



IFN e-bulletin

August 2021

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk. It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on links in the list below.

Faith and public life updates

- [COVID-19 and faith communities](#)
- [COVID-19 and safe use of places of worship](#)
- [New site in Wales for scattering Sikh and Hindu ashes](#)
- [Statement on Inter faith relations and election campaigning](#)
- [Hate crime](#)
- [Rise in RE entries reflected in A Level results](#)
- [Religious dress and symbols](#)
- [Protect Duty and places of worship](#)
- [APPG on Safeguarding in Faith Communities](#)
- [National Resilience Strategy Call for evidence](#)
- [Windrush monument consultation](#)
- [Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre](#)
- [Faith communities, climate change and the environment](#)
- [Borders and Immigration Bill](#)

Inter Faith Network for the UK News

- [The Faith Communities Forum](#)
- [IFN webinar on digital upskilling](#)
- [IFN AGM](#)
- [Inter Faith Week 14 to 21 November](#)
- [Come Together Appeal](#)

Inter faith projects and developments

- [Coventry City of Culture 'Faith' project](#)
- [Council of Christians and Jews 'For Hope and Healing' project](#)
- [Near Neighbours Network](#)
- [Cambridge Inter Faith Programme podcast](#)
- [Meet Slough's diverse community](#)
- [Brighton inter faith art exhibition](#)
- [Inter Faith Buddies](#)

Resources and study/training

- [LSE report on 'Interfaith Beyond the Pandemic'](#)
- [Charity Commission guidance on 'Managing faith charities'](#)
- [Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals](#)
- [Climate change resources](#)
- [The Charity Commission and faith charities](#)
- [Religion Media Centre](#)
- [IFN Digital surgery slots for local inter faith groups](#)
- [SAFE Webinar programme](#)
- [Webinars for faith charities](#)

Calls for information, competitions and nominations

- [Honours nominations](#)

Jobs, internships and volunteering

- [Inter Faith Network for the UK](#)
- [Faith & Belief Forum – Office volunteer](#)

Funding opportunities

- [Near Neighbours small grants programme](#)
- [Funding websites](#)
- [COVID-19 related funding](#)
- [Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme](#)
- [FCC Community Action Fund](#)
- [Subsidised fundraising workshops](#)

Special Weeks/Days

- [Dates for Special Weeks and Days taking place throughout the year](#)

Diary Dates

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

FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

COVID-19 and faith communities

Volunteers from across all faith communities have continued to respond to the needs of their congregations and wider society during the pandemic. This report by the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby, for example, reflects on Derby faith communities' contributions during the pandemic. <https://multifaithcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Derby-Keeping-the-Faith.pdf>

Faith communities in a number of areas continue to play an important role in the vaccination roll-out, either by hosting vaccination clinics - such as the Glasgow Central Mosque <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-57887850> or, in Crawley, West Sussex, where a medical centre partnered with the Gurjar Hindu Union to relocate their vaccination service to its Hindu Temple,

<https://www.crawleyobserver.co.uk/health/coronavirus/hindu-temple-in-crawley-is-set-to-host-a-quiet-vaccination-session-this-weekend-3284880>, or by addressing vaccine concerns - such as through this film by NHS Salford Clinical Commissioning Group with Alchemy Arts featuring the Revd Charles Kwaku-Odoi of Faith Network for Manchester <https://www.facebook.com/SalfordCCG/videos/866548567402251>.

Faith communities are also involved in organising ways to remember all those who have died with COVID-19. For example, Colchester Council is organising a 'festival of remembrance' to honour COVID19 victims. "Working with faith and community groups, the idea is to set a format for the event that others can follow in their own areas such as village halls or places of worship." <https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/19478095.colchester-council-organise-covid-festival-remembrance/> Worcester Cathedral is hosting The Leaves of the Trees, an installation of 5,000 steel 'Hope' leaves, as a 'reflective memorial to the effects of the pandemic'. <https://www.worcestercathedral.co.uk/whats-on/the-leaves-of-the-trees>

[Back to the top](#)

COVID-19 and safe use of places of worship

England

On 19 July England moved to Step 4 of the 'roadmap'. There are no longer legal requirements for physical social distancing or the wearing of face masks in indoor spaces. However, the UK Government has emphasised that COVID-19 remains a serious health risk and that it is important to remain cautious to help protect one another.

Updated guidance on the safe use of places of worship is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship>. There are no longer legal limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events or the receptions that follow. All restrictions on chanting and singing have also been removed.

Scotland

On 9 August Scotland moved beyond Level 0. The legal requirements for physical distancing and limits on gatherings have been removed. Some protective measures remain in place such as the use of face coverings indoors.

Updated guidance on the safe use of places of worship is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>. There are no restrictions remaining on how many people may attend significant life or milestone events. Singing, chanting and/or the playing of instruments is permitted.

Wales

On 7 August Wales moved to alert level 0. The legal requirements for physical distancing and limits on gatherings have been removed. Some protective measures remain in place such as the use of face coverings indoors.

Guidance for all businesses and organisations, including places of worship is at <https://gov.wales/alert-level-0-guidance-employers-businesses-and-organisations>. There are no longer legal limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events or the receptions that follow.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland the number of people attending places of worship for life ceremonies, and post-ceremony receptions, continues to be determined by the venue on a risk assessed basis.

Guidance on the use of places of worship is at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-places-worship>. Since 26 July the legal requirement for social distancing indoors has been reduced to 1m. The legal requirement to wear a face covering in a place of worship, during an act of worship, has been removed, however it is still strongly advised. Where singing or chanting is deemed to be essential to an act of worship, this should be at a low volume and it is strongly advised that face coverings are worn.

[Back to the top](#)

New site in Wales for scattering Sikh and Hindu ashes

On 31 July a new site was officially opened in Cardiff, where Sikhs and Hindus can scatter the ashes of their loved ones. The Antim Sanskar Group Wales has been working with Cardiff Council for a number of years to identify a suitable location where cremated remains can be dispersed into a flowing water course. The platform, at Llandaff Rowing Club, was officially opened at a ceremony attended by First Minister Mark Drakeford and members of Cardiff Council. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-57988853>
<https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/international/2021/08/02/fes54-uk-ashes-site.html>

The site joins a number of others in the UK, such as on the River Soar in Leicester <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-community/births-marriages-and-deaths/funerals-burials-and-cremations/cremations/scattering-of-ashes/> and the Newark slipway near the Port Glasgow in the authority of Inverclyde <https://scattering-ashes.co.uk/places/scattering-ashes-location-for-sikh-and-hindus-in-glasgow-scotland/>.

[Back to the top](#)

Statement on Inter faith relations and election campaigning

The Batley and Spen By-election saw a number of incidents of aggressive campaigning, including material which saw a British Freedom Party member co-opting the image of a local church in her leaflet to identify her far right message with Christianity.

On 25 June, the Inter Faith Network for the UK's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators issued the following statement on 'Inter faith relations and election campaigning'.

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

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

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

This statement can be found on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-from-ifn-co-chairs-and-fcf-moderators-inter-faith-relations-and-election-campaigning>.

[Back to the top](#)

Hate crime

Home Office data released in July shows that a total of 61,851 racially and religiously aggravated offences were recorded in 2020, a 7% increase on 2019. The analysis was compiled by the PA news agency from data published by the Home Office.

<https://news.sky.com/story/racially-and-religiously-motivated-hate-crime-hit-a-new-high-in-2020-home-office-statistics-reveal-12356632>

CST's Antisemitic Incidents Report January-June 2021, published on 5 August, shows 1,308 anti-Jewish hate incidents nationwide recorded by CST in the first half of this year.

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2021/08/05/antisemitic-incidents-report-january-june-2021>

This is a 49% increase on incidents recorded in the first six months of 2020, and is the highest total CST has ever recorded in the first half of any year. The number for this 6 months is higher than every full-year incident total prior to 2016 since CST began recording antisemitic incidents in 1984.

Tell Mama's recent reports on Islamophobic incidents include graffiti in Northumberland.

<https://tellmamauk.org/northumbria-police-investigating-islam-is-evil-and-funds-terror-graffiti/>

A report on the Public Inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland by the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia, published by Newcastle University, speaks of increasing verbal and physical assaults on Muslims. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-57641242>

As well as antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents, other communities continue to express concerns about incidents. In a response of 10 June from Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government Luke Hall to a Written Question from Navendu Mishra MP about tackling Hinduphobia, the Minister referred to “the refreshing by the Government of its hate crime strategy.”

An Early Day Motion was tabled on 23 June which condemned racism faced by British Indians and made reference to “research by the 1928 Institute which revealed that 80 per cent of British Indians have faced prejudice because of their Indian identity, with Hinduphobia the most prevalent”. <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58678/rise-of-antiindian-racism>

[Back to the top](#)

Rise in RE entries reflected in A level results

A level results were published on 10 August. The RE Council for England and Wales reports that the number of Religious Studies A-level exam entries in England and Wales has increased 6.1 percent year on year. The subject outperformed other A-level subjects as a whole, which increased by 5.1 percent, with a greater increase than most other humanities subjects. It says that this year's increase, and the long-term trend in entries, “suggest that candidates continue to recognise the value of RS A-level for Higher Education entry, graduate employment, and as an essential life skill”.

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/religious-studies-at-a-level-in-2021/>

[Back to the top](#)

Religious dress and symbols

The Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ) last month ruled that employers can limit workplace expression of religious, political, or philosophical beliefs where there is “a genuine need” to “present a neutral image towards customers or to prevent social disputes.” This was in response to two cases brought by German employees who had been suspended from their jobs for wearing a hijab. UK courts are not now bound by decisions of the ECJ (although under the EU Withdrawal Act 2018 UK courts and tribunals may ‘have regard’ to ECJ judgements ‘so far as it is relevant to any matter before the court or tribunal’).

A Sikh visitor to a fair in North Wales was handcuffed because he was carrying a kirpan. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2021-08-05/sikh-father-handcuffed-at-funfair-for-carrying-legal-religious-blade-in-public> Kirpans are permissible for Sikhs to carry under the relevant provision of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/33/section/139/2007-04-06>

[Back to the top](#)

REPORT HATE CRIME AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE IT

Report hate incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK 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.psnl.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>

[Back to the top](#)

Protect Duty and places of worship

The last issue of the e-bulletin noted that the Home Office was seeking views on how the Protect Duty can make the public safer at publicly accessible locations, including places of worship. The consultation closed on 2 July.

On 27 July Kevin Foster, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, provided a written answer to a question about how places of worship would be affected by the Protect Duty. In the course of this he said that “The Government is mindful places of worship differ significantly in the nature of their function and operation from other locations potentially within the scope of the Protect Duty proposals. This is balanced against the threat posed by terrorism, and a need to ensure there are effective security measures at public places, regardless of their nature. The Government will be carefully considering the issues raised within the consultation and our engagement events, including those discussed with representatives of different faith communities, before considering next steps.” One of the contexts where faith communities’ input was given was IFN’s Faith Communities Forum (see [below](#)).

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-07-19.35592.h>

[Back to the top](#)

APPG on Safeguarding in Faith Communities

A new APPG on Safeguarding in Faith Communities was established in July. This is a successor to an older APPG on Safeguarding in Faith Settings. The aims of the group are “to increase awareness of issues relating to safeguarding within faith settings and to provide an opportunity for faith communities to inform safeguarding discourse, share best practise and work together to create safer places.” The Co-Chairs are Janet Daby MP and Lord Bishop Viv Faull. Thirtyone:eight, an independent safeguarding charity, provides the secretariat. For more information, visit <https://thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/all-party-parliamentary-group/>.

[Back to the top](#)

National Resilience Strategy call for evidence

On 13 July the Cabinet Office published a call for evidence for the National Resilience Strategy. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-resilience-strategy-call-for-evidence> The call for evidence closes on 27 September.

This Call for Evidence “seeks public views to inform the development of a new National Resilience Strategy that will outline an ambitious new vision for our national resilience. It seeks to understand current perceptions of risk and resilience, gather evidence on where improvements could be made, and gauge the UK’s appetite for change. Views are welcome from anyone with an interest in the subject.”

The Call for Evidence asks questions around six themes: Risk and Resilience; Responsibilities and Accountability; Partnerships; Community; Investment; and Resilience in an Interconnected World. Also included in the Call for Evidence are specific questions on the Civil Contingencies Act. This Act provides a legislative framework for emergency

management and response in the UK. Evidence gathered in this section will help to inform the scheduled review of the Act which is due to be completed by March 2022.

Within the Call for Evidence document it notes that strengthening the Government's partnerships may include "collaborating with voluntary, charity, faith groups and business sectors to make best use of their capability, capacity and networks, to respond to the localised effect of risk" and also that all references to 'community' include faith groups and faith networks.

[Back to the top](#)

Windrush monument consultation

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is commissioning a permanent national Monument to the Windrush Generation at London Waterloo station "to recognise how they have enriched our nation's history. The Monument will be a permanent tribute to a generation of arrivals from the Caribbean to this country – from the arrival of MV Empire Windrush in 1948 and in the decades that followed. It is expected to be unveiled on Windrush Day 22 June 2022."

A consultation has been opened on the four shortlisted designs, all by artists of Caribbean descent. The final artist design will be chosen in September by the Windrush Commemoration Committee, chaired by Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE, and announced in October during Black History Month. On 20 July the Windrush Commemoration Committee came together to talk about the monument. A recording of the event can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoaNtiUoPJo>.

For more information, and to share your views, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-monument-share-your-views>.

[Back to the top](#)

Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Planning permission was granted by the Government on 29 July to build the country's first national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, next to Parliament. The Memorial will be the national focal point to honour the 6 million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered in the Holocaust, and other victims of Nazi persecution, including the Roma, gay and disabled people. The co-located Learning Centre will also focus on subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/planning-permission-granted-for-new-uk-holocaust-memorial>

[Back to the top](#)

Faith communities, climate change and the environment

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) is scheduled to take place in Glasgow from 1-12 November. <https://ukcop26.org/> It will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Together with the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Faith for the Climate convenes a COP Faith Task Group called 'Make COP Count' to enable diverse faith groups to contribute meaningfully to climate action before, during and after COP26. Its priorities are: Transformation; Advocacy; and Hospitality.

<https://makecopcount.org/> <https://www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/Our-work> Among the activities it is supporting are:

- Climate Sunday – An initiative led by CTBI, which encourages the holding of a climate-focused worship service any time before COP26, and which will culminate in a Nations Climate Sunday service on 5 September. A number of Churches have created downloadable resources for this initiative.
- Rise to the Moment – A relay pilgrimage from St Ives to Glasgow, organised by the Young Christian Climate Network. This is a relay rather than a full pilgrimage because of the restrictions on gathering in person. The relay enables people to take part in different ways. It is taking place through August, September and October.

Interfaith Scotland is continuing its 'Year of Climate Action'. It provides the secretariat for the Religious Leaders Forum of Scotland. The Forum produced a Statement of Commitment from the faith leaders of Scotland. <https://interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources> As noted [below](#), to coincide with COP26, this year's Scottish Inter Faith Week will begin on 31 October.

[Back to the top](#)

Borders and Immigration Bill

On 6 July the UK Government introduced its Borders and Immigration Bill. This completed its second reading on 20 July. The provisions will make knowingly arriving in the UK without permission a criminal offence and will give Border Force officers the powers to turn back migrant boats attempting to cross the Channel from France and use "reasonable force, if necessary". They mean that, for the first time, the way an individual arrives in the UK - legally or illegally - will have a bearing on whether their asylum application is accepted. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9275/> <https://news.sky.com/story/mps-back-new-immigration-bill-which-makes-arriving-in-uk-without-permission-a-criminal-offence-12359884>

Responses to the Bill have included a number from faith communities, for example from the Free Churches <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/responding-to-the-governments-proposals-for-asylum-reform/> and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Renee Cassin, JCORE and World Jewish Relief <https://www.bod.org.uk/bod-news/jewish-organisations-release-joint-statement-in-response-to-nationality-and-borders-bill/>.

[Back to the top](#)

INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

The Faith Communities Forum

The Inter Faith Network for the UK's Faith Communities Forum brings together national faith community bodies in IFN membership for regular discussion of issues of common concern. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/faith-communities-forum>

On 21 June a special session of the FCF was held with Home Office officials to give input on the Protect Duty consultation and its likely considerable implications in terms of security responsibilities for churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship accommodating 100 or more people. There was also a presentation by officials on the Places of Worship Security Scheme (England and Wales).

The FCF met again on 6 July. It discussed a range of COVID-19 matters, including faith community engagement with the vaccination roll-out. There was discussion of calendars of religious festivals, with a presentation by Paul Hopkins, Senior Editor and Co-Chair of the widely used Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals. James Jones, Complaints Executive, Advertising Standards Authority, introduced the Advertising Standards Authority's recent call for evidence about racial and ethnic stereotyping in advertising and the role of the ASA in responding to complaints.

[Back to the top](#)

IFN webinar on digital upskilling

On 27 July IFN held a webinar for member local inter faith groups on 'digital upskilling'. This opened with a presentation from IFN's Inter Faith Development Officer, Ashley Beck, about using Facebook and Twitter. There was also an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning. This session will be available on the IFN website shortly.

[Back to the top](#)

IFN AGM

IFN held its 2021 AGM on 15 July. This was held as a 'hybrid' AGM, at NCVO and virtually. The meeting welcomed into membership a number of new bodies: Bath Interfaith Group, Maidstone Inter Faith Network, Reading Interfaith Group, Nisa-Nashim, Middlesex

University Inter Faith Network and University of Salford Faith Centre. It elected Narendra Waghela as Co-Chair from membership categories other than national faith community representative bodies, welcomed new Trustee Dr Susan Siegel from Interfaith Scotland and offered warm thanks to Trustees standing down.

Special thanks were given to Rabbi Maurice Michaels who stood down at the AGM both as a Trustee and Honorary Treasurer, coming to the end of his term, having served IFN with great distinction in a number of capacities for many years.

[Back to the top](#)

Inter Faith Week 14-21 November

This year Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org takes place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. 6 August marked 100 days to go until the Week. The aims of Inter Faith Week, which is led by IFN, are to:

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

The Week is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace.

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>

Inter Faith Week is about highlighting the contribution of faith groups to society; spotlighting inter faith cooperation and understanding; and encouraging dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. It's a fantastic platform to share, learn and build relationships with neighbours, colleagues and service users of different backgrounds, and to come together in service for the common good.

If you've not yet started planning, August is a great month to start to think creatively about activities that can benefit from being part of the Week and can bring something special to the Week!

What might you do? Perhaps a learning activity, a multi faith Remembrance event, inter faith sports match, an inter faith art, poetry or photography competition; a jointly crafted special quilt or banner; a video message from faith leaders and/or particular figures in your organisation; a special dialogue; a quiz or speed-faithing event? Or maybe be a special environment/climate change focused event linked to #COP26 (which will have just taken place); an 'Inter Faith Buddies' scheme; social media video clips of interviews with

chaplains of different faiths; an inter faith ‘bake off’; an inter faith pilgrimage/peace walk; a physical or virtual tour of some local places of worship; a video about your organisation’s inter faith activity; a learning session about beliefs and practices of a particular faith; or a classroom session or week-long series exploring how people of different faiths and beliefs live, learn and work in Britain today? There are so many possibilities: those are just a few!

You’ll find lots of activity ideas at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas>.

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and has this year been brought forward to the earlier time of Sunday 31 October – Sunday 7 November to coincide with COP26. <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> Its theme this year is Together for our Planet. Follow it on Twitter and Facebook at <https://twitter.com/SIFWEvents> and <https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>.

SIFW has recently launched a SIFW digital toolkit.

<https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/download-your-free-digital-toolkit-for-sifw2021>

[Back to the top](#)

IFN COME TOGETHER APPEAL

The Inter Faith Network 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/appeal> or by Paypal at <https://www.paypal.com/biz/fund?id=96WTW2PGERGWL>.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference. Thank you.

[Back to the top](#)

INTER FAITH PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Coventry City of Culture ‘Faith’ project

Coventry, one of the most religiously diverse cities in the UK, is to host 24 hours of art, theatre, music, food and debate aimed at exploring belief and promoting the connections between faiths. The Royal Shakespeare Company and Coventry City of Culture have teamed up to produce ‘Faith’, 24 hours of free live events in September.

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/major-24-hour-faith-event-21223057>

Places of worship and faith centres throughout the city will open their doors to visitors, offering sacred music, prayer, quiet reflection and tea. Specially commissioned dramatic promenade pieces have been written by Chinonyerem Odimba and Chris O’Connell. The 24-hour event will culminate in a ceremony of lights, with 500 candles lit at dusk in the city centre. Erica Whyman, Deputy Artistic Director of the RSC, is also keen to attract people of no faith to the celebration. For more information, visit <https://coventry2021.co.uk/what-s-on/faith/>.

[Back to the top](#)

Council of Christians and Jews ‘For Hope and Healing’ project

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) is running a project called ‘For Hope and Healing’. Participants are invited to explore this theme through artwork. The goal is to collate the artwork and display the submissions in a digital exhibition. The deadline for entries is 31 August. For more information, email avigail.simmonds-rosten@ccj.org.uk.

[Back to the top](#)

Near Neighbours Network

The Near Neighbours Network is a new opportunity for individuals and organisations to connect with other likeminded people and groups beyond the 11 Near Neighbours areas in England. Near Neighbours notes: “We remain committed to creating strong and cohesive communities at local level, but we also want to create a wider national network where all the groups and individuals involved with Near Neighbours can share good practice and expertise and build new partnerships. The Network will also enable our hubs and partners to offer knowledge and training, online events, and downloadable resources, to a wider audience.”

For more information, and to sign up, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/network-joining-page>.

[Back to the top](#)

Cambridge Inter Faith Programme podcast

Cambridge Inter Faith Programme (CIP) has launched a new podcast on 'Religion and Global Challenges'. This explores “how religious narratives and ideas, practices and experiences inform some of the most crucial challenges facing our world today.” The podcast is part of CIP's Religion and Global Challenges Initiative. For further information, visit <https://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/news/new-cip-podcast-religion-and-global-challenges>.

[Back to the top](#)

Meet Slough's diverse community

Slough Faith Partnership is partnering with #OneSlough to bring faith and belief members and the wider community together, giving them the opportunity to learn about the cultures and religions that make up Slough. During August and September members of the public are invited to lunchtime sessions to meet members of a particular faith, listen, ask questions and engage in discussion. For more details, visit

<https://www.facebook.com/Slough-Faith-Partnership-139714316133566/> or email emel@art-beyond-belief.com.

[Back to the top](#)

Brighton inter faith art exhibition

Fabrica, a contemporary art gallery in Brighton, is showing an art exhibition this summer that integrates materials and iconography of different religious communities. Constructed from redundant Christian church pews it consciously draws on the visual language of Islamic architecture to create a new kind of contemplative space, one that looks for 'common cultural and spiritual ground' in our diverse society." Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group has interviewed the artist, Wolfgang Weileder, about the exhibition, which is called 'Kiosk'. For more information, visit <https://www.fabrica.org.uk/kiosk>.

[Back to the top](#)

Inter Faith Buddies

Inter Faith Buddies is a scheme designed by IFN to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue.

- The scheme involves two people of different faiths or beliefs: keeping in touch on a weekly basis for 6 weeks;
- choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and
- if they wish, sharing at an in-person or online event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they have gained from the experience.

It is an opportunity for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time, about what is important to us, in the context of our wider community. The process may, of course, lead to longer term conversations and new forms of practical co-operation.

Interested in taking up the idea within your organisation?

If you are an organisation interested in taking up the Inter Faith Buddies idea, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers.

Interfaith Scotland also hosts opportunities for ‘buddying’. A recent example was an inter faith buddies event held in June as part of the Great Get Together.

<https://interfaithscotland.org/news/events-2021>

[Back to the top](#)

RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

LSE Report on ‘Interfaith Beyond the Pandemic’

On 21 July the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) released a report entitled ‘Interfaith Beyond the Pandemic: from London Communities to Global Identities’. The report can be found at <https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2021/g-July-21/Growing-divide-between-young-and-old-in-interfaith-sector-New-report>.

[Back to the top](#)

Charity Commission guidance on ‘Managing faith charities’

On 28 July the Charity Commission for England and Wales published its updated guidance on ‘Managing faith charities as trustees’. This is the Commission’s “core guidance for religious charities whose main focus is religious worship and related activities.” The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faith-based-charities>. The Commission has scheduled a joint webinar with Strengthening Faith Institutions to present the updated faith guidance on 19 August. For further information, and to register, visit https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9WKESyPSRBWAmiHUGYIPmg.

[Back to the top](#)

Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals

The Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals for 2021-22 is available to order from <http://www.shapcalendar.org.uk/>. The e-calendar provides: 3 A4 calendar sheets and a booklet giving a brief description of each religious festival in 12 of the world’s faiths and traditions, from Baha’i to Zoroastrian, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Pagan festivals. A hard copy wallchart is also available.

[Back to the top](#)

Climate change resources

A number of faith communities have produced resources on responding to climate change. Many of these have been collated by Faith for the Climate at <https://www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/Faith-Resources>.

Interfaith Scotland has also produced a number of resources on climate action, which can be found at <https://interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources>.

[Back to the top](#)

The Charity Commission and faith charities

The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. It also maintains the Charity Register (<https://www.gov.uk/find-charity-information>). Its purpose is to ensure that charities can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

Almost all charities with an income of over £5,000 must register with the Charity Commission. Being a registered charity has advantages, such as: tax benefits, such as Gift Aid; opportunities to apply for grant funding; support and guidance to help you run your organisation more effectively; and increased public confidence in your organisation.

The Commission's Faith Charities Outreach Team works with faith charities, such as churches, gurdwaras, mosques, synagogues and temples. They provide free support to trustees - also known as committee members or directors - of faith organisations that are required to register as a charity. To arrange a meeting, discuss registration or find out what support they can offer, email faithoutreach@charitycommission.gov.uk.

The Commission's website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission> has more information about their work.

[Back to the top](#)

Religion Media Centre

The Religion Media Centre was launched in December 2017 and has since then been working as a resource for journalists, aiming to encourage the highest quality coverage of religious issues in the media. It also offers training to journalists in the coverage of religion, and media training for religious organisations to better understand the media and the way it works. A new monthly podcast is due to start in the autumn.

The RMC produces fact sheets, daily and weekly news bulletins and regular zoom press briefings on religion and belief topics and also holds two annual events - a public lecture and a festival celebrating and challenging the coverage of religion and belief. Its content is regularly featured in the main UK news outlets.

The Centre is keen to collaborate with academic, media and religious organisations that wish to be a part of the work. It has previously featured publications and projects from Cambridge University, SOAS, The Woolf Institute and others. To learn more, and to support, or be a part its work, visit <http://religionmediacentre.org.uk/>.

[Back to the top](#)

Study/Training

IFN Digital surgery slots for local inter faith groups

IFN is continuing to make available during August a number of free half hour digital ‘surgery’ slots for local inter faith groups to have a conversation about their group’s use of digital communications and how they might strengthen this. Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email Ashley Beck at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

[Back to the top](#)

SAFE Webinar Programme

The Community Security Trust is delivering a series of free webinars on Security Advice for Everyone (SAFE). These “will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to hate crime and violent extremism. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible.”

Topics include: Event security for your community, Past terror attacks – lessons learned, Organising security, Conflict management, Online security, Basic security and Hate crime and your community. For more information, and to register, visit <https://cst.org.uk/about-cst/safe-security-advice-for-everyone>.

[Back to the top](#)

Webinars for faith charities

The Charity Commission provides webinars for faith charities on good governance topics, such as Trustee Duties, Financial Management and Safeguarding. To receive details of future webinars, email faithoutreach@charitycommission.gov.uk.

[Back to the top](#)

CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Nominations

Honours nominations

Each year a number of people receive Honours for services to inter faith work or community cohesion. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is looking for nominations for people who work or volunteer in a number of areas which include ‘Faith, integration and communities’. All nominations must be made on an

official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. The form can be found at [MHCLG Birthday 2022 Honours nomination form](#). The deadline for nominations is 1 September. For more information, email honours@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

[Back to the top](#)

JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK

Honorary Treasurer

IFN invites expressions of interest in the post of Honorary Treasurer. The work of IFN is overseen by a board of Trustees. All IFN Trustees hold their posts on a voluntary basis. The gift of Trustees' time and skill is vital to the wellbeing of the organisation's work and is greatly valued. Among the Trustees are 2 Co-Chairs and 1 Honorary Treasurer. For the role description and expression of interest form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Finance/administration and project roles

IFN expects shortly to advertise two fixed term finance/admin (part-time) and project support (full-time) roles. If those or other potential roles at IFN are of interest, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs> to check on vacancies.

Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has 2 opportunities for online volunteers 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 and Belief Forum – Office volunteer

The Faith & Belief Forum is looking for an organised and motivated volunteer, to help make a difference by providing remote administrative support to its Education and Learning team. The deadline for applications is 5 September. For more information, visit <https://faithbelieforum.org/programme/office-volunteering>.

[Back to the top](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £3,000 as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities.

To be eligible, projects should meet the following criteria: Bring together people of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust; Work locally; Work sustainably; Work to improve the community; and involve a diverse group of people in planning and implementation. For more information, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

[Back to the top](#)

Funding websites

My Funding Central is a new 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.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

[Back to the top](#)

COVID-19 related funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

[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, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark.
<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 current round closes on 1 September. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

[Back to the top](#)

Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

[Back to the top](#)

SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 9 October to Saturday 16 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 17 to Sunday 24 October.
www.oneworldweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will this year be held from Sunday 31 October to Sunday 7 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. The theme for this year's week is 'Together for our Planet'. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 21 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Sewa Day is a day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. It normally takes place on 4 dates across the year. Due to COVID there are currently no fixed days; rather, 'every day is Sewa day' and volunteers are helping people continually as they are able. <https://sewaday.org/>

**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 are used with care to make a real difference.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

**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 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

[Back to the top](#)

DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Although COVID-19 restrictions have largely been lifted at this time, most events continue to take place online. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group is holding its next meeting on Monday 16 August. This will be a virtual tour of Welwyn Garden City Synagogue. For more information, email theresa.whifg@gmail.com.

Havering Interfaith Forum will be holding at a Multicultural Cricket Match & Picnic on Sunday 22 August at 2pm. It will be held at Ardleigh Green Cricket Club, Central Park, Romford. For further details, contact haveringinterfaithforum@gmail.com.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 7 September. Luke Lerner from St Paul's Church in Bedford will be speaking on 'Journey from action to organising, working collaboratively for the common good'. It is uncertain at this stage whether people will be able to attend in person. It is hoped that the option of attending via Zoom will also be possible. For more information, email bedfordcounciloffaiths@gmail.com.

Interfaith MK is holding an Open-Air Multifaith Service on Thursday 9 September. This will be held at 6.30pm at The Amphitheatre in Campbell Park, Milton Keynes MK9 3FT. Interfaith MK is inviting representatives of the religions of Milton Keynes to each present a five minute act of Worship, Spiritual Practice or Devotion representative of their community. For more information, contact David Rennie interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Herefordshire InterFaith Group is holding its next event on Sunday 19 September. This will be a celebration to mark the UN International Day of Peace, with a multicultural programme including music and readings from different faiths and cultures and a candle lighting ceremony. It is being held from 3pm to 4.15pm at Madley Church, HR2 7DJ. For more information, visit <https://herefordshireinterfaith.org.uk/events/international-day-of-peace-celebration-2021/>.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding its next 'Bring and Share Lunch' online on Tuesday 17 August. Mr Fateh Patel from the Gujarati Association will talk about his faith and work. It is being held from 1pm to 2pm via Zoom. For more information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its annual networking seminar for local inter faith groups on Thursday 19 August. This is an opportunity for members of local interfaith groups in Scotland to come together and share good practice. The seminar is being held from 10.30am to 2.30pm. For more information, contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

The **Faith & Belief Forum** and **Maccabi GB** are organising and Interfaith Fun Run on Monday 30 August. This family-friendly event is being held at the Stone X Stadium in Barnet. For those who cannot attend in person, there will be online activities. For more information, visit <https://www.interfaithrun.org/>.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding its next event on Tuesday 21 September. EMF has been organising a series of events looking at variations among different faiths. Earlier in the year there have been two events looking at Buddhism and Sikhism. This will be the third such event in the year and will be on 'My Hinduism: Differences among Hindus'. It is being held at 7.30pm. For more information, contact KawtherH@smef.org.uk.

Woking People of Faith is holding an event on Tuesday 21 September to mark International Peace Day and this year's theme of 'Climate Action for Peace'. They have asked children to produce a poster or poem in answer to the question: 'What is causing climate change and what can people of faith do to help solve it?' and are working with RHS Wisley Gardens to mark the event. The event will be from 6.30pm until 7.15pm. Winners of the competition will be announced and there will be a short talk from RHS Wisley Gardens. For more information please visit www.wpof.org.uk or email administrator@wpof.org.uk.

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

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

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

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 or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

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 e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **20 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

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

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