agenda Items on:

- Hate crime and terrorism
- Faith communities and the 'the3million' campaign, with a presentation by Ms Ilse Mogensen, Head of Advocacy for that campaign
- Faith and BAME communities, with opening reflections from Bishop Dr Joe Aldred of Churches Together in England
- Health and spiritual care, with a presentation by the Revd Mark Burleigh, Chair of the Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care in Health
- The importance of faith communities in relation to climate change and the environment, with a presentation by Rabbi David Mason about Green Shabbat and Eco Synagogue
- The Kruger report: *Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant*
- Safeguarding at a time of COVID, with a presentation by Simon Bayliss, Senior Practice Development Manager of the Social Care Institute for Excellence



- Inter Faith Week
- Government engagement with faith communities, with a presentation by Colin Bloom, the UK Government's Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Freedom of expression in relation to religion or belief, with reflections from Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
- 2021 Census, with a presentation by Pete Benton, Director of Population and Public Policy Operations at the Office for National Statistics
- Faiths, the environment and COP26, with a presentation by Dr Shanon Shah, Director of Faith for the Climate, on planning for the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP26)
- Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities
- Protect Duty consultation, with a presentation by Home Office officials
- Places of Worship Security Scheme for England and Wales, with a presentation by Home Office officials
- Calendars of religious festivals, with a presentation by Paul Hopkins, Senior Editor and Co-Chair of the Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals.



- The call of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) for evidence about racial and ethnic stereotyping in advertising and the role of the ASA in responding to complaints, with a presentation by James Jones, Complaints Executive, ASA
- Inter faith engagement of faith communities
- Other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities

Because of the urgency of pandemic issues and the shift to shorter more frequent meetings, the usual opening reflections from different faith communities were not included, with the exception of reflections at the April 2021 meeting by Minister David Bruton on the basis in the Spiritualist tradition for addressing climate change.

“The information on Funerals (in the roundtable discussion) and the discussion on buildings and the gradual coming out of “Lockdown” was extremely interesting”

“I found the preparatory papers very helpful with links that enriched the papers.”

“As Quakers, one of the most valuable aspects of belonging to FCF is the increase in understanding that comes through hearing the sharing of problems that have arisen both in our increasingly multi faith society and in particular in our diverse faith bodies. Sometimes these come as a surprise as did many of the Covid related issues around ablutions, use of alcohol-based sanitisers and vaccinations. The IFN supported FCF to respond by meeting more often during the pandemic and the solidarity which built up through sharing of options and solutions to such issues was heart-warming and strengthened our interfaith connections.”

The FCF has ten Moderators: two Co-Moderators, who jointly chair the Forum, and eight Vice-Moderators. Six Moderator places are held by the largest communities: Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, and Buddhist. The other places are held in

rotation agreed by the other groups. The Moderators have a particular role in relation to statement-making (see page X).

A meeting of the Moderators was held in November 2019. The focus of its discussion was the forward work of the FCF and a statement request.

The usual period of office for FCF Moderators is three years. In September 2019 a number of Moderators had reached the end of their term and new appointments were made.

From September 2019 the Co-Moderators were:
The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark (Christian)
Mr Malcolm Deboo (Zoroastrian)

The Vice-Moderators were:
Minister David Bruton (Spiritualist)
Mr Mohinder Singh Chana (Sikh)
Mr Hassan Joudi (Muslim)
Rabbi David Mason (Jewish)*
Mr Neil Pitchford (Druid/Pagan)
Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala (Buddhist)
Mr Vinay Shah (Jain)
Dr Vinaya Sharma (Hindu)

*In February 2021 Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg became the Vice-Moderator from the Jewish community.

Exiting the EU

A note, ‘Exiting the EU – the important role of faith communities at a time of transition’ was developed by the IFN office in the light of discussion at the October 2019 FCF meeting and subsequent correspondence with FCF members. The former Department for Exiting the EU and the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government were also consulted in the development of the note.

The note highlighted faith communities’ trusted role in signposting information and as providers of community support and their vital work to unite communities, promote good relations and tackle hatred. It was circulated to member bodies and put up on IFN’s website on 31 October 2019. It was recirculated and shared on social media on 31 January, when the UK left the European Union.

The note can be found on IFN’s website at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/leaving-the-eu-the-important-role-of-faith-communities-at-a-time-of-transition>.

STANDING TOGETHER

The Inter Faith Network for the UK plays an important role both in highlighting faith communities standing together in the face of terrorism, hate crime, and other social evils; responding to these; and helping others do so.

Terrorism

We condemn, in the strongest terms, terrorism and the extremist ideologies that underpin it and we call on all to stand together and speak out in the strongest terms against them.

FROM AN IFN STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE LONDON BRIDGE TERRORIST MURDERS OF 2019

During the period covered by this Review, terrorist attacks took place in the UK and in other countries – often directly targeting places of worship, which created a climate of anxiety and worries about security. IFN responded with timely statements about standing together and with provision of security information to members.

- On 29 November 2019 two people were murdered and a number of others injured in a terrorist stabbing attack at London Bridge by a convicted terrorist out on licence. IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum

issued, on 1 December, a statement in response to the attack.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-attack-at-london-bridge>

- On 21 June 2020 three people were murdered and three seriously injured in a knife attack by a man in Reading. This was subsequently judged to be a terrorist attack. A statement was issued, on 21 June, on behalf of the Board and Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum.
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-terrorist-attack-in-reading>
- On 29 October 2020 there was a fatal attack at the Notre-Dame Basilica in Nice in France. A statement was issued, on 30 October, on behalf of the Board and Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum in the context of UK inter faith relations.¹
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-recent-terrorist-attacks>
- On 20 May 2021 a statement was issued, at the time of recent events in Israel and Gaza, responding to UK inter faith impacts of overseas events. This is reproduced below and can be

¹ IFN's Policy on the making of statements is at https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Policy_on_making_of_statements.pdf.

Responding to inter faith impacts of overseas events

A STATEMENT BY THE CO-CHAIRS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES FORUM MODERATORS OF IFN

There are times when political and other events overseas have a significant and distressing impact on communities here in the UK and on relationships between them. Recent events in Israel and Gaza have seen significant impacts in the UK: antisemitic incidents, such as the megaphone abuse from a car driving through an area of North London last weekend; a car ramming of a pro-Palestinian march in Nottingham, many of those marching in which were Muslims; bullying by children in some schools; some reports of worsened campus relations; and increased abusive social media posts. These kinds of experience can bring vulnerability and fear – particularly if they come in the context of long term experiences of prejudice or tensions.

At such times, the right of people to express their strongly held views is recognised, as is its importance. At the same time, we call for expression of views in peaceful and respectful ways; for increased dialogue and practical actions such as fundraising to help those affected; for support for children and others particularly vulnerable to swirling and sometimes frightening currents of argument and accusation; and for holding fast to long established relationships of trust that have been built across many years.

20 May 2021

found at:

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-from-ifn-co-chairs-and-fcf-moderators-responding-to-inter-faith-impacts-of-overseas-events>

Following a number of other attacks during the period, such as that in Streatham in February 2020, IFN's Co-Chairs issued messages.

Hatred and division

Concerns about hate crime have also continued to be high. In all cases, IFN has gathered and shared stories of solidarity and amplified these through strong use of social media. Just a few examples include sharing, with comment details of how to report hate crime, of tweets on:

- hate crime on the London Underground
<https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1404372779080822784>;
- an attack on gravestones in a Jewish cemetery in Belfast
<https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1384121171625406466a> and
- a Women's Interfaith Network Zoom meeting on Faith and COVID hacked by racists and participants subjected to racist abuse and video clips with racist emblems and violence
https://twitter.com/Win_Interfaith/status/1280080358558650368/photo/1.

The pandemic saw particular communities targeted and the subject of conspiracy theories. The Chinese British community and Muslims were among these and IFN highlighted this issue through posts such as <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/3056063487777539>, as well as through other routes.

There were also times during the period which saw attempts to sow division, for example in the run up to elections and bye-elections, as in Batley and Spennings Dale.

On 25 June 2021, IFN's Co-Chairs and FCF Moderators issued:
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-from-ifn-co-chairs-and-fcf-moderators-inter-faith-relations-and-election-campaigning>. (See opposite page).

They had also issued a statement in October 2019: 'Disagreement, protest, and respect'.
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/disagreement-protest-and-respect-a-statement>



Looking after one another

'Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities' is IFN guidance on responding jointly to attacks on

places of worship; working for calm at times of tension; and working to build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations. It contains material about how and where to report hate incidents, cyber-attacks, and actual or suspected terrorist activity; where to find information on strengthening the security of buildings; and where to find information about working to build – and strengthen – good inter faith relations locally.

The guidance was published in partnership with the then Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the National Fire Chiefs' Council.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>



Inter faith relations and election campaigning: Statement from IFN Co-Chairs and FCF Moderators

A STATEMENT BY THE CO-CHAIRS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES FORUM MODERATORS OF IFN

We affirm the right of people to express, within the law, their strongly held views, including during election campaigning. However, it is vital in our diverse and democratic society that views are expressed in a peaceful and respectful way and also that care is taken that observations on situations locally, nationally or abroad do not reflect or play into antisemitism, Islamophobia or hatred of other communities.

During election campaigns, symbols and images of different faith communities are sometimes co-opted and manipulated by organisations and/or public figures to justify or promote divisive political agendas. A recent example of this is a campaign leaflet for a far-right candidate for election in Batley and Spen, with a crude collage of the candidate against the background of a local church and with a large image of a cross. Slanted and inaccurate portrayals of religious and cultural history often accompany such misuse of imagery.

At such times, solidarity of response from faith communities and inter faith initiatives is crucial: nurturing existing good relationships between different communities and seeking to safeguard those; speaking out against politics of division which set communities against each other; rebutting misappropriation of our respective faith communities' symbols, traditions and history; reporting any hate incidents; and encouraging informed dialogue and respectful expression of views at all times. 25 June 2021

Racism and racial justice

During the period of the pandemic, the racist murder in the USA of George Floyd took place.

At its meeting in June 2020, IFN's Board of Trustees offered reflections on #BlackLivesMatter. This is reproduced overleaf.

A Circular to member bodies drew attention to a collation of statements and responses by IFN member bodies responding to the killing of George Floyd and subsequent murder charge, the ensuing protests and actions taken by authorities, as well as addressing the fundamental issues of racism and discrimination. This collation created by IFN can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-member-responses-to-killing-of-george-floyd-subsequent-events-and-racial-injustice>

IFN also shared information about member bodies' responses to the killing of George Floyd and engagement with the #BlackLivesMatter campaign on social media. On Facebook, a longer item was posted, which included similar material to the Circular.

Issues of racial justice and equality continued to be addressed during the period, particularly through the Faith Communities Forum. Inter Faith Week provided another context for their being addressed by a number of IFN member bodies such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Leeds Faith Forum, and by others.

The BoDCast: Navigating Faith, Race and Identity in 2020
Thursday 12th November
6:00PM - 7:00PM

- Chaired by **Stephen Bush** - Chair of Commission on Racial Inclusion in the Jewish Community and Political Editor of the New Statesman
- Rev Celia Apeagyei-Collins** - Christian Pastor and Founder of Rehoboth Foundation
- Clr Awale Olad** - Camden Councillor and Somali Muslim
- Jodeci Joseph** - Black-Jewish Motivational Speaker

LFF Inter Faith Week
Leeds Faith Forum

BLACK LIVES MATTER LEEDS

United for Racial Justice Through Faith

Woking People Of Faith
Diverse Beliefs. United Action.

What Are Religions Doing About Race Inequality?

Woking People of Faith held a Zoom webinar on Thursday 12th November during Interfaith Week to discuss the topic of "What are Religions Doing About Race Inequality?" Simon Trank, our Chair welcomed 48 people and handed over to Donovan Black, who gave an introduction on his parents' background in Jamaica and then told us how the case for them in England. Donovan recommends a further reading list as follows:

Natives: Race & Class in the Ruins of Empire by Akiba Black & Brittan

A Forgotten History by David Cusack Widdowah by Mike & Trevor Phillips forthcoming.

#BLACKLIVESMATTER

REFLECTIONS FROM THE BOARD OF IFN AT ITS MEETING ON 9 JUNE 2020

Thousands have protested in the USA in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on 25 May as well as in response to other deaths and acts of brutality and to racism today and across recent centuries. The UK has also seen a number of such protests.

Many of the Inter Faith Network's member faith communities, inter faith organisations and educational and academic bodies have made statements or held discussions about the issue of racism and how to address it.

At the turn of the Millennium, IFN supported the faith communities of the UK in the development of an Act of Commitment which was said as part of the official event at the Houses of Parliament. That Act of Commitment opens with words said by the faith community representatives.

*In a world scarred by the evils of war,
racism, injustice and poverty,
we offer this joint Act of Commitment as we
look to our shared future.*

When the Act is used – as it has been thousands of times since it was first said, by organisations in the UK and in other countries – those opening words are sometimes dropped or others substituted. The faith community leaders 20 years ago felt strongly the need for them and the words have particular resonance at this time.

The Act of Commitment continues:

*We commit ourselves,
as people of many faiths,
to work together
for the common good,
uniting to build a better society,
grounded in values and ideals we share:*

*community,
personal integrity,
a sense of right and wrong,
learning, wisdom and love of truth,
care and compassion,
justice and peace,
respect for one another,
for the earth and its creatures.*

*We commit ourselves,
in a spirit of friendship and co-operation,
to work together*

*alongside all who share our values and ideals,
to help bring about a better world
now and for generations to come.*

Faith communities are diverse and yet there are profound values that they share. Each has fundamental teachings that can empower action for justice and peace. These are a basis for standing up to oppression; they are foundation blocks for a just society and for a world where people are united in their common humanity.

There have been – and are – times when teachings in faith traditions have been used in ways that encourage or justify racism, with people acting in racist ways or complicit in racism. Understanding and responding to past episodes and periods in history and to incidents and structural racism in the present is part of an ongoing journey both for communities and their individual members.

We know that faith communities are reflecting at this time on how best they can draw on the teachings and fundamental values in their traditions to support education and action for change towards a more equal and mutually respecting society unscarred by racism.

We hope that the coming months will see faith and inter faith conversations and projects that can help make a long term difference to attitudes in our society.

At this time of COVID-19, so much of our encounter is 'virtual' but let us find ways to reach out and create greater understanding and build on commonalities. Later this month it will be again the Great Get Together. That commemorates the life of the late Jo Cox MP by encouraging people across the UK to focus on the powerful message "We have more in common than that which divides us".

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/blacklivesmatter-reflections-from-the-board-of-ifn-at-its-meeting-on-9-june-2020>

The Act of Commitment can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/act-of-commitment>

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATIONS

Among IFN’s member bodies are 30 inter faith organisations whose work is carried out at UK or national level or which, while regionally focused, are used by people more widely. They are important resources for people who want to get involved in inter faith – and in some cases intercultural – activity.

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

In March 2020 a meeting was held for these bodies and also IFN member bodies in the Educational and Academic Bodies category. The joint nature of the meeting reflected an overlap of common interests and concerns.

On the agenda were:

- Responding to climate concerns, with presentations by the Revd Adam Dickens of the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby and Ms Atmica Reddy, a post graduate student at Derby University, and Jamie Cresswell, Chair, Religions for Peace (UK)
- round table updates on member bodies’ current inter faith work; issues of current interest and concern
- teaching and learning about inter faith activity in the secondary phase



Meeting for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies, March 2020



Further joint meetings for the same member categories were held in January and June 2021. At the first there was discussion about how inter faith and educational and academic bodies help support Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) and other key memorial days and weeks such as Remembering Srebrenica, with a presentation by the Revd Nathan Eddy, Interim Director of the Council of Christians and Jews, about the importance of engagement with HMD and one from Ashley Beck of IFN about Inter Faith Week. There was also sharing of news, information and current concerns, including responding to COVID-19 and discussion of emerging issues of shared interest and concern and IFN matters, including planned youth and school resources.

At the joint June meeting, in addition to sharing of news and good practice, there was discussion of plans for activities in the run up to COP26. Dr David Hampshire, IFN's Assistant Director, gave a presentation on 'Religious and inter religious literacy'. 'Building back' from COVID-19, and IFN matters were also addressed.

A virtual meeting was also held just for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations in April 2020 to share news of how they were responding to COVID-19 and to discuss related issues of interest and concern.

National Inter Faith Linking Bodies

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

IFN works closely with these bodies and each year arranges a meeting with them to enable sharing of news and good practice for mutual strengthening of work for inter faith understanding and cooperation. The meetings usually rotate between Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. However, during the pandemic, they were online in September 2020 and June 2021.

Both meetings included updates from the participating bodies and discussion of: Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week; IFN matters; and



matters of current interest and concern. The 2021 agenda also covered COP26 and national inter faith linking work post EU exit and in the context of perspectives on independence and union.

Members from the devolved national linking bodies also attend the general meetings for this NRIFO category and can attend meetings of the FCF. A number of them did so during the period. As well as enabling exchange through meetings, IFN makes known the work of the linking bodies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales through resources and social media. There is some reciprocal attending of meetings, for example by IFN staff of Scotland's annual event for local inter faith groups.

You can find out more about the work of the national inter faith linking bodies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland at:

<https://interfaithscotland.org>

<https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru>

<http://niinterfaithforum.org>



RELIGIOUS AND INTER RELIGIOUS LITERACY

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

Supporting and adding value to the work of educational and academic member bodies

IFN's member bodies include a number of educational and academic bodies which, in different ways, work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Some are specialist academic institutions, or a part of these, and others are educational bodies with a focus on relevant areas, such as Religious Education in schools. One of the ways that IFN contributes to religious and inter religious literacy is through supporting these bodies in a number of ways. For example, it helps raise the profile of their work through channels such as website profiles and social media posts.

IFN also contributes to strengthening their work through opportunities to share news and good practice. As noted on pages 23–24, joint meetings for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies were held in March 2020, January 2021 and June 2021. As well as the joint meetings held for bodies of this category and of the National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations category, a virtual meeting was also held for IFN member Educational and Academic Bodies in June 2021 to share their responses to COVID-19 and to discuss any related issues of interest and concern.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/list/educational-and-academic-bodies>

IFN creates new resources for inter religious literacy in schools

Citizens of a diverse society need good dialogue and reflection skills to help them 'live well together', establishing common ground and engaging well with difference.

This is very important to the continued development of an integrated society.

2019–21 saw IFN create two significant new resources for schools to help pupils learn about inter faith activity in the UK and develop skills for dialogue.

Both use examples from across different communities. Given the complexity of curriculum requirements across the UK, the resources were shaped in the context of English curriculum requirements. However, they benefited from the input of the national inter faith linking bodies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and also draw on examples from their nations.

The first of the resources, *Learning about inter faith activity*, is for primary schools at Upper Key Stage Two (9 to 11 years). It was launched for Inter Faith Week 2019. It consists of a teacher introduction and five units:

- Religious Diversity in the UK and the importance of Inter Faith Activity
- Introducing Inter Faith Activity
- Let's Talk – Inter Faith Dialogue
- Making a Difference in the Community: Inter Faith Social Action
- Team Spirit – Inter Faith Sport.

The resource can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource>.



'I wish to congratulate you on your excellent publications for schools. We ... will most definitely draw attention to these tools which will help us in our work.'

AN INTER FAITH ORGANISATION EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The second resource, *Inter Faith Activity in the UK*, was published in March 2021 and is for teachers and pupils at Key Stage 3 (ages 11 to 14). It has a teacher introduction and five units:

- Introducing Inter Faith Activity in the UK
- Let's Talk – Inter Faith Dialogue
- Faith Communities, Service and Solidarity
- Faith Communities in Service for the Wellbeing of Others
- Making a Difference in the World – Inter Faith Responses to the Climate Crisis.

The resource can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-activity-in-the-uk-a-teacher-resource-for-secondary-pupils>.

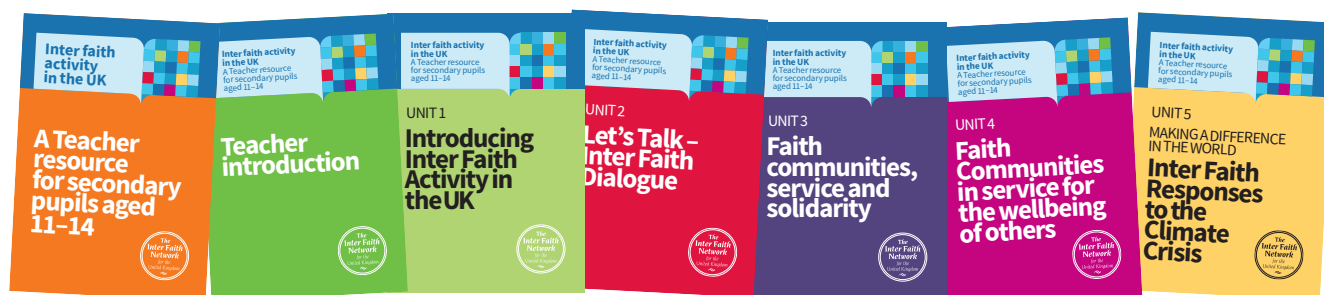
Both the primary and secondary resources provide opportunities to explore the concept of worldviews in RE – for example what religious and non-religious worldviews have in common; or how multi faith and inter faith encounters and joint action demonstrate particular forms of commitment on the part of different faiths and belief traditions to work together.

The secondary units were created in such a way that they can serve as a useful springboard for GCSE study as the material is relevant to such topics as social justice, values and shared ethics. The resource can also support schools in providing SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) education since it enables pupils to think about 'British values' and values shared by different religions and to learn about the social capital that faith communities and inter faith bodies bring to their locality and to the UK as a whole.

'... Having trialled the materials we revisited our learning and then also held an interfaith collective worship time. It was really thought provoking and I know our children got lots out of it so a huge thanks for this.'

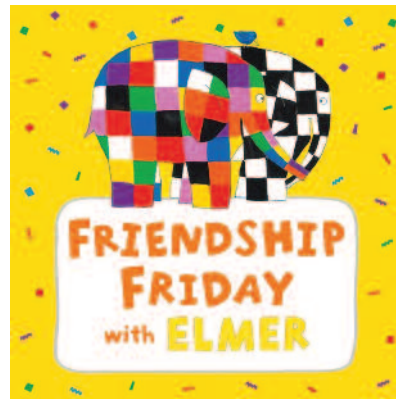
KEY STAGE 3 TEACHER

IFN was grateful for the valuable assistance in creating these of: contacts at IFN member bodies the Religious Education Council for England and Wales, the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and the Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (WASACRE); other member bodies which responded to a request for materials or provided concept feedback; teachers and schools which piloted material and gave input; IFN Trustees and Faith Communities Forum members; and number of other individuals. IFN's Assistant Director, Dr David Hampshire led on the project.



Addressing faith and belief linked bullying of primary aged children

IFN collaborated with anti-bullying charity Kidscape to provide a special blog for 'Friendship Friday' (FF) on the Friday immediately before Inter Faith Week 2019. That year the theme for FF was about people finding ways to be kinder and friendlier. Kidscape invited IFN to provide a blog for parents and carers of primary age children to share some pointers about the importance of faith and belief; encouraging respectful inter faith engagement; and working to prevent faith and belief-linked bullying. The blog was highlighted by both organisations



during the Week, and widely circulated. It can be seen below and at www.interfaithweek.org/news/inter-faith-week-and-friendship-friday.

HELPING YOUR SCHOOL ENCOURAGE A FAITH AND BELIEF FRIENDLY ETHOS: AN IFN BLOG

Policies: Find out about your school's relevant policies such as those relating to inclusion, anti-bullying, values and respectful behaviour. Do they pick up the importance of faith and belief and of respectful inter faith interaction? Could they be strengthened in an appropriate way to help lessen the likelihood of bullying relating to religious or belief identity?

Anti-bullying tools: Kidscape's "Top tips for schools" gives some ideas on how to manage concerns about bullying and you may find these helpful to read. Also useful will be the NSPCC's online resource: [Bullying and Cyberbullying](#).

Other ideas: Talk with your child's teacher or another member of staff about how they might encourage an even stronger ethos of inter faith respect through such routes as:

- Promoting values such as empathy, co-operation and respect
- Helping pupils to learn about the religions and beliefs of fellow classmates
- Inviting speakers in from local places of worship/ communities of different faiths and beliefs
- Ensuring that there is good quality RE and that the ethos of the school benefits from that learning – for example there could be displays about the different faiths through the year as well as noting of their key festivals.
- Arranging visits to local places of worship
- Taking part in Inter Faith Week (see www.interfaithweek.org/resources/schools-2)
- Talking about how pupils may be part of different faith communities – and also that some people have 'religious beliefs' and some have non-religious beliefs – and encouraging pupils to be respectful of each other's views and family and community contexts
- Reminding pupils in all school contexts that respect and friendship are two of the things that make our lives better!

Extract from IFN blog for Kidscape for Inter Faith Week 2019 and Friendship Friday on tackling faith and belief linked bullying

YOUTH INTER FAITH ENGAGEMENT



In 2019 and 2020, IFN used Inter Faith Week as a key way to engage HE and FE students.

Supporting young adult inter faith dialogue and action

During 2019, IFN used Inter Faith Week as the primary focus for encouraging youth inter faith activity. Every registration pack sent out included a copy of *Connect: a youth inter faith action guide* to encourage all kinds of organisations to hold further activities involving young people.

Intern Madiha Hussein did targeted outreach to a number of institutions during the Week. The NUS Vice-President for Welfare wrote a blog post encouraging involvement in the Week and re-tweeted a number of tweets about the Week and activities being held on Campus. The main NUS account also highlighted the Week and the blog post.

Although the pandemic had an impact, a significant number of institutions took part, as noted on page 27 of <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/interfaith-week-2020-connection-learning-and-cooperation-at-the-time-of-covid>

IFN held a by invitation Zoom meeting on 9 November for a number of youth inter faith initiatives to talk about their work and discuss the significance of youth inter faith engagement for the future of the UK. The focus of this significant discussion was on activities involving, and in some cases run by, young people in approximately the 16–25 age range. Participating organisations were; Barnet Multi Faith Youth Forum; British Organisation of Sikh Students; Catalyst (Near Neighbours); Catholic Student Network;

Council of Christians and Jews Campus Leadership Programme; Devon Inter Faith Forum for Youth; Faith and Belief Forum; Faiths United Youth Network; Inter Faith Youth Trust; Interfaith Scotland; LSE Faith Centre; National Hindu Students' Forum; Religions for Peace UK Youth Network; Student Christian Movement; The Feast; and Union of Jewish Students.

Sponsor an intern!

Each year, IFN aims to offer two three month internships.

As well as bringing fresh ideas and insights to IFN, these help provide a chance for learning about the field of inter faith skills and gaining skills and experience. The internships are paid at the Living Wage.

If you would like to support an internship in 2022 or 2023, IFN would be delighted to hear from you!

Please contact the Executive Director ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or 0207730 0410 for further details.



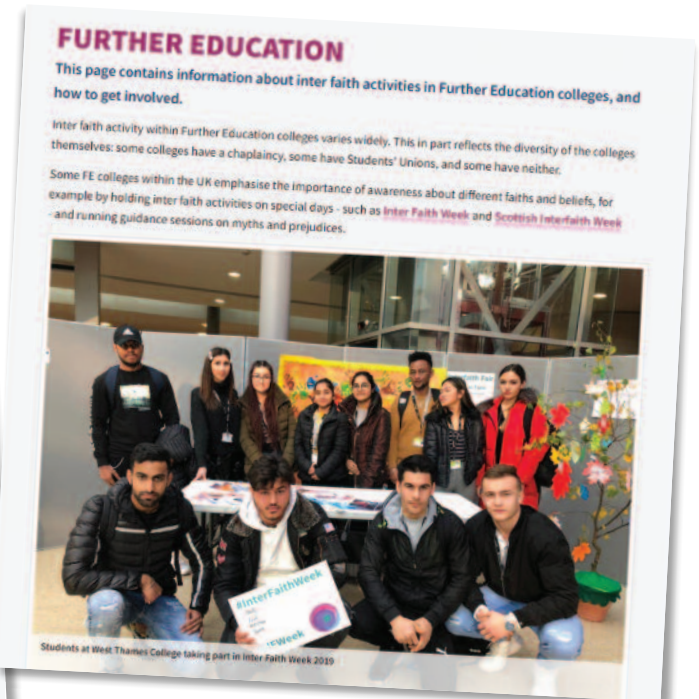
A new youth inter faith website resource

In 2019–20 IFN Project Assistant Ruth Foster researched and created a new website section for young people of 16 to 25, including in Further Education and Higher Education contexts. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/activity/youth-inter-faith-engagement>

The website section contains succinct and practical material about: what inter faith activity is, why it is important, and different ways that young people can get involved.

It is designed to help strengthen youth inter faith engagement by:

- Giving ideas for ways to get involved
- Highlighting online and printed resources that others have found helpful when running inter faith initiatives with young people
- Providing links to youth inter faith initiatives
- Sharing information on inter faith activity within HE and FE institutions



The resources and materials included draw on suggestions from: youth inter faith bodies; inter faith bodies with youth programmes; chaplains and student unions' presidents at Higher and Further Education Institutions; national student faith and belief bodies; and youth organisations with inter faith programmes.



SUPPORTING LOCAL INTER FAITH ACTIVITY

The UK has become increasingly diverse across the last decade. Local inter faith organisations play a very important role in developing understanding and cooperation in their areas. Their activities include:

- Promoting inter faith understanding through discussion/dialogue
- Joint social action projects
- Visits to places of worship
- Faith trails and multi faith walks or pilgrimages
- Educational events or exhibitions
- Assisting at multi faith civic ceremonies
- Shared meals
- Inter Faith Week events
- Providing speakers to help school children learn about different faiths from practitioners as part of Religious Education
- Working to prevent community tensions and also to respond to these when necessary
- Enabling and supporting joint responses to major events
- Diversity training
- Providing advice and assistance to public bodies

Their work differs in pattern from area to area – for example in less diverse areas, groups often play a particularly important role in arranging speakers and educational opportunities to increase religious literacy.

There are currently around 292 local inter faith initiatives known to IFN in the UK. There are 3 local groups of the Women’s Interfaith Network; 11 independent bilateral and trilateral groups as well as 16 local groups of Nisa-Nashim and 27 branches of the Council of Christians and Jews.

IFN supports grassroots inter faith activity through an active programme which includes: providing resources such as publications and special focus sections on its website; helping local inter faith enquirers with contacts and advice to strengthen their initiatives; visiting and speaking with groups; enabling local inter faith practitioners to share



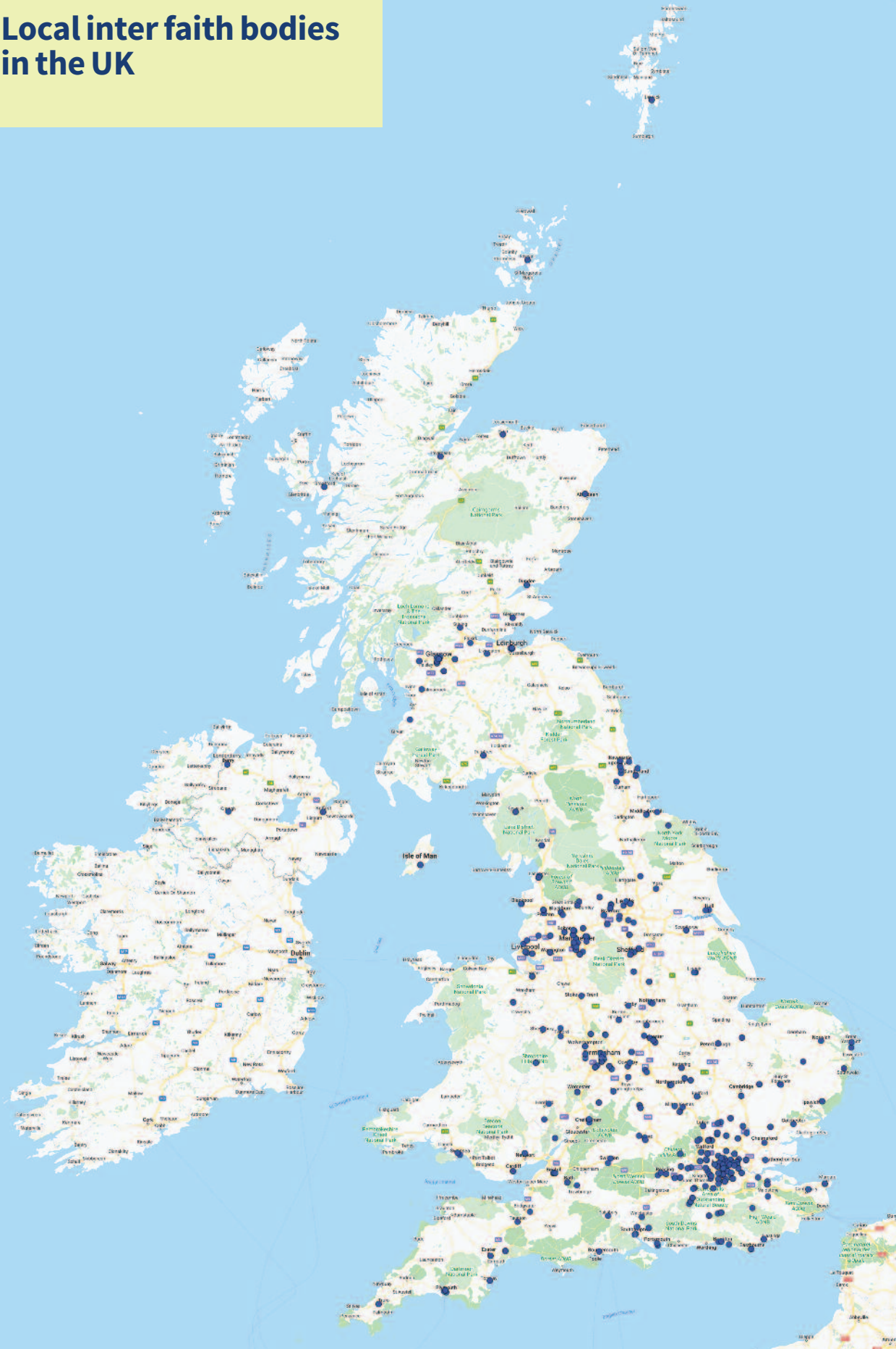
IFN Project Assistant Madiha Hussein (on the right) at a Herts Interfaith and Herts County Council conference ‘Stronger Together’

insights and practical learning through special meetings; highlighting to local authorities the important resource that local inter faith bodies provide; and using Facebook and Twitter to encourage more people to join their local inter faith organisation.

IFN also leads on Inter Faith Week which is one of its key programmes (see pages 46–64). Local inter faith initiatives play a key role in the Week, marking it in a wide variety of creative ways. IFN highlights these through its work to support the Week.

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

Local inter faith bodies in the UK





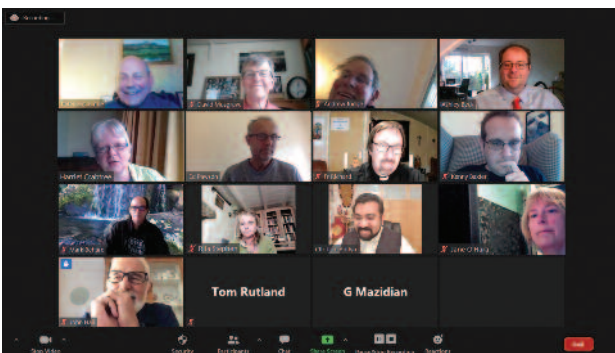
Above and immediately below: Participants at Link meeting for local inter faith groups in Kent



Sharing good practice and meeting together

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own, and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county.

Meetings took place as planned in Maidstone in February and early March 2020, respectively, for local inter faith bodies in Kent, and Preston for groups in the North West of England. A meeting for groups from across the UK in Reading which was due in late March had, however, to be cancelled due to the increased impact of COVID-19.



Virtual link meeting for local inter faith groups in the South West



IFN Trustees from local inter faith bodies: Esmond Rosen, Jay Anderson, Jatinder Singh Birdi (then Co-Chair) and Patricia Stoa, Autumn 2019

At both meetings news was shared from each of the groups represented, and there was discussion of topical issues of interest and concern. There were also agenda items on Inter Faith Week, and on experiences and views of places of worship ‘open door’ days. At the Kent meeting, the County Council gave a presentation on its involvement in Inter Faith Week. At the North West meeting, there were opening reflections from Preston Faith Forum about its Inter Faith Week activity. The latter meeting was kindly hosted by the Oasis Faith and Spirituality Centre at the University of Central Lancashire.

Regional link meetings went online as the pandemic took a grip. During the remainder of 2020 virtual meetings were held in England for local inter faith organisations in the East Midlands (29 June), North East (27 July), South West (27 August), West Midlands (22 October) and East (27 November). Each began with a short overview of IFN and its work relating to COVID-19 and then included sharing of news of programmes and projects being run by each group, including discussion about opportunities and challenges, and Inter Faith Week.

In 2021 virtual meetings were held for local inter faith organisations in Greater London (19 January); Yorkshire and the Humber (20 May) and the South East of England (14 June).

On the Agenda for the Greater London meeting were: ‘London resources for local inter faith bodies’ with presentations by Mustafa Field, Director of Faiths Forum for London, and Steve Miller, Convener of the London Boroughs Faiths Network; round tables to share news, information and ideas (including how COVID-19 is shaping activity); and discussion of emerging key issues and themes.

On the Agenda for the Yorkshire and Humber meeting were: round table sharing of news, information and ideas (including reflections on how COVID-19 has been shaping activity, COP26 and climate change discussions and activities, and Inter Faith Week plans); support, encouragement and learning from communities, with a presentation by Near Neighbours’ West Yorkshire Coordinator Kaneez Khan MBE; local inter faith bodies and engagement with schools and other education settings, with a presentation by IFN Assistant Director Dr David Hampshire; and local inter faith online and digital presence and activity.

On the Agenda for the South East of England meeting were: South East England Faiths Forum, with a talk by its Chair, Kawther Hashmi; round tables to share news, information and ideas (including impacts of COVID-19, Refugee Week, the lead up to COP26 and Inter Faith Week); local inter faith bodies and engagement with schools and other education settings, with a presentation by IFN’s Assistant Director Dr David Hampshire; and local inter faith online and digital presence and activity.

SOME COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS:

“It was great to hear about all the different project and events that are going on, it helps us work together and not duplicate or reinvent the wheel.”

“It’s great to link up organisations from across the North West as there is little opportunity to do so otherwise.”

“Very interesting to see how local groups managed to invent new ways of connecting/engaging with members during the lockdown.”

“As a first timer this was an excellent introduction. Thank you”

“Very useful to hear about what the different interfaith groups in Kent, Bexley and Bromley were doing, and their experiences.”

“I wrote lots of notes, and I feel really inspired to see if we can move forward here in Great Yarmouth.”

“It was useful to hear what each organisation is doing and how they have adapted and coping with the current situation and we are all learning from each other’s good practices.”

“For a meeting of this size, Zoom is an excellent medium, because it is possible to see and hear everyone all the time, so the communication was genuine and helpful.”

Assistant Ruth Foster visited events linked to Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum and Islington Faiths Forum. FCF Vice-Moderator, Minister David Bruton of the Spiritualist National Union, visited a service held by the Greater Yarmouth Interfaith and Belief Network.

In February 2020 the Assistant Director visited Cumbria and met with representatives of the South Lakeland Interfaith Forum in Kendal. Further in-person visits were prevented due to COVID-19.

“I was invited to talk about Inter Faith Week and afterwards stayed for the AGM. It is always good to have the chance to join groups for their AGMs, when they look back across their year’s work and plan for the coming year, as well as elect their new officers.”

HARRIET CRABTREE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FOLLOWING VISIT TO HASTINGS DISTRICT INTERFAITH FORUM EVENT

Visits to local groups

IFN staff usually visit and meet with a number of local inter faith groups as part of a planned pattern of engagement to learn more about and support their current work, strengthen links, and encourage applications for membership from non-member groups.

Staff, Trustees and Moderators visited a wide variety of places across the UK during Inter Faith Week in November 2019. The range of staff and Trustee visits can be seen in the IFW blogs:

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/blogs>.

For example, during Inter Faith Week 2019, Executive Director Harriet Crabtree visited and spoke at events of Calderdale Interfaith, Hastings District Faiths Forum, York Interfaith and Wellingborough Interfaith Group; Assistant Director David Hampshire was invited to a Scottish Interfaith Week event of Edinburgh Interfaith Association and also visited a youth initiative linked to the Devon Faith and Belief Forum; Inter Faith Development Officer Ashley Beck attended events involving Harrow Interfaith, Lancashire Forum of Faiths and Watford Inter Faith Association; while Project



2021 NATIONAL MEETING: FAITH COMMUNITIES AND COVID – LEARNING FROM THE JOURNEY

With the impact of COVID-19 and the altered operating context, IFN’s Board of Trustees took the decision to postpone the National Meeting that would have taken place in 2020. It took place online on 23 March 2021. Its theme was ‘Faith communities and COVID-19 learning from the journey’. During the day, the multi faith gathering of nearly 120 people from member organisations and other bodies heard about the remarkable faith community response to need in the community during the pandemic.

The meeting was an opportunity for IFN and its member bodies to: remember together all who had died with COVID-19; celebrate resilience and selfless service; consider some key issues; share some of the learning from their experiences on the journey so far; draw on that learning to help them think about how they can best work – separately and together – towards a reopening of society; and think about the road ahead. A full report on the day can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-communities-and-COVID-19-learning-from-the-journey-report-on-ifn-national-meeting-2021>.

Shortly before the meeting, it was announced by the Prime Minister that 23 March would be a National Day of Reflection (marking a year since the announcement of the first lockdown) initiated and

led by Marie Curie UK. In the light of that, the previously planned time of silence at the outset of the day was moved to coincide with the national one at midday so that IFN’s member bodies could join with others across the UK to remember all who had died with COVID-19. The work of all those who have been responding to its impacts on our lives was also held in gratitude. Introducing the silence, the Most Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala, Buddhist Vice-Moderator, read out a short statement from the Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators. This is reproduced below. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-issued-at-ifn-national-meeting>



Most Ven Bogoda Seelawimala

Statement on the National Day of Reflection

A STATEMENT FROM THE CO-CHAIRS AND FCF MODERATORS OF IFN

“At this meeting of Inter Faith Network member bodies today, we join with all those around the UK holding a minute’s silence at the noon hour to remember the lives of those who have died with COVID-19.

Faith communities have experienced the loss and illness of many among their number. Some have experienced an especially heavy impact because their members are drawn in part or entirely from groups disproportionately affected by COVID-related illness and death.

We hold particularly in our prayers at this time the families, friends and colleagues of all who have died, their sorrow of loss deepened by isolation and, for many, inability to observe traditional rites of mourning. We hold also in our prayers those who continue to provide physical and spiritual support for the dying and the bereaved.

As well as remembering those who have died, we give thanks for all that has been done, by so many, to support those whose lives have been affected by the pandemic.

Let us, as we pause to remember, also commit to moving forward in hope and with commitment to working for a reopening of society that reflects the values of mutual concern, support and compassion demonstrated during this last year.”

23 March 2021



Image from Churches Together in England presentation

The day was chaired by IFN’s Co-Chairs the Rt Revd Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela.

IN THE PLENARY SESSION:

- Major Pam Knuckey, Assistant Director (Research), Research and Development, with Major David Evans, Territorial and Inter Faith Officer, the Salvation Army UK, spoke about the Salvation Army’s response during the pandemic, including through its congregations and partnerships.

The Sikh faith teaches us to support others, no matter what their background or faith. 99% of our users come from outside the Sikh community, and the volunteers range from the young to senior. People from all walks of life were ... giving up their time to support the Sikh Foodbank.

GURDEEP KAUR, CO-FOUNDER OF THE SIKH FOODBANK (SCOTLAND)

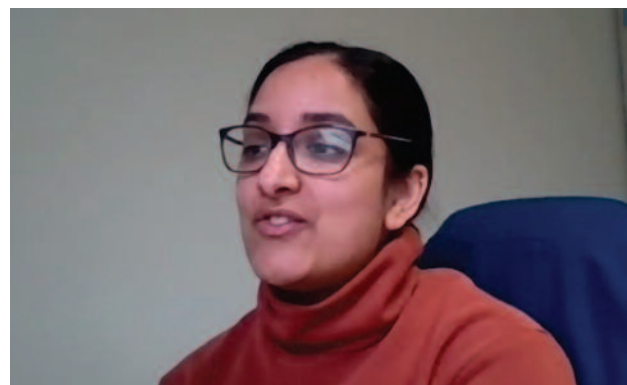
It’s been quite encouraging to see the way that relationships and trust have developed during the Pandemic and that increasingly that we’re working together and supporting each other. Thanks be to the glory of God. Amen

MAJOR DAVID EVANS, TERRITORIAL AND INTER FAITH OFFICER, THE SALVATION ARMY UK

- Gurdeep Kaur, Co-Founder of the Sikh Foodbank (Scotland), gave an insight into this important initiative which has been serving a number of area communities during COVID-19 and Dr Maureen Sier, Director of Interfaith Scotland shared the inspiring response from faith and inter faith initiatives from Scotland.

Very early on in the pandemic the Scottish Government asked Interfaith Scotland if it would be willing to manage two grant funds. The first of these was the immediate Covid Relief Fund. The Scottish Government had recognised that faith communities were at the heart of community and were in a key position to help the most vulnerable, isolated, lonely and struggling, at the grassroots level.

DR MAUREEN SIER, DIRECTOR, INTERFAITH SCOTLAND



Gurdeep Kaur, Scottish Foodbank



Image from Hidden Treasures presentation

- Hetvi Parekh, Sewa Day Team Leader Nottingham**, spoke about its programme where volunteers of many backgrounds, including from local faith communities, have been delivering food donations to foodbanks, charities and local schools.
- IFN Executive Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree**, gave a brief overview of faith and inter faith responses, highlighting the issues that were being explored during the meeting.
- Shermara Fletcher, Principal Officer for Pentecostal, Charismatic and Multi-cultural Relations, Churches Together in England** talked about health inequalities, particularly in BAME communities, and the impact on and response of churches.
- Dr Arshad Latif, Covid-19 Response Group, British Islamic Medical Association** talked, from the perspective of their organisations, about the unequal impact of COVID-19 in terms of mortality and illness and the issue of vaccine hesitancy and the response to this, including encouragement of vaccine take-up.
- Paul Smalley of NASACRE, Senior Lecturer at Edge Hill University**, then spoke about 'Religious Education and COVID-19 response', including how RE in schools adapted to the online world of the pandemic. He introduced a new IFN resource, 'Inter faith activity in the UK: A Teacher resource for secondary pupils 11-14'.
- Daniel Singleton, Director, FaithAction**, talked about its work in England to support actions by the UK Government on places of worship during

the pandemic and faith communities during COVID-19 and the importance of faith groups and local authorities working in partnership.

The impact in Nottingham in the last one year has been tremendous. For instance, we have helped 10 foodbanks at least on a fortnightly basis, delivered 50 tons of food and cooked over 25,000 hot meals. The meals have been cooked in community kitchens and temples for frontline workers, homeless people and those in need. We are still continuing to cook these meals, though they are now more for those in need in the community than for frontline workers. We have also helped 14 schools to date, with food, stationery and books throughout the last year.

HETVI PAREKH, COORDINATOR SEWA DAY NOTTINGHAM

- Esmond Rosen, President of Barnet Multi Faith Forum** offered a response from the perspective of a local inter faith organisation which has been working closely with its local authority throughout the pandemic.
- Kate McColgan, Chair, Inter Faith Council for Wales**, reflected on the experience in Wales of the Inter Faith Council for Wales and the Faith Communities Forum of the Welsh Government of mutually supportive work with the Welsh Government to tackle the pandemic.
- In the final session of the day there were reflections on the road ahead by **Ed Petersen, Chair, Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum**, **Eda Molla Chousein, Youth Programme Coordinator of the National Interfaith Youth Network**, **Religions for Peace UK**, **Dr Avtar Singh Matharu, Chair, York Interfaith and Malcolm Deboo, Co-Moderator of IFN Faith Communities Forum**.

"Inspiring and moving stories of responses to loneliness and domestic abuse from: FADA, Near Neighbours, Faith Forum for London and New Vision for Women."



Image from Mark Burleigh presentation

During the day ten workshops were held. Each workshop provided a chance for insights into faith and inter faith responses during the pandemic so far and also to consider what has been learnt – lessons for the future in terms of faith and inter faith engagement.

MORNING WORKSHOPS WERE HELD ON:

- ‘Places of worship, ritual life and celebrating festivals’, with presentations by **Rajnish Kashyap**, General Secretary, Hindu Council UK and member of the UK Government’s Places of Worship Task Force (England) and **Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg**, Senior Rabbi of Woodford Forest United Synagogue in London, under the Chief Rabbi’s auspices, and IFN FCF Jewish community Vice-Moderator.

“There was at least one point from each of the plenary sessions for our own Interfaith Group to consider in future.”

LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUP PARTICIPANT



Slide from Faith and Belief Forum presentation

We had to get used to using different means to communicate with people. We found ourselves representing families to dying patients, when families were not allowed to attend but chaplains were. We were often on the phone to families supporting them in their distress. We lost the sense of being able to touch patients. With gloves on, this was not the same.

There were family liaison staff keeping families up to date with how their loved ones were but families often rang us and asked us to go and sit with their relatives, or, for example, to take their relative a Qur’an cube, a Bible cube, or Hindu prayers on an mp3 player.

THE REV MARK BURLEIGH, CHAIR OF THE NETWORK FOR PASTORAL, SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS CARE IN HEALTH AND HEAD OF CHAPLAINCY & BEREAVEMENT SERVICES AT LEICESTER’S HOSPITALS

- ‘Funerals and bereavement’, with presentations by **Mohamed Omer MBE**, Gardens of Peace/Muslim Council of Britain and the **Revd Canon Dr John Hall**, Devon Faith and Belief Forum.
- ‘Health care chaplaincy’, with presentations by the **Revd Mark Burleigh**, Chair of the Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care in Health and Head of Chaplaincy & Bereavement Services at Leicester’s hospitals and **Swaminathan**, Hindu Forum of Britain and **Chaplain**, London North West University Health Care Trust.
- ‘Vaccination and BAME health COVID matters’, with presentations by **Haidar Lapcha**, Programme Manager and Communications Lead for the Community Champions project, Strengthening Faith Institutions and **Vinay Shah**, Institute of Jainology, One Jain Initiative and IFN FCF Jain Vice-Moderator.
- ‘Capturing the faith response to the pandemic – surveys, research, blogs’, with presentations by **Professor Paul Weller**, Inter Faith Working Group of the Baptist Union of Great Britain; **Emeritus Professor**, University of Derby; **Professor** in the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University; **Research Fellow** in Religion and Society, Regent’s Park College, University of

Oxford; and IFN Trustee and Dawn Waterman, Archives and Heritage Manager, Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Within weeks of the first lockdown many faith communities had developed online liturgical offerings. Places of worship throughout the country experimented with Facebook and other types of livestreaming, many wrestling for the first time with such practicalities as use of tripods and getting the right camera angles. Bar and batmitzvahs streamed from home. Arti was beamed into people's living rooms. The weekly sermon arrived on YouTube. Festivals have come and gone. Virtual Vaisakhi. Digital Diwali. Electronic Easter. Remote Ridvan. And Iftars over Zoom.

HARRIET CRABTREE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

Elizabeth Fewkes, Near Neighbours West London Coordinator and Nighat Khan, CEO of New Vision for Women.

- 'Financial impacts on places of worship and faith-based charities' with presentations by Oliver Chan, Research Team, National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Ian Hardie, Treasurer, United Reformed Church.

".....This was a time for unity, a time to unite. BIMA took the lead as the medical COVID-19 Response Group. Even before the lockdown had been declared, we had brought together organisations working in different areas... We did a lot of work on different fronts, from engaging with mosques and responding to issues around safe burial and safe washing of the deceased to creating extensive Ramadan guidelines (because Ramadan came shortly after COVID-19 hit) and guidelines on visitation rights. We also did work relating to mental health.

DR ARSHAD LATIF, BRITISH MUSLIM MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (BIMA)

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS WERE HELD ON:

- 'Faith groups and leaders working with local authorities', with presentations by Carlo Schroder, Rochdale Borough Council, and Samra Kanwal, Greater Together Manchester and Ryan Charlton, Policy Lead for Community Resilience in the Cabinet Office.
- 'Wellbeing and safety, from loneliness to domestic abuse: responding on an inter faith basis', with presentations by Jeeves Rohilla, Faiths Forum for London and Strengthening Faith Institutions and Tara Corry, Women's Interfaith Network and
- 'Digital communication – from dialogue to social media and Inter Faith Week', with presentations by Philip Ybring, Communications Manager, Faith and Belief Forum and Yogesh Joshi and Chanda Shome, Watford Inter Faith Association.
- 'Inter faith solidarity and shared messaging in challenging times', with presentations by Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director, Inter Faith



Dr Ashad Latif, British Islamic Medical Association

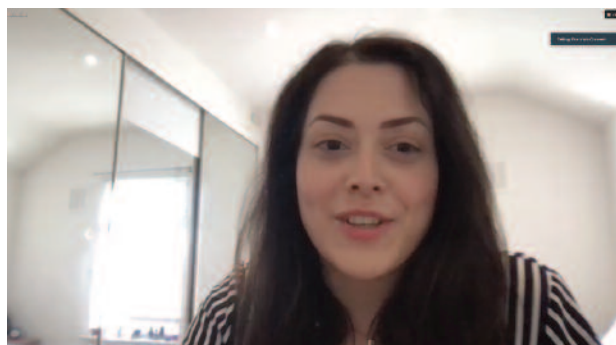
Network and Neil Pitchford, Druid Network and IFN FCF Vice-Moderator.

One of the key questions to consider.....is what is the role of faith post the pandemic. More and more people are starting to understand that faith is not a series of buildings, but rather a way of life. In that sense Covid itself was revealing.... the pandemic has shown what is going on underneath, both within our faith communities but also within society as well. The statistics about health inequalities is just one example of an area that has been given more focus. Most of the faith groups FaithAction has engaged with and connected with have said that faith is more about relationships and connections than it is about meetings or buildings. Local authorities have realised that there is great value in what I would call 'faith capital', the connection with parts of their constituents...

DANIEL SINGLETON, CEO FAITH ACTION



Major Pam Knuckey, Salvation Army UK



Eda Molla Chousein, Religions for Peace UK Youth Interfaith Network

IFN is grateful to all who made presentations throughout the day, and also to the workshop facilitators, rapporteurs and note-takers: Patricia Stoa, Nottingham Inter Faith Council and IFN Trustee, Ashwin Soni, Crawley Interfaith Network, Jo Backus, Network of Buddhist Organisations and IFN Trustee, Jay Anderson, Leeds Faiths Forum and IFN Trustee, Mohinder Singh Chana, Network of Sikh Organisations, IFN Trustee and IFN FCF Moderator, Kirit Wadia, Interfaith Coordinator, BAPS Swaminaryan Hindu Sanstha, Rabbi Maurice Michaels, Faith Links Bournemouth and Poole and IFN Trustee, Leonie Lewis MBE, IFN Trustee, Karl Wightman, Baha'i Community of the UK, Carrie Gealy, Inter Faith Network, the Revd Mark Umpleby,

North Kirklees Interfaith, Jim Robertson, North East Regional Faiths Network, Marigold Bentley, Assistant General Secretary, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Moin Azmi, Vice-Chair, Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), Steve Miller, Convenor, London Borough Faiths Network, Minister David Bruton, Spiritualists' National Union and IFN FCF Vice-Moderator, Chelsea Craven, IFN volunteer, Dr Ed Kessler MBE, Director, Woolf Institute, Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra, Muslim Council of Britain, Paul Southgate, North East Regional Faiths Network and Denise Raby, Keighley Interfaith Group.



Chelsea Craven, IFN volunteer

Since the start of COVID-19 we have had monthly meetings with the Minister and these have covered a lot of issues. The primary issues at the beginning were the closing of all our places of worship and then how we were going to reopen them, making sure there was proper consultation.

KATE MCCOLGAN, CHAIR, INTER FAITH COUNCIL FOR WALES

RAISING AWARENESS AND SHARING GOOD PRACTICE AND INFORMATION

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

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

In some cases, IFN staff are involved with projects on a longer-term basis, where this is seen as fitting with IFN's aims and helping to carry out those aims. For example, this period saw continued engagement with the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (Community Resilience) of the Cabinet Office, the Civil Service, Equally Ours, the Office for National Statistics, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, the Taylor Review Pilot (managed by Historic England and funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) and the Modest Fashion in UK Women's Working Life project of the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London.

Staff visits, attendance and speaking at events are also an important part of keeping people in touch and sharing good practice. Examples during this period include: speaking at the AGM of Barnet Multi Faith Forum; attending an event in Glasgow to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Interfaith Scotland; attending the National Commemoration for Srebrenica Memorial Day at the Guildhall in London; attending an event to mark the Bicentenary of the Birth of the Bab hosted by the APPG on the Baha'i Faith at the Houses of Parliament; speaking at a conference for RE teachers organised by the British Library; and the kind of local visits described on page 34.

Questions from just a few of the enquirers assisted

- Our local inter faith group is redesigning its leaflet. Can IFN provide us with some information to include about the 'golden rule'?
- Where can our local authority find information around deaths, burials and funerals for different religious traditions?
- We are creating a local memorial for families affected by COVID-19. Can you let me know how I can contact the local inter faith group about this?
- Our council is organising a Christmas lights competition and would like advice on how to include other festivals such as Diwali and Hanukah. Can you help?
- Our NHS Foundation Trust would like to use faith symbols on its website. Where can I find some?
- Where can I find support and advice for an inter faith relationship?
- Can you offer any advice on 'multi faith prayers' to be used at public meetings?
- We would like to invite representatives of national faith bodies to the openings of some new temples. Can you let us have some contact details?

If you have an enquiry on which you think IFN might be able to help you can contact: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/contact>



Good to contribute to panel at @UKCivilService #interfaith and #Unity event today and to talk with many participants. Part of its #Faith and #Belief strand led by Champion @ClareMoriarty with dept'l F+B champions and staff networks. #diversity #government #employers @en4ei

E-BULLETIN

IFN produces a bi-monthly e-bulletin packed with news about inter faith projects and resources and with updates about key faith and public life developments. It is sent to subscribers and is also available on the IFN website in both PDF and web page formats. Members of the public can subscribe to the E-Bulletin on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-e-bulletin>.

CIRCULARS

IFN issued Circulars throughout the two years to draw member bodies' attention to a wide range of issues and opportunities. Many of the Circulars during the period contained information about faith communities and COVID-19. They also helped to keep members in touch with relevant faith and public life issues, such as leaving the EU and responses to terrorist attacks on places of worship, as well as highlighting IFN news and resources.

WEBSITES

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

NEW LOCAL INTER FAITH WEBSITE SOURCES

During January 2020 IFN published a resource on its website about Annual Memorial Days and Weeks including Holocaust Memorial Day and Remembering Srebrenica. This includes examples of events held by local inter faith organisations. It can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/annual-memorial-days-and-weeks>.

In February 2020, it published a resource about local inter faith organisations and environmental social action: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/local-inter-faith-organisations-and-environmental-social-action>.

As noted on Page X, during the period IFN created a special section on its website about faith and inter faith responses to COVID-19: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>.

FAITH FESTIVALS

On IFN's website it provides a list of faith festivals. This is in association with the Shap Calendar – a calendar with an RE origin, produced for many years for use in schools and other contexts.

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

IFN tweets regularly on faith festival dates. Some examples of the tweets can be seen on the opposite page. It has also highlighted the growing trend for faith communities to greet each other at times of their key festivals, as well as the increasing number of secular bodies from companies to sports clubs marking the festival dates of their clients and supporters.



Hindu Council/City of London Diwali celebration at the Guildhall attended by IFN's Executive Director

INTER FAITH NETWORK ON TWITTER:

Sharing this pm some eggs of how faith communities exchange greetings on key festivals. For example @JustinWelby has sent a special message to Muslims at #EidAlFitr and the message below was issued by @BishopAngaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church. @CopticMediaUK @ChrisMusForum

INTER FAITH NETWORK ON TWITTER:

Faith communities exchanging greetings at significant #festivals and times of observance in their respective https://twitter.com/hashtag/calendars. Here, the @BoardofDeputies wishing #RamadanMubarak on behalf of British #Jews to #Muslims, who will shortly begin marking the Islamic holy month of #Ramadan.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are increasingly important channels for information about faith and inter faith activity and they are also very useful tools for encouraging wider involvement. IFN’s current Strategic Plan places particular emphasis on social media, and using this as a tool to encourage greater awareness of the different faith communities in the UK and to advance positive narratives about relations between different faiths. This work is an important part of increasing religious literacy and of acting as a counternarrative to negative, hateful and divisive narratives online.

IFN works toward this through running several series each year, highlighting different types of activity, as well as through regular sharing of information and ‘good news’ stories. This was especially important during COVID-19. IFN also posts about different religious festivals throughout



the year – some 190 in total – on its Facebook and Twitter accounts, as a way of further increasing awareness and understanding of the different faiths in the UK and their practices. These posts are often widely liked/ shared.

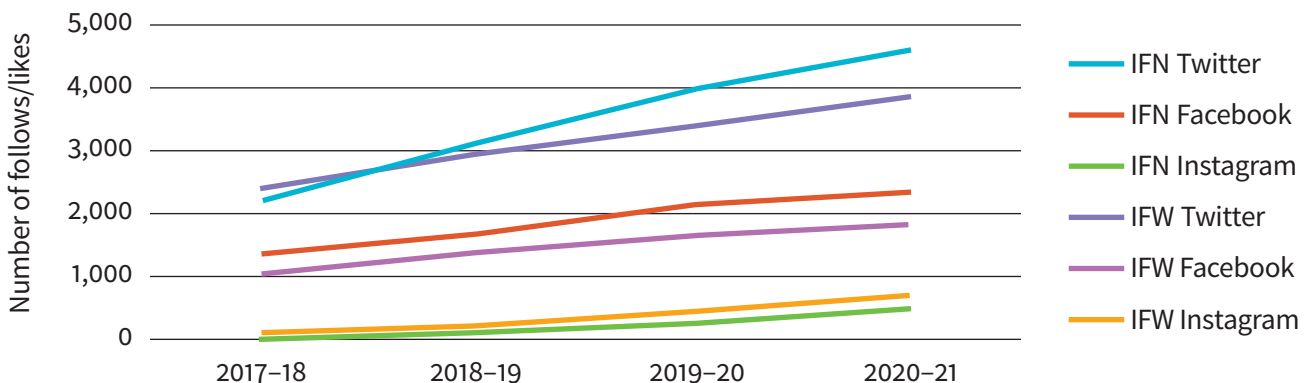
IFN runs separate Facebook and Twitter accounts for the Inter Faith Network and Inter Faith Week. The latter is reported on in more detail in the Inter Faith Week section.

During this period, IFN continued to use these platforms extensively and also encouraged its member bodies to do so. The number of people following all of IFN’s accounts grew steadily during the 2 years covered by this review (see chart).

During the period, the number of impressions on IFN’s main Twitter account increased significantly. On its other channels the number broadly stayed



Follows/likes over time





stable, with small dips on the Facebook accounts linked to changes made by Facebook in the period which favours paid over organic reach.

SOCIAL MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

In February and March 2020 IFN ran a short Social Media Photography Competition called ‘#InterFaithFocus’. The purposes of the competition included highlighting and encouraging local inter faith dialogue and action and encouraging more inter faith groups to use Facebook and Instagram to share positive stories of encounter and action.

There were four different categories to enter: local inter faith social action; local inter faith dialogue; local inter faith arts/culture/sports; and local youth inter faith engagement. Entries were accepted via Facebook or Instagram. COVID-19 affected the overall competition but five gift card prizes were awarded.

SOCIAL MEDIA SERIES

In August 2019 IFN ran a social media series on Twitter twitter.com/ifnetuk and Facebook facebook.com/ifnetuk highlighting the work of local inter faith bodies on dialogue and social action. It also included examples of their work during a series of tweets and posts for Communities Week which ran during September 2019.

In November and December 2020 IFN ran a Facebook series highlighting the inter faith activity of member National Faith Community



A winning entry from the competition

“Our entry for the InterFaith Network Social Media Photography Competition, under the category ‘Interfaith Dialogue’.

This photo is of Shamim, a Muslim, and Jenny, a Christian – friends and colleagues at Touchstone Bradford. We’re holding banners with quotes from our religious texts, instructing us to love our neighbour. Aware of an increase in recorded Islamophobic, antisemitic and racially motivated attacks, we took to the streets of Bradford with these banners to show that people of different faiths can be united. We spoke with people as we walked together, about what we were doing and why, and asked them to write messages of faith, hope and love that we later displayed to inspire others”.

Touchstone Bradford, 20 March 2020

Representative Bodies. Each post included a short profile and a photograph. A link to each post was also Tweeted. These series are important in highlighting the inter faith engagement of these bodies and also highlight the breadth of IFN’s membership in this category.

Social media mini campaigns during 2021 included a focus on local inter faith engagement and on faith communities and the environment, including preparation for the UN climate conference later that year, COP26.

INTER FAITH WEEK

A very special Week

In our increasingly diverse society it is ever more important that people live together well. Inter faith understanding and cooperation is part of that.

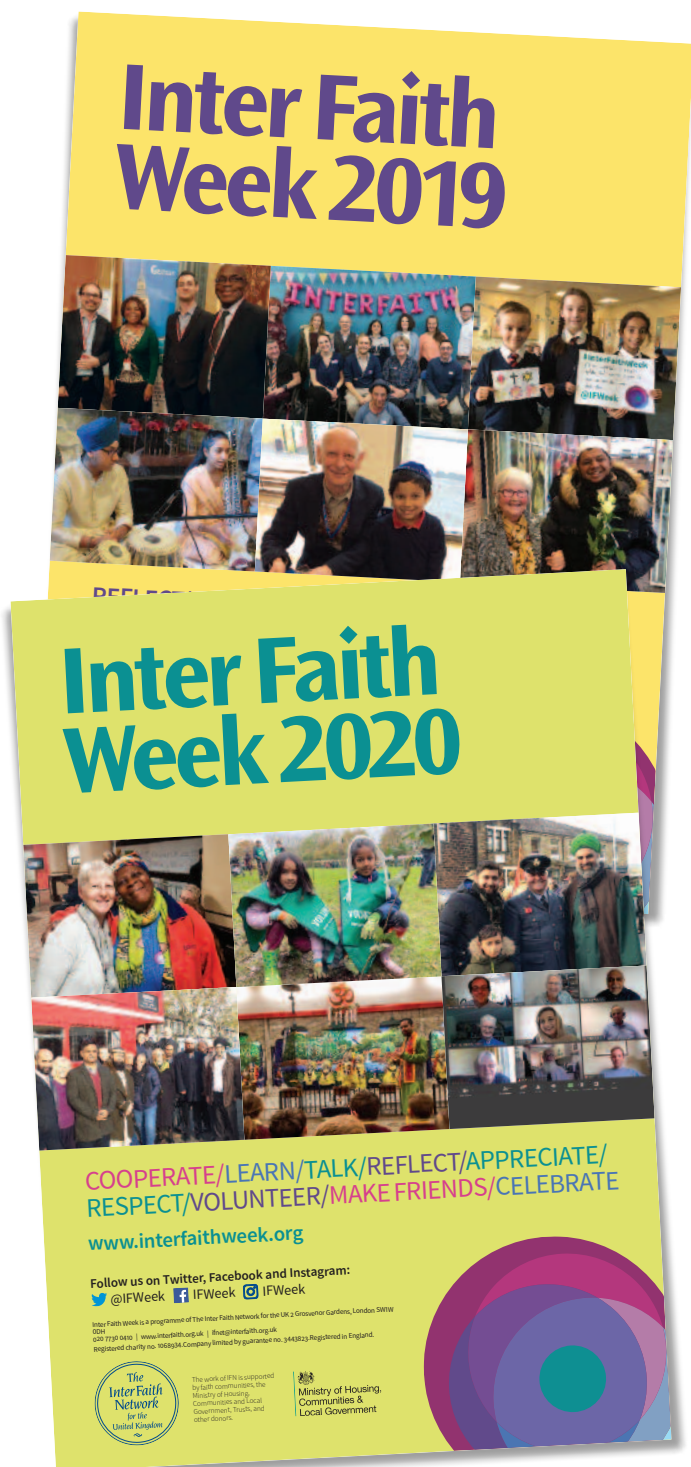
Each November, Inter Faith Week provides a special platform to highlight the importance of inter faith understanding and cooperation; the contribution that faith communities make to society; and the importance of increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs. It shines a light on this work and helps thousands of

people and organisations come to learn more and make new connections.

For many the Week offers the first chance to learn in any depth about the faiths and beliefs of workmates, neighbours and others or who might use it to encourage their organisation to engage more broadly and deeply with different communities. The Week is also a practical and powerful contribution to tackling ignorance, prejudice and hatred and to increasing understanding, respect, cooperation and partnerships rooted in shared values.



Arsenal in the Community Inter Faith Week workshops at the Emirates Stadium with pupils from Hasmonean High School for Girls and Islamia School



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.

Inter Faith Week is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in consultation with the Inter Faith Council for Wales and Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum on activity in those nations. It has run since 2009, held in partnership the first year with Government and led by IFN with the support of Government in subsequent years. It drew its inspiration from the very successful Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW), led by Interfaith Scotland.

Providing the framework and resources to enable a successful Inter Faith Week is a big part of IFN’s work each year. IFN’s Inter Faith Week programme is a year-round one: planning for the next Week, publicising it, running the website, helping ever more people and organisations get involved, providing support, surveying and reporting on the Week, and developing new partnerships which can strengthen the Week and particular areas of work such as youth inter faith engagement.

“Inter Faith Week helps raise awareness of the diversity of religions that exist and helps strengthen interfaith relations”

– LOCAL AUTHORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Inter Faith Week is timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday to encourage the remembering together of the service of soldiers and civilians of different faiths and also to think about peace. Inter Faith Week has



Members of Tooting Christian Muslim women's group

This section contains short reports on Inter Faith Week in 2019 and 2020. Inter Faith Week 2020 was, of course, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions on gatherings. However, as will be seen, a considerable number of activities took place to mark the Week, the majority of them virtual.

Inter Faith Week 2019 – the biggest Inter Faith Week yet!

Inter Faith Week 2019 took place from 10–17 November. It saw 814 activities take place across England, Northern Ireland and Wales, including 70 'Interfaith Mitzvah Day' activities held to jointly mark Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day. 713 organisations took part.

A number of event types also increased compared to the previous year, including arts/cultural/music activities; celebrations and festivals; children's



Dancers from Action Factory Arts performing at a Celebration of Inter Faith Week held by Lancashire Forum of Faiths and Near Neighbours in Blackburn

events; civic receptions; dialogues and discussions; higher and further education events; intergenerational events; open door days; Remembrance activities; and, notably, activities involving young people (which made up 41% of the total).

2019 also saw a marked increase in activities with an environment or climate focus, and a new event type category was added to accommodate these.



Intern Lavinia Menegoni (third right) at a London Wildlife Trust Walthamstow Wetlands open day and conservation event for Inter Faith Week/Mitzvah Day



South Lakeland Equality and Diversity Partnership and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, with Jacquetta Gomes, getting ready for Inter Faith Week



OneJain, Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur, Harrow Interfaith, Harrow Council and Trees for Cities event for 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Inter Faith Week



Watford Inter Faith Association Inter Faith Pilgrimage

In total, these activities made up nearly 5% of all that took place, reflecting a growing recognition of the significance of these issues.

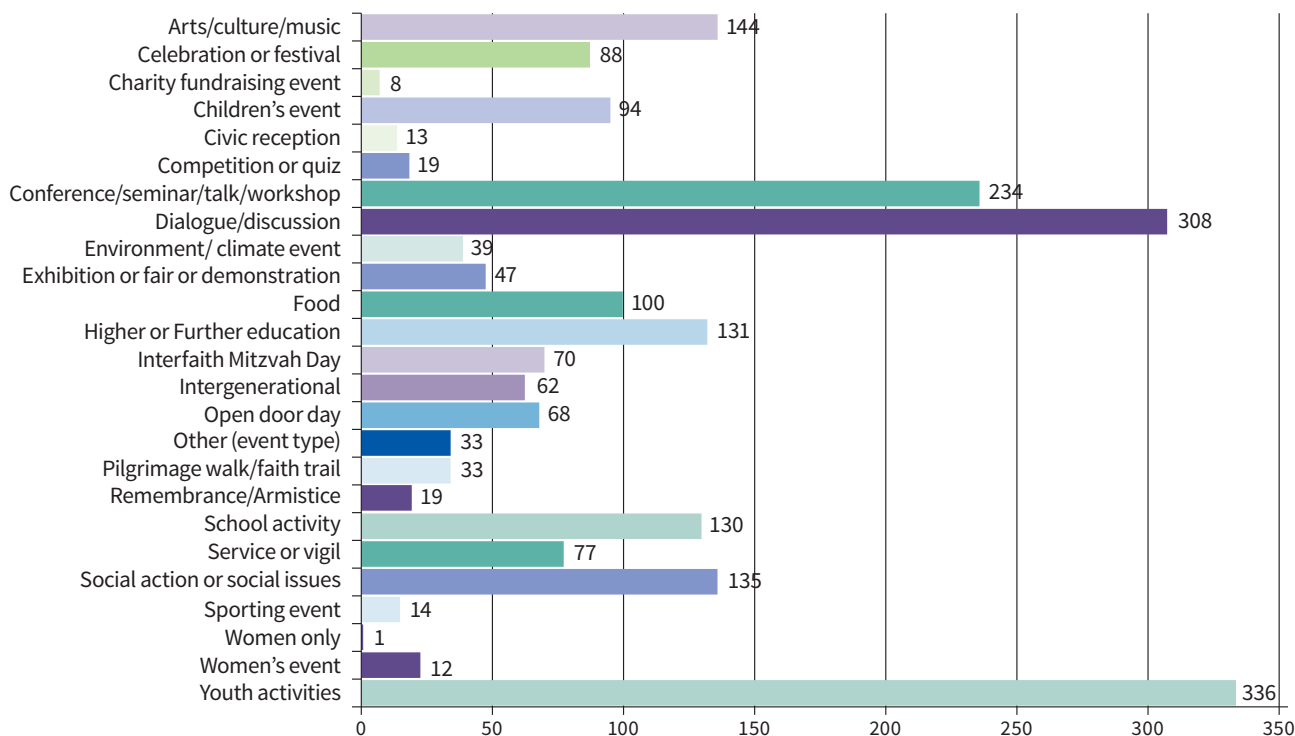
The Week also had a significant reach on social media: tweets about Inter Faith Week reached over 8.3million Twitter users and appeared on user feeds over 31million times.

ACTIVITY TYPES

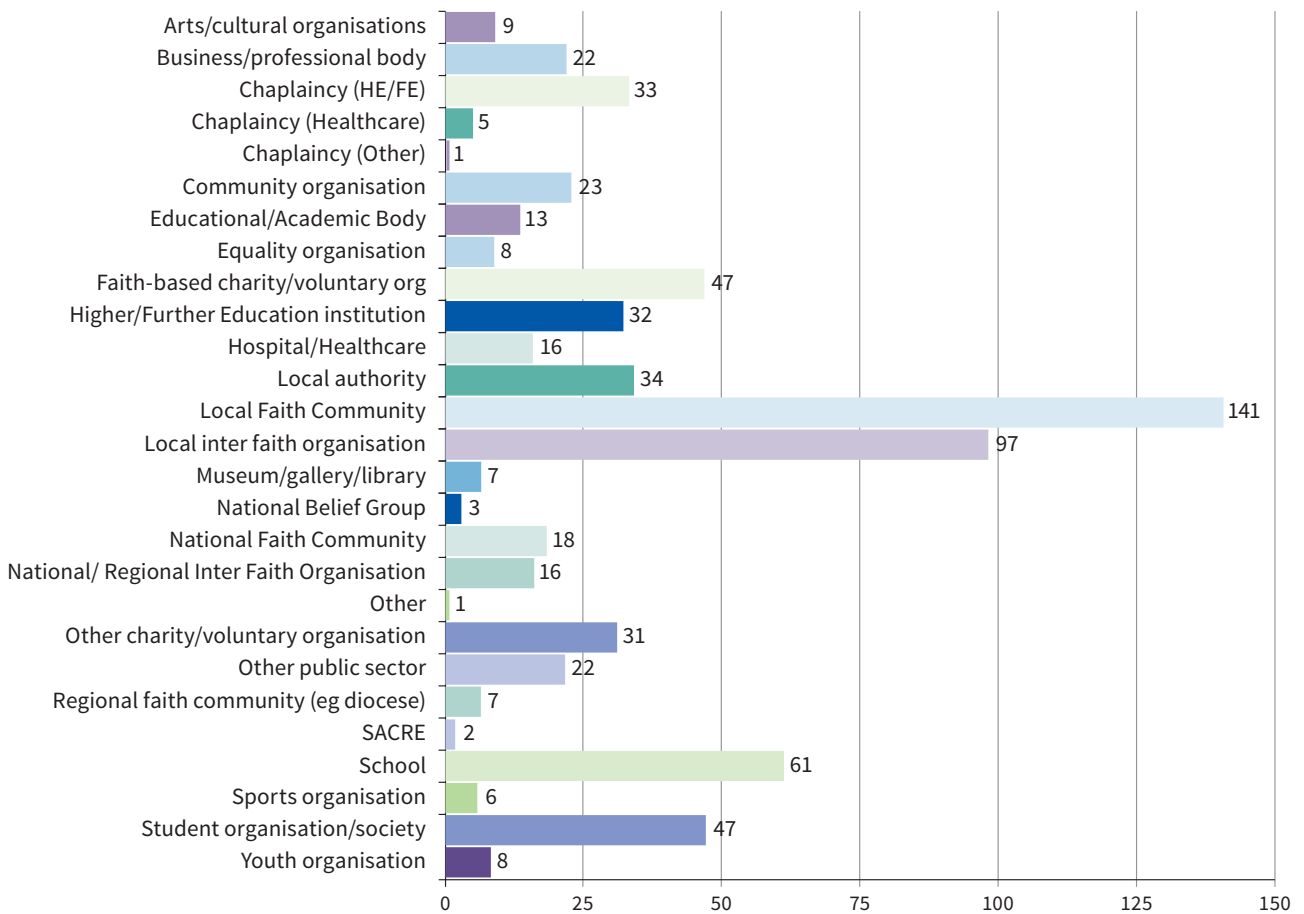
The chart below gives a breakdown of the different kinds of activity held to mark Inter Faith Week in 2019. Activities could be added to more than one event type, other than Interfaith Mitzvah Day activities.

To encourage greater youth involvement in the Week, IFN included copies of its publication *Connect: a youth inter faith action guide* in the free

Activities by type 2019



Organisations by type 2019



Devon Inter Faith Forum 4 Youth event

registration packs sent to those who registered their activities via the IFN website. Copies were also sent to Higher and Further Education chaplains. Overall, the number of activities involving young people increased from 285 in 2018 to 336 in 2019.

ORGANISATIONS TAKING PART

713 organisations are known to have taken part overall. The number of HE/FE Chaplaincies, Healthcare chaplaincies, Community organisations, educational/academic bodies, faith-based charities, local faith communities, local inter faith organisations, national faith communities, other charities/voluntary organisations, schools, and student organisations/societies taking part in 2019 increased compared to the 2018 Week.

A FLAVOUR OF THE WEEK

During Inter Faith Week 2019, a number of IFN staff, volunteers, Trustees and Faith Communities Forum Moderators visited activities across the UK. Blogs by a number of those visiting activities can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/blogs>.

BLOG FROM MADIHA HUSSEIN, IFN INTERN



Inter Faith Week 2019 was a very eventful week for me, and all of the events I attended were testament to the fantastic inter faith work being done across the UK. It was a real pleasure to be part of it.

After weeks of preparations, the day finally arrived to attend my first event of the Week on

Monday morning. I began the Week bright and early at Bradford City Hall for the Women of Faith celebration organised by Bradford Council and Believing in Bradford which I attended with my colleague Ashley Beck. Lord Mayor Doreen Lee opened the event by speaking of her pride in the achievements of the women of Bradford. She concluded her speech by recalling an African proverb that says, “If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation”.

The Chief Executive of Bradford Council then highlighted three important principles in shaping a successful community. These are to love thy neighbour, to build a ‘commonweal’, and to implement the concept of ‘nothing about us without us’. Professor Udy Archibong from the University of Bradford honoured the legacies left behind by women of faith, noting that Rosa Parks had to sit down to be noticed, as opposed to the conventional act of standing up. A key highlight of the event for me was witnessing a ‘friendship quilt’ made by the women of Touchstone Bradford. They described how as the quilt grew, so did their friendships. One contributor recited a heartfelt poem that linked the fiddly nature of weaving the thread through the fabric to the intricacy of forming inter faith relations that ultimately leads to a beautiful masterpiece of faiths entwined together.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

On Wednesday, I attended the Canterbury Cathedral Diverse Open Doors event organised by Kent County Council. We began the day by

observing the Eucharist in the Crypt. We then participated in inter faith dialogue and discussion, led by the Revd Canon Dr Tim Naish. He began by providing information about the Cathedral and its ongoing restoration project, and went on to share personal stories of inspiring inter faith encounter. For Canon Tim, inter faith dialogue is not about mixing various faiths together, but about bringing them together and respecting and understanding one another. He also highlighted the fact that there is much diversity within one faith in itself, which makes intra-faith dialogue just as important as inter faith dialogue. After an enlightening discussion, we were free to explore the Cathedral to admire the beauty of both its internal and external architecture.

Having returned to London in the evening, I arrived at the Ministry of Justice for a Civil Service Inter Faith Celebration, organised by CPS Muslim Network and Prosecution Christian Fellowship. The theme for the celebration was ‘building bridges’. Civil Service Faith and Belief Champion Clare Moriarty gave a warm welcome. She highlighted the need to discuss what faith means to each of us in order to develop personal connections that pave the way for a deeper, human understanding of one another. Rebecca Lawrence, Chief Executive of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), opened the event by reflecting on the importance of multi faith forums, and faith leaders working together, particularly during times of tragedy. For instance, in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, faith leaders were at the heart of the humanitarian response to the victims and wider community.

The panel of speakers was made up of successful and inspiring professionals from various faith backgrounds. An interesting point made by one of the panellists was that the term ‘neighbour’, in both a Biblical and legal sense, does not just refer to those in close physical proximity to you, but to anyone who is affected by your actions or omissions and thus, we owe a duty of care to all those around us.

On Thursday I visited St Angela's Ursuline School in Newham for a student SACRE meeting on climate change, organised by RE Matters. It felt nostalgic to be back at a school, but this time as a visitor. In attendance were four secondary schools across Newham with students from various faith backgrounds. The students began with an exhibition task, in which they had to choose three pictures to illustrate one of the following: 'enlightenment', 'harmony', or 'shalom' (the Hebrew word for peace and wholeness) – or the absence of those positive states. I was asked to be part of the judging panel. It proved incredibly difficult to pick one worthy winner as each group made an intelligent case for the motivation behind their chosen pictures. In the end, the group who chose pictures that displayed the opposite of harmony won due to their creative flare in defining the word from a unique perspective.

Forest Gate South Councillor Mas Patel then spoke about the climate issue on a local level, emphasising that global problems require local solutions. He explained that Newham has the worst air quality in London due to carbon emissions from City Airport, the A406, and Blackwall Tunnel which are all within the vicinity of the borough. The children were made aware of how they would be the worst affected by air pollution as their lungs are still growing and developing. They were really eager to question the councillor and learn more about the local politics of climate change.

THE BIG CONVERSATION IN LEICESTER

I travelled to Leicester on Friday to attend the Big Conversation, which was the final event of the 'Real People, Honest Talk' programme organised by Near Neighbours and St Philip's Centre. The event focused on encouraging inter faith dialogue on common concerns between our neighbours. The event was structured to break up the discussions with short entertainment pieces of spoken word poetry and musical performances. At this event, the concept of neighbours being those affected by our actions was again reiterated as an important point in the context of building community spirit. The table I was sat on had individuals from different parts of the UK, including Luton

and Nottingham. This made for a fascinating discussion on concerns which various towns and cities shared, such as knife crime and homelessness. The solutions participants agreed on were to participate in community outreach work; set up youth bodies to tackle youth focused issues; mobilise places of worship; and engage in social action.

FAITH, CLIMATE AND MITZVAH ACTIONS IN LIVERPOOL

The final event I attended was the 'Faith, Climate and Mitzvah Actions' event in Liverpool organised by Faiths4Change, the Diocese of Liverpool, the Merseyside Faith and Climate Network and Mitzvah Day. It was great to attend another climate focused event, as the environment and climate theme was a prominent feature during Inter Faith Week 2019. Professor Ric Williams from the University of Liverpool explained how the impacts of a 1.5°C temperature limit differ from those of 2°C, and that action needs to be taken by companies, governments and individuals. I was interested to learn that the Great London Smog in 1952 that led to nearly 12,000 deaths was a catalyst for air pollution controls through the passing of the Clean Air Act of 1956.

There was then a series of 'soapbox talks' from various faith traditions. The first was by representatives from Liverpool Region Mosque Network. They described the work they have done in raising awareness of the climate crisis, such as during Friday prayer sermons. They have also set up a 'Green Deen' project in local mosques to create spaces to plant trees, save water, and to encourage recycling and the use of city bikes. A thought-provoking question was posed to the audience: Are we wasting our natural energy resources, such as the sun? On the same theme, Annette James from Christ Church, Toxteth Park spoke of the eco-friendly work her church has done which had earned the Eco Church Gold award. This included setting up marquees inside the church for small congregations that were far less wasteful of light and heat, as well as digging up the tarmac around the church in order to plant flowers and fruit for the local community to harvest and enjoy."

BLOG FROM RUTH FOSTER, IFN PROJECT ASSISTANT



It was a true privilege to be a part of Inter Faith Week 2019. The events I attended in my role as IFN Project Assistant ranged from children's craft activities to football to discussions around censorship and inter faith action for refugees. They gave a small insight into the different ways that communities across the UK come together during Inter Faith Week each year.

The first Inter Faith Week activity took me and my colleague Dr David Hampshire to an unlikely location – Emirates Football Stadium, where Arsenal in the Community had brought pupils from local faith schools together. Primary school pupils from North West London Jewish Day School and the Olive School had a tour of the stadium and played football before being treated to workshops led by sixth form and year 11 girls from Islamia Girls' School and Hasmonian High School. Each presentation group was made up of a mixture of girls from each school, who expertly used quizzes, sweets and games to teach the primary school children about different religious festivals. I was personally very impressed by the older girls and their ability to capture the attention of a restless audience of young schoolchildren. The day was rounded off with emotional goodbyes between the girls from different schools who had worked so hard on the presentation which included countless selfies being taken so that they would remember this special experience together.

The second Inter Faith Week event that I attended was the Islington Faiths Forum, Platform Youth Hub, Targeted Youth Support and Islington Council's joint event at the Platform Youth Hub in Islington. The event took the form of a youth debate on the question "Does Social Media change your relationship with your faith and beliefs?". Young people from Christian, Muslim and Buddhist backgrounds

contributed. I was fortunate enough to attend this event alongside one of IFN's Co-Chairs, the Rt Revd Jonathan Clark, who opened the event with a few words about Inter Faith Week and his own experience working in Islington before becoming Bishop of Croydon. The range of issues that the young people raised throughout this event – from mental health to faith to knife crime – highlighted the importance of placing youth-focused initiatives at the centre of inter faith learning and cooperation. In our ever more diverse country, Inter Faith Week gives young people a valuable chance to learn about each other's backgrounds and beliefs.

Wednesday of Inter Faith Week gave me the chance to see what educational institutions were doing to get their students excited about inter faith activity. I travelled to West Thames College in Isleworth, where a range of activities were being hosted by local faith communities and students, including a space for students at the college to educate their classmates about their religious traditions. Observing the consideration and respect with which students approached their classmates with questions about Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Sikhism and Islam was heart-warming. Set against the unique soundtrack of tabla drumming and Christian rap, this exchange somehow encapsulated both the importance and uniqueness of Inter Faith Week in celebrating diversity and commonality in the UK.

Moved by my time with young people at West Thames College, that evening I went to West London Synagogue to hear Barbara Winton, refugee rights campaigner, and Professor Tony Kushner from the Parkes Institute at the University of Southampton speak on the topic 'The Refugee Crisis Then and Now'. The talk was held by the central London branch of the Council of Christians and Jews, and included the travelling exhibition 'James Parkes and the age of intolerance'. What struck me throughout this talk was that although I was aware of the historical examples of inter religious cooperation to help refugees, the similar initiatives that exist today are often

underreported. Inter Faith Week gives a good opportunity to celebrate this work as well as enabling a wider audience to learn about how they can get involved.

Having spent the majority of my Inter Faith Week in London thus far, on Thursday I was excited to travel to Belfast to attend the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and Council of Christians and Jews Belfast Branch event on the theme of 'Religious perspectives on Culture, Community and Censorship'. The event was a discussion between representatives from Presbyterian, Jewish, Muslim and Latter-day Saint traditions. The evening provided an insight into inter faith relations in Northern Ireland, where community-level initiatives are often focused on divisions along sectarian lines. Having been born and raised in Northern Ireland, I left the event with a sense of pride for the steps that are being taken to develop good relations between different faith communities.

After a short but sweet visit to Belfast, it was back to London for me. On Friday I headed to Dagenham to visit the local Jain Derasar as part of the Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum's borough wide visit my place of worship campaign for Inter Faith Week. It was here that I learned about Jainism, the Jain community in the UK and plans to expand their current Jain Derasar in Dagenham. Despite the small Jain

community in the area, it was clear that Inter Faith Week provided community members with the opportunity to create new possibilities for partnership and friendship in their locality.

The final day of Inter Faith Week was Mitzvah Day, an annual Jewish-led day of social action. Many events are held to mark both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day each year. I was fortunate enough to spend the day at the Jewish Museum in Camden, where an array of activities were being held for children by teams from Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral and the Museum of Methodism and John Wesley's House. The activities included baking challah bread for a local homeless charity, designing a mini stained-glass window and making a wearable Bishop's Mitre. I put my knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet to the test at the Hebrew scribing station, and explored the museum's exhibitions, which were free to the public for Mitzvah Day and Inter Faith Week.

I was amazed and inspired by each of the event holders I met from across the country who dedicated time and energy to creating such a special Inter Faith Week. Wherever I went throughout the Week I was welcomed with open arms – and often invited to come back – reflecting the hospitality and positivity that are essential to building good inter faith relations at all levels.

A SPECIAL RESOURCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

As mentioned at page 25, during Inter Faith Week 2019, IFN launched a special new resource for primary school teachers on teaching about inter faith activity in the UK. The resources can be found at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource>

SCOTTISH INTERFAITH WEEK

Scottish Interfaith Week, led by Interfaith Scotland since 2004, took place across the same dates in 2019. Its theme was 'Eat Share Love'. The launch event took place in Perth and was attended by IFN's Inter Faith Development Officer. Over 70 activities took place to mark Scottish Interfaith Week, in addition to those detailed above in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.



Board of Deputies of British Jews delegation at Khalsa Jatha Central Gurdwara, London

Board of Deputies



Digital display van arranged by NHS Digital as part of a week long programme of activities in Leeds

NHS Digital



Connecting at the time of COVID: Inter Faith Week 2020

2020 Inter Faith Week was a remarkable Week which took place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thousands of people used the Week to connect digitally and through multimedia in new ways and many found solace and encouragement in the contact they made at this time of isolation.

... People of different backgrounds connected to talk; celebrate; learn; make music; visit places of worship as part of virtual exploration trails; and much more. A number of events highlighted and celebrated the powerful response of people of different faiths and beliefs to need in their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

... It was wonderful to have special Inter Faith Week messages from many faith leaders about the importance of faith communities working together for the common good and being in dialogue.

RT REVD JONATHAN CLARK AND NARENDRA WAGHELA, CO-CHAIRS, IFN



A video sketch produced by Faiths United for Inter Faith Week

<https://vimeo.com/477563336>



An Inter Faith Week message from Gerald Williams, the Lead Chaplain of North Wales Police

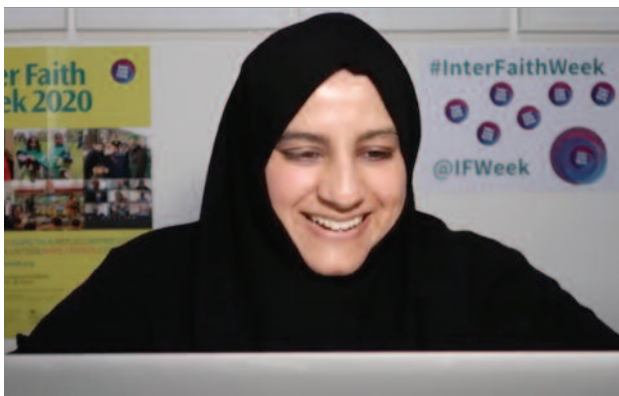
Reproduced with permission from Gerald Williams



St Mary the Virgin Church, the Merchant Seafarer Association, and Muslim friends on Remembrance Sunday, Butetown

Diocese of Llandaff





A virtual scriptural reasoning session led by Maysoon Shafiq, of Al Mu'minin (The Believers), a Kirklees Community Diversity Champion

<https://youtu.be/7n8WxLgqvZw>

Inter Faith Week 2020 took place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November and was predominantly virtual. Despite the challenges of COVID, over 700 activities took place. Many of these focussed on COVID-19, and the ways that faith communities and inter faith organisations served local communities during the pandemic. 720 organisations took part.

The social media reach of the Week was significantly higher, with tweets about the Week reaching 11 million users a total of 35 million times.



The 'Lockdown Quilt' produced by members of York Interfaith

Reproduced with permission from York Interfaith



Pupils from Blue Coat School, Coventry, learning about Diwali and Bandi Chorr Divas

<https://mobile.twitter.com/BlueCoatCofE/status/1326850420359172096>



Five people of different faiths interviewed by Age UK about how their faith was affected by the pandemic

https://www.ageuk.org.uk/discover/2020/11/the-role-of-faith-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/



“The Week made space for connection between people who have never met, or who have not interacted since before the pandemic. Our target audience are particularly isolated and vulnerable, and so making spaces for them to be together was very valuable.”
 LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUP

Digital forms of engagement enabled wider participation, and schools continued to embrace the Week with enthusiasm and creativity. Some towns and cities such as Birmingham, Kendal, Kirklees, Preston, Swansea, Swindon and York saw wide-ranging programmes of activities throughout the week. In-person activities took place in schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, hospices and other settings that remained open during lockdown/ tiered restrictions.

Network of Buddhist Organisations UK
 12 November 2020

Community engagement amongst faith communities makes an essential contribution to the welfare and protection of individuals and society.

The Network of Buddhist Organisations (NBO) is made up of Buddhist communities each with a strong commitment towards relieving suffering in the various forms it takes within contemporary life.

Over the last few months, NBO members have been working alongside other faith communities on capacity building for climate action and with the Covid-19 pandemic at the forefront of our minds, have been engaging in dialogue with other faith groups, seeking to strengthen each other's faith, understanding and hope for the future.

This #InterFaithWeek we consolidate our commitment to working, on the basis of shared values, with other faith communities, secular groups and individuals, towards a respectful, just and compassionate society.

“It is clear from the surveys and the comments and reports found through online research, and also from comments at subsequent IFN meetings, that the Week was even more important than usual for many people: it connected, encouraged, informed and inspired at a time of deep need”
 HARRIET CRABTREE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IFN



Shree Ganapathy Temple in Wimbledon, London, hosted a virtual service

https://youtu.be/vngxCa88gKo

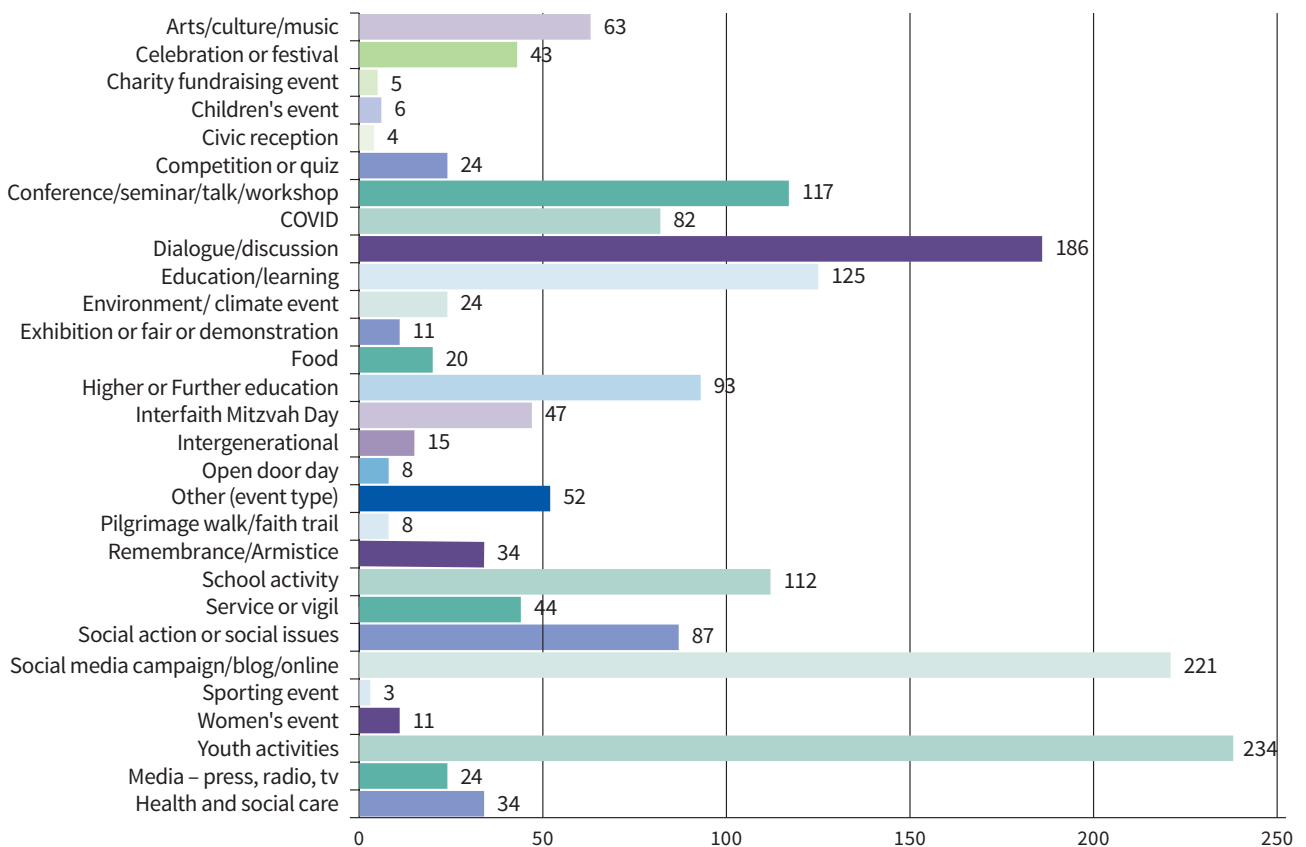
ACTIVITY TYPES

The chart below gives a breakdown of the number of Inter Faith Week activities assigned to each category. As in past years, activities could be assigned to more than one type of category, other than Interfaith Mitzvah Day activities.

A number of the activity categories used in 2020 were new, including ‘COVID’, for activities focussing

on the ways that faith communities and inter faith initiatives helped during the pandemic; ‘social media campaign/ blog/ online video/ message’ and ‘media – press, radio, tv’ to pick up some of the new ways that the Week was being marked in 2020; and ‘health and social care’, an area of growth perhaps inspired by experiences during the pandemic. In total, over 74% of activities were held online or had a significant online component.

Activities by type 2020



Watford Interfaith Association

Inter Faith Week is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday, to encourage ‘Remembering together’. Here, Harjinder Singh of Watford Inter Faith Association laying a wreath

ORGANISATIONS TAKING PART

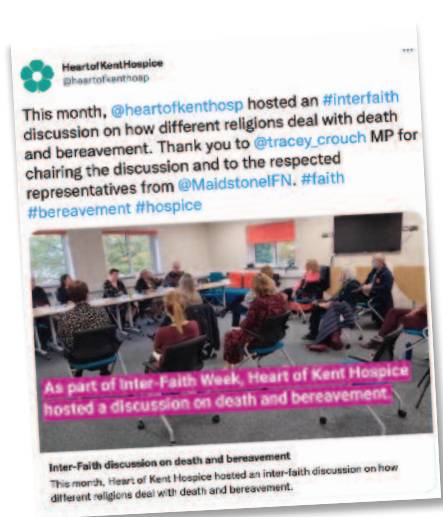
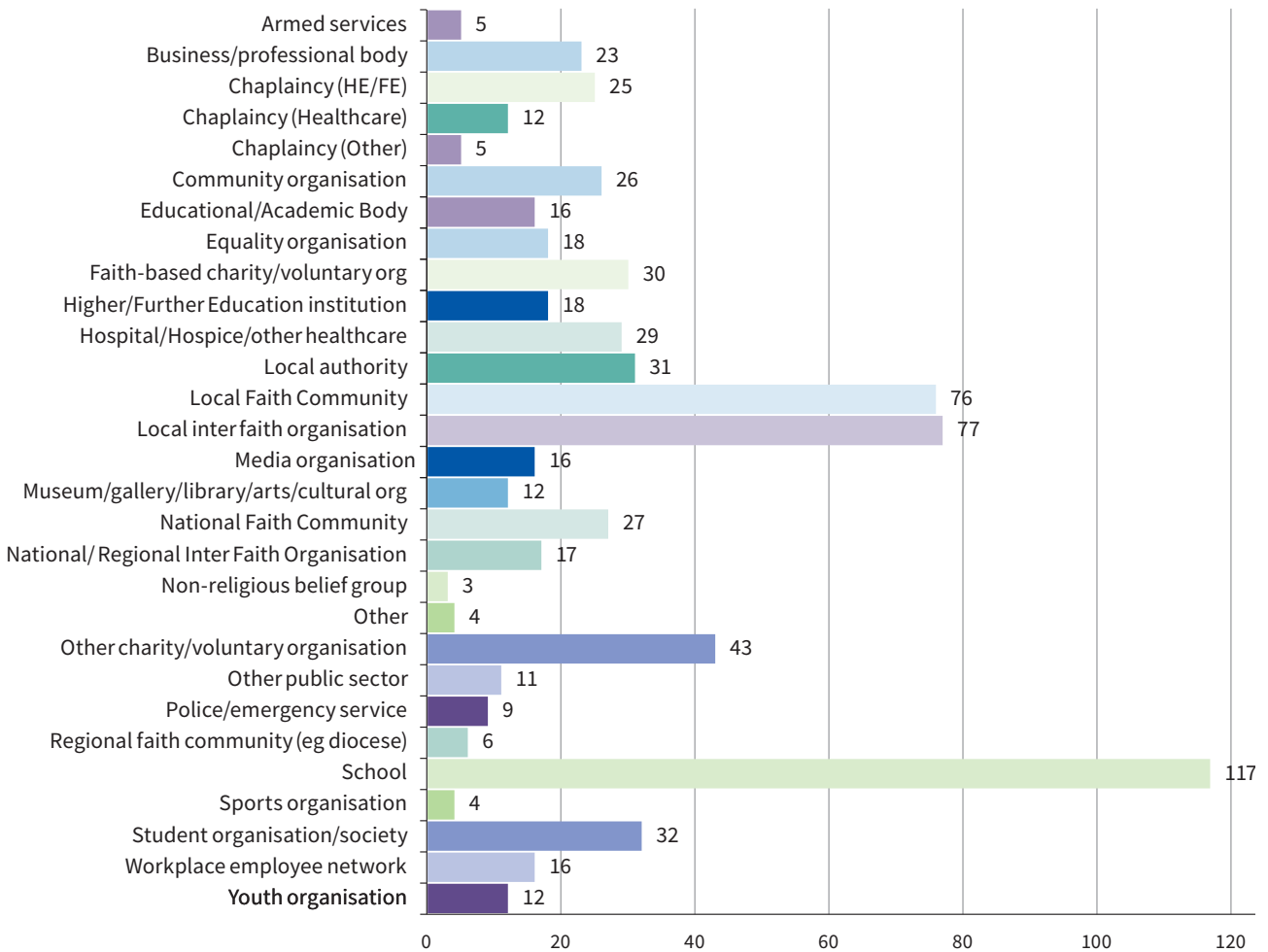
720 organisations are known to have taken part.

The chart below shows the amazing range of different types of organisation that took part in Inter Faith Week 2020.

The pattern of participation in the 2020 Week was distinctive due to the impact of social distancing

and other necessary restrictions. For example, there were significantly fewer activities held by sports organisations, museums, galleries and libraries because most of their premises were closed or operating restrictedly and possibly also because of levels of staff on furlough. By contrast, school participation went up 90% on the previous year and a much higher number of hospitals and hospices took part.

Organisations by type 2020



Inter Faith Week messages from faith leaders and government

Following discussion by IFN's FCF, faith community leaders/ bodies were invited to put out messages and reflections linked to the Week. Many faith community body leaders did so. An illustrative sample of them are included on pages 58, 61 and 63; the full range can be seen at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-faith-communities>.

Messages of support were offered by the UK Government's Communities Minister with the faith brief; the Deputy Minister in the Welsh Government; the Shadow Minister for Communities; the Mayors of London and the West Midlands; as well as numerous MPs; and mayors and councillors.





A selection of flyers and posters for Inter Faith Week 2020



IFN youth inter faith roundtable

IFN’s main role in Inter Faith Week is supporting activities of others. In 2020 it held a by-invitation Zoom meeting on 9 November for a number of youth inter faith initiatives to talk about their work and discuss the significance of youth inter faith engagement for the future of the UK. The focus of this significant discussion was on activities involving, and in some cases run by, young people in approximately the 16 to 25 age range.



Inter Faith Week buddies

IFN also initiated, for 2020, an ‘Inter Faith Week Buddies’ scheme. This involved two people of different faiths or of a particular faith and of a non-religious belief keeping in touch on a regular basis in the weeks leading up to Inter Faith Week; choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and during Inter Faith Week, sharing online or at a socially distanced event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they had gained from this. A number of organisations took this up, such as Cornwall Faith

Inter Faith Week 2020 Connection, learning and cooperation at the time of COVID

2020 survey respondents were asked what they saw as most important about Inter Faith Week. Here are some of their answers:

- "The national focus on interfaith encourages local activities."
- "It is national and creates the space to organise and deliver activities/projects relevant and suitable for local need and interests."
- "... it inspires and provides a focus for celebrating diversity."
- "The Week is a focal point for activities and for promoting interfaith."
- "It highlights that religions are important in the community and that religions can work, and are working together happily and successfully."
- "Countering negative stereotypes in social and other media."
- "The Week encourages positive connections and understanding between people of different backgrounds."
- "The Week promotes interfaith collaboration for the good of the local community."
- "It encourages faiths to reach out to each other, learn more about each other and work together."

Inter Faith Week 2020: Connection, learning and cooperation at the time of COVID

19. Inter Faith Week: Cooking up understanding!

Interfaith cooking sessions were popular, such as those held by Berbenham United Community Trust, which held an online interfaith cooking and Star Primary School in Newham's online cooking session. So, too, were 'take-offs' such as that at St. Michael's Catholic School in Coventry's. Teachers encouraged pupils to create a cuisine of their choice and send in recipes etc, and the University of East Angles, Norwich's virtual Challah bake.

Interfaith Partnership shared recipes inspired community members of different faiths and on their Facebook page.

Nigal Faith - Licious Cookbook Display' urged staff to cook / bake items which are faith related or culturally important. Recipes images were then published during Inter Faith in the form of a cookbook.

Yorkshire firms. "Through those videos we showed our appreciation and the importance of what the faith communities were doing and why they should be centre stage alongside the medical and other front-line workers who have given so much."

Inter Faith Week 2020: Connection, learning and cooperation at the time of COVID

Forum which said in its latest newsletter: "Everyone said that they learned a lot and really appreciated the rare opportunity to ask personal questions in a safe environment."
<https://dorkemmy.org.uk/feedback-from-interfaith-week-2020/>

The scheme was also taken up successfully by Humanists UK, providing opportunities for dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs.

Report on Inter Faith Week 2020

A special, extended report, *Inter Faith Week 2020: Connection, Learning and Cooperation at the time of COVID*, was published in September 2021. The present Review includes some key data and highlights from that.
<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/interfaith-week-2020-connection-learning-and-cooperation-at-the-time-of-covid>

Inter Faith Week @IFWeek

Reflections from national faith communities and their leaders in the context of #Interfaithweek Here from the President of the @paganfederation

The Pagan Federation @paganfederation · Nov 9, 2020
 This week is National Interfaith Week and our President has a message to share with you about the importance of Interfaith work within our communities.....
 @IFNetUK @IFWeek
 #InterFaithWeek

Oldham Council @OldhamCouncil
 It's #InterFaithWeek and families along with @PlayActionGroup and families along with various faiths and beliefs in our communities in the form of an art project. View the exhibition, find out how you can get involved and enter our competition. here [facebook.com/PlayActionGroup](https://www.facebook.com/PlayActionGroup)

Executive Director and Founder President of the Woolf Institute, Cambridge

Reproduced with permission from the Woolf Institute

Feedback on the 2020 week

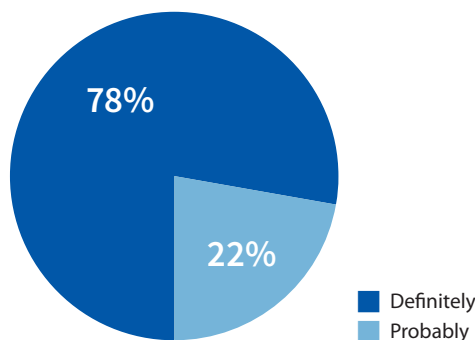
A feedback survey was sent to event organisers and put on the website and social media. Feedback was generally very positive.

98% of survey respondents said that Inter Faith Week adds value to their work

95% of survey respondents said that taking part in Inter Faith Week helped to raise the profile of their work

77% of survey respondents said their organisation was planning follow-up activity in the coming months.

100% of the of respondents to the survey said that they would either 'definitely' or 'probably' be organising an Inter Faith Week activity again in 2021



“Inter Faith Week provides us with a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the significant contribution our faith communities in Swansea make in both good and challenging times such as Covid-19....This week we are able to bring all our communities together to increase interfaith dialogue and to better connect with our communities of faith and belief in the broadest sense.”

CHAIR OF SWANSEA INTERFAITH FORUM AND FAITH AND COMMUNITY MANAGER AT SWANSEA UNIVERSITY

95% of survey respondents believed that their activity had helped participants to learn more about different faiths and beliefs

88% of respondents said that their activity helped them to reach new people or groups.

75% of survey respondents said the online element of the Week was beneficial

93% of survey respondents said that, in the COVID-19 context, Inter Faith Week provided a focal point for making or celebrating positive connections between people of different backgrounds

THE UK AND THE WIDER WORLD

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

The focus of IFN's own work is the UK. However, IFN's work – and inter faith work in the UK more generally – is of interest to governments, researchers, students and inter faith practitioners in other countries. Many make contact as part of exploring good practice around the world.

In September 2019 IFN staff met with the British Council to discuss inter faith aspects of a project being undertaken in Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal. IFN was also approached about work by the Christian Council of Sweden and Interfaith Council of Sweden; and about a newly formed African Christian-Muslim Interfaith International Council.

Across the years IFN has engaged with a number of Commonwealth inter faith initiatives and with UK dimensions of global environmental initiatives. The late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh was a pioneer of this kind of inter faith engagement and was actively involved across several decades. On 9 April 2021 a statement was issued on behalf of IFN's Board of Trustees following the death of His Royal Highness. This is reproduced in the adjoining column.

A statement following the death of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

A STATEMENT FROM THE RT REVD JONATHAN CLARK AND NARENDRA WAGHELA, CO-CHAIRS, INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

“On behalf of the Board of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, we express our great sadness at the death of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and extend our deepest sympathies to Her Majesty The Queen and to the Royal Family.

The tributes from those of many faiths that are today being shared are a testimony to the wide appreciation among the UK's faith communities of his life of service and the significance of faith within that.

Among Prince Philip's many achievements through the years has been the consistent encouragement of inter faith dialogue – both through the conversations and conferences at St George's House Windsor and through foresighted initiatives focusing on issues such as faith and international business ethics and religion and the environment.

We express our great gratitude for the significant contribution of Prince Philip to the development of inter faith understanding and cooperation for the common good: one that is of ever greater importance in our increasingly diverse society and interconnected world.”

9 April 2021



AGMS, TRUSTEES AND MEMBERSHIP

AGMS

The 2020 AGM was held on 20 September 2020 and the 2021 AGM on 15 July. The usual business was transacted, including appointment of Trustees, receipt of accounts and agreement of membership applications and confirmation of membership following the provisional membership period required under the Membership Admission Policy.

At both AGMs, while the Trustees had been able to affirm in the relevant Statutory Accounts that IFN is a 'going concern', the challenging financial situation of IFN was drawn to the attention of members. This has remained a concern throughout the period of this Review, particularly in the context of the pandemic where IFN has, like many charities, experienced additional pressures. The reports to the AGM in both years, however, recorded a strong programme of work, putting IFN's aims into action for the public benefit.

TRUSTEES

2020–2021

In June 2020, Mr Narendra Waghela was appointed as Co-Chair from the local inter faith organisations category to serve until the 2020 AGM. This followed the resignation of Jatinder Singh Birdi as Co-Chair drawn from the local inter faith organisations membership category and as an IFN Trustee. At its meeting in June, the Board recorded its gratitude to Mr Birdi and his fellow Co-Chair, the Rt Revd

Jonathan Clark wrote to convey to him their warm thanks for his valuable service to IFN across the last four and half years – particularly for his role as a Co-Chair and a member of the Finance and General Purposes Subcommittee. IFN is grateful to him for the commitment and wisdom that he brought to the role of Co-Chair and, in particular, the way in which he encouraged local inter faith activity.

Mr Waghela was then elected at the 2020 AGM to serve again until the 2021 AGM as Co-Chair, drawn from the local inter faith organisations category of membership.

The following Trustees retired at the 2020 AGM: the Revd James Breslin, a Trustee since 2014 and Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Subcommittee since 2015; Professor Brian Gates MBE, a Trustee from 2005 to 2011 and again from 2016, serving on the Membership Subcommittee since 2017; and Ms Miriam Levene, a Trustee since 2018, who had served on the Co-Chair Nomination Panel in 2019. All retiring Trustees were warmly thanked for their contribution to IFN. A presentation was made separately to Mr Breslin in gratitude for the role he had played as Chair of the FGPS.

At the 2020 AGM the following were elected for the first time to serve as ordinary members of the Board for 2020–21: Mrs Leonie Lewis MBE; Mr Paul Smalley; and Professor Paul Weller. And in December 2020 Ms Kate McColgan was co-opted as a Trustee for the 2020–21 year.

IFN's Bye-law on Nomination and Appointment of Trustees notes at paragraph 3.1 that "It is an



Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair to June 2020



The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark Co-Chair 2019–2021



Narendra Waghela, Co-Chair from July 2020



Trustees Patricia Stoit, Trupti Patel and Maureen Sier, Autumn 2019

aspiration that the Board shall have equal representation of men and women. Where there are fewer than eight Trustees of any one gender, the Board shall propose measures for increasing representation at the next following election.”

The 2020–21 Board of Trustees included 11 men and 9 women .

2020–21 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CO-CHAIRS

The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark
Mr Narendra Waghela

HONORARY TREASURER

Rabbi Maurice Michaels

TRUSTEES

Ms Jay Anderson
Mrs Josephine Backus
Mr Keith Bishop
Mr Mohinder Singh Chana
Mr Malcolm Deboo
Mr Pejman Khojasteh
Ms Sabira Lakha
Mrs Leonie Lewis MBE
Mrs Edit McCathie
Mrs Trupti Patel
Mr Ed Petersen

Mr Esmond Rosen
Dr Natubhai Shah MBE (dec)
Dr Maureen Sier
Mr Paul Smalley
Ms Patricia Stoit
Ms Marie van der Zyl
Professor Paul Weller

2021–2022

At the 2021 AGM Mr Narendra Waghela was elected as Co-Chair from the local inter faith organisations category of membership and Dr Susan Siegel was elected for the first time to serve as an ordinary member of the Board for 2021–22.

The 2021 AGM offered warm thanks to those Trustees who were retiring and not seeking



Rabbi Maurice
Michaels



Revd James Breslin

reappointment: Mr Pejman Khojasteh, Rabbi Maurice Michaels and Dr Maureen Sier. A presentation was made to Rabbi Michaels, for his service as a Trustee since 2012, as Honorary Treasurer since 2015 and, since 2020, as the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Subcommittee.

The 2021–22 Board included 10 women and 10 men, in line with the aspiration of the Board in its relevant Bye-Law.

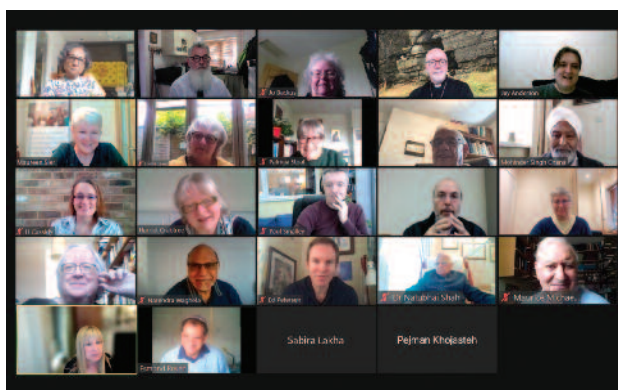
2021–22 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CO-CHAIRS

The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark
Mr Narendra Waghela

TRUSTEES

Ms Jay Anderson
Mrs Josephine Backus
Mr Keith Bishop
Mr Mohinder Singh Chana
Mr Malcolm Deboo
Ms Sabira Lakha
Mrs Leonie Lewis MBE
Mrs Edit McCathie
Ms Kate McColgan
Mrs Trupti Patel
Mr Ed Petersen
Mr Es Rosen
Dr Natubhai Shah MBE
Dr Susan Siegel
Mr Paul Smalley
Ms Patricia Stoat
Ms Marie van der Zyl
Professor Paul Weller



Board meeting 2020-21

MEMBERSHIP

2020–2021

The 2020 AGM accepted into provisional membership the following organisations:

Educational and Academic Bodies

The ASHA Foundation
City, University of London Chaplaincy

National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations

Abrahamic Reunion (England)

Local inter faith organisations

Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester
Plymouth Council of Faiths
Slough Faith Partnership

The AGM also affirmed the full membership of the bodies which had been admitted into provisional membership in 2018: Salvation Army UK Territory with the Republic of Ireland (known as “The Salvation Army”); Greater Yarmouth Inter Faith and Belief Network; North Kent Council for Inter Faith Relations – Kent Thameside; and Swindon Inter Faith Group.

The AGM noted that the following organisations had ceased to operate and were therefore withdrawn from IFN membership: Joseph Interfaith Foundation and United Religions Initiative (UK). It also noted that, in addition, the following organisations were deemed to have resigned due to non-payment of fees or had withdrawn from IFN membership due to significant financial or other operational difficulties; change of direction of their work; or for other reasons: British Muslim Forum, Community Religions Project (University of Leeds), London Society of Jews and Christians, North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership and Portsmouth Interfaith Forum.

The AGM noted the following name changes: Hastings and District Interfaith Forum to Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum; North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council to North Kirklees Inter Faith; and Torbay Interfaith Forum to Torbay Faith and Belief Forum.

The AGM agreed membership fee levels for 2021.

2021–2022

The 2021 AGM accepted into provisional membership the following organisations:

Educational and Academic Bodies

Middlesex University Inter Faith Network
University of Salford Faith Centre

National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations

Nisa-Nashim

Local Inter Faith Organisations

Maidstone Inter Faith Network
Reading Interfaith Group
Bath Interfaith Group

The AGM also affirmed the full membership of five of the bodies which had been admitted into provisional membership in 2019: Institute of Jainology, University of Lincoln Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts at the University of Wales Trinity St David, OneSpirit Interfaith Foundation and Hertsmere Forum of Faiths.

The AGM agreed that Kettering Interfaith Forum, which had also come into provisional membership in 2019, remain in provisional membership for a further period.

The AGM noted that the following organisations had ceased to operate and were therefore withdrawn from IFN membership: Hindu Christian Forum, London Inter Faith Centre, North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths and Newham Association of Faiths. It also noted that Dudley Borough Interfaith Network was deemed to have resigned from membership due to non-payment of fees.

The AGM agreed membership fee levels for 2022.

BECOMING A MEMBER BODY OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK

Membership of the Inter Faith Network provides members with an important route for learning about and sharing good practice from a wide spectrum of other bodies which share a commitment to developing inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK.

The participation and support of its member bodies are the foundation for IFN's work of building good inter faith relations.

IFN has four categories of membership: National faith community representative bodies; Local inter faith organisations; National and regional inter faith organisations; and Educational/academic bodies. IFN's member bodies share a commitment to the development of inter faith understanding and co-operation and to working together for this.

IFN welcomes applications from eligible bodies which share this commitment. The current Membership Admission Policy can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/aboutmembership>. It explains the eligibility criteria, the application process, and links to guidance for applicants.

The IFN office will be happy to assist with any queries.

LOOKING AHEAD

IFN works with a Strategic Plan and takes forward its work on the basis of an annual work plan which gives effect to that. IFN's 2019–23 Strategic Plan is structured around the following aims:

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

The Work Plan adopted for the coming year is based on the Strategic Plan, whilst importantly taking

account of learning from the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021–22 includes:

- developing downloadable material for use by schools in Collective Worship on inter faith topics;
- holding a series of webinars, including for local inter faith groups on digital upskilling and on running successful dialogue activities;
- holding virtual regional link meetings for local inter faith organisations;
- holding virtual meetings of IFN's Faith Communities Forum for representatives of member National Faith Community Representative bodies to discuss faith and public life issues;
- holding virtual meetings for national and regional inter faith organisations and educational and academic bodies, as well as the national inter faith linking bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- holding a National meeting for all member bodies;
- continuing use of social media, including regularly sharing faith and inter faith responses to COVID-19 and a number of series highlighting certain themes and initiatives;
- continuing to produce bimonthly issues of IFN's e-bulletin; and leading on Inter Faith Week.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT IFN'S WORK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works in many different ways to support and encourage inter faith cooperation and understanding across the UK.

You can find out more about these at www.interfaith.org.uk, where you can also download a range of practical resources for building good inter faith relations.

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to keep in touch with news and stories:

www.facebook.com/ifnetuk

www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

www.instagram.com/ifnetuk

Sign up to receive IFN's e-bulletin at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-e-bulletin>.

For more ways to engage with IFN and with other inter faith initiatives see page X.

THE IFN TEAM

STAFF

Mr Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer
 Mrs Hannah Cassidy, PA/Senior Administrator p/t [0.9 FTE]
 Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Executive Director
 Mr David Hampshire, Assistant Director p/t [0.8 FTE]
 Mrs Keetha Singam, Bookkeeper p/t [0.3 FTE]
 Miss Amal Malik, Clerical Assistant p/t [0.2 FTE] (November 2019 to March 2020)
 Ms Ruth Foster, Project Assistant (October 2019 to March 2020)
 Ms Lavinia Menegoni, Intern p/t [0.8 FTE] (July 2019 to September 2019)
 Miss Madiha Hussein, Intern (October 2019 to January 2020) and Project Assistant (January 2020 to June 2020)
 Miss Carrie Gealy, Intern (January 2021 to July 2021)
 Bashir Ali, a former IFN Intern, returned to volunteer briefly for IFN and was then employed as a temporary Project Assistant (July to August 2019)

VOLUNTEERS

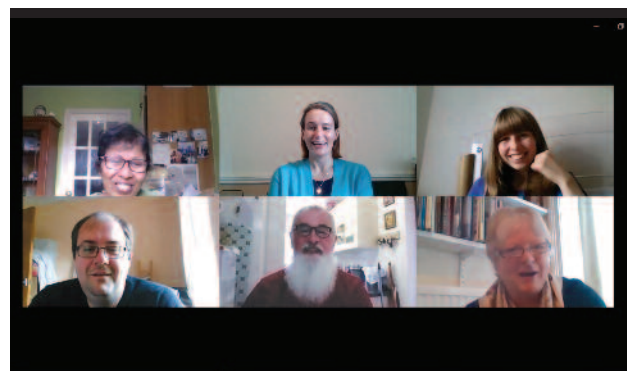
Miss Megan Wainwright (from June 2020 to October 2020)
 Miss Chelsea Craven (from January 2021 to May 2021)



Keetha Singam, David Hampshire, Lavinia Menegoni and Bashir Ali

Volunteers make a very important contribution to IFN's work. Some help on a one-off basis, others have volunteered for longer periods. IFN is grateful to them for their contribution. If you are interested in volunteering, see Get Involved (page 77).

In March 2020 IFN staff and volunteers began working remotely in line with Government guidance for England. This continued for the remainder of the period covered by this Annual Review.



Keetha Singam, Hannah Cassidy, Megan Wainwright, Ashley Beck, David Hampshire and Harriet Crabtree



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2019

	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
	£	£	2019	2018
	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and Legacies	25,750	421,243	446,993	465,590
Charitable Activities	—	215	215	60
Investment Income	—	30	30	24
Total income	25,750	421,488	447,238	465,674
Expenditure on:				
Raising Funds	(5,615)	(35,695)	(41,310)	(36,384)
Charitable Activities				
Information, Advice and Comms	(4,817)	(77,226)	(82,043)	(79,857)
Meetings and Events	(8,383)	(134,425)	(142,808)	(131,770)
Publications and Research	(4,058)	(65,057)	(69,115)	(84,472)
Increasing Awareness & Engagement	(6,067)	(97,273)	(103,340)	(101,520)
Total expenditure	(28,940)	(409,676)	(438,616)	(434,003)
Net income (expenditure)/				
Net surplus (deficit) for the year	(3,190)	11,812	8,622	31,671
Reconciliation of funds:				
Funds at beginning of the year	4,190	126,154	130,344	98,673
Funds at the end of the year	1,000	137,966	138,966	130,344

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

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

The movement on reserves is shown above.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

	2019		2018	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Fixed Assets		7,067		4,836
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	31,166		29,685	
Cash at bank	116,838		112,251	
		148,004		141,936
Creditors: amounts due within one year	(16,105)		(16,428)	
Net Current Assets		131,899		125,508
Net Assets		138,966		130,344
Funds				
Restricted Funds		1,000		4,190
Unrestricted Funds		126,154		97,374
Total Funds		138,966		130,344

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. They were approved by the Board of Trustees on 10 September 2020 and signed on its behalf by Rabbi Maurice Michaels, Honorary Treasurer.

Note: The full Accounts and Trustees' Annual Report for 2019 can be accessed on the Charity Commission website

Note: IFN received support on a fiscal year calendar from MHCLG and some funds carried forward related to work due in the first Quarter of 2020

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2020

	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
	£	£	2020	2019
	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and Legacies	72,357	299,974	372,331	446,993
Charitable Activities	—	32	32	215
Investment Income	—	14	14	30
Total income	72,357	300,020	372,377	447,238
Expenditure on:				
Raising Funds	(2,315)	(33,843)	(36,158)	(41,310)
Charitable Activities				
Information, Advice and Comms	(6,120)	(89,468)	(95,588)	(82,043)
Meetings and Events	(9,616)	(92,383)	(101,999)	(142,808)
Publications and Research	(2,949)	(43,119)	(46,068)	(69,115)
Increasing Awareness & Engagement	(13,813)	(75,250)	(89,063)	(103,340)
Total expenditure	(34,813)	(334,063)	(368,876)	(438,616)
Net income (expenditure)/				
Net surplus (deficit) for the year	37,544	(34,043)	3,501	8,622
Reconciliation of funds:				
Funds at beginning of the year	1,000	137,966	138,966	130,344
Funds at the end of the year	38,544	103,923	142,467	138,966

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

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

The movement on reserves is shown above.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

	2020		2019	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Fixed Assets		4,711		7,067
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	15,416		31,166	
Cash at bank	146,537		116,838	
		161,953		148,004
Creditors: amounts due within one year	(24,197)		(16,105)	
Net Current Assets		137,756		131,899
Net Assets		142,467		138,966
Funds				
Restricted Funds		38,544		1,000
Unrestricted Funds		103,923		137,966
Total Funds		142,467		138,966

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. They were approved by the Board of Trustees on 7 June 2021 and signed on its behalf by Rabbi Maurice Michaels, Honorary Treasurer.

Note: The full Accounts and Trustees' Annual Report for 2020 can be accessed on the Charity Commission website

Note: IFN received support on a fiscal year calendar from MHCLG and some funds carried forward relate to work due in the first Quarter of 2021.

SUPPORTERS IN 2019 AND 2020

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

The Trustees of IFN thank most warmly all those who have given financial support during the calendar years 2019 and 2020 and also those who have given the gifts of time, skills, and other in-kind support.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The Inter Faith Network received support towards its work in 2019/20 and 2020/21 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (at that time, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government).



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

TRUSTS, FOUNDATIONS AND COMPANIES

Inlight Trust
Joy Cohen Charitable Trust
Marsh Christian Trust
Michael and Anna Wix Charitable Trust
Mollie Croysdale Charitable Trust
Westminster Foundation

FAITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Archbishops' Council of the Church of England
Institute of Jainology
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

OTHER DONORS

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation
Torbay Faith and Belief Forum
Wisbech Interfaith Forum
Mr Mashfiqul Alam
The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE
Ms Lorna Barbour
Mr Jatinder Singh Birdi
Mr Keith Bishop

The Revd Daniel Burton
Cynthia Dickinson
Mr Kersi Fanibunda
Miss Mehru Fitter
The Revd Peter Godfrey
Mr Henry Grunwald QC, OBE
Mr Matthew Guthrie
Mr Warwick Hawkins
Mr Kevin Heyvaert
Ms Salina Hoang
Mr William Hopkinson
M Hossain
Mr John Keast OBE
Mrs Abeda Laher
Major (Retd) Rashid Laher
Hon Barnabas Leith OBE
Dr Kishan Manocha
Dr A J McCaffry
Mr Neville Nagler OBE
Mr Deepak Naik MBE
Ms Francesca Oram
Mr Brian Pearce OBE
Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE
Dr Norman Richardson MBE
Ms Henny Rolan
Mr Esmond Rosen
Ms Clare Salters
Ms Heather Savini
Mr Rashid Siddiqui
The Revd Richard Tetlow
The Revd Kevin Tingay
Ms Kim Wasey
Mrs Marna Watson
The Revd Canon Guy Wilkinson
The late Rt Revd Roy Williamson
The Revd Canon Michael Wolfe

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

We note, in particular, two generous donations from the estate of a longstanding supporter of inter faith dialogue and cooperation which it was asked be treated as anonymous in keeping with the deceased's preferred approach to charitable giving. These were used towards the youth inter faith and local inter faith strands of IFN's work in this period.

Note: IFN's accounts are on a calendar year basis and the support of those who have kindly given in 2021 will be noted in the 2021-22 Annual Review.

GET INVOLVED AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

There are many different ways to find out more, keep in touch, and get involved in helping create inter faith cooperation and understanding:

KEEP IN TOUCH

- sign up to receive IFN's E-bulletin (www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-e-bulletin/)
- 'like' us at www.facebook.com/IFNetUK
- follow us at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK and www.instagram.com/IFNetUK
- keep an eye on our regularly updated website at www.interfaith.org.uk

TAKE PART IN INTER FAITH WEEK

- take part in – or organise – an Inter Faith Week activity in your local area, workplace or place of study (www.interfaithweek.org)

GIFT YOUR TIME AND SKILLS

- volunteer at the Inter Faith Network office – find out more at www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering
- volunteer your services and skills to help a national or local inter faith initiative. IFN's e-bulletin includes information on volunteering opportunities. More information can also be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering

MAKE A DONATION

- make a donation to support the work of your local inter faith organisation, a national inter faith initiative or other inter faith project or to support the work of the Inter Faith Network at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate>

JOIN AN INTER FAITH GROUP OR INITIATIVE

- get involved through your own faith community if you belong to one (those in membership of IFN can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/members/list)
- find out about the nearest local inter faith organisation to you and take part in its activities (www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/groups)
- join a national inter faith initiative which promotes inter faith understanding between particular faiths or works for a goal such as peace or social justice. You can find details at www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/find-a-national-initiative
- get involved in school or youth inter faith initiatives – take a look at www.interfaith.org.uk/activity/youth
- get involved in an inter faith society on campus – your Students' Union will be able to tell you if there is one. If there is not, you might like to help set one up. Helpful pointers can be found in the NUS resource Good Inter Faith Relations on Campus: A Toolkit at www.interfaithweek.org/uploads/Good_inter_faith_relations_on_campus_toolkit.pdf and IFN's Connect: A youth inter faith action guide at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/connect

START AN INITIATIVE

- start a local inter faith initiative by reaching out to others in your local community. You might find the IFN/Near Neighbours Faiths Working Together Toolkit and the Local Inter Faith Guide helpful – both can be downloaded from www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications

SUPPORT OUR WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT

Please help us to continue and extend our work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation and help people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

EVERY GIFT, HOWEVER LARGE OR SMALL, IS VALUED AND CAREFULLY USED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

MAKE A GIFT

Please consider making a donation today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are valued and are used for maximum impact. You can donate using a debit or credit card through our website at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate, by PayPal at www.paypal.me/ifnetuk or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank You!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

From time to time we receive an 'in memoriam' gift after an individual has passed away, from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, you can contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 020 7730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future.

If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries. You can call Hannah Cassidy, on 020 7730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

ANNEX

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK 2021–2022

FAITH COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

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

EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC BODIES

The ASHA Foundation
Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme
City, University of London Chaplaincy
The Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts at the University of Wales Trinity St David
Islamic Foundation
Middlesex University Inter Faith Network
National Association of SACREs
OneSpirit Interfaith Foundation

Religious Education Council of England and Wales
Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter
The University of Lincoln Multi-Faith Chaplaincy
University of Salford Faith Centre
Wales Association of SACREs
Woolf Institute

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATIONS

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

LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATIONS

Altrincham Inter Faith Group
Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum
Barnet Multi-Faith Forum
Bath Interfaith Group
Bedford Council of Faiths
Birmingham Council of Faiths
Blackpool Faith Forum
Bolton Interfaith Council
Faith Links (Bournemouth and Poole)

Bradford Concord Interfaith Society
Brent Multi-Faith Forum
Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group
Bristol Inter Faith Group
Bristol Multi-Faith Forum
Building Bridges in Burnley
Calderdale Interfaith Council
Cambridge Inter-Faith Group
Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action
Cheltenham Inter Faith
Cleveland and Tees Valley Inter Faith Group
Cornwall Faiths Forum
Coventry Multi-Faith Forum
Crawley Interfaith Network
Faiths Together in Croydon
Cumbria Interfaith Forum
Devon Faith and Belief Forum
Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum
Exeter Faith and Belief Group
Gateshead Inter Faith Forum
Greater Yarmouth Inter Faith and Belief Network
Harrow Interfaith
Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum
Hertsmere Forum of Faiths
Hillingdon Inter Faith Network
Horsham Interfaith Forum
Hounslow Friends of Faith
Hull and East Riding Interfaith
Inter Faith Isle of Man
Islington Faiths Forum
Keighley Interfaith Group
Kettering Interfaith Forum
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Inter-Faith Forum
Faiths Together in Lambeth
Lancashire Forum of Faiths
Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship
Leeds Faiths Forum
Leicester Council of Faiths
Interfaith Forum for Leicestershire
Loughborough Council of Faiths
Luton Council of Faiths
Maidstone Inter Faith Network
Faith Network for Manchester
Mansfield Interfaith Group
Medway Inter Faith Action Forum
Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)
Milton Keynes Council of Faiths
Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester
Newcastle Council of Faiths
North Herts Faith Forum
North Kent Council for Inter Faith Relations – Kent Thameside
North Kirklees Inter Faith
Northampton Inter Faith Forum
Norwich Inter Faith Link
Nottingham Inter Faith Council
Oldham Inter Faith Forum

Building Bridges Pendle – Interfaith Community Project
Peterborough Inter-Faith Council
Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity
Plymouth Council of Faiths
Preston Faith Forum
Reading Interfaith Group
Redbridge Faith Forum
Rochdale Multi Faith Partnership
Rugby Inter Faith Forum
Salford Interfaith Network
Sheffield Inter Faith
Slough Faith Partnership
Solihull Faiths Forum
South London Inter Faith Group
South Shropshire Interfaith Forum
Southampton Council of Faiths
Southwark Multi Faith Forum
Stafford and District Friends of Faith
Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Forum
Swindon Inter Faith Group
Faiths United (Tameside)
Torbay Faith and Belief Forum
Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum
Wakefield Interfaith Network
Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum
Warwick District Faiths Forum
Watford Inter Faith Association
Wellingborough Inter Faith Group
Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group
Westminster Faith Exchange
William Campbell-Taylor (City of London Interfaith)
Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum
Wisbech Interfaith Forum
Interfaith Wolverhampton
Worcestershire Inter-Faith Forum
York Interfaith Group

As after July 2021 AGM

ANNEX

MEETINGS HELD BY IFN DURING 2019–2021

IFN holds regular meetings for member bodies in each of its categories of membership. It also holds meetings that are open to non-member bodies, such as regional link meetings and some webinars. A list of those that took place during the period of this Review is below.

During the period of the Review IFN's Board of Trustees met 15 times (more frequently than usual, in part due to the pandemic) and there were regular meetings of its Finance and General Purposes Subcommittee and Membership Subcommittee. There were also a number of Co-Chairs' meetings and ad hoc working groups of Trustees to discuss different issues.

2019

3 October Faith Communities Forum meeting

2020

12 February Faith Communities Forum meeting

27 February Link meeting in Maidstone for local inter faith groups in Kent

2 March Category meeting for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

5 March Link meeting in Preston for local inter faith groups in England's North West region

30 March Faith Communities Forum meeting

27 April Extra meeting for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations with COVID-19 focus

30 April Extra meeting of Faiths Communities Forum with COVID-19 focus

27 May Special session of Faith Communities Forum relating to COVID-19

19 June Webinar for Local Inter Faith Organisations on 'Getting Together at a time of COVID-19'

23 June Extra meeting for member Educational and Academic Bodies with COVID-19 focus

29 June Link meeting for Local Inter Faith Organisations in the East Midlands region

25 June Faith Communities Forum meeting

27 July Link meeting for Local Inter Faith Organisations in the North East region

28 July Extra session for Faith Communities Forum

29 July Webinar for Local Inter Faith Organisations and member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations on preparing for Inter Faith Week 2020

27 August Link meeting for Local Inter Faith Organisations in the South West region

17 September Meeting for IFN and the inter faith linking bodies in the devolved nations

30 September AGM

21 October Faith Communities Forum meeting

22 October Regional Link meeting for local inter faith groups in the West Midlands region

9 November Inter Faith Week roundtable on Youth Inter Faith Engagement

27 November Regional Link meeting for local inter faith groups in the East of England region

2 December Faith Communities Forum meeting

15 December Webinar for Local Inter Faith Organisations on using Zoom

19 January Regional link meeting for Greater London

2021

26 January Meeting for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

28 January Social media session for Faith Communities Forum members

18 February Faith Communities Forum

23 March National Meeting

26 April Faith Communities Forum meeting

20 May Regional link meeting for Yorkshire and the Humber

10 June Meeting of IFN with the inter faith linking bodies of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

14 June Regional link meeting for local inter faith organisations in the South East of England

15 June Meeting for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

21 June Faith Communities Forum special session with Home Office officials

6 July Faith Communities Forum meetings

ANNEX

URLS OF TWEETS USED IN THE REVIEW

The URLs of tweets used in the Review are listed below. They are ordered in the order that they appear in the Annual Review, from top to bottom, left-hand column to right-hand column.

PAGE 6	8 April 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1380243139663962115
	22 March 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1241682186182549506
	24 April 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1253686786037108736
	29 May 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1266249988205494273
	25 February 2021	https://twitter.com/UnitedReformed/status/1364923166485864455
	26 February 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1365277644858736645
	26 March 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1243059544873467905
	17 May 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1261958054477803522
	29 April 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1387864743843700736
PAGE 7	14 Jun 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1272102699279036416
	1 May 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1256159207742681091
	16 July 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1283817782887493635
	25 January 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1353719423379648513
	3 February 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1356974334775074816
	11 August 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1293103781333413890
	3 May 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1257038361698676736
	8 February 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1358772488038146055
	19 January 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1351579914986774528
	2 July 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1278595064730537984
	18 March 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1372598868492349441
PAGE 11	19 June 2020:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1273954012371574787
PAGE 12	15 December 2020:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1338943720503197697
PAGE 17	18 February 2021:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1362470044622610438
	29 July 2020:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1288496391262789632
PAGE 20	21 June 2021:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1407025383149654023
PAGE 24	19 August 2019:	https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/2545803142136912
PAGE 28	14 February 2021:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1360951613326819330
	29 August 2019:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1165218930962632705
PAGE 29	12 Aug 2020:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1293490802639896576
PAGE 32	14 June 2021:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1404488062751608834
PAGE 41	9 July 2019:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1148689799248850947
PAGE 42	13 April 2021:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1381902806790049793
PAGE 43	24 May 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1264570372168519683
	26 March 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1375506709628608513
	12 April 2021:	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1381640855665180674
	13 April 2021	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1381902806790049793
PAGE 44	18 December 2020	https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1339975976818753537
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PAGE 56	16 November 2020:	https://twitter.com/ChrisMusForum/status/1328422911846326273
PAGE 58	9 November 2020:	https://twitter.com/SikhMessenger/status/1325718430213959680
	14 November 2020:	https://twitter.com/MuslimCouncil/status/1327622084693008384
	12 November 2020:	https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3635026153223331&id=599646423428001&_rdr
PAGE 60	1 December 2021:	https://twitter.com/heartofkentosp/status/1466004152031621120
	10 November 2020:	https://twitter.com/BHRUTChaplains/status/1326075295389143042
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	10 November 2020:	https://twitter.com/JustinWelby/status/1326079671809748994
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