



# Inter Faith Network Newsletter

March/April 2023

## Contents

The newsletter can be read by scrolling through. If you prefer to go to a particular section, click on its title in [Sections](#). To go directly to an individual item, click on its 'Read more' link under [Items](#).

## Sections

[Faith and public life updates](#)  
[Inter Faith Network for the UK News](#)  
[Inter faith projects, programmes and developments](#)  
[Resources and study/training](#)  
[Calls for Information, Competitions and Nominations](#)  
[Jobs, Internships and Volunteering](#)  
[Funding opportunities](#)  
[Special Weeks/Days/Months](#)  
[Diary Dates](#)

## Items

### [Faith and public life updates](#)

Illegal Migration Bill [Read more](#)  
Safety and security of places of worship [Read more](#)  
Damage to Qu'ran and Home Secretary article [Read more](#)  
Antisemitism and Islamophobia and political parties and groups [Read more](#)  
Prevent Review report [Read more](#)  
COVID-19 Public Inquiry [Read more](#)  
Faith groups respond in the UK to earthquake in Turkey and Syria [Read more](#)  
Marking the one year anniversary of war in Ukraine [Read more](#)  
Special Feature - Faith communities and the Coronation Weekend 6 to 8 May [Read more](#)

### [Inter Faith Network for the UK News](#)

Webinar on IFN Inter Faith Buddies scheme [Read more](#)  
Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum [Read more](#)  
IFN Link meetings for local inter faith groups [Read more](#)  
Feedback on 2022 Inter Faith Week [Read more](#)  
Support to member inter faith organisations on using social media and on websites [Read more](#)

### [Inter faith projects, programmes and developments](#)

Church Mosque twinning [Read more](#)

Inter faith tree planting [Read more](#)  
Multi faith choir 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary [Read more](#)  
Faith Matters project on the history of Ugandan Asians [Read more](#)  
York Interfaith Group local radio [Read more](#)  
Lincoln Spring Faith Festival [Read more](#)  
Inter faith history trail in Willesden and Brondesbury Park [Read more](#)  
Near Neighbours and women's activities [Read more](#)  
Multi faith prayer spaces in sports venues [Read more](#)

### [Resources and study/training](#)

IFN social media guidance resource [Read more](#)  
Resources for reporting hate crimes and incidents [Read more](#)  
NaCTSO resources for places of worship [Read more](#)  
Strengthening Faith Institutions training [Read more](#)

### [Calls for information, Competitions and Nominations](#)

Commission on the Integration of Refugees [Read more](#)

### [Jobs, Internships and Volunteering](#)

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Volunteers [Read more](#)  
Faith & Belief Forum – Programmes Coordinator [Read more](#)  
Brent Multi Faith Forum – Office Administrator [Read more](#)  
Council of Christians and Jews – Trustees [Read more](#)

### [Funding opportunities](#)

UK Government Find a Grant programme [Read more](#)  
Funding websites [Read more](#)  
Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme [Read More](#)  
FCC Community Action Fund [Read more](#)

### [Special Weeks/Days/Months](#)

Dates for Special Weeks, Days and Months taking place throughout the year [Read more](#)

### [Diary Dates](#)

Information on some of the inter faith events taking place around the UK [Read more](#)

### **IFN Newsletter Survey**

We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this year's newsletter survey. Your responses will help us to continue to shape the newsletter and our wider communications into valued resources for inter faith practitioners at all levels.

[https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFN\\_newsletter\\_2023/](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFN_newsletter_2023/)

Thank you!

## FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

### Illegal migration bill

On 7 March the UK Government introduced the Illegal Migration Bill to the House of Commons. <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3429>

This would make asylum claims inadmissible from those who travel to the UK on small boats and under it a home secretary would be required to remove “as soon as reasonably practicable”, to Rwanda or a ‘safe third country’ those anyone who arriving in that way. Those coming this way would also be prevented from ever claiming asylum in the UK.

The opening notes to the Bill include: “Secretary Suella Braverman has made the following statement under section 19(1)(b) of the Human Rights Act 1998: I am unable to make a statement that, in my view, the provisions of the Illegal Migration Bill are compatible with the Convention rights, but the Government nevertheless wishes the House to proceed with the Bill.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/08/what-are-the-legal-obstacles-faced-by-the-uks-migration-bill-suella-braverman>

Responses of concern have come from a number of faith communities, eg Churches <https://ctbi.org.uk/churches-voice-opposition-to-illegal-migration-bill/>; <https://jpit.uk/response-to-illegal-migration-bill>; Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees <https://twitter.com/WithRefugees/status/1633139798515785730> and the Board of Deputies of British Jews <https://mobile.twitter.com/BoardofDeputies/status/1633488546710405121>.

In October 2021 the Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network for the UK issued a call, “drawing on the common values at the heart of our different and distinct faith traditions” for safe, humane and dignified treatment of refugees and those seeking asylum. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-call-for-safe-humane-and-dignified-treatment-of-refugees-and-those-seeking-asylum>

[Back to the top](#)

### Safety and Security of Places of Worship

At its meeting on 2 February the IFN Faith Communities Forum agreed a statement on the Safety and Security of Places of Worship. This can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-on-safety-and-security-of-places-of-worship>.

The December issue of the newsletter noted that the Home Secretary had set out the foundational policy for the Protect Duty in Parliament (from now on to be known as Martyn’s Law). The aim of the Bill is to make publicly accessible locations, including places of worship, safer. For further information, or to express a wish to take part in stakeholder engagement events run by the Home Office, email [ProtectDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:ProtectDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk).

The Home Office is holding a dedicated webinar for faith communities, about Martyn’s Law, on 9 March. The registration link is <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/martyns-law-webinar-for-places-of-worship-tickets-519101836567>.

A special roundtable was hosted at Westminster Abbey on 6 March which brought together representatives of a number of faith community representative bodies with places of worship 800+ in capacity (those most likely to have more far reaching requirements under Martyr's Law) to explore aspects of linking and sharing good practice on security of places of worship in the context of counter-terrorism. The roundtable was convened by the Faith Sector lead for the Counter Terrorism Business Information Exchange and held in association with the police National Counter Terrorism Security Office, with assistance from the office of the Inter Faith Network for the UK.

Information on NaCTSO resources can be found [here](#).

[Back to the top](#)

### **Damage to Qur'an and Home Secretary article**

Four pupils from a secondary school in West Yorkshire were suspended last month after a copy of the Qur'an was damaged. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-64757799> The Police declared this a non-crime hate incident as there was no criminal intent.

The Home Secretary has subsequently said that the Home Office will work with the Department for Education to issue new guidance to outline children's protection from punishment over actions perceived to be blasphemous.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-braverman-we-do-not-have-blasphemy-laws-in-great-britain-9ps9lj8r5>

[Back to the top](#)

### **Antisemitism and Islamophobia and political parties and groups**

#### *Investigation into antisemitism in the Labour Party*

In October 2020, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) served the Labour Party with an unlawful act notice, after its investigation into antisemitism found the Party responsible for unlawful acts of harassment and discrimination. As a result, the Labour Party was obliged to produce an action plan to prevent continuation or reoccurrence of those unlawful acts, which was legally enforceable by the court if not fulfilled. The action plan concluded on 31 January. The EHRC confirmed on 15 February that it is content with the actions taken and has now concluded its work with the Labour Party.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/equality-watchdog-concludes-monitoring-labour-party-action-plan>

#### *Response to reports of Islamophobia in the Conservative Party*

In January the Cabinet Office announced that it would conduct an inquiry into the allegations made by Nusrat Ghani MP that she was discriminated against due to her religion. The EHRC has written to the Cabinet Office and the Conservative Party seeking further information. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/response-reports-islamophobia-conservative-party>

#### *New Issues Group*

The body Hope Note Hate has expressed concerns that a group of members of the House of Lords that meets as the New Issues Group may have been collaborating with far-right activists. Baroness Cox, a member of the New Issues Group denied has denied that it is

anti-Muslim, saying that it is a meeting of people who support the aims of her private member's bill, first introduced in 2011, which aims to protect Muslim women in Britain from sharia law. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/25/house-of-lords-worked-with-far-right>

[Back to the top](#)

### **Prevent Review report**

Prevent is one of the four 'pillars' of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy.

On 8 February the UK Government published the report by William Shawcross CVO on his Independent Review of Prevent, and its own response to it. These can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-prevents-report-and-government-response>.

The Independent Review took place during 2021 and 2022. Its Terms of Reference can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-review-of-prevent>.

The Shawcross Report makes 34 recommendations and the Government's response commits to implementing these.

[Back to the top](#)

### **COVID-19 Public Inquiry**

As noted in the last issue of the IFN Newsletter, 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) has now begun its work, and a number of national faith community bodies in membership of IFN participated in an Inquiry roundtable in December. Further engagement with faith communities is planned.

As part of the Inquiry's listening exercise, members of the public can share their experiences at <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/share-your-experience/>. To keep up to date with Inquiry news and progress, key dates and updates on the listening exercise, you can sign up to the Inquiry newsletter at <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/newsletter/>.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Faith groups respond in the UK to earthquake in Turkey and Syria**

Faith groups and local inter faith groups in the UK responded to the in Turkey and Syria on 6 February through fundraising efforts; through holding vigils, such as those in Peterborough and Watford <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/news/city-to-come-together-as-mark-of-respect-following-earthquake-in-turkey-and-syria> [https://twitter.com/farzana\\_chaudry/status/1627326251332513794](https://twitter.com/farzana_chaudry/status/1627326251332513794); or issuing statements encouraging support, such as this one issued by Leicester Council of Faiths <https://www.facebook.com/CouncilofFaiths/posts/pfbid02jU1dZctqYLYVkHzHpzjsBqrm7jZkfdecMVQDKVoH7tpFbvAAxhDykj36hkVsCZ3u7l>.

UK Faith-based aid agencies have worked, alongside others, to help provide support to all those affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. These include CAFOD <https://cafod.org.uk/news/emergencies-news/turkey-syria-earthquake-how-your->

[support-is-helping](#), Islamic Relief <https://islamic-relief.org/news/islamic-relief-responds-as-two-devastating-earthquakes-hit-syria-and-turkiye/>, Khalsa Aid [https://twitter.com/Khalsa\\_Aid/status/1630257726893744131](https://twitter.com/Khalsa_Aid/status/1630257726893744131) and World Jewish Relief <https://www.worldjewishrelief.org/ways-to-donate/appeals/1443-turkeysyria-earthquake-appeal>.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Marking the one year anniversary of war in Ukraine**

An 'Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Prayer Service for Peace in Ukraine' took place at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in London on 24 February to mark the one year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. This was attended by a number of leaders and politicians, including Faith Minister, Baroness Scott of Bybrook. <https://cte.org.uk/in-prayer-and-solidarity-with-ukraine/>

A UK-wide minute's silence was held on the same day. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-minutes-silence-one-year-war-anniversary-b2288833.html>

A number of inter faith groups in the UK held vigils to mark the anniversary. These include Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group <https://interfaithcontactgroup.com/> and the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby, in partnership with Derby Cathedral <https://multifaithcentre.org/events/sunday-prayer-vigil>.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Special Feature - Faith communities and the Coronation Weekend 6 to 8 May**

The Royal Household and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have released further details of the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronation-weekend-celebrations-that-will-bring-communities-together-announced> There will be a weekend of activities to celebrate this historic occasion and many opportunities for faith communities to take part. <https://www.royal.uk/coronation-weekend-plans-announced>

The Coronation will take place on the morning of Saturday 6 May at Westminster Abbey in London.

On Sunday 7 May the Coronation Big Lunch will take place, overseen and organised by the Big Lunch team at the Eden Project. Neighbours and communities across the UK are being invited to join together in streets, gardens, parks and community spaces to boost community spirit, reduce loneliness and support charities and good causes. Free downloadable resources will be made available online at <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch> to help people and communities start their Coronation Big Lunch planning.

On 7 May there will also be a special Coronation Concert staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle, with several thousand pairs of tickets to be made available via public ballot.

Monday 8 May has been designated as an extra Bank Holiday and members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work already being undertaken to support their



local areas. This is being organised by The Together Coalition and a wide range of partners such as The Scouts, the Royal Voluntary Service and faith groups from across the UK. It aims to highlight the positive impact volunteering has on communities across the nation and to create a lasting volunteering legacy from the Coronation Weekend. Charities can sign up to take part at <https://thebighelpout.org.uk/>.

The Coronation ceremony is performed by the archbishop of Canterbury, the most senior cleric in the Church of England, of which the monarch is supreme governor. A note exploring the role and history of coronation in the UK, published this month, can be found at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9412/CBP-9412.pdf>.

### *Coronation Champions*

In honour of the service to the country of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort, the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) has launched the Coronation Champions Awards for volunteers, an official Coronation project, linked to the Big Help Out.

The RVS is encouraging individuals, charities and organisations to submit nominations for volunteers aged 14 and over from all backgrounds and communities across the UK, who have been giving their time to a variety of causes, formally and/or informally, within the last five years. A total of 500 volunteers will be chosen as Coronation Champions and will receive a specially designed, official Coronation Champions pin and a signed certificate from The Queen Consort. There is also a 'Young Coronation Champions' category for those aged 14 to 18. All Coronation Champions will be offered the opportunity to attend an official Coronation celebration such as the Windsor Castle Coronation Concert or a Coronation Garden Party.

The deadline for nominations is 2 April. More information is at <https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteering/coronation-champions-awards/>.

### *National Lottery funding for the Coronation*

Funding of up to £10,000 is available for events and activities for the Coronation through the National Lottery 'Awards for All' programme. Community groups are asked to note that it can take up to 12 weeks from the point of application submission to receiving funding if successful. Funding criteria and terms and conditions are at <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k>.

[Back to the top](#)

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

### **Webinar on IFN Inter Faith Buddies scheme**

A webinar about the Inter Faith Buddies scheme took place on 17 January. It was facilitated by the Executive Director and began with some introductory words about the scheme from IFN's Project Assistant, Mr Aled Vernon-Rees. This was followed by presentations on the benefits of using the scheme in local inter faith contexts by Ms Kawther Hashmi of Surrey Faith Links and by three representatives of Cornwall Faith Forum, Dr Rita Stephen, Ms Eve Salthouse and Mr Jeremy Jacobson OBE. The next item was on 'Religious/non-religious dialogues: Humanist/faith buddy dialogues', with reflections offered by Mr Yogesh Joshi, Vice-Chair of Watford Interfaith Association and Mr

Simon Nightingale of Shrewsbury Inter-Faith Forum and South Shropshire Interfaith Forum. The webinar ended with Dr Maureen Sier, Director of Inter Faith Scotland, speaking about how IfS has developed the scheme, including for World Inter Faith Harmony Week, and reflecting on the potential for its wider use.

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

[Back to the top](#)

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

A meeting of the IFN Faith Communities Forum took place in February. Items on the Agenda included: Faith and social care, with a presentation by the Rt Revd James Newcome, Co-Chair of the Archbishops' Care Commission of the Church of England; National faith communities and inter faith / inter religious engagement, with presentations by Mr Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary of the Hindu Council (UK) and Mr Peter Colwell, Deputy General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland; The Coronation and the 'Big Help Out', with a presentation by Ms Fazila Aswat of the Together coalition; and a number of IFN Matters.

[Back to the top](#)

### **IFN link meetings for local inter faith groups**

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 meetings were held on 30 January and 23 February for local inter faith organisations in the East of England and in Yorkshire & Humber. The main items on the Agenda were: Round table sharing of news, information and ideas (including activities held during Inter Faith Week); and Working together for the common good. The Yorkshire & Humber meeting also included a presentation from Dr Javed Bashir of the Bradford Volunteering Interfaith Partnership programme and Revd Nathan Javed of Grace Baptist Mission Bradford, a contribution from the Revd Andy Williams, Director for Inter Faith Relations at the Blackley Centre in Elland and input from Revd Jenny Ramsden of Leeds Diocese and Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Feedback on 2022 Inter Faith Week**

Inter Faith Week [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org) took place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. As noted in the last issue of the newsletter, a full list of activities can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/calendar>. Work on the report on the Week is underway.

If you held an activity for the Week, and have not already responded to the feedback survey, we would be very grateful if you could spare some time to share by 15 March 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>.

[Back to the top](#)

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

IFN continues to offer 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. There are some places available for non-member local inter faith groups.

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 March, you can email him at [Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk).

[Back to the top](#)

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

### **Church Mosque twinning**

The Christian Muslim Forum has been growing its Church-Mosque twinning network with new partnerships being fostered in Birmingham in the West Midlands and in Luton, Bedfordshire. Twinning is a great way to learn about Christian or Muslim neighbours and to build strong bonds of friendship between church and mosque leaders.

<https://tinyurl.com/CMFtwinning>

Any churches or mosques interested in exploring connections in local communities, can email [info@christianmuslimforum.org](mailto:info@christianmuslimforum.org) for further details.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Inter faith tree planting**

Faiths Forum for London is “engaging in a Mayor of London-backed 12-month tree planting programme which aims to plant 75 trees across multiple sites in London, enabling Londoners to benefit from a greater, healthier environment whilst engaging with local faith communities.”

The events will focus on inter faith engagement, empowering religious communities through relationship building and creating attractive public places. The Mayor of London has provided funding to enable 15 separate tree planting events, with the trees being provided free of charge. FFL is dedicating the planting of these trees to its former Trustee, Leonie Lewis who died last year (also a former IFN Trustee), and will also be raising funds to plant 25 more trees in her honour.

To find out more about hosting a tree-planting event, email [stewart@faithsforum.com](mailto:stewart@faithsforum.com).

[Back to the top](#)

### **Multi faith choir 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

In March, multi faith community choir Sounds International will be celebrating its twentieth anniversary. The choir, based in Netherlee in Scotland, has so far raised over £80,000 for charities and local causes such as Mary's Meals, Barnardo's and Mission Voices. <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/scottish-news/23256770.netherlee-community-choir-celebrates-20-years/>

[Back to the top](#)

### **Faith Matters project on the history of Ugandan Asians**

A significant number of members of some of the UK's faith communities have Ugandan Asian descent.

Faith Matters is inviting people of Ugandan Asian descent to become involved in its oral history project 'From East to West: The History of Ugandan Asians'.

<https://www.ugandanasians.com>

Faith Matters has already begun to upload interviews conducted by its volunteers which can be found at <https://www.ugandanasians.com/interviews-page>. It is also continuing to look to work with Ugandan Asians who experienced the 1972 expulsion directly, to be interviewed and share their lived experience.

For more information, email [max.russel@faith-matters.org](mailto:max.russel@faith-matters.org).

[Back to the top](#)

### **York Interfaith Group local radio**

Members of York Interfaith Group (YIG) are now contributing a daily 'Thought for the day' slot on Jorvik Radio. The project began with an interview on 3 February with Vice-Chair Dee Boyle who spoke about the history of YIG, who is involved, and where it meets. This emphasised its commitment to tolerance and respect of differences as well as the celebration of all that unites those of faith and non-religious beliefs. The contributions have become an opportunity for more people in York to hear about YIG and its work. They can be heard on the 'Love in the Morning' show at <https://listenagain.jorvikradio.com/>.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Lincoln Spring Faith Festival**

The Lincoln Spring Faith Festival, organised by The Centre for Reconciliation, University of Lincoln Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, Lincolnshire Faith Council, Students Union and Lincoln BIG, will be held from 13 to 16 March. This year's theme will be 'Hope and Resilience in turbulent times'. <https://chaplaincy.lincoln.ac.uk/spring-faith-festival/>

Over the four days there will be: a faith exhibition, in the Waterside shopping centre, demonstrating different faiths; a Faith Trail across Lincoln; a trip to the Holocaust Centre in Nottingham; a Faith Awareness Day in Leicester (including visiting the new Sikh statue, lunch at the Gurdwara, a Hindu Temple, Jain Temple and the Brahma Kumari Centre); and a festival day with a programme of speakers, workshops and prayers.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Inter faith history trail in Willesden and Brondesbury Park**

A trail describing the history of Jewish and inter faith communities in Willesden and Brondesbury Park is going to be created after receiving funding from the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/Statue-for-Ella-Adoo-Kissi-Debrah-and-memorial-for-Rolan-Adams-among-28-new-community-projects-funded-by-the-Mayor>

[Back to the top](#)

### **Near Neighbours and women's activities**

Near Neighbours, a programme administered by Church Urban Fund, the Church of England's social action charity, has been supporting a wide range of local projects involving or for women of different faiths. They highlighted this for International Women's Day on 8 March on their [Facebook page](#).

[Back to the top](#)

### **Multi faith prayer spaces in sports venues**

Multi faith prayer spaces in sports venues are becoming more common. Regal Food Products Group Plc has opened a new multi-faith prayer room at Valley Parade in partnership with Bradford City AFC. The hope is to create an inclusive space that will provide a room for reflection and prayer for those attending on match days and also encourage those in the community with an interest in football to attend.

<https://www.asianstandard.co.uk/regal-foods-open-multi-faith-prayer-room-in-partnership-with-bradford-city-afc>

[Back to the top](#)

## **RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING**

*Resources*

### **IFN Social media guidance resource**

IFN has added to its website a new section on using social media. This can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/social-media-guidance>.

[Back to the top](#)

### **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://reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psnipolice.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>

[Back to the top](#)

### **NaCTSO resources for places of worship**

The police National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) recommends that places of worship use the ProtectUK counter terrorism information sharing online platform to find out more on how to 'protect and prepare' against malicious acts and to access training and up to date news and messaging on threats and risks.

The main website where the guidance can be found is called Protect UK. <https://www.protectuk.police.uk/> The website also includes free e-learning packages, available to enable any individual to become more informed about the threat from terrorism and actions they can take to deal with those threats.

There is also a Protect UK app which can be accessed via Apple or Android. The app is designed for those who have more of a public facing interaction. It includes quick-time actions, for example guidance on who to contact if you find a suspicious item; and also how to find a local counter-terrorism security adviser.

[Back to the top](#)

*Study/Training*

### **Strengthening Faith Institutions training**

Strengthening Faith Institutions is continuing to offer a number of training courses for places of worship and faith centres. These include 'Basic Safeguarding for Children and Young Adults' held on the first Wednesday of every month ([https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_BlenJAekTM6gS5283XxOzw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BlenJAekTM6gS5283XxOzw)) 'Introduction to the lead roles in safeguarding, health & safety, fire safety and first aid for faith centres' on the third Wednesday of every month ([https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_OrriBI0ZRLKbQsZGI2WpZg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OrriBI0ZRLKbQsZGI2WpZg)) and 'Basic Health & Safety, Fire Safety and Fire Marshal courses for faith centres' on the fourth Wednesday of every month ([https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_GDJBj-zuRHWNrIjd4UKNUQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GDJBj-zuRHWNrIjd4UKNUQ)).

[Back to the top](#)

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

*Calls for information*

### **Commission on the Integration of Refugees – Call for evidence**

The Commission on the Integration of Refugees is convened by the Woolf Institute in Cambridge which explores the relationship between religion and society. It is independent and describes itself as undertaking a holistic review of the UK refugee and asylum system, with an aim to improving the integration of refugees. The Chair of the Commission is Lord

Alex Carlile, the Vice-Chair is Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani and the Convenor is Dr Edward Kessler.

The Commission has released a Call for Evidence, which will remain open until 31 March. It is keen to hear from as broad a range of views as possible, especially from faith communities. Evidence can be submitted, as an individual or an organisation, by completing the form on the website at <https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/call-for-evidence/>. You can also complete this pdf form: [https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CIR\\_Call\\_for\\_Evidence.pdf](https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CIR_Call_for_Evidence.pdf) and return it to the Commission at [contact@refugeeintegrationuk.com](mailto:contact@refugeeintegrationuk.com).

Any questions about the Commission or the Call for Evidence, can be directed to Chris Cooper-Davies, Head of the Commission Secretariat at [cc961@cam.ac.uk](mailto:cc961@cam.ac.uk).

[Back to the top](#)

## **JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING**

### **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>.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Faith & Belief Forum - Programmes Coordinator**

The Faith & Belief Forum is currently seeking a Programmes Coordinator, Communities. The successful candidate will lead on community projects and engagement events in London, including the delivery of The London Interfaith Fun Run, London Faith & Belief Community Awards, and local community awards. The role is full-time, partly working from home and partly working from the F&BF office in London. The deadline is a rolling one. Further information can be found at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/programmes-coordinator-communities/>.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Brent Multi Faith Forum – Office Administrator**

Brent Multi-Faith Forum is currently seeking an Office Administrator. The successful candidate will work remotely for one day per week and will be responsible for managing the administrative tasks of the forum. The closing date for applications is 17 March. For more information, visit <https://brentmultifaithforum.substack.com/p/february-2023-newsletter>.

[Back to the top](#)

### **Council of Christians and Jews – Trustees**

The Council of Christians and Jews is currently seeking Trustees to join its Trustee Board and an Honorary Secretary (Jewish). For more information about the process for

application and to download the Trustee Recruitment pack visit <https://ccj.org.uk/about/trustees>.

[Back to the top](#)

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### UK Government Find a Grant programme

The UK Government's Find a Grant programme currently includes 53 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

[Back to the top](#)

### 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/>.

[Back to the top](#)

### 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/>

[Back to the top](#)

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

[Back to the top](#)

## SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

**Fairtrade Fortnight** runs until Sunday 12 March. Many places of worship take part. <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>



**International Women's Day** is on 8 March. Its theme this year is '#EmbraceEquity'. 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.

**The Coronation Big Lunch** is an official part of the Coronation Weekend from 6 to 8 May. Across the years millions of people from different backgrounds have joined together to take part in the Big Lunch through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. Participants can also hold their Big Lunch anytime in June, throughout the Month of Community. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch>

**Refugee Week** will take place from Monday 19 to Sunday 25 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 2023 Week is 'Compassion'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/> 2023 marks its 25<sup>th</sup> year.

**The Great Get Together**, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 23 to Monday 26 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

**Srebrenica Memorial Day** takes place each year on 11 July. This year's theme is 'Together We Are One'. It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica. <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

**National Hate Crime Awareness Week** takes place from Saturday 14 October to Saturday 21 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

[Back to the top](#)

## 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>.

**Redbridge Faith Forum** is holding a women's inter faith workshop on Thursday 9 March for International Women's Day. The theme will be 'Exploring Faith and Mental Health'. It is being held from 1.15pm to 3.15pm at VHP Ilford Hindu Centre, 55 Albert Road, Ilford IG1 1HJ. For more information, email [faith.forum@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:faith.forum@redbridge.gov.uk).

**Council of Christians and Jews South East London branch** is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 14 March. The theme will be 'Is there a role today for Christianity and/or Judaism in setting standards for British public service?' and the speakers will be Daniel Greenberg, Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and Helen Hayes MP Dulwich and West Norwood. It will be held at 8.00 pm, with refreshments from 7.45pm, at St Stephen's Church, College Road, Dulwich SE21 7HN. Attendees are asked to pre-register by emailing [stephenweil6@gmail.com](mailto:stephenweil6@gmail.com).

The **St Philip's Centre in Leicester** is holding the next in its series of 'Abrahamic Conversations' on Tuesday 14 March. The theme will be 'Fasting' and the speakers will be Uri Gordon, Rabiha Hannan and the Revd Dr Tom Wilson. It is being held from 7pm to 8.30pm at the St Philip's Centre, 2a Stoughton Drive North, Leicester LE5 5UB. For more information, email [admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk).

**Interfaith Glasgow**, in partnership with the **Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society** and **Cathcart Old Parish Church**, is holding a scriptural reasoning event for Christians, Jews and Muslims on Tuesday 14 March. The topic will be 'Fasting'. It is being held from 6pm to 8.30pm at Cathcart Old Parish Church, 119 Carmunnock Road Glasgow G44 5UW. For more information, and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/scriptural-reasoning-fasting-tickets-541019532987>.

**Hull and East Riding Interfaith** will be holding its next meeting on Tuesday 14 March. The topic will be 'The nature of, and language used, to describe the Divine' and the speakers will be from the following faiths: Islam, Orthodox Judaism, Humanism and Roman Catholicism. The meeting is being held from 5.30pm to 7pm at the Guildhall in Kingston upon Hull. There will be refreshments from 5pm. It will also be possible to join the meeting remotely. For more information, email [mapliener@pliener.karoo.co.uk](mailto:mapliener@pliener.karoo.co.uk).

**Shirley House Interfaith Centre** is holding an 'Any Questions' event on Wednesday 15 March. Is there something you want to know about a particular faith or belief? Or to hear different faiths' ideas about an issue? A diverse panel will try to answer questions submitted in advance. It is being held at 7:30 pm at Shirley House Interfaith Centre, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YL and it will also be possible to join via Zoom. For more information, ring 0114 258 8932 or email [shirleyhouseinterfaith@gmail.com](mailto:shirleyhouseinterfaith@gmail.com).

**Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council** is organising this year's Love Telford event on Saturday 18 March. It is being held from 12pm to 4pm in Southwater. The event will include cultural music and performances, sports and arts activities, acrobats, crafts and more. For further information, email [hello@interfaithtelford.org](mailto:hello@interfaithtelford.org) or visit <https://newsroom.telford.gov.uk/News/Details/16674>.

**Barnet Multi Faith Forum** and **Middlesex University Inter Faith Network** are holding an event on Monday 20 March to celebrate the Sikh Festival of Vaisakhi. This will be a screening of the film Bend it like Beckham followed by a panel discussion. Cllr. The panel will include Caroline Stock, International Politics & Law, Alumna Milijana Bodroza, Dr James Charlton, the Revd Julie Gittos, Rabbi Jeff Berger and Anna Hussain from Nisa-Nashim. It is being held from 4pm to 7pm at Middlesex University and online. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bend-it-like-beckham-faith-discussion-and-live-film-screening-on-campus-tickets-522644593047>.

**The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** is holding Nowruz Celebrations on Tuesday 21 March. Nowruz is celebrated as the beginning of the new year by more than 300 million people all around the world and has been celebrated for over 3,000 years in the Balkans, the Black Sea area, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East. The St Ethelburga's Centre invites people to join them as they celebrate Nowruz with live music, traditional sweets and decorations. The event is being held from 6.30pm to 9pm at the Centre in London. For more information contact Jo Winsloe Slater [jo.winsloe@stethelburgas.org](mailto:jo.winsloe@stethelburgas.org).

**Crawley Interfaith Network** is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 22 March. The theme will be 'Spotlight on Sikhism'. After the talk, there will be time for questions & answers, discussion and light refreshment. It is being held at 7.30pm in person at Crawley Sikh Gurdwara, Ifield Green, Crawley RH11 0NU. For more information, email [ashel@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ashel@hotmail.co.uk).

**Norwich InterFaith Link** will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 23 March. The theme will be 'The Appeal of Jewish traditions'. The speakers will be Melina and

Dennis D'Costa who have a Sephardic lineage from India. It is being held at 7pm. For more information, contact NIFL through <https://norwichinterfaithlink.wordpress.com/contact-us/contact-us/>.

The **Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester** will be holding an Interfaith Iftar on Sunday 26 March. Speakers will include: Cllr Heather Fletcher — MJF Co-Chair (Master of Ceremonies); Mr Sajjad Amin — President, Khizra Mosque; Mrs Diane Hawkins JP LLB — The Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester; Mr Afzal Khan CBE — MP for Manchester Gorton; Rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen — Principal Rabbi, Manchester Reform Synagogue. It will be held in the evening at Khizra Mosque & Community Centre, 425 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 0PF. Booking by 19 March is essential. For more information, visit [https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Future\\_events.html](https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Future_events.html).

**St George's Hospital Charity** and the **Naz Legacy Foundation** are holding an Interfaith Iftar on Tuesday 28 March. The evening is being held to raise funds for the Time for a Change Appeal, aiming to transform Children's Services at St George's Hospital in South London. Guests are invited attend to share food, to share stories and to share thanks with their local community. It is being held from 6.30pm to 9pm at the Royal Mahal Banqueting Suite in Tooting. Tickets are free, with a suggested donation for food and drink provided. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.stgeorghospitalcharity.org.uk/get-involved/events/special-events/iftar>.

**Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum's Women's Group** is holding its next meeting on Monday 27 March. They will be exploring the role of women in religious learning in Sikhism. The meeting is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at The Maidenhead Gurdwara, Rutland Road, Maidenhead SL6 4HZ. For more information, email [samuelsberks@aol.com](mailto:samuelsberks@aol.com).

**Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship** will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 27 April. The theme will be 'Christian perspectives on freedom and enslavement' and the speaker will be Dr Stanley Pearson. It is being held at 7.30pm at the Roscoe Methodist Church, 132 Chapeltown Rd, Leeds LS7 4EE. For more information, email [chair@concord-leeds.org.uk](mailto:chair@concord-leeds.org.uk).

**Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum** is holding its next dialogue event on Thursday 27 April. The Topic will be 'What is the role of faith in creating a more peaceful world?' It is being held at 8.30pm at Maidenhead Synagogue, Grenfell Lodge, Ray Park Road, Maidenhead SL6 8QX. For more information, email [samuelsberks@aol.com](mailto:samuelsberks@aol.com).

#### **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).

[Back to the top](#)

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!**

[Back to the top](#)

**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 28 April** 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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