



IFN e-bulletin

December 2020

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 the 'Read more' link in the Sections and Contents lists below.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

UK/national response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Advice is available on the following websites in the devolved nations:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

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COVID-19 – faith community and inter faith responses

Faith communities continue to play a tremendously important role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, both in relation to the wellbeing of their members but also to wider society: adapting their worship, pastoral and community engagement as necessary for safety and contributing through provision of advice and guidance to development of UK, national and local responses to the pandemic. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>

From the beginning of the pandemic, there have been many initiatives to reach out to help those in need. Some of these can be seen at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-acts-of-kindness-and-service>. Just a few recently highlighted by IFN on social media are the Khidmat Centres in Bradford delivering Christmas lunch to elderly Christian neighbours <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1339125052210601985>; Midland Langar Seva Society helping communities in Corby and Kettering <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1338830930975338499>; and Sewa Day, with West Bridgford Helpers at West Bridgford Methodist Church providing seasonal cheer to those in need <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1338764015317684227> and BAPS volunteers delivering provisions to a local Leicester Foodbank <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/3685951591455389>. Faith groups are also helping in many other kinds of ways.

Inter Faith Week, on which there is a report [below](#), saw a wide range of COVID- related dialogues and practical projects. These can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/calendar/covid/>.

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COVID-19 restrictions during Christmas and forthcoming period

Restrictions

Across the UK Christmas bubble arrangements have now been limited to one day only. A brief update on restrictions in each nation is below.

A rapid rise in cases of Coronavirus led to announcement on 18 December of tougher restrictions in England. A large number of areas moved on 20 December into higher tiers, including a new Tier 4. The full list of the tiers can be seen at <https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions> and guidance on Christmas bubbling at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>.

The Scottish Government announced on 19 December that mainland Scotland will go into Tier 4 lockdown from 26 December. Information on the Tier levels is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/> and on Christmas bubbling at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-festive-period/>.

The Welsh Government announced on 19 December that Tier 4 restrictions would be in place across Wales from 20 December. <https://gov.wales/written-statement-alert-level-four-restrictions> Information on Christmas bubbling is at <https://gov.wales/making-christmas-bubble-friends-and-family>.

Northern Ireland begins a 6 week lock down on 26 December. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you> Information on Christmas bubbling is at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-restrictions-christmas>.

Places of worship

Places of worship may remain open for communal worship in all tiers in England <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>; in Wales under Tier 4 <https://gov.wales/alert-level-4-frequently-asked-questions#section-58346>; and in Northern Ireland after it enters lockdown <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>. In Scotland communal worship may continue but indoor and outdoor acts of worship will be limited to a maximum of 20 people. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/pages/protection-level-4/>

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Vaccines and faith communities

A number of vaccines have now been authorised for COVID-19 and vaccinations began earlier this month in the UK with the Pfizer. The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020>

Law and Religion UK notes that the start of COVID-19 vaccination has brought into focus the ethical issues associated with the production of the vaccine. It provides a summary of the position of a number of faith organisations and a recent analysis of the evidence by FactCheckNI.

<https://lawandreligionuk.com/2020/12/16/vaccines-and-religion/#more-62378>

The Royal College of Nursing includes places of worship among spaces that may be used for vaccination [Immunisation services and large-scale vaccination delivery during COVID-19 | Public Health | Royal College of Nursing \(rcn.org.uk\)](#)

An example of guidance from one faith community can be seen at [COVID 19 Churches as vaccination centres v1.0.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#) and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/12/church-of-england-gives-space-for-covid-vaccination-and-testing-for-up-to-a-year>.

Mitigating inequalities is one of the considerations being taken into account in deciding on priority groups for vaccination. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation notes that “Good vaccine coverage in BAME groups will be the most important factor within a vaccine programme in reducing inequalities for this group”.

A new poll from the Royal Society of Public Health showed 57% of respondents from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds (199 respondents) were likely to accept a COVID-19 vaccine, compared to 79% of White respondents. Confidence was lowest among respondents of Asian ethnicity, of whom 55% were likely to say yes.

<https://www.rsph.org.uk/about-us/news/new-poll-finds-bame-groups-less-likely-to-want-covid-vaccine.html>

Religious leaders are among those being enlisted by the NHS to encourage vaccinations and testing. Bradford Royal Infirmary, for example, is working with religious leaders to encourage people in the community to have vaccinations

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/nov/29/nhs-enlist-sensible-celebrities-coronavirus-vaccine-take-up> Elsewhere, faith groups in Wolverhampton including Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, local leaders from the Catholic Church and Church of England, local Muslim faith leaders, and Oasis of Love International Church, came together to support a

testing pilot at the gurdwara

<https://vimeo.com/lskproductions/review/489389286/56ed8d4076>.

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Exiting the EU and faith communities

On 31 January this year the UK formally left the EU. The transition period for the withdrawal ends on 31 December.

IFN's note on 'Exiting the EU – the important role of faith communities at a time of transition' <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/leaving-the-eu-the-important-role-of-faith-communities-at-a-time-of-transition> contains material about faith communities' vital work to unite communities, promote good relations and tackle hatred. This has continuing relevance at this time, as the UK approaches the final stages of engagement over a trade deal. The information relating to practicalities of EU exit should be sourced from the most up to date information at www.gov.uk/transition.

When free movement ends on 31 December religious communities that have relied on members from the European Union to fill temporary posts will be affected.

[Tier 5 Temporary Worker casework guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544443/tier-5-temporary-worker-casework-guidance.pdf)

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/4-december/news/uk/religious-communities-should-prepare-for-brexit-says-lawyer>

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2021 Census

The 2021 Census in March will be carried out primarily online. The Office for National Statistics (ONS), which carries out the Census in England and Wales, is keen to encourage as many community groups as possible, including faith communities, to share information about the importance of the Census and the different ways that this can be completed.

Regional contacts at the ONS have been contacting some local inter faith organisations about this. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/takingpartinandsupportingthecensus>

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Hate Crime

In late November West Mercia Police launched a hate crime investigation after a Sikh boy was attacked on the way home from a Telford school by other pupils.

Government figures show that 117 hate crimes were recorded against Sikhs in 2017-18 compared to 202 in 2019-20. <https://news.sky.com/story/anti-sikh-hate-crimes-reported-across-britain-rise-by-70-in-two-years-12151620>

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**THE INTER FAITH NETWORK
COME TOGETHER APPEAL**
www.interfaith.org.uk/appeal

Dear readers,

We write to you at the end of an extraordinary year. Here, and around the world, the pandemic has changed all our lives – making it both harder and yet even more vital to come together.

Coronavirus has been a challenge to which faith communities have risen with enormous energy and commitment – including reaching out to help many in need. People of different faiths have volunteered side by side in a number of areas.

The Inter Faith Network has played a key part in supporting and encouraging faith-based initiatives sharing good practice, and enabling grassroots inter faith interaction to develop strongly online, adapting to continue to build positive relationships and foster cooperation for the common good. It has also continued to enable national faith community bodies to come together through its Faith Communities Forum discuss how they are responding to COVID but also to so many other issues which continue to be of interest and concern, from hate crime to establishing new dialogues.

Please help us take forward and strengthen our vital work for inter faith understanding and cooperation with a donation.

We thank you for considering this Appeal and for such kind support as you are able to give. It will be used with care to make a real difference.

Best wishes, Bishop Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela
Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network for the UK

Donations can be made at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/appeal> (by card or PayPal); by sending a cheque to: the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH; or by BACS - CAF Bank Ltd; Sort Code: 40-52-40; Acc No: 00019472

INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2020

Inter Faith Week took place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Despite the challenges of COVID, well over 600 events took place; the social media reach was significantly higher; the number and breadth of types of organisation messaging about the Week increased; digital forms of engagement enabled wider participation; and schools continued to embrace the Week with enthusiasm and creativity. Some towns and cities such as Birmingham, Kendal, Kirklees, Preston, Swansea, Swindon and York saw wide-ranging programmes of activities throughout the week.

In-person activities took place in schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, hospices and other settings that remained open during lockdown/ tiered restrictions. The Week was, however, as anticipated, a predominantly virtual one.

Inter Faith Week messages from faith leaders and Government

Following discussion by the Faith Communities' Forum, faith community leaders/ bodies were invited to put out messages and reflections linked to the Week. A significant number of IFN member faith community body leaders did so, as did the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi and the leaders of the Reform, and Masorti movements of Judaism which further strengthened the Week's online reach and contributed to the positive online 'buzz'. The reflections/ messages can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-faith-communities>.

Messages of support were issued from the UK Government's Faith Minister; the Deputy Minister in the Welsh Government; the Mayors of London and the West Midlands; as well as numerous MPs, other mayors and councillors. The First Minister of Scotland released a special video message for Scottish Interfaith Week.

IFN youth inter faith roundtable

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

Inter Faith Week Buddies

IFN also instigated an 'Inter Faith Week Buddies' scheme. This involved two people of different faiths or of a particular faith and of a non-religious belief keeping in touch on a

regular basis in the weeks leading up to Inter Faith Week; choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and during Inter Faith Week, sharing online or at a socially distanced event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they had gained from this. A number of organisations took this up, such as Cornwall Faith Forum which said in its latest newsletter: "Everyone said that they learned a lot and really appreciated the rare opportunity to ask personal questions in a safe environment."

<https://dorkemmyrn.org.uk/feedback-from-interfaith-week-2020/>

Feedback on the Week

A feedback survey was sent to event organisers, and put on the website and social media. An interesting fact emerging from responses so far is the high number of respondents who have indicated that they are likely to incorporate an online element into future activities (eg through live streaming in-person events) due to their positive experience this year.

If you held an Inter Faith Week activity, and have not yet responded but would like to, the survey remains live at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/about/give-feedback-on-2020>.

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Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 2 December. The agenda included items on: COVID-19 matters (Current restrictions, Places of worship and communal worship and 'Building back'); Inter Faith Week; Government engagement with faith communities, with a presentation by Colin Bloom, the UK Government's Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; and other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities, including hate crime.

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Webinar on Using Zoom Effectively

On 15 December IFN held a webinar for local inter faith organisations on Using Zoom Effectively. This drew on the experience of some involved with local groups who have been using Zoom this year to keep connected, including during Inter Faith Week. Contributors included: Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer, IFN; Patricia Findlay, Chair, and Madhav Regmi, member, of Aberdeen Inter Faith Group; Cllr Afrasiab Anwar MBE, Chair, Building Bridges in Burnley; and David Vane, Secretary, Southampton Council of Faiths. There were also reflections from Jay Anderson and Esmond Rosen, IFN Trustees from the local inter faith organisations membership category. Speakers discussed a number of topics, including: Key features of Zoom and frequently asked questions; Using Zoom for open/ public activities; and Using Zoom for organisational outreach and meetings.

IFN is also making available during December and January a number of digital ‘surgery’ slots for local inter faith groups. These are 20 minutes slots for IFN member local inter faith groups to ring and have a conversation about their group’s use of digital communications and how they strengthen this. There are also some spaces available for other local inter faith groups; there is no charge for non-members, however a donation is welcome.

Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email Ashley Beck via ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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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.

The most recent link meeting, which was for local inter faith organisations in the East of England region, was held virtually on 27 November. It began with a short overview of IFN and its work relating to COVID-19 from IFN’s Executive Director and then included discussion of Inter Faith Week and sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges.

The next regional link meeting planned is for Greater London in January. Earlier this year links took place for groups in Preston (for the North West area of England) and Maidstone (for Kent). Since then IFN has held virtual link meetings for local groups in England in the East; East Midlands; North East; South West; and West Midlands.

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National Faith Community Representative Body profiles

During November and December IFN ran a Facebook series highlighting the inter faith activity of its member National Faith Community Representative Bodies with a short profile post and photograph about each. A link to each post has been tweeted. These can be seen at www.facebook.com/ifnetuk and www.twitter.com/ifnetuk. The series highlights the inter faith engagement of these bodies and also the breadth of IFN’s membership in this category.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Faith leaders' statement on Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

On 22 January the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons enters into international law. The Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church is working towards marking the occasion, by involving inter faith leaders in Great Britain in a joint statement, and by producing a short video which includes all the faith leaders reading the statement, for sharing on social media and by their own communications teams as appropriate.

Videos are being collected by 24 December and the joint statement will be signed by 4 January. For more information, contact Roo Stewart at roo.stewart@urc.org.uk or on 020 7916 8632.

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Flickers of Hope

This Advent and Chanukah the Council of Christians and Jews has been running a new project called 'Flickers of Hope' which seeks "to use craft and art to raise awareness of social injustice, and in turn catalyse change". It is inviting people to create their own hanging flame decoration, and include a key call to action, for example on climate change or food poverty. Participants are invited to hang up their flames and post photos of them on social media with the hashtag #FlickersOfHope. For further information, or for a Flickers of Hope workshop guide, email esther.sills@ccj.org.uk.

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Festivals of Light - Newcastle

Each year Newcastle Council of Faiths (NCF) helps to support a Festivals of Light event. This year it will be taking place differently but will still be bringing some light to 80 families and over 150 children who are either asylum seekers, refugees or destitute families. NCF will be delivering to each family a gift of chocolates, a goodie bag containing arts and crafts, including cards from the major faiths depicting their festival of lights and a selection box for each child. A sponsor is paying for take away food for each family and the Bahr Academy has offered to make the food for the families. For more information, contact Lesley Hillary at l.hillary@newcastle.anglican.org.

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The Great Winter Get Together

The Great Winter Get Together began on 14 December and ends on 18 January. It aims to build connections during what is already a lonely time of year for many. There is a

different theme during each of the five weeks, suggesting different ways to connect: Say thanks, Reach out, Show you care, Understand loneliness and Help out. For more information, visit https://www.greatgettogether.org/winter_get_together.

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Faith and Belief Forum new community project

The Faith and Belief Forum is launching a new community project in two regions – Barking & Dagenham, and Birmingham. The project, funded by the MHCLG Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grants Scheme, will pair up local faith-based organisations for friendship-building and dialogue through a series of interactive, facilitated online events in early 2021.

<https://faithbeliefforum.org/get-involved-in-new-community-project-in-barking-dagenham-and-birmingham> It would be pleased to hear from people who are part of a faith or community group in either region. For more information, contact christiana.amao@faithbeliefforum.org about Barking and Dagenham and anna.lockley-scott@faithbeliefforum.org about Birmingham.

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Building Bridges Pendle poetry competition song

Earlier this year Building Bridges Pendle ran a poetry competition on the theme of 'Living in Hope'. People were invited to write and express their feelings, emotions and experiences during the covid-19 pandemic and national lockdowns. The aim was to produce material which most people can relate and connect to and be used as a message of hope. The winning poem, Human Touch, by Hilary Walker has now been turned into a song. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDEKA8I-z8o>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

2021 Faith Festivals greetings guidance

On IFN's website is a guidance document, developed with IFN's Faith Communities Forum, setting out two festivals on which different faith communities have indicated that they would most appreciate receiving greetings from those of other faiths and none. It includes appropriate greetings. The 2021 document is now available at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings>.

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An Inclusive Christmas

The Christian Muslim Forum (CMF) has produced a short booklet, An Inclusive Christmas, celebrating the way Christians and Muslims come together at this time of year and how

traditions associated with the Christian festival have been adapted by other faith communities. CMF hopes that this will inspire inter faith encounters and encourage deeper dialogue between Christians and Muslims during the festive season. The booklet can be found online at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/articles/an-inclusive-christmas/>.

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Woolf Institute Report on Diversity Study for England and Wales

In November the Woolf Institute published its study of personal attitudes to religious, ethnic and national diversity in England and Wales, 'How we Get Along: The Diversity Study for England Wales 2020'. The study addresses questions such as:

- What is the state of relations between people from different backgrounds in the UK today?
- How comfortable are we with the increased diversity and pace of change and what are the regional differences?
- What is the role of friendship and the workplace in shaping attitudes to diversity?
- What do attitudes towards marriage tell us about our views of our neighbours?
- What can and should the UK Government be doing to manage diversity effectively?

The full report and executive summary can be found at <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/diversity>. For more information, or to request a printed copy of the executive summary, contact Claire Curran at cc640@cam.ac.uk.

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Keeping the Faith: Partnerships between Faith Groups and Local Authorities During and Beyond the Pandemic

The November issue of IFN's e-bulletin noted that The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society had commissioned the Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London, to conduct a study to explore the extent and nature of new relationships between local authorities and faith groups. As well as exploring the extent and nature of new relationships between councils and faith groups, the study examined how and why these relationships came about, how they worked in practice, and their implications for local authorities, communities, and faith groups themselves. The report on *Keeping the Faith: Partnerships between Faith Groups and Local Authorities During and Beyond the Pandemic* is now available at https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5aa7ae58266c07fe6b48eb76/t/5fab1475ae8b92bcf64f30c/1605091658307/APPG_CovidReport_Full_V4.pdf.

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Preventing radicalisation – new ACT Early website

Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) has launched a new website - actearly.uk - to encourage friends and family to act early, share concerns and seek help if they are worried that someone they care about is being radicalised.

The increase in time spent online due to Covid19, and a rise in hateful extremism, is creating an environment in which young and vulnerable people are at a greater risk of being targeted and groomed by people who wish to do harm.

The ACT Early website includes case studies, signs to spot, FAQs and details of where to get help, including a new, confidential advice line staffed by specialists at CTP.

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Webinars for faith charities

The Charity Commission's Faith Outreach team is running a series of webinars for faith charities on trustee duties, safeguarding and financial management (all in a faith charities context) from January to March. For more information, and to register, visit www.bookwhen.com/fcot.

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Journey of Hope leadership programme

The Journey of Hope is a collaboration between ten of the UK's peace and reconciliation centres, who have teamed up to co-host "an immersive six-month faith leadership programme to transform communities".

The programme welcomes applicants who:

- Have a passion to take action for a more just and peaceful world
- Hold a formal or informal leadership role within their faith community, or a calling to do so
- Can sustainably root their activism in the vision/values of their faith community
- Have some experience of peacebuilding & reconciliation or community activism in any form

The application deadline is 31 December. For more information, visit <https://www.reconcilerstogether.co.uk/>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Greater Manchester essay competition – deadline extended

The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester has extended the deadline for its essay competition to 4 January. As noted, in the last issue of the e-bulletin, the essay must tackle the question: “What makes people become perpetrators or rescuers in a conflict or genocide?” The competition is open to children aged 7 to 11 in Greater Manchester. For full details, visit <https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Past-events/Sardari-essay-competition-2020.html>.

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Research project on ritual innovation during COVID-19

Manchester Metropolitan University is working on a research project called 'Social Distance, Digital Congregation' (or BRIC-19). This is looking at ritual innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic - exploring how British religious communities have adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions it has imposed. To take the survey, visit <https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>. The project web site can be found at <https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/>. For more information, email bric-19@mmu.ac.uk.

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Places of Worship energy research

Bishop Grosseteste University is among those researching ways to assist places of worship to become more energy-efficient and address climate change more broadly. As part of this process the researchers would like to know about the features of different places of worship and how they are used. They are keen to hear from as many faith communities as possible. For more information, contact Dr Mark Charlesworth at mark.charlesworth@bishopg.ac.uk.

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Religion & Collections

Religion & Collections is a new group which has been set up dedicated to the care and interpretation of religious collections – in museums, places of worship, faith organisations, schools and elsewhere. <https://religioncollections.wordpress.com/religion-collections-group/>

It is keen to reflect as many different faith voices as possible and would like to hear from anyone who has been involved in a project regarding the care or presentation of religious material culture. For more information, visit <https://religioncollections.wordpress.com/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Internship

IFN is currently advertising for an Internship from 14 January to 31 March. This Internship offers a chance to develop new skills and gain valuable experience in the field of inter faith relations. It has a special focus on youth inter faith engagement in HE and FE settings, which continues to grow in scale every year.

IFN Interns are paid at the London Living Wage. For more information, and to download the Job Description and Application Form, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>. The closing date for applications is 11am on 4 January.

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Faith for the Climate – Movement builder

Faith for the Climate is seeking a Movement Builder “to develop and support increased climate action within faith traditions across England, working towards the COP 26 conference in November 2021 and beyond”. The role is 3 days per week and begins in February. The closing date for applications is 5 January. For more information, visit <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/recruitment>.

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Faith & Belief Forum – Senior Leadership Team roles

The Faith & Belief Forum is seeking to appoint three roles to its senior leadership team: Head of Programmes, Head of Operations, Head of Engagement and Income Generation. Further information, including the January deadline dates for each role, is at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/appointing-a-new-senior-leadership-team/>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has some 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>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 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>

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Interfaith Scotland grants for places of worship

Interfaith Scotland is offering funds of up to £500 to places of worship that are struggling to meet the safety requirements of re-opening their buildings and safely holding services (within the Government Guidelines). With discretion, the funds can also be used to assist in keeping open places that have managed their initial outlay with regard to safely reopening their place of worship but are now struggling to keep up the measures required to stay open. The funding criteria for areas of support is primarily so that religious buildings can re-open safely and stay open during this critical stage in the pandemic and that places of worship remain connected to those that are still too vulnerable to come to places of worship. For more information, email frances@interfaithscotland.org.

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Thriving Communities Fund

The Thriving Communities Fund supports local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCSFE) organisations that work in a range of sectors, including arts and culture, libraries, museums and heritage. Successful applicants must bring together place-based partnerships to improve and increase social prescribing community activities – especially for those people most impacted by COVID-19 and health inequalities. Grants of between £25,000 and £50,000 are available. The application deadline is 8 January. For more information, visit <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/thriving-communities-fund#section-1>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 3 March. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling the helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faith in Community Scotland

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty charity founded in 2005. They support individuals and faith groups in Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods to achieve the difference that they are capable of. They do this through training, resources and funding which helps to build people's skill and to increase their confidence. It has a small grants programme which has distributed over £1 million over the past ten years to urban and rural faith groups tackling poverty. For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a grant, including the next application deadline date, email andrew@faithincommunity.scot.

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Funding websites

Funding Central <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk>, supported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England. It provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources to develop sustainable income strategies. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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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>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2021 is 'Be the Light in the Darkness'. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

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

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 21 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. mysadaqaday.org

The Big Lunch is held in the first weekend of June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch-faqs>

Refugee Week will take place from 14-20 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 2021 Week is 'We cannot walk alone'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

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

Earlier this year an Appeal was launched <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate> to support and strengthen IFN's work for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Thank you so much to those who have already kindly contributed through this or through a different route. If you have not, but appreciate this e-bulletin and the work of IFN and would like to do so, that would be most welcome.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate which includes credit card and PayPal options. 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!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

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.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

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

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

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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DIARY DATES

In light of COVID-19 many events have had to be cancelled or postponed. Some events are instead taking place online. A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding the next Zoom reflection in its faith leadership series on Tuesday 22 December. This will be with Jasmin O'Hara from the World Wide Tribe on the Christmas story told through the stories of refugees. It is entitled 'God's epic journey: the refugee Christ'. It is being held online from 4pm to 5pm. For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/event/gods-epic-journey-the-refugee-christ/>.

FaithAction is holding a series of focus groups in January “to learn about the issues and concerns around the pandemic specific to each faith”. For dates and further information, visit <https://www.faithaction.net/campaigns/faith-covid-response/involved/>.

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is collaborating with **The Dean and Chapter of Westminster** and **Gingko**, alongside **Embrace the Middle East**, on an event on Tuesday 5 January entitled 'Christmas and the Qur'an'. Participants can join the dialogue at 3:30pm in person at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey or online. To attend in person, register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-dialogue-on-christmas-and-the-quran-tickets-132394382161>. To register for the live stream, email gingko@gingkolibrary.com.

Faiths Together in Lambeth and MFHA are running a 2 day Adult Mental Health First Aid Training course on Thursday 7 and Friday 8 January. It will be held from 8.45am to 5.30pm each day at St Martins Scout Hut, 16-28 High Trees, Tulse Hill, London SW2 3PU. To request a place, email ftil@hotmail.co.uk and for more information, contact Phil on 07956 441911.

Central Scotland Interfaith Group is hosting its monthly 'Soul Space' on zoom on Sunday 10 January at 5pm. The theme for the evening is 'Closeness'. Participants are welcome to bring something to share with the group such as a poem, prayer, story or piece of music. To attend, contact Andrew Sarle at csi@irenic.org.uk.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding its next meeting on Monday 11 January. This will be on the topic of 'Black Lives Matter'. The presenters will be David Randolph-Horn and Adam Aslam. It is being held online at 7.30pm. For more information, contact chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Inform's next online seminar will take place on Thursday 14 January, on the topic 'Becoming religious: How and why beliefs and practices are transmitted'. The seminar will explore "the motivations of minority religions and spiritual seekers to transmit and learn, and the processes they employ". It is being held online from 5.30pm to 7.30pm. Participants can register to attend by making a donation through the Inform website, at <https://inform.ac/seminars> or by emailing inform@kcl.ac.uk to book a place.

Woking Action for Peace, Friends of the Earth, Surrey Faith Links, Woking LA21, Woking Quakers and Woking People of Faith are holding the next Woking Debate on 'Are we giving children the help they need?' on Saturday 16 January. The event will take place online from 11am to 12.30pm. For more information, visit <http://www.wokingdebates.com>. For joining details, contact Keith Scott at ketihsc_2000@yahoo.com or on 01483 824980.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its next event on Thursday 21 January. The topic will be 'How we worshipped and managed during lock down'. This will be led by Najma Osman. It is being held online at 7.30pm. For more information, contact Iyad Daoud at iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk.

Strengthening Faith Institutions has partnered with **Civil Society Consulting** CIC on 'Steps to Sustainability' (S2S) – a joint initiative that will outreach to 60 BAME faith social action leaders in England. As part of this, they are working with local communities to support the marketing needs of community interest companies, faith organisations and grassroots groups to deliver Social Media Training. The next free session takes place on Wednesday 27 January from 11am to 1pm. For more information or to book, email Emma Crabtree emma@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk.

South London Inter Faith Group is holding its next meeting on Thursday 28 January. This will be on the theme of 'Bereavement and funerals'. It is being held online from 1pm to 2pm. For more information, contact secretary@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk.

The National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) will be holding its Strictly RE Conference online across the weekend of 30 and 31 January. In addition there will also be a series of evening seminars leading up to the conference. For details of the online Conference and seminars, visit <https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/strictlyRE-2021/>.

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: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

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 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 18 February** 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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