



# Inter Faith Network Newsletter

December 2022

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## FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

### 2021 Census data on religion

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published the Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion topic summary from the 2021 Census in England and Wales. The ONS reports that the main points are as follows:

- The religion question is voluntary; 94.0% (56.0 million) of usual residents answered the question in 2021, an increase from 92.9% (52.1 million) in 2011.
- For the first time in a census of England and Wales, less than half of the population (46.2%, 27.5 million people) described themselves as “Christian”, a 13.1 percentage point decrease from 59.3% (33.3 million) in 2011; despite this decrease, “Christian” remained the most common response to the religion question.
- “No religion” was the second most common response, increasing by 12.0 percentage points to 37.2% (22.2 million) from 25.2% (14.1 million) in 2011.
- There were increases in the number of people who described themselves as “Muslim” (3.9 million, 6.5% in 2021, up from 2.7 million, 4.9% in 2011) and “Hindu” (1.0 million, 1.7% in 2021, up from 818,000, 1.5% in 2011).
- Wales had a greater decrease in people reporting their religion as “Christian” (14.0 percentage point decrease, from 57.6% in 2011 to 43.6% in 2021) and increase in “No religion” (14.5 percentage point increase, from 32.1% in 2011 to 46.5% in 2021) compared with England and Wales overall.
- London remains the most religiously diverse region of England in 2021, with over a quarter (25.3%) of all usual residents reporting a religion other than “Christian”; the North East and South West are the least religiously diverse regions, with 4.2% and 3.2%, respectively, selecting a religion other than “Christian”.

Responses to the figures came from a number of faith community bodies, for example <https://cte.org.uk/churches-respond-to-census-results/> and <https://mcb.org.uk/2021-census-as-uk-population-grows-so-do-british-muslim-communities/>. The Board of Deputies of British Jews commented both on the value of the statistics and the fact that the community could see itself as undercounted. <https://bod.org.uk/bod-news/board-of-deputies-reacts-to-national-census-figures-on-number-of-jews-in-england-and-wales/> The separate material on ethnicity, within which category the ONS had decided not to include ‘Sikh’ as an ethnic category, prompted renewed calls from some within the Sikh community to revisit that decision.

Local faith leaders have also responded to the figures, for example in Peterborough <https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/people/peterborough-faith-leaders-react-as-one-third-of-city-say-they-are-not-religious-3939528> and in Birmingham <https://twitter.com/FaithLeadersGrp/status/1598345417904865288>.

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### Places of worship and the Protect Duty

On 19 December, the Home Secretary set out the foundational policy for the Protect Duty in Parliament, from now on to be known as Martyn’s Law. Martyn Hett was one of the victims of the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017. The aim of the Bill is to make public accessible locations, including places of worship, safer. This follows last year’s Protect Duty consultation which asked what measures might be taken to protect the public from attacks, as well as how to make sure staff are trained to respond appropriately.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/martyns-law-to-ensure-stronger-protections-against-terrorism-in-public-places>

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities notes that “There will be a tiered approach which will be linked to the activity that takes place at a location, and its capacity, with proportionality a key consideration. All places of worship will be placed within the standard tier of the Duty regardless of their capacity, except a small cohort across all faiths that charge tourists for entry and/or hire out the site for large commercial events.” And “Duty holders in public buildings within the standard tier will be required to undertake simple yet effective activities to improve protective security and preparedness.”

Further details on what the foundational policy means for places of worship can be found at <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/19/martyns-law-factsheet/>.

The Government will introduce the Protect Duty when parliamentary time allows. For further information, or to express a wish to take part in stakeholder engagement events run by the Home Office in the new year, email [ProtectDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:ProtectDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk).

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### **Faith communities responding to the cost of living crisis**

With inflation rising to over 10%, costs of many basic provisions and rent and mortgages rising and energy prices particularly so, the cost of living has become very difficult for many, even with available forms of support. In this context, faith communities are working to offer what assistance they can. They are doing so individually but also tackling the issues together. For example, as reported in the Bradford Argus and Telegraph, over 50 community leaders there met earlier this month at a roundtable organised by Strengthening Faith Institutions to discuss what they can do to support the most vulnerable amid the cost of living crisis. They spoke about “ways places of worship can be used to support the needs of local communities, with suggestions on how food and essential items can be delivered to families in poverty, and on how churches, mosques and temples can be used as safe spaces where people can keep warm to avoid having to pay high energy bills”. <https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/23160314.faith-leaders-bradford-speak-cost-living-crisis/>

#### *Creating places of warm welcome*

Places of worship and faith centres across the UK have opened their doors as warm spaces for those who are struggling to heat their homes.

Many of these are doing so through the Warm Welcome initiative. The campaign was started by the ChurchWorks Commission and it is operating with a number of Christian, Muslim and other partners, such as the Royal Voluntary Association and the Together Coalition. A list of all warm spaces registered so far can be found at <https://www.warmwelcome.uk>. The mission of the initiative is to support organisations to open their doors and provide a warm welcome.

Others are contributing through/also through local authorities schemes where there are networks of ‘warm spaces’ or ‘warm hubs’. See, for example, the example of <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/21602/Register-to-become-a-Warm-Space-in-Gateshead>, where churches are among the warm spaces and similarly Swansea, <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/SwanseaSpacesPR> with its list of warm spaces/hubs. London also has an extensive network of these, including many places of worship and

centres of different faiths such as the Jain Oshwal Shakti Centre and Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, the Riverside Church and Al Madina Mosque in Barking, and Leyton and Wanstead Synagogue. Glasgow also has different faith communities participating with participation from a number of churches of different denominations and the Sikh Gurdwara in Pollokshields.

#### *Providing food and other essentials*

A number of places of worship run local food banks or collect for a local food bank. For example, the St Neots Foodbank is a collaborative action between ten St Neots churches working under the auspices of the Trussell Trust, a national Foodbank network. Some also provide hot meals for those in need. A Sky News report highlighted that the cost of living crisis has brought an increasing number of non-Sikhs through the doors of gurdwaras for the free langar. <https://news.sky.com/story/cost-of-living-sikh-community-is-serving-up-hot-meals-to-more-people-than-ever-12713552> The news report notes that many Sikh organisations have also ramped up their efforts by distributing food on the streets, to cater for those who need it most.

Other programmes such as Mitzvah Day and Sewa Day have also been working to gather and distribute essentials. Mitzvah Day runs an extensive food bank support programme. <https://mitzvahday.org.uk/project/foodbank-aid-north-london-network/> Sewa Day is active in many areas of the country. In Nottingham it has worked for the third year with Communities Working Together to run a 'shoebox appeal', where presents of hats, scarves, food, gifts and toys, books and toiletries to adults and children who might otherwise not get presents. <https://westbridgfordwire.com/pictures-shoebox-appeal-organisers-blown-away-by-the-generosity-of-the-rushcliffe-community/> Sufra NW London provides a Foodbank but also a wide range of services and community-based activities to empower individuals and families to overcome impoverishment and social isolation.

These are just a few examples of the ways in which faith and faith-linked initiatives have been responding to some of the cost of living impacts. Faith communities and their national and regional structures engage with these and on other social needs and social justice issues through ongoing programmes.

#### *Support for individuals*

Information on support available can be found on the UK Government website at <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/> and on the following sites for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/>

<https://gov.wales/get-help-cost-living>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/benefits-and-financial-support/low-income>

#### *Support for charities and voluntary organisations*

The Charities Aid Foundation has launched a [Cost-of-Living Resource Hub](#), in collaboration with a number of partner organisations. This includes practical guidance and tools to help charities navigate the current challenging times. CAF has also launched a £3m [Keystone Fund](#) offering unrestricted grants to charities with income under £1m who are addressing social justice or working towards social equity, to help cover core costs, strengthen capacity and build resilience.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has appealed for the government to ensure voluntary organisations get continued support from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme beyond March 2023, outlining the risks for communities if the current support package stops. <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/call-for-continuing-energy-bill-support-for-voluntary-organisations/#/>

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### **COVID-19 commemoration**

The last issue of the e-bulletin noted that a UK Commission on Covid Commemoration had been established to secure a broad consensus from across the whole of the United Kingdom on how to “commemorate the COVID-19 pandemic and mark this distinctive period in our history at a national and community level”. The Commission held its fourth meeting at the end of November and is expecting to report to the Prime Minister by the end of March 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-commission-on-covid-commemoration>

A public consultation ran until 5 December and the Commission is still keen for organisations and members of the public to complete the local Covid Commemoration survey which can be found at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UKCovidCommemorationActivity/>.

The UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry (<https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/>), the independent public inquiry set up to examine the UK's response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and learn lessons for the future, is also exploring ways in which the scale of the hardship and loss experienced during the pandemic can be commemorated as part of its proceedings. A number of national faith community bodies in membership of the Inter Faith Network participated in a roundtable on 13 December, where this was one of the items addressed, with more engagement planned for the new year.

Christmas sees ‘Together at Christmas’ carol services happening at a number of churches around the UK which, like that recorded on 15 December at Westminster Abbey, hosted by HRH the Princess of Wales, celebrate ‘local heroes’, including those who went above and beyond during the Covid pandemic. <https://www.royal.uk/together-at-christmas-service-2022> The Westminster Abbey service was described as “combining traditional and modern elements to encompass people of all faiths and none”.

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### **Royal visits to new Sikh gurdwara and to Jewish cultural centre**

Earlier this month His Majesty King Charles III visited the newly built Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Luton, which he officially opened. The event was attended by many members of the Sikh community, civic leaders, representatives of other faiths and of Luton Council of Faiths and others. The King met volunteers, including those who provide langar and run a weekly Luton Sikh Soup Kitchen outside Luton’s Town Hall. <https://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/people/king-charles-visit-to-lutons-new-guru-nanak-gurdwara-brought-towns-faiths-together-3944233>

The King also visited the JW3 Jewish Cultural Centre in London for an annual Chanukah party, where he danced with Holocaust survivors. This was part of a tour of JW3, in the

course of which he also met with a group of girls packing Christmas packages for asylum seekers, stopped by a hair and beauty course for Orthodox students and was shown the kitchen where volunteers and refugees were preparing food packages for the needy. <https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-hanukkah-jewish-community-b2246823.html> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/king-charles-dances-hora-with-holocaust-survivors-at-london-jewish-community-center/>

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### **Hate crime and antisemitism**

The most recently published figures from the Home Office (October) showed that for the year to March 2022, religious hate crimes increased by 37 per cent (to 8,730 offences), up from 6,383 in the previous year; this was the highest number of religious hate crimes recorded since the time series began in year ending March 2012.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022>

Examples of disturbing incidents in the last two months include those in Bridgnorth in Shropshire <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2022/11/11/appalling-anti-semitic-graffiti-found-in-town-condemned/> and at Heatons Muslims Community Trust in Stockport <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/support-mosque-police-probe-hate-25729472>.

A criminal prosecution against a street preacher arrested for an alleged 'hate crime' in which the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) argued that parts of the Bible are 'abusive' and 'no longer appropriate in modern society' has been dropped. However, as reported in *The Times*, it has now led to a warning from a religious freedom expert that the CPS is unilaterally trying to extend the law. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/street-preacher-was-charged-with-hate-crime-for-quoting-bible-at-lesbians-xbrhgr25r> Also dropped by the CPS have been charges against two men suspected of shouting anti-Semitic abuse in the convoy which drove through Finchley Road in North London in March 2021. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11444671/Fury-prosecutors-DROP-charges-convoy-screaming-F-Jews.html>

While the majority of religious related hate crime targets Jews and Muslims, members of other communities are also targeted. Early in 2022, a body called Sikhguard was created to encourage the reporting of hate crime by members of the Sikh community throughout the United Kingdom. The National Sikh Police Association UK has initiated the project in conjunction with True Vision and other community-based organisations concerned about under-reporting and the need to make the authorities aware of the true extent of anti-Sikh hate. <https://sikhguard.org>

Information on reporting hate crimes and incidents can be found below.

#### **REPORT HATE CRIMES AND INCIDENTS AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE THEM**

Report hate crimes and incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK; Sikhguard and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>  
<https://reporhate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime.

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

The Bishop's Disciplinary Tribunal for the Anglican diocese of Winchester has ruled that the conduct of the Revd Dr Stephen Sizer was unbecoming to the office and work of a clerk in Holy Orders. It concluded that he had "engaged in anti-Semitic activity" when, in January 2015, he posted an article that was "virulently anti-Semitic" on Facebook. Dr Sizer said that he accepted the conclusions and criticisms of his conduct and apologised unreservedly for the hurt and offence caused.

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/9-december/news/uk/tribunal-finds-the-revd-dr-stephen-sizer-guilty-of-conduct-unbecoming-and-anti-semitic-activity>

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### **Commission on the Integration of Refugees**

At the end of November, a new Commission on the Integration of Refugees was launched. Convened by the founder President of the Woolf Institute, Dr Ed Kessler, this independent Commission aims to:

- Improve the refugee and asylum system, for a society where everyone, including refugees, feels welcome and integrated;
- Bring together opposing views and diverse experiences from across the UK – from refugees and local communities, faith and community leaders, security forces and healthcare professionals; and
- Work to overcome differences to find common ground to fix the broken system with practical solutions.

The Commission is chaired by Lord Alex Carlile, the Commission and is composed of 23 commissioners from across civil society, the public sector, politics, faith communities and academia. The Commission's first publication, produced in collaboration with the Good Faith Partnership, is a review of asylum reform initiatives between 1997 and 2022. Further information is available at <https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/about/>.

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### **UK Government Resilience Framework**

The UK Government Resilience Framework was published in December (replacing the 'National Resilience Strategy'). The Framework is "a risk-agnostic plan to strengthen the systems, structures, and capabilities which underpin the UK's resilience to all risks, including those which are yet to emerge". The Framework is built around three core principles:

- A shared understanding of the risks we face is foundational: it must underpin everything that we do to prepare for and recover from crises;



- Prevention rather than cure wherever possible: resilience-building spans the whole risk cycle so we must focus effort across the cycle, particularly before crises happen;
- Resilience is a ‘whole of society’ endeavour, so we must be more transparent and empower everyone to make a contribution.

Faith groups are included within the communities referenced in the Framework and it acknowledges that “National, regional, local and grassroots VCS and faith-based organisations have been at the forefront of the response to emergencies”. The Framework can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-strengthen-national-resilience>.

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### **RE Council campaign**

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales has launched a campaign to ensure that “all children in all schools receive a high-quality education in RE/an education in religion and worldviews taught by well-qualified and trained teachers”. The key messages of the campaign are: RE is vital for life in the modern world; RE is valued by the voting public; Too many children are not receiving RE; A national standard is needed; Recruitment of secondary trainees is Insufficient; and Too many primary teachers have no RE training.

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/?news=re-and-politics-your-voice-counts>

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### **Police recruitment campaign and faith communities**

The UK Government plans to recruit an additional 20,000 frontline officers in England and Wales by March 2023. The Police are keen for the service to represent the communities that it serves and are looking for talented people from all backgrounds, ages, ethnicities and faiths. They are seeking the support of communities to promote a career in policing by:

- Signposting to the website [Why join the Police? | Join The Police \(joiningthepolice.co.uk\)](https://www.joiningthepolice.co.uk) as a place to find out more information on a career in policing and see which forces are currently open for recruitment;
- Highlighting the police network support organisations, such as the Jewish Police Association, the National Association of Muslim Police, the National Sikh Police Association and the Police Pagan Association [Police officer support organisations | Join The Police \(joiningthepolice.co.uk\)](#); and
- Amplifying police recruitment content on social media, that addresses the barriers around faith, such as: [Feeling supported](#), [career progression](#), [policing is a rewarding career](#), [being a voice for others](#).

For further information, or any enquiries, contact the Police Recruitment campaign team at the Home Office at [joiningthepolice@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:joiningthepolice@homeoffice.gov.uk).

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## Religion in the workplace

The importance of employees' faith and belief in the employment context has been receiving increased focus. For example, in November and December business psychology consultancy Pearn Kandola published two reports, *Religion at Work: Experiences of Christian employees* and *Religion at Work: Experiences of Hindu Employees* (both by Binna Kandola). <https://pearnkandola.com/research/>

The author commented that "Many Hindus do not feel that they are able to express their faith openly. This is significant and demonstrates that organisations still have progress to make in creating truly inclusive cultures" <https://www.businessleader.co.uk/religion-work-why-hindu-employees-religious-holiday-requests-denied/> and that "Many Christians are in fact facing similar issues as those of other minority religions. As our research revealed, they are not exempt from negative experiences at work, such as those involving discrimination and stereotyping." <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/23-december/news/uk/some-religious-employees-subjected-to-ridicule-and-stereotyping-survey-finds>

Some resources relating to religion in the workplace can be found [below](#).

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## INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

### Inter Faith Week 13-20 November

This year Inter Faith Week [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org) took place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. Across the Week, over 800 activities are known to have taken place, and details of further events continue to come in. Thousands of people took part in the Week and its positive messages has also reached millions through social media.

Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, which supports the Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, hailed it an 'inspiring success' and said "*The Week's growth reflects increasing awareness of the vital importance of people of different faiths and beliefs living together well, finding ways to engage on issues where there may be divergence of views and building on shared values to work for the common good.*"

Read more about the week at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/news>. A full list of activities can be seen on the website here: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/calendar>.

*Inter Faith Week messages from faith leaders*

Inter Faith Network for the UK's Faith Communities Forum invited national faith community leaders to share messages about the importance of religious literacy. You can see their messages at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-national-faith-communities-and-their-leaders-2022>.

### *Feedback on the Week*

If you held an activity for the Week, thank you for making the week such a success! If you have not already responded to the feedback survey, we would be very grateful if you could spare some time to share any thoughts or reflections that you may have on your experience of the Week. The link to the survey can be found here:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFW2022>.

### *Scottish Inter Faith Week*

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and took place from 13-20 November. More information about this can be found at [www.scottishinterfaithweek.org](http://www.scottishinterfaithweek.org). This year's theme was 'Storytelling', linked to Scotland's Year of Stories.

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### **IFN's e-bulletin renamed 'newsletter'**

Following on from the responses to this year's e-bulletin survey, it was noted in a previous issue that we would be moving to a new name for the e-bulletin. 'E-bulletin' was found by some respondents to sound outdated and, while the overall length of content was found helpful by the majority of respondents, the material is more detailed than is commonly the case with bulletin contents. It has therefore been renamed 'newsletter'.

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### **Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum**

A meeting of the IFN Faith Communities Forum took place in October. Items on the Agenda included: Shared reflections on events of recent months; IFN Strategic Plan development; Three-yearly review of FCF Terms of Reference; FCF Moderator appointments; Local inter faith organisations – their role and engagement with them by faith communities, with reflections offered by Es Rosen, President, Barnet Multi Faith Forum, and Fayyaz Suleman, Chair, Leicester Council of Faiths and also Mr Narendra Waghela, IFN's Co-Chair drawn from the local inter faith constituency and also an officer of Leicester Council of Faiths; Inter Faith Week; Inter faith engagement of faith communities; and Other issues of interest and concern.

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### **IFN link meeting for local inter faith groups in the West Midlands**

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county. They provide an opportunity for sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges. Minutes of previous link meetings can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/local-inter-faith-linking>.

The most recent meeting was held on 23 November for local inter faith organisations in the West Midlands. On the Agenda were: Round table sharing of news, information and ideas (including activities held Inter Faith Week); and Discussion of issues of common interest

and concern, including particular issues that emerged in the earlier discussion as well as tackling and reporting hate crime and working for religious literacy.

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### **IFN leaflet and ‘code’**

One of IFN’s most widely used publications is its short guidelines: *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/building-good-relations-with-people-of-different-faiths-and-beliefs> The principles were adopted by its members in 1993 and have been so by new members since that time. The ‘code’ has been used and drawn on by groups around the world.

A new leaflet about IFN and its work can be found at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-network-leaflet>.

Hard copies of both documents are also available from the IFN office.

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### **Support to member inter faith organisations on using social media and on websites**

IFN is offering member local, regional and national inter faith organisations one to one sessions on Zoom or the phone to talk through questions about whether/how to use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as about running and maintaining websites. You can explore any questions - if we don't know the answer we will try and point you to someone who might! These 30-45 minutes sessions are run by IFN's Project Director Ashley Beck and individually tailored. If you would like to book one of the remaining available sessions in January or February, you can email him at [Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk) by 12 January.

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

### **Faith and football**

Linked to the BBC’s World Cup coverage, BBC Morning Live ran a special feature on Building Bridges in Burnley’s inter faith football tournament. They brought children of different faith backgrounds from Barden Primary School, St John's School CE Cliviger, and Daneshouse FC to take part in an inter faith football tournament at the the Leisure Box Brierfield. Those who took part were given free tickets to go with their families to see Burnley Football Club play at Turf Moor. The feature can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001g5zv/morning-live-series-4-16122022> 8 minutes in. It includes interviews with the Chair of BBB and parents and pupils.

The Inter Faith Tournament was linked to Inter Faith Week which also saw members of the Berks & Bucks FA visit Singh Sabha Slough FC to meet its youth team, composed of individuals from predominantly Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Christian backgrounds. This highlighted how sport has the ability to break down barriers and foster inter faith understanding. The club’s main ground is owned by Singh Sabha Gurdwara, the local Sikh temple. Having access to these community facilities is what gave the club the starting

point it needed to begin providing accessible football in the local area. <https://www.berks-bucksfa.com/news/2022/dec/08/breaking-barriers-singh-sabha-slough> In Sunderland, a match was held between two teams of Sunderland Samba FC players and friends to celebrate their commitment to bringing people together and to encourage learning and understanding. <https://sunderlandsamba.com/>

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### **Christian Jewish initiative**

Lambeth Palace and the Board of Deputies of British Jews are working on a joint initiative involving leaders of Jewish Representative Councils and other local Jewish leaders from the south of the UK together with interfaith advisers from the Church of England who are part of the Church of England's Presence and Engagement Network. The aim is to think about how they can enrich their work locally and create new relationships between communities working together. The first event took place at the end of November and a second day of engagement will take place with northern communities in 2023. Both groups will be brought back together for a final meeting at the end of the first year.

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### **Faith communities and domestic abuse and violence against women and girls**

During the Covid-19 pandemic there was a steep increase in the number of calls to Refuge, the UK's largest domestic abuse charity. In response to this crisis, [Faiths Forum for London \(FFL\)](#) and [Women's Interfaith Network](#) created a multi faith domestic abuse awareness campaign called Faiths Against Domestic Abuse (FADA). Since then the FADA campaign has held a number of online webinars and workshops with speakers including Nicole Jacobs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales. Partners on the campaign have included Jewish Women's Aid, The Sharan Project, The Faith and Belief Forum and Near Neighbours. The first FADA Week was held in 2020 and the most recent FADA Awareness Week took place from 28 November to 2 December.

<https://twitter.com/faithsagainstda>

There is also a Faith and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Coalition which is a partnership of organisations lead by the Safety Across Faith and Ethnic (SAFE) Communities project at Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse. It wishes to highlight the critical role that faith communities and religious groups play in addressing VAWG as they are often the first point of contact or help seeking for those suffering abuse. More about its work can be found at <https://www.faithandvawg.org/h>

There are also other charities working on abuse which are not faith-specific such as Karma Nirvana which works with victims and survivors of Honour Based Abuse or facing forced marriage. <https://karmanirvana.org.uk>

The Religions for Peace (UK) Women of Faith Network <https://www.facebook.com/UKWFN> has recently taken part in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence linked to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It posted on social media, hosted events and presented a new video series "Visible Advocacy – Interfaith Male Allies in our Midst" which can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/@RfPUKWFN>.

During Inter Faith Week, a conference on Faith and Domestic Abuse, arranged by the Hope Consultancy, was held in Leicester. <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/faith-and-domestic-abuse-conference-in-leicester-5413>

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### **The Great Winter Get Together**

The Great Winter Get Together, organised by the Jo Cox Foundation, takes place from 16 to 29 January. The theme will be 'Places for Connection'.

<https://www.greatgettogether.org/winter>

The [Organiser Pack](#) includes: inspiration and ideas, social media templates and the 'keys to unlocking connection at events'. Events don't have to be organised from scratch. If you are already involved with an event that different people come along to, you could give it a Great Winter Get Together theme for January by including activities that get people chatting with each other. For further information, email [hello@greatgettogether.org](mailto:hello@greatgettogether.org).

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### **Faith in Mental Health**

The Woolf Institute is currently undertaking a research project on 'Faith in Mental Health'. This is a two-year blended research and public education project to study mental health from an interfaith perspective with a twin focus on:

1. The development of public educational materials on faith, interfaith and mental health;
2. The study of policy-related issues concerning mental health and British Muslim communities.

For further information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/mental-health-project>.

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### **Multi faith youth initiatives**

Earlier this year the Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF) set up a Youth Council, a group of young leaders from a variety of faith and belief backgrounds, which is consulted on key decisions at F&BF. <https://faithbeliefforum.org/meet-the-fbf-youth-council> The Council will be holding an Interfaith Summit in February.

A new National Multifaith Youth Centre has also been launched, which is designed to bring together university students across all faiths and beliefs. This is working, with partner organisations, to create a network of faith and belief based university society representatives and multi faith champions. <https://www.nmycentre.org/>

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### **Tower Hamlets Faith Health Action Partnership**

FaithAction is running a project to look at how faith settings support the health needs of their communities. Funded by Tower Hamlets Public Health, working with East London Mosque and supported by Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum, it is supporting eight local

faith settings and faith based organisations to deliver health focused projects to the local community.

It is working with a number of local groups to deliver health focused activities to their local communities and is funding Cycle Sisters, Christ Apostolic Church, Shahporan Masjid and Islamic Centre Trust, Globe Community Project, Dorset Community Association, Newark Youth London, East London Mosque and Wapping Noorani Masjid and Cultural Centre. These groups will be offering a range of health based projects, including activities for young people, healthy eating guidance, fitness sessions and blood pressure checks.

For more information, visit <https://fhap.faithaction.net/> or email [jenny.hadgraft@faithaction.net](mailto:jenny.hadgraft@faithaction.net).

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### **London Health Inequalities Action Group report and recommendations**

In October, the Health Inequalities Action Group (HIAG) published its report, 'On Faith, Place and Health: Harnessing the Power of Faith Groups to Tackle London's Health Inequalities'. HIAG is a multi-faith initiative led by the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, to explore London's health inequalities and how faith groups can and do contribute to the health of their communities. The report includes a number of recommendations such as supporting the development and integration of an Interfaith Health Council with national health structures to represent faith communities. More information can be found at <https://bishopoflondon.org/news/bishop-of-londons-health-inequalities-action-group-publishes-14-recommendations-to-tackle-health-inequalities/>.

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### **Faith Covenant renewals**

The Faith Covenant, developed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, is a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove some of the mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels. <https://www.faithandsociety.org/> The Covenant has now been signed by 24 local authorities. During, and either side of, Inter Faith Week, Faith Covenants were renewed or signed in Barnet, Brighton, Birmingham, Calderdale and Southampton.

The APPG hosts a Faith Covenant Forum which brings all the Covenant holders together (both local authority representatives and faith leaders) and also provides a space for prospective Covenant areas to hear about what the Covenant looks like in action. For more information, email [info@faithaction.net](mailto:info@faithaction.net).

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## **RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING**

### *Resources*

#### **Faith festivals and greetings**

In the UK today a range of festivals are celebrated by different faith communities. A number of faith festival calendars are produced each year. One of the most widely used is

the Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals (<http://www.shapcalendar.org.uk/>). This comes with a booklet explaining each festival. Their calendar of dates is used, with their permission, on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals>.

At <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings> is the 2023 list of festivals and greetings that has been produced with the IFN's Faith Communities Forum, which brings together National Faith Community Representative Bodies in IFN membership. Each faith community has many different festivals but has chosen two festivals on which greetings from those of other faiths and none would be particularly appreciated.

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### **Resources on religion in the workplace**

Guidance on religion and belief in the workplace has been produced by equality organisations and bodies such as the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion. <https://www.enei.org.uk/category/employer-guides/>

There are also a wide range of consultancies, such as the Faith & Belief Forum (<https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/faith-inclusion-training-and-consultancy-for-workplaces>) that support employers in this area, underlining the value of religious diversity in the workplace (for example, <https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/blog/the-benefits-of-religious-diversity-in-the-workplace/>) and creating a religiously inclusive workplace <http://www.personneltoday.com/hr/religious-inclusion/>) as well as advising on relevant law and good practice. On the latter area, there is relevant guidance produced both by the EHRC <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/religion-or-belief-discrimination> and ACAS <https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-guide-to-religion-or-belief-discrimination>.

Some guidance points from the Inter Faith Network for the UK are at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/employers>.

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### **Faith and inter faith resources for Holocaust Memorial Day**

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place on 27 January each year. HMD is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. Next year's theme is 'Ordinary people'.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has produced a guide for faith and inter faith groups on marking HMD. This can be found at <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/your-faith-interfaith-group-and-holocaust-memorial-day/>.

The Council of Christians and Jews has published its HMD Resource for 2023 which reflects the theme of 'Ordinary people'. The resource contains reflections on the importance of marking HMD as people of faith. It also includes practical advice for churches on how to



commemorate the Holocaust in churches, prayers for HMD, all genocides, and Christian-Jewish relations. It can be found at <https://ccj.org.uk/resources/holocaust-education>.

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### **Bar Standards Board Religion and Belief Toolkit**

Following on from the launch of its Equality Strategy earlier in the year, the Bar Standards Board (BSB) has this month published a Religion and Belief toolkit for barristers and legal professionals. The toolkit has been developed by the BSB's Religion and Belief Taskforce. The taskforce "aims to support and advise the BSB on how best to raise the awareness of differing religions and beliefs amongst the profession, to address the lack of inclusive action and discussion of religions and belief, to encourage a more inclusive environment, and help to eliminate any religion or belief related discrimination at the Bar."

The Toolkit can be found at <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/religion-and-belief-taskforce.html>.

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### **Inter faith poetry book**

Interfaith Scotland has worked with the Scottish Poetry Library to create an anthology of 40 poems written by poets of all faiths and beliefs. The poets share insights into what gave them support and inspiration during the pandemic, such as nature, faith and culture. More information can be found at <https://interfaithscotland.org/interfaith-scotland-launches-poetry-book>.

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### **Bradford Hospitals app**

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has launched a new Spiritual, Pastoral and Religious Care (SPaRC) app. The app, launched during Inter Faith Week, is designed for both staff and patients and offers self-help resources, support and guidance on six beliefs and information on the SPaRC team. More information can be found at <https://sparc.bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk/>.

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*Study/Training*

### **St Ethelburga's training and workshops**

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London hosts and offers events, training and workshops based on the themes of peace, community inclusion, reconciliation and ecological awareness and community action. Forthcoming events include 'Conflict coaching' on 13 January and 6 February. For more information, including cost and timings, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/events/>.

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## **JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING**

### **Inter Faith Network for the UK – Internship (paid)**

IFN is offering a full time, 10 week fixed term Internship from 23 January to 31 March, paid at the London Living Wage. This a great opportunity to contribute to building good inter faith relations and to develop skills and gain increased knowledge of inter faith activity in the UK. The internship will include the chance to work on a number of IFN’s programme areas, including local inter faith support and national Inter Faith Week. The full role description and official application form can be found on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>. Any queries can be sent to Hannah Cassidy at [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk). The closing date for receipt of application forms is 5pm on 6 January.

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### **The Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN’s work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **UK Government Find a Grant pilot**

The UK Government’s Find a Grant pilot is part of the Grants Applicant Programme (GAP), being delivered by the Government Grants Management Function in the Cabinet Office and aims to make applying for and finding government grants simpler, faster and fairer. <https://grantscommunity.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/12/the-first-gov-uk-release-of-the-find-a-grant-pilot-is-now-open-for-everyone/>

The pilot phase includes 23 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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### **Funding websites**

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.cymru/funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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## Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund grant scheme

The Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund considers small grant applications from UK registered non-profit organisations supporting grassroots projects in diverse and deprived communities in the UK (and Commonwealth and internationally). The small grants programme awards single or multi-year grants to a maximum value of £5,000 and £15,000 respectively. The average single award is £2,000. It also considers awarding multi-year small grants to UK registered non-profit organisations. <https://www.pwcf.org.uk/how-apply-grant>

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## Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and its administration has, since July, been run by East Midland Business. In response to user feedback, it is now possible to submit digital application forms, as well as using postal options.

<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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## FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The next round opens on 21 December and closes on 8 March.

<https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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## SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

**The Great Winter Get Together** will be from 17 to 30 January. This is a project of the Jo Cox Foundation. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

**Holocaust Memorial Day** takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2023 is 'Ordinary People'. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

**World Interfaith Harmony Week** takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>

**Fairtrade Fortnight** runs from Monday 21 February to Sunday 6 March. Many places of worship take part. <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>

**International Women's Day** falls on 8 March. Its theme this year is 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'. Many faith and inter faith bodies mark the day. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/> See Diary Dates for some inter faith events taking place in the UK.

**Great British Spring Clean** [Keep Britain Tidy](https://www.keepbritaintidy.org) runs an annual Great British Spring Clean campaign, which this year runs from Friday 25 March to Sunday 10 April. Every year lots of faith and inter faith groups take part. For more information, visit <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean>.

**The Big Lunch** this year is an official part of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June. Across the years millions of people from different backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/get-involved>

**Refugee Week** will take place from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2022 Week is 'Healing'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

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## DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

**Norwich InterFaith Link** will be holding its next event on Tuesday 20 December. This will focus on Human Rights, with discussion led by NIFL Chair, David Griffith, and a guest refugee. It begins at 7.30pm. For more information, contact NIFL through <https://norwichinterfaithlink.wordpress.com/contact-us/contact-us/>.

**Interfaith Wolverhampton** is holding its next virtual Bring and Share Lunchtime meeting on Tuesday 20 December. There will not be a speaker this time but participants are invited to have something short in mind to share about Christmas or some other celebration which is important to them. It is being held from 1pm to 2pm. For more information, email [admin@ifwton.org.uk](mailto:admin@ifwton.org.uk).

**Nisa-Nashim** Jewish Muslim Women's network and **JW3** are hosting an inter faith Chanukah celebration on Wednesday 21 December. Members of all faiths are invited to share in a special communal Chanukah candle-lighting followed by a festive meal. It is being held at 6.30pm in the JW3 building at 341-351 Finchley Road, London, NW3 6ET. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.jw3.org.uk/whats-on/interfaith-chanukah-celebration-nisa-nashim#>.

The **Bournemouth Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews** is holding a Celebration of Chanukah on Thursday 22 December. The event will including candle lighting and

traditional food. Rabbi Maurice Michaels will host the celebration and tell the story of Judith, followed by a talk about the Maccabees from a Catholic perspective from Father Andrew Wagstaff, who is a member of the Congregation of the Oratory and Catholic Chaplain to Bournemouth University and Arts University. The event will begin at 7.30pm and is being held at Bournemouth Reform Synagogue, 53 Christchurch Road, BH1 3PA. For further information, email [ccjbaw@gmail.com](mailto:ccjbaw@gmail.com).

The **Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester** is holding its annual Kosher Meal on Sunday 15 January. It will be held at 6.30pm for 7pm in the Upstairs room above Celia's Kitchen Takeaway, 7 King's Rd, Prestwich, Manchester M25 0LE. Participants must book in advance. For more information, visit [https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Future\\_events.html](https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Future_events.html).

**Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship** is holding its next meeting on Monday 16 January. The theme will be 'Concepts of the Divine in Paganism' and the presenter will be Jay Anderson. It is being held at 7.30pm at All Hallows Church, 24 Regent Terrace, Burley, Leeds. For more information, email [chair@concord-leeds.org.uk](mailto:chair@concord-leeds.org.uk).

**The Inter Faith Network for the UK** will be holding a webinar on Tuesday 17 January about the Inter Faith Buddies scheme. This is designed to bring individuals together to learn more about how each other's faith and beliefs shape their lives and perspectives on issues of common interest. To be sent more information when this available, email [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk).

#### **More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:**

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: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at [www.twitter.com/IFNetUK](https://www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) [www.facebook.com/IFNetUK](https://www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and [www.facebook.com/IFWeek](https://www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: [www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr) or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk).

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

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at:

<https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option).

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

**Thank you!**

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**MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE  
OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY**

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing [remember@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:remember@interfaith.org.uk) or call us on 0207 730 0410.

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

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at [remember@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:remember@interfaith.org.uk).

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

### **Submissions for next issue**

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next newsletter please email these to [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk) **by 23 January** with 'newsletter' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk) to your mailing list.

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

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