



# IFN e-bulletin

November/December 2016

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk) by **13 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk) to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter ([www.twitter.com/IFNetUK](http://www.twitter.com/IFNetUK)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/IFNetUK](http://www.facebook.com/IFNetUK)).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week ([www.twitter.com/IFWeek](http://www.twitter.com/IFWeek) and [www.facebook.com/IFWeek](http://www.facebook.com/IFWeek)) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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***Note: This is an extended issue of the e-bulletin which covers October to December due to work on IFN's National Meeting and AGM and on Inter Faith Week.***

## **FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES**

### **Continuing work with refugees**

Faith and inter faith organisations and communities are continuing to respond to the refugee crisis.

As noted [above](#), this was a key item on the Agenda of a meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum on 8 November. At that meeting a short opening reflection was given by Rabbi David Mason on bases within the Jewish tradition for responding to refugees and a presentation was made by Hannah Gregory, Head of Partnership Team, Resettlement Programmes, Home Office, on the Government's response to the Syrian refugee crisis and the development of the community sponsorship programme. This included information about the Government's refugee resettlement programme; the 'Help Refugees' website <https://www.gov.uk/helprefugees>; and the Community Sponsorship Scheme <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship> which enables community groups, such as faith groups and charities, to directly support refugees arriving locally.

During Inter Faith Week the Joseph Interfaith Foundation launched an initiative for young refugees entitled 'Introduction to Social Culture of Britain'. The project will begin in January 2017 and is aimed at refugees aged between 16 and 26. "Many of our young refugees come from war-torn countries where either they have witnessed or been personally affected by horrific violence. When they arrive in this country they don't have necessary language skills or knowledge of our laws and social mores. The aim of this project is to inform these young people and offer them support from various professional and religious bodies to help them build resilience to being misled, and help them to integrate more easily into the community and society." For further information, to participate, or recommend individuals, visit <http://www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org/forthcoming.php>.

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby has partnered with the British Red Cross and Upbeat Communities to deliver a project supporting refugees and asylum seekers in

Derby called 'Survive and Thrive'. More information about the project is at <http://multifaithcentre.org/projects/>. One of its aims is to give refugees and asylum seekers increased opportunity to belong and to find purpose within the community. As part of this project the Centre is offering free training on 'Getting the Story Straight: Refugees and Asylum Seekers'. Further information is [below](#).

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## **Equality and Human Rights Commission materials on Religion or Belief**

The EHRC will shortly be concluding its three-year programme of work - Shared understandings: a new EHRC strategy to strengthen understanding of religion or belief in public life – by publishing three final products. These are: Religion or belief – is the law working? (an evaluation of the effectiveness of the religion and belief legal framework); online guidance for employers on key religion or belief topics including a user-friendly step-by-step guide to handling employee requests; and online training modules on religion or belief for line managers (developed with ACAS) and trade union representatives (developed with the TUC).

For more information, view the EHRC website after Friday 2 December at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>.

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## **BBC review of religious affairs coverage**

It has been reported that a review of religious affairs coverage at the BBC will be taking place and that the Director General of the BBC, Lord Hall, will head discussions with faith leaders in the New Year with the aim of making religious affairs programming more reflective of modern, multi-faith Britain. This will include a drive to produce high quality content on a wider variety of faiths and beliefs, including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Humanism. For further information, see <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bbc-christian-bias-plans-diversify-faith-programming-a7416141.html> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/28/bbc-coming-short-religious-broadcasting-does-not-take-faith/>.

The BBC has announced that the former Labour minister James Purnell will assume responsibility for religious affairs programming and that Religious affairs correspondent Martin Bashir has been promoted to the more senior role of 'religious editor'. This is reported at <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/nov/23/james-purnell-to-head-bbc-religious-affairs-programming>.

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## **Caste discrimination consultation**

In September the Government announced that it will be undertaking “a full public consultation on the issue of caste and the Equality Act 2010”. Further details and timings for the consultation will be set out in due course. The announcement can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/caste-discrimination-consultation>.

On 27 October a question was raised in Parliament about the consultation process: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-10-27/debates/2EEDAD3B-164B-448B-AE4F-A7918E044974/CasteDiscriminationConsultation>.

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## **Religious Education Commission**

As noted in the August-September E-bulletin, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales – which shares reciprocal membership with IFN – launched a new Religious Education Commission in July. The Commission was established by the REC, which set its Terms of Reference and provides its secretariat. However, it is independent, and has responsibility for its own reports and recommendations. It now has its own website at <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/> and Twitter account [@CommissonOnRE](#) and those interested in engaging with the Commission are advised to follow these. The website includes an email sign-up form. It is envisaged that the Commission will launch public evidence-gathering consultations in due course, but the website also includes the ability to make contributions ahead of that.

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## **Update on places of worship security funding scheme**

Further to the Government’s announcement of funding for security at places of worship in July, the Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Home Secretary, has awarded a total of £700,000 to 9 community projects and 59 places of worship. The community projects will receive £300,000 pounds between them to fund ‘innovative schemes’ to tackle hate crime. The 59 places of worship will benefit from over £400,000 to assist with the installation of security measures, such as CCTV cameras or protective fencing. The Home Secretary said that “this funding is the latest step in this government’s mission to stamp out all types of hate crime, which has absolutely no place in a Britain that works for everyone.”

For further information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-awards-700k-to-tackle-hate-crime>.

A second round of bids for the fund is due to open in Spring 2017 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>.

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### **EHRC letter to political parties**

On 25 November the Chair and Chief Executive of the Equality and Human Rights Commission published an open letter to all political parties in Westminster encouraging them to engage with the Commission and calling upon them to do more to heal divisions which have emerged following the EU referendum earlier this year and states "Politicians of all sides should be aware of the effect on national mood of their words and policies, even when they are not enacted." The letter can be read at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/letter-all-political-parties-westminster>

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### **Inter faith friendship theme for latest Amazon advert**

In consultation with the Church of England, Christian Muslim Forum and Muslim Council of Britain, Amazon UK launched an advert, during Inter Faith Week in November which takes inter faith friendship as its theme. The advert shows a vicar and an imam in friendly conversation before exchanging gifts.

A spokesman for Amazon said that they wished to portray the figures accurately and sensitively: "Our casting reflects this: the gentleman playing the vicar is a practising vicar in London, the gentleman playing the imam is a devout Muslim and the principal of a Muslim school. We used an actual church and mosque for our scenes within the places of worship." Harun Khan, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, said: "The video from Amazon Prime is a brilliant advert highlighting an example of the strong friendships that exist between many Christians and Muslims across the country. The symbolism of gift-giving adds to the advert's power, especially during seasonal festivities." A Church of England spokesman said: "Fostering interfaith dialogue and community cohesion is a daily part of our work. In many parts of the country the Church of England is the guarantor and convenor of much interfaith dialogue, and this advert reflects that reality."

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### **New £5 banknote and animal products**

Following a question from a Twitter user on 28 November, the Bank of England confirmed that the new polymer £5 banknotes contain 'a trace' of tallow, a product derived from

animal fat. The news has sparked concern among vegetarian and vegan groups, and it is likely that this will have relevance for those who avoid animal products for religious reasons. A Hindu temple in Leicester, for example, is encouraging people not to bring the notes into the temple as charitable donations - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-38156650>. This is a breaking story, and more information is likely to become available in due course. News coverage can be found at <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/nov/29/bank-of-england-urged-to-make-new-5-note-vegan-friendly> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/29/new-5-notes-contain-animal-fat-says-bank-england-drawing-anger/>. A Change.org petition calling upon the Bank of England to use alternatives has already attracted over 100,000 signatures, and mentions religious objections to animal products in its leader text. It can be found at [https://www.change.org/p/bank-of-england-remove-tallow-from-bank-notes?recruiter=12006801&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_medium=copylink](https://www.change.org/p/bank-of-england-remove-tallow-from-bank-notes?recruiter=12006801&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink)

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## **INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS**

### **Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week**

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Scottish Interfaith Week both drew to a close on 20 November.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK leads on the Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and its Co-Chairs, Bishop Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi have said:

“The 500+ events that have taken part around the UK have sent a powerful signal about people of different faiths and beliefs working together for the good of our shared society and about the importance of positive inter faith relations. The Week has also highlighted the enormous contribution that those of all faith and belief communities make – in most cases through volunteering – to their local communities.”

The Week saw an astonishing range of events and activities: multi faith remembrance events; faith trails and open door days; conferences and seminars on topics from tackling hate crime, to health and faith, and different faiths’ and beliefs’ understandings of particular issues; social action initiatives from help for refugees and the homeless to river cleaning and tree planting; football matches; music, dance, poetry and arts and craft workshops; school activities; quizzes; the launch of new initiatives; cookery sessions; exchange visits between places of worship of different faiths; a youth 'Interfaith Summit'; blog series; exhibitions; photographic and art competitions; campus programmes; dialogues on a wide range of topics; celebrations; and more.

Faith communities took part across the UK. They hosted those of other faiths, journeyed with each other to visit each other’s places of worship; discussed responses to the

challenging issues of the moment; contributed to social action projects to help their local communities; and taken active roles in civic and other markings of the Week. Locally, an increasing number of churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques, synagogues, temples and viharas have thrown open their doors. People of non-religious beliefs were also actively involved in many events.

Inter faith organisations also played a significant role in the Week, from the UK's 250+ local inter faith groups, through to national inter faith bodies. A special event held at the Houses of Parliament by the All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group with the Inter Faith Network for the UK on 15 November explored local inter faith work and the importance of local inter faith bodies with inputs from Interfaith Glasgow, Faith Network for Manchester and the Redbridge Faith Forum. There was cross-party participation in the Week at both national and local levels. Both Communities Secretary Sajid Javid and Communities Minister Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth attended events.

This year saw many public agencies getting involved in the Week: from local authorities, to emergency services. It also had energetic involvement from a range of organisations from other sectors such as Sporting Equals and participation from many youth bodies such as Girlguiding and the Scouting Association. It saw wide-scale involvement from schools, colleges and universities, museums and libraries, youth organisations, other voluntary and community bodies, and many more. A list giving examples of the range of events that took place can be found at [https://www.interfaithweek.org/uploads/Selection\\_of\\_events\\_held\\_for\\_Inter\\_Faith\\_Week\\_2016.pdf](https://www.interfaithweek.org/uploads/Selection_of_events_held_for_Inter_Faith_Week_2016.pdf).

Many event organisers and participants tweeted about the Inter Faith Week activities they took part in, and tweets about the Week have had a potential reach of over 5.5million Twitter users with over 18.5million impressions. Many tweets linked to the Week can be seen on the @IFWeek twitter feed.

To assist people who have attended an Inter Faith Week event and would like to get more involved, the Inter Faith Network published a new booklet at the end of Inter Faith Week, *Inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation: Next steps*. Further information is [below](#).

This year Scottish Interfaith Week, which has taken place since 2004, took place on the same dates as Inter Faith Week. It, too, has had a very high impact week, with over 50 events taking place. Inter Faith Week, which owes its inspiration to Scottish Interfaith Week, was represented at its launch and Interfaith Glasgow took part in the APPG and IFN event at the Houses of Parliament.

Frances Hume of Interfaith Scotland gave an address on 15 November at the Time for Reflection in the Scottish Parliament opening with the words "I am particularly delighted to be able to address you during Scottish interfaith week, for which more than 50 events have been organised by local people, faith communities, interfaith groups, educational bodies and organisations, to promote and celebrate the multifaith and multicultural nature of Scottish society." In her speech she refers to the important meeting of the First

Minister Nicola Sturgeon with faith leaders which had taken place in the preceding week in the run up to Inter Faith Week.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10626&i=97682&c=1947365>

More information about Scottish Interfaith Week, which this year, took as its theme 'Religion and the Media', can be found at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/>

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### **New IFN resource – Next Steps**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has published a new resource to help people to get involved in inter faith activity: *Inter Faith Learning, Dialogue and Cooperation: Next Steps*.

During Inter Faith Week, and at other times in the year, many people will have engaged with inter faith activity for the first time, either by meeting others of different faiths, or learning more about those with whom they share their communities. Some people's experiences prompt them to want to get further involved in inter faith learning, discussion and practical cooperation.

Next Steps is designed to help those wanting to get involved, or further involved, in inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation. The booklet includes information and pointers about the different ways people can engage with those of other faiths and beliefs.

The resource can be downloaded from the Inter Faith Network and Inter Faith Week websites at [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk) and [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org) respectively, and hard copies are available on request.

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### **IFN National Meeting**

IFN held its National Meeting on 19 October in Peterborough.

The National Meeting was on the theme of 'Faith and Cohesive Communities'. The question of how communities 'cohere' and what common values and expectations they share has come increasingly to the fore in recent months. Partly, this has been triggered by the impact upon communities in this country of international terrorist attacks and persecutions and the refugee crisis. Other factors have included the increase in hate crime in some areas following the EU referendum. There also continue to be many other reasons that faith and cohesion are a focus of attention: the positive contribution of faith communities to community wellbeing; the role of educators about religion (and non-

religious beliefs) and the manifold community affirming dimensions of inter faith engagement. The meeting was an opportunity to explore a wide range of aspects of what makes for 'cohesive communities' in the most positive sense of that term.

Participants were welcomed to the day by IFN's then Co-Chairs, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Vivian Wineman, and also by Jaspal Singh, Chair, Peterborough Inter-Faith Council. During the plenary session Bishop Dr Joe Aldred, Multicultural and Pentecostal Relations, Churches Together in England, spoke on 'What are the signs of a 'cohesive community' and what role do faith communities play in this?'; Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government offered reflections in his role as Minister with responsibilities including cohesion and faith; Councillor Saima Mahmud and Canon Steven Saxby, Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum, spoke about the work of the Forum; Gillian Merron, Chief Executive, Board of Deputies of British Jews, spoke on 'Supporting a faith community in creating and contributing to cohesive communities'; Trupti Patel, President, Hindu Forum of Britain, spoke on 'Mutual respect and understanding as a keystone of cohesive communities'; and Reflections on themes of the day were offered by Dr Norman Richardson, Executive Member, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum and Abid Khan, Chair, North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership.

Discussion groups were held on: 'Cohesive communities: compassion and social action' with presentations from Jaspal Singh, Sajjad Jivraj and Rajni Reddi, Chair and colleagues, Peterborough Inter-Faith Council, and Keith Bishop, Interfaith Advisor, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; 'Cohesive communities: a place for those of all abilities and disabilities' with presentations from Christine Hardy, Advocacy, Rights and Awareness Manager, DeafBlind UK, and Dr Dale Dishon, Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas, Historic England; 'Cohesive communities: creating connections across generations' with presentations from Aishah Mehmood, Graduate of Near Neighbours' Catalyst Programme and now Communications and Media Officer, Near Neighbours, and Lynsey Wilkinson, Redhill Academy Nottingham and Coordinator of the RE Ambassadors Programme of the RE Council of England and Wales and Qaa'Sim Uhuru and Laura Norris, RE Ambassadors and students at Redhill; 'Cohesive communities: equality within society as a vital dimension' with a presentation from Jamie Spurway, Religious Equality Officer, Interfaith Scotland; 'Cohesive communities: diversity and commonality' with presentations from Ngakma Nor'dzin Pamo, Buddhist member, Inter-faith Council for Wales, and Fazal Rahim, Project Coordinator, Oldham Inter Faith Forum; 'Cohesive communities: the importance of learning and dialogue' with presentations from Dr Avijit Datta, Chair, York Interfaith Group, and Dr Jane Clements, Director, Council of Christians and Jews; and on 'Cohesive communities: the impact of the web and social media on cohesion' with presentations from Natasha Blank, More Tea Less Hate campaign, 'Worrying Signs' and Dr Harshad Sanghrajka, Deputy Chairman, Institute of Jainology.

A report on the Meeting will be published in due course.

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## **IFN governance update**

IFN has been undertaking a review of its governance structures across the last two years. Following agreement on a new governance structure at the 2016 EGM in May, this was implemented at the 2016 AGM, held in Peterborough on 19 October following the National Meeting.

One of the major changes that has taken place is a streamlining of the Board from 35 to 22 Trustees. The new Board of Trustees was elected at the AGM. This is co-chaired by the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi. A number of longstanding IFN Trustees, including Dr Natubhai Shah and Vivian Wineman retired at the AGM and presentations were made to them.

Another change is the introduction of Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum, comprising 2 Co-Moderators and 8 Vice-Moderators. The Moderators have been elected by the National Faith Community Representative Bodies in IFN membership. The Co-Moderators for the coming year are the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Malcolm Deboo of the Zoroastrian community.

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## **IFN Faith Communities Forum meetings**

In the wake of recent concerns about a rise in hate crime and of the publication of the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan, arrangements were made for a meeting of the Faith Communities Forum on 27 September with this as a key item on the agenda. A short opening reflection was given by Acharya Modgala Duguid on Buddhist bases for responding to crimes motivated by hate. A presentation was made by Sally Sealey, Senior Policy Adviser on Hate Crime, Integration and Faith Directorate, Department for Communities and Local Government. This included reference to the Plan – entitled Action Against Hate – copies of which were distributed. Lord Singh of Wimbledon also made a formal contribution about the need for the Government to reflect adequately the problem of hate crimes targeting Hindus, Sikhs and other members of non-Abrahamic groups, including to the issue of attackers mistaking their religious identity. Wider discussion covered aspects of possible reasons for, and responses to, hate crime.

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was also held on 8 November. This included items on the resettlement of refugees and social action days and inter faith cooperation. A short opening reflection was given by Rabbi David Mason on bases within the Jewish tradition for responding to refugees. A presentation was made by Hannah Gregory, Head of Partnership Team, Resettlement Programmes, Home Office, on the Government's response to the Syrian refugee crisis and the development of the community sponsorship

programme. For the item on Social action days, Ms Vinaya Sharma, General Secretary of Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK, spoke about Sewa Day, which took place most recently on 16 October and Ms Daniella Pears, Interfaith Chair, Mitzvah Day, spoke about Mitzvah Day, on 27 November, and Mitzvah 365.

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## **Focus on women at IFN meeting of National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations**

A meeting for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations in IFN membership took place in London on 19 September.

The morning session had a special focus on women and inter faith engagement. Speakers included Dr Maureen Sier of Interfaith Scotland and Ms Jackie Goymour of the Women's Interfaith Network. A presentation by Ravinder Kaur Nijjar of the Women of Faith Network of Religions for Peace (UK) was circulated. Printed copies of her presentation were circulated. In the afternoon, there was an opportunity for sharing of news and discussion about issues of common concern; discussion of IFN matters; and a session on the post Brexit landscape.

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## **INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Sewa Day and Mitzvah Day**

Two major days of faith-based social action took place in October and November, either side of Inter Faith Week. Both saw people of different faiths and beliefs coming together to do good in their communities.

People across the UK came together for Sewa Day on Sunday 16 October to volunteer at a range of social action projects. The term 'Sewa' equates to 'selfless service', and the day saw people of different backgrounds planting trees, litter picking, cooking for the homeless and collecting for food banks among many other things. This year, Sewa Day also featured in Diwali celebrations on Trafalgar Square, where hundreds of people gathered to mark the festival. Sewa Day said that "2016 has been a massive success with projects leaving a lasting legacy in their communities".

Mitzvah Day took place on Sunday 27 November. This Jewish-led day of faith-based social action encourages an inter faith dimension, and brought together people of many backgrounds to do good in their local communities. 'Mitzvah' translates as a good deed or act of kindness, and people responded by visiting care homes, holding sporting events,

working in schools and improving public spaces just to name a few. A number of special early events were held to coincide with Inter Faith Week.

Sadaqa Day, another day of faith-based social action, led by the Muslim community, takes place on Sunday 26 March 2017.

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### **Chief Rabbi and Archbishop of Canterbury launch inter faith project**

The Archbishop of Canterbury was joined at Lambeth Palace during Inter Faith Week by the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis to launch a new inter faith project, 'In Good Faith'. The project hopes to further Jewish-Christian dialogue by encouraging priests and rabbis to work together over the coming year to address matters of common concern. Topics discussed during the day included religious extremism. Rabbi Mirvis said that "it is in the everyday conversations, the grassroots initiatives and the building of local bridges between Christians and Jews, our synagogues and churches, that we will see real change and the hope for a divided world and nation."

For more information, see <http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/166061/chief-rabbi-launches-interfaith-project-archbishop-canterbury> and <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5806/archbishop-and-chief-rabbi-launch-rabbis-and-priests-social-action-initiative>.

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### **Church-Mosque Twinning programme**

The Christian Muslim Forum is continuing to expand its Church-Mosque Twinning programme and is working with Near Neighbours to roll this out.

An illustrated report on the programme that has so far taken place in South West London can be found at [http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/images/uploads/Twinning\\_Report.pdf](http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/images/uploads/Twinning_Report.pdf).

Anyone interested in doing something similar in their area, should contact Siriol Davies at [info@christianmuslimforum.org](mailto:info@christianmuslimforum.org).

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## RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

### Inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation: Next Steps

As noted [above](#), at the end of Inter Faith Week, IFN published a new resource entitled *Inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation: Next steps*.

The booklet is intended to assist people who have attended an Inter Faith Week event and would like to get more involved. It can be downloaded from <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>.

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### Interfaith Scotland Media Guide

The theme for Scottish Interfaith Week this year was ‘Religion and the Media’. The media plays an increasingly important role in people's lives, whether through newspapers, TV, radio or social media and many people are influenced by what they read, see and hear. Media reporting can have a powerful effect on people of different faiths, both positive and negative. The theme provided an opportunity to explore complex relationships with the media, how positive stories of faith and interfaith work can be shared and how some of the negative reporting and stereotypes about people of different faiths in the media can be challenged.

One of the resources produced by Interfaith Scotland for the work was a ‘Media Guide’ to assist groups in promoting their good stories via social and traditional media. It includes tips on using Facebook, Twitter and the web; as well as press releases, letters and TV and radio.

An electronic copy of the Guide can be downloaded from <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/religion-and-the-media-resources-for-scottish-interfaith-week-2016/>.

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### Thinktank report on faith-based charities

The New Philanthropy Capital thinktank has launched a report on the value and distinctive role that faith-based charities and voluntary organisations play in the

charitable sector. The report, 'What a Difference a Faith Makes', concludes an 18 month study into suspicion of faith-based charities and in particular accusations of proselytism against them. The report concluded that faith-based charities were undervalued in the sector, and made an immense contribution, collectively raising over £16 billion a year for good causes.

For more information, and to download the report, visit <http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/what-a-difference-faith-makes/>.

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### **Woolf Institute e-learning course**

The Woolf Institute is running an e-learning course entitled 'Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter'. It will explore the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting on similarities and differences as well as the major challenges. The e-learning approach allows students to participate throughout the world.

The course begins with Induction Week on 17 January and runs for 15 weeks. The application deadline is 20 December. For further information, visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/e-learning/mj.asp>.

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### **Funded doctoral studentship at the Centre of Religion, Reconciliation and Peace**

The Centre of Religion, Reconciliation and Peace at the University of Winchester is offering a fully funded doctoral studentship in 'Radicalisation, extremism and prison'.

This is for three years full time commencing in April 2017. Further information can be downloaded from <http://www.winchester.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research/Documents/PhD%20Studentship%20Radicalisation%20Extremism%20and%20Prison%20final.pdf>.

For more information about the Centre, visit [www.winchester.ac.uk/wcrpp](http://www.winchester.ac.uk/wcrpp). Contact [PGAdmin@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:PGAdmin@winchester.ac.uk) for more information about the studentship.

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## **Workshop on Safeguarding in faith organisations**

As part of the Strengthening Faith Institutions programme, Near Neighbours and Grassroots Luton are holding a workshop on ‘Safeguarding in Faith Organisations’. The workshop looks at how people can work together to ensure the well-being of children and vulnerable adults in places of worship and faith-based community organisations.

It will include: an introduction to safeguarding and good practice; who to contact for advice and reporting; case studies and toolkits; and resources.

It is being held from 6pm to 8.30pm on Thursday 1 December at All Saints Hall, Shaftesbury Road, Luton LU4 8AH. For more information, or to book a place, contact Kim Greig at [near.neighbours-luton@btconnect.com](mailto:near.neighbours-luton@btconnect.com) or call 07930 501640.

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## **Training on Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby has partnered with the British Red Cross and Upbeat Communities to deliver a project supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Derby called ‘Survive and Thrive’. More information about the project is at <http://multifaithcentre.org/projects/>. One of its aims is to give refugees and asylum seekers increased opportunity to belong and to find purpose within the community.

As part of this project the Centre is offering free training on ‘Getting the Story Straight: Refugees and Asylum Seekers’. This training can be tailored to meet an individual organisation’s needs but the standard training offered is 2 hours and can be delivered at the Multi-Faith Centre or a venue of choice. For further information, or to book, contact [mfc@derby.ac.uk](mailto:mfc@derby.ac.uk) or call 01332 591285.

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## **CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS**

### **Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life**

The Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life, co-ordinated by Citizens UK and chaired by Dominic Grieve QC MP ([http://www.citizensuk.org/islam\\_public\\_life\\_commission](http://www.citizensuk.org/islam_public_life_commission)), brings together 20

Commissioners drawn from a wide cross section of British society to consider how the Muslim community could better engage and participate in public life.

The Commission has been touring the UK, holding hearings in a number of towns and cities. It is keen to hear from as broad a range of voices as possible and so is encouraging all sectors of our society to contribute by submitting written evidence. It is seeking to hear about the key challenges for Muslim communities in Britain, but also looking for practical recommendations that might be implemented by the state, business sector and broader civil society. It is also interested in positive examples that can be viewed as best practise.

The deadline for submitting evidence is 16 December. Evidence can be submitted online at [http://www.citizensuk.org/submit\\_evidence](http://www.citizensuk.org/submit_evidence), via email to [islamcommission@citizensuk.org](mailto:islamcommission@citizensuk.org) or via post to: Ms Esmat Jeraj, Secretariat Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life, Citizens UK, 112 Cavell Street, London E1 2JA.

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### **Welcoming the Stranger short story competition**

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby is running a Short Story Competition entitled 'Welcoming the Stranger'.

Participants are invited to submit a short story, which is a work of fiction, on the theme of the stranger being welcomed. The competition is open to all. For those under 18 years of age, the story should be 1,000 to 1,500 words; for those over 18 years, it should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words.

Winning and highly recommended stories will be read aloud at a Prize Evening in May at the Multi Faith Centre in Derby. Entries must be submitted between 1 January and 3 March. For further information, including terms and conditions, visit [www.multifaithcentre.org](http://www.multifaithcentre.org).

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### **Sandford St Martin Trust Awards**

The 2017 Sandford St Martin Trust Awards are now open for entries. The awards are for radio, TV and online content exploring religious, spiritual or ethical themes.

Applications are encouraged from news, current affairs, drama, music, arts, children's and comedy genres, as well as from specifically 'religious' commissions. Programmes that

challenge as well as support faith are among those that have been previously recognised by the Awards.

The 2017 Awards will be presented at Lambeth Palace in June. The closing date for entries is 3 February. For details on how to apply, visit [www.sandfordawards.org.uk](http://www.sandfordawards.org.uk) and for further information, contact Anna McNamee on 07899 800758 or at [anna.mcnamee@sandfordawards.org.uk](mailto:anna.mcnamee@sandfordawards.org.uk).

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## **JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING**

### **Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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### **Nisa-Nashim - Project Manager**

Nisa-Nashim, a Jewish Muslim Women's Network, is seeking to recruit a Project Manager. The ideal candidate will be a dynamic, proactive and creative person with excellent communication skills and event management experience, to take forward its new phase.

One of the main areas of responsibility will be the development and production of its Conference, taking place in March 2017, as well as nurturing and continuing to develop our local groups across the UK. This is a full time role, based in London, though flexible working is welcomed. The job description can be viewed at <http://www.nisanashim.org/nisa-nashim-looking-project-manager/>. The closing date for applications is 1 December. For further details, email [info@nisanashim.org](mailto:info@nisanashim.org).

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## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Common Good funding programme**

On 14 November the Department for Communities and Local Government announced £250,000 of 'small grants funding' through its 'Common Good' programme. The

programme will be offering grants between £250 and £5,000 and will be managed by the Church Urban Fund. It will be funding projects that bring together diverse communities and different faiths through a range of activities from cookery classes to teaching computer coding.

A DCLG press release containing further details, and including quotes from Communities Minister Lord Bourne, is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-boost-diverse-communities-during-inter-faith-week>.

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## **Building a Stronger Britain Together programme**

In September, the Home Office announced the Building a Stronger Britain Together programme, which will provide “funding and support for groups involved in counter-extremism projects in their communities”. The programme is offering two kinds of support:

- in-kind support (such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals)
- grants: targeted funding for specific projects with demonstrable outcomes which provide a positive alternative to extremist voices

The deadline for grants and combined in-kind/grant applications has now passed. However, the deadline for in-kind support applications is 5pm on 9 December. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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## **Funding websites**

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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## **Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War**

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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## **Community foundations**

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at [http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community\\_foundations/map](http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map).

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## **Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants**

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at [http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic\\_relief/](http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/).

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## **Transform Foundation**

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit [www.transformfoundation.org.uk](http://www.transformfoundation.org.uk).

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

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Please consider making a gift today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are valued and make a difference. You can donate by credit card or PayPal online at [www.interfaith.org.uk/donate](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate) or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

### **REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND**

From time to time we receive an 'in memoriam' gift after an individual has passed away, funded from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing [remember@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:remember@interfaith.org.uk) or call us on 0207 730 0410.

### **A GIFT IN YOUR WILL**

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries. You can call Hannah Cassidy, on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at [remember@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:remember@interfaith.org.uk).

Every gift, however large or small, makes a difference.

*Thank you!*

## SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

**Holocaust Memorial Day** will take place on 27 January <http://hmd.org.uk>

**World Interfaith Harmony Week** will take place in the first week of February <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

**Sadaqa Day** will take place on 26 March <http://mysadaqaday.org>

## DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

**Bristol Inter-Faith Group** will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 1 December. The meeting will consider the subject of 'Mysticism'. Those who attend will be invited to tackle questions such as: Do you believe in a divine being which has an absolute existence beyond and separate from human imagination or in a force for goodness and creativity that pervades the whole universe in so far as humans allow it to? Is it possible to believe in both? What is the role of prayer and worship in your faith community? Do you see the need for an intermediary between yourself and the Divine being or force for goodness? The meeting takes place at 7.30pm with refreshments from 7pm, at Central Quaker Meeting House, Champion Square, Cabot Circus, Bristol BS2 9DB. For more information, visit <http://www.bifg.org.uk/> or email [info@bifg.org.uk](mailto:info@bifg.org.uk).

The **Muslim Council of Wales** with **Dar Ul Isra Mosque** is holding an inter faith talk on Thursday 1 December. The talk is entitled 'Refugees in Religion' and there will be 3 speakers representing 3 faiths, each talking about the concept of refugees within their faith. Confirmed speakers so far are the Revd Aled Edwards of CYTUN/Churches Together in Wales and Sheikh Ali Hammuda, co-Imam of Al Manar Mosque. The event takes place from 7.30pm to 9.15pm at the Darul Isra Mosque, 21-23 Wyverne Road, Cardiff CF24 4BG. For further information, contact Mohammed Alamgir at [mohammeda535@gmail.com](mailto:mohammeda535@gmail.com) or on 07788 310255.

**Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding a day of reflection for Advent on Saturday 3 December from 11am to 3.15pm. The speaker will be Sr Teresa Brittain nds who will give reflections for Advent on Light and Darkness. Refreshments will be served from 10.30am. There is no charge but any donation will be sent to CAFOD. There is a request to bring in a packed lunch or some food to share. For further information, contact [sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com](mailto:sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com) or call 020 73138286.

**Crawley Interfaith Network** is holding a Christmas Party on Sunday 4 December. This will include inter faith carol singing, food and networking. For further information, contact lyad Daoud at [contact@crawleyinterfaith.net](mailto:contact@crawleyinterfaith.net) or call 01293 883372.

**Burngreave Ashram Multifaith Chapel & Library** is hosting its next Meditation/Prayer lunch and seminar on Monday 5 December from 12pm to 2.30pm. The theme for this month's seminar is 'Non-Violence/Harmony/Peace' and will be led by Sandra Dutton. The meditation and prayer will be led by Shelly Hinson. It is being held at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, contact [BAMCL@outlook.com](mailto:BAMCL@outlook.com) or call 07932017929 or 01142436688.

**York Interfaith Group** is holding an event on Tuesday 6 December. It will begin with a 'Bring and Share' Meal with Music from 5.30pm and will then be followed at 7.30pm by its Monthly Meeting, for which the theme is 'Judaism in Three Yorkshire Cities'. It is being held at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. For further information, contact [yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com](mailto:yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com).

**The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding its Annual Lecture on Wednesday 7 December from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The guest speaker will be Zaki Cooper, an inter-faith activist and communications professional. There will be a talk on "God in Government: The Faith of Prime Ministers", followed by Q&A and refreshments. This event is being held at the Multi-Faith Centre, University of Derby, Derby, DE22 1GB. Register for this event using the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/multi-faith-centre-annual-lecture-god-in-government-the-faith-of-prime-ministers-tickets-27989923615>. For further information, contact on [mfc@derby.ac.uk](mailto:mfc@derby.ac.uk) or call 01332 591.

**Sheffield Interfaith** is holding a Quiz Night and Party on Wednesday 7 December at 7.30pm. Bring a team, or join one on the night, for a light-hearted introduction to some beliefs and traditions of some faiths, and maybe dispel some misconceptions. Refreshments will be available. This is being held at the Shirley House, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YL. For further information, contact [office@standrewspsalterlane.org.uk](mailto:office@standrewspsalterlane.org.uk) or call 0114 267 8289.

**Faith in Lancaster** is holding its next Faithshare on Tuesday 8 December at 7.30pm. The theme for the meeting will be 'Winter Festivals and Celebrations'. This meeting provides an opportunity to meet together in a safe and respectful space in which to share and learn about each other's beliefs, understandings, experiences, traditions and practices. It is being held in Room 4, Quaker Meeting House, Lancaster, LA1 1TX. For further information, email [info@faithinlancaster.org.uk](mailto:info@faithinlancaster.org.uk) or visit [www.faithinlancaster.org.uk](http://www.faithinlancaster.org.uk).

**Building Bridges in Burnley** is organising an Ecumenical Advent Celebration on Thursday 8 December 2016 at 7pm. This is being held at the Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre, Burnley Campus, Barden Lane, BB10 1JD. For further information, email Colin Wills at [colin@wills77.plus.com](mailto:colin@wills77.plus.com).

**Barnet Multi Faith Forum** together with the **United Nations Association** and **Rene Cassin** is holding a Multi-Faith Human Rights Celebration evening on Saturday 10 December at 6.30pm. The event will feature Sacred Sounds Interfaith Choir, faith organisations across Barnet and a presentation on the Challenge of Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery. This is being held at Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon NW4 4BT. To register for the event, contact [info@barnetmultifaithforum.org](mailto:info@barnetmultifaithforum.org).

**Policy-UK** is holding a forum entitled 'Faith in the Media: Realistic Portrayals, Realistic Headlines and Freedom to Believe' on Wednesday 14 December from 8.30am to 1pm. The speakers include Aaqil Ahmed, Head of Religion & Ethics - BBC, and Dr Edward Kessler MBE, Vice-Chair - Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, and Ruth Gledhill, Contributing Editor – Christian Today. A year on from the publication of The Commission on Religion and Belief in Public Life report, *Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good*, the event will provide an opportunity for delegates to discuss depictions of religion on screen. It will be held at the Royal Society of Chemistry, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BA. For further information and to book, visit [http://www.policy-uk.com/event/2221/Faith and the Media Realistic Portrayals Realistic Headlines and Freedom to Believe](http://www.policy-uk.com/event/2221/Faith_and_the_Media_Realistic_Portrayals_Realistic_Headlines_and_Freedom_to_Believe).

**Interfaith Wolverhampton** is holding an Open Day on Tuesday 13 December from 11am to 2pm. Light refreshments will be provided. This is being held at the Darlington Street Methodist Centre, 24 School Street, WV1 4LF. For further information, contact on [admin@ifwton.org.uk](mailto:admin@ifwton.org.uk) or call 01902427601.

**Interfaith Wolverhampton** is holding a 'Bring and Share Lunch' event on Tuesday 17 December from 12.45pm to 2pm. The speaker will be the Revd Ray Gaston, vicar of the Church of St Chad and St Mark in Penn Fields, and author of the book, "A Heart Broken Open". This is being held at Darlington Street Methodist Centre, 24 School Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 4LF. For further information, contact [admin@ifwton.org.uk](mailto:admin@ifwton.org.uk) or call 01902427601.

**Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** is considering during 2016 Laudato Si' Our care for our common home by Pope Francis. Its next meeting will be on Wednesday 21 December and will be led by Vedic, Man Mohan Gupta. The group meets from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1EP. For further information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888586 or at [woodhouseopten@btinternet.com](mailto:woodhouseopten@btinternet.com).

**For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:**

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: [www.niinterfaithforum.org](http://www.niinterfaithforum.org)

Interfaith Scotland: [www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)

Inter-faith Council for Wales: [www.interfaithwales.org.uk](http://www.interfaithwales.org.uk)

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk) by **13 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

**Disclaimer:** Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH  
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