



IFN e-bulletin

May/June 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.

Sections

[Faith and public life updates](#)

[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

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

[Resources and study/training](#)

[Calls for information, competitions and nominations](#)

[Funding opportunities](#)

[Special Weeks/Days](#)

[Diary dates](#)

Note: in place of the usual section on INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS we are this time carrying a special section on [COVID-19](#).

Items

[Faith and public life updates](#)

UK/national response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) [Read more](#)

New UK Government Faith Minister [Read more](#)

COVID-19 and BAME communities [Read more](#)

New Labour Party leader [Read more](#)

Protecting places of worship – consultation and funding scheme [Read more](#)

Extremism and terrorism [Read more](#)

Implementation of Organ Donation opt out system in England [Read more](#)

Census Order comes into force [Read more](#)

Faith communities and climate change [Read more](#)

APPG on Religion in the Media [Read more](#)

Welsh Government consultation on RVE [Read more](#)

Rise in number of RE trainee teachers [Read more](#)

VE Day 75th anniversary commemorations [Read more](#)

[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

COVID-19 and faith communities [Read more](#)

COVID-19 and inter faith organisations [Read more](#)

COVID-19 and other types of initiative [Read more](#)

COVID-19 and charities [Read more](#)

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

Inter Faith Week 2020 [Read more](#)

Meetings of Faith Communities Forum [Read more](#)

Meeting for National Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies [Read more](#)

IFN meetings for local inter faith practitioners [Read more](#)

[Resources and study/training](#)

IFN Annual Review and National Meeting report [Read more](#)

ONS statistics on religious identities in England and Wales [Read more](#)

Faith Action follow on report on faith communities tackling loneliness [Read more](#)

[Calls for information, competitions and nominations](#)

NATRE Spirited Arts competition [Read more](#)

[Funding opportunities](#)

COVID-19 funding [Read more](#)

Near Neighbours small grants programme [Read more](#)

FCC Community Action Fund [Read more](#)

Windrush Compensation Scheme [Read more](#)

Faith in Community Scotland [Read more](#)

Veolia Environmental Trust community funding [Read more](#)

Funding websites [Read more](#)

Website and Facebook grants [Read more](#)

Subsidised fundraising workshops [Read more](#)

[Special Weeks/Days](#)

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

[Diary Dates](#)

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

[Back to the top](#)

FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

UK/national response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

On 31 December 2019, Chinese authorities notified the World Health Organization (WHO) of an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan City, which was later classified as a new disease: COVID-19. On 12 January, the World Health Organisation confirmed that a new coronavirus had affected a number of people in Wuhan in the Chinese province of Hubei. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” (PHEIC). By 1 March, cases had been detected in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

On 3 March the UK Government published a Coronavirus Action Plan.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan/coronavirus-action-plan-a-guide-to-what-you-can-expect-across-the-uk> On 12 March the Government moved to the 'delay' phase of its approach to tackling the virus. On 23 March the Prime Minister announced more stringent measures to stem the pandemic, including closing places of worship. <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

On 26 March the Coronavirus Act 2020 was passed into law. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/contents/enacted/data.htm> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-what-it-will-do>

Some powers to determine the approach to Coronavirus policy are held by the individual nations of the UK and, as the Institute for Government explains, powers to deal with the spread of infection are set out in different pieces of legislation for the four nations. In England and Wales, powers are provided by the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 (as amended by the Health Protection Act 2008). Similar powers are provided by the Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008 and the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967. <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/coronavirus-and-devolution>

On 26 March the Government also released guidance outlining how members of the public can help in the fight against coronavirus, and how they can do this safely. The full guidance, as updated in April, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely--2>.

On 11 May, the UK Government published its plans for the next steps on responding to COVID-19 in England. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy> A number of task forces to assist on this were announced. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-roadmap-taskforces/covid-19-roadmap-taskforces>

On 12 May the Northern Ireland Executive set out its plan for relaxing restrictions. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-recovery-plan> On 15 May the Welsh Government announced a roadmap for easing the lockdown in Wales. <https://gov.wales/unlocking-our-society-and-economy-wales-roadmap-published> On 21 May the Scottish Government set out a route map for changing its current restrictions. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

A useful summary of the lockdown easing approach across the different nations of the UK can be found at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/coronavirus-lockdown-rules-four-nations-uk>

Across the period, a major emergency response framework has been created, with local resilience forums, community hubs and other mechanisms assisting on different fronts,

together with vital frontline responders such as the NHS, the emergency services, carers and many others.

On 31 March, the IFN's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators issued a statement which opened with the words:

“As faith communities of the UK we are united in our commitment to working for the wellbeing of all affected by COVID-19.

We thank and support those who are working so hard to enable us to get through this testing time: NHS and care workers; emergency response services; providers of food, medicine and other vital goods; those in government and officials; and the many others who may not be classed as ‘essential workers’ but make all the difference to our daily lives.

We know that around the UK faith organisations and their ministers, members, staff and volunteers are among those helping ensure that support is provided to people, providing spiritual and pastoral care; a listening ear; much needed provisions; and other practical assistance of many kinds.

In a number of areas, people of different faiths are working together to respond to needs of groups such as the homeless and refugees and others. Faith and inter faith bodies are also feeding into local resilience forum and other contexts, helping ensure that faith is taken into account in planning. All of this is vital work. So, too, is the prayer and spiritual support that each faith offers....”

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus-a-statement>.

Throughout the crisis faith and inter faith organisations have been assisting those affected. Faith communities themselves have been greatly impacted by issues including, for example, the closure of places of worship and arrangements for funerals. More information on this, and more, is in the [special section on COVID-19](#) below which replaces the usual section on inter faith projects.

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

[Back to the top](#)

New UK Government Faith Minister

Lord Stephen Greenhalgh was appointed in March as a Minister of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). He subsequently received the faith portfolio and so became the UK Government's new 'Faith Minister' in succession to Lord Younger, who moved to a new role after the last election.

[Back to the top](#)

COVID-19 and BAME communities

COVID-19 has been causing many deaths. These have been across the population and affecting people of all backgrounds. There is, however, a markedly higher death rate among those of BAME backgrounds. There is significant overlap between BAME groups and particular faith communities and sections of those and some are seeing a sharply increased rate of deaths – particularly among NHS doctors, nurses and other staff and other health workers. Among these were the first four doctors to die (all Muslim), a Sikh A and E Consultant and a Hindu neonatal specialist as well as those of other backgrounds. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020>

On 16 April the Government announced a review looking at how different factors can impact on people's health outcomes from COVID-19. This is being led by Professor Kevin Fenton, Public Health Director for London. The review has been holding a number of virtual roundtables, including with faith groups. Its report is anticipated by early June. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-into-factors-impacting-health-outcomes-from-covid-19>

In Wales an advisory group has been set up to examine the issue. <https://gov.wales/wales-bame-covid-19-health-advisory-group-takes-cross-government-approach> The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights in Scotland (CRER) has written to the Scottish Government asking it to publish the number of people from BAME backgrounds who have died from COVID-19 in Scotland. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/18444409.coronavirus-scottish-government-urged-publish-bame-deaths-data/>

On 24 April the Labour Party announced that it would be holding an enquiry, led by Baroness Lawrence of Clarence.

Faith leaders were among 70 signatories who wrote a letter to the Prime Minister on 10 May asking for an independent public inquiry. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52602467> <https://www.ubele.org/weneedanswers>

[Back to the top](#)

New Labour Party leader

On 4 April, the Rt Hon Sir Kier Starmer KCB QC MP was elected as leader of the Labour Party. Appointed to his team as Shadow Communities Secretary was Steve Reed OBE MP and as Faith Minister was Janet Daby MP.

[Back to the top](#)

Protecting places of worship – consultation and funding scheme

The Home Office consultation on ‘Protecting places of worship’ has been extended to 28 June. The consultation is being carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), on behalf of the Home Office. Full details are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>.

The Home Office has announced that 27 mosques, 13 churches, 5 gurdwaras and 4 Hindu temples in England and Wales would benefit from £1.6 million of the Home Office Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme this year. Next year’s scheme is due to double, with £3.2 million earmarked for 2020 to 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-scheme-provides-record-levels-of-funding>

[Back to the top](#)

Extremism and terrorism

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a rise in online extremism. For example the BBC reported on 4 May on the far-right spreading a Covid-19 'infodemic' on Facebook <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52490430> The IFN Co-Chairs and Moderators’ statement of 31 March noted that “We have a concern that in isolation some individuals may become increasingly affected by misinformation, particularly on social media – and also by extreme views including coronavirus conspiracy theories that have been targeting particular groups such as Jews or East Asians. We call on Government and relevant agencies to do all that they can to tackle this.” Conspiracy theories have been widely distributed and many target particular groups such as Muslims <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-muslim-lockdown-conspiracy-theories-tommy-robinson-katie-hopkins-a9471516.html> or those of Chinese background or Jews <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/covid-19-pandemic-sees-jewish-and-chinese-communities-targeted-1.499315>.

The threat of terrorism remains and has evolved during the crisis. *The Independent* reported on 21 April that protective security advice is being distributed to NHS trusts by counterterrorism officers, amid warnings that extremists are exploiting the pandemic to radicalise new recruits. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-lockdown-hospitals-nhs-terror-threat-5g-conspiracy-theory-a9476066.html>

In April, an updated version of the Action Counters Terrorism Awareness e-Learning course was launched with the latest advice from security experts and a simplified registration system so anyone wanting to take part can help keep the UK safe. The course explains how to spot the signs of suspicious behaviour and what to do to help yourself, others and the emergency responders if an attack should take place. It takes less than an hour to work through the six sections and can be done in one session or one module at a time. It can be found at <https://ct.highfieldelearning.com/>.

[Back to the top](#)

Implementation of Organ Donation opt out system in England

Following the passing of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act last year a new opt out system for organ donation came into law in England on 20 May. All adults in England will now be considered as having agreed to donate their own organs when they die unless they record a decision not to donate (also known as ‘opt out’), or are in one of the excluded groups.

Information about organ donation and the position of individual faith and belief systems is at <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/about-donation/organ-donation-and-my-beliefs/>.

There is also a selection of downloadable faith and belief-specific donor cards so people can show their support for donation alongside their own faith or beliefs as well as share with family and friends. The cards can be found at <https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/how-you-can-help/get-involved/download-digital-materials/faith-and-belief-donor-cards/>.

[Back to the top](#)

Census Order comes into force

The next ten-yearly census is due to take place in 2021. Information the census provides on the population helps to inform policy, plan services, and is used in consideration of distribution of resources.

Delivering the census in England and Wales is the statutory responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority, which operates through the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In Northern Ireland it is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research

Agency, and in Scotland the National Records of Scotland. These three offices work closely to ensure the three censuses provide comparable statistics on the UK population.

The Census Order is used to direct that a census is carried out. The Order specifies: the date the census will take place; the question topics to be included; the people who need to fill in the forms; and the people to be included on the forms.

Following the approval by the House of Commons of the draft Census Order (England and Wales) it came into force on 20 May. It is noted in <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8531/> that almost all of the topics asked about in 2011 will appear again in 2021, although the way in which some questions are asked will change. The ethnicity question will include a new tick-box for people of Roma ethnicity, alongside the existing 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box. The Explanatory Memorandum to the Order notes that "A large number of new response option tick-boxes were requested but did not meet the threshold for inclusion in the census following this process of engagement, research and testing." These non-inclusions include a 'Sikh' tick-box in the ethnic group question (there will continue to be a 'Sikh' religion tick box as in 2011) and a 'Jain' tick-box in the religion question. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/532/memorandum/contents>

Legislative responsibility for the censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland is devolved to the respective legislatures. Following the agreement of the draft Census Order by the Scottish Parliament, the Census Order came into force in Scotland on 12 March 2020. In Northern Ireland, following the agreement of the draft Census Order, it came into force on 5 May.

[Back to the top](#)

Faith communities and climate change

42 faith institutions from 14 countries, including 21 from the UK, have announced their divestment from fossil fuels – the largest-ever joint announcement of divestment from fossil fuels from faith institutions. <https://ctbi.org.uk/42-faith-institutions-divest-from-fossil-fuels/>

Faith communities also marked Earth Day in April. For example, an inter faith climate gathering, planned for Birmingham and the West Midlands by Footsteps Faiths for a Low Carbon Future and partners, took place online – <https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/2020/04/30/reflections-on-earth-day/> - and Faiths Leaders in Manchester issued a joint statement - <https://www.manchester.anglican.org/news/2020/04/22/faith-leaders-statement-earth-day-2020/>.

[Back to the top](#)

APPG on Religion in the Media

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Religion in the Media is currently running an inquiry into religious literacy in print and broadcast media. It put out a call for written evidence which is open to the public. Alongside taking written submissions, the APPG is also holding oral evidence sessions with panels of industry experts and faith leaders during May. Further information can be found at <https://www.appgreligioninmedia.uk/inquiries>.

[Back to the top](#)

Welsh Government consultation on RVE

On 5 May the Welsh Government issued a consultation on changes to legislation to support religion, values and ethics (RVE) as a mandatory part of the Curriculum for Wales. The deadline for response is 28 July. <https://gov.wales/legislative-proposals-religion-values-and-ethics>

[Back to the top](#)

Rise in number of RE trainee teachers

The number of new religious education trainee teachers in England has risen by 30 per cent compared with last year – to its highest level in almost a decade. The rise is mostly being attributed to a new government grant allowing graduates in other humanities subjects to do an eight-week subject knowledge enhancement course (SKE) in RE.

<https://www.tes.com/news/re-popularity-boost-30-rise-trainee-teachers>

[Back to the top](#)

VE Day 75th anniversary Commemorations

This year marked the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day). To mark VE Day 75 on Friday 8 May, the Royal British Legion encouraged people across the UK to come together remotely and honour the Second World War generation – recognising the service and sacrifice of men and women from many different faiths and backgrounds in inclusive Remembrance. Information on the activities that took place, as well as a learning resource, are available at www.rbl.org.uk/veday75.

IFN posted on social media during the day, using #veday75, @RoyalBritishLegion and @PoppyLegion, including a story of a Parsi Zoroastrian who served in the Navy <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1258721553329643520> and photos of Muslim soldiers at Eid prayers in East London <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1258883752492765184> and Sikh soldiers at a VE Day party in Reading <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1258713535842070528>.

[Back to the top](#)

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

In place of the usual section on Inter Faith Projects, Programmes and Developments we are carrying a special section on COVID-19 and faith communities.

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.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

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

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

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

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

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

[Back to the top](#)

COVID-19 and faith communities

The impact of COVID-19 has many implications for faith communities. Among these are: the need to provide guidance to members, including signposting of relevant Government guidance; operating with places of worship closed, necessitating use of online and telephone worship and pastoral services; restrictions on attendance of funerals and postponement of some other rites; potential difficulties in cremation or burial requirements being met; closure or truncation of some charitable services; putting service into action on behalf of the vulnerable and those in need; and significant operational and financial issues.

One of the key roles of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is sharing information and good practice. Since the crisis began IFN has been regularly sharing faith and inter faith responses on social media and sending regular updates by email to its member bodies. It has also created a special section on its website about faith and inter faith responses: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>.

As noted in the IFN News section below, IFN has held extra meetings, with a special focus on COVID-19, of its Faith Communities Forum; and also a special focus meeting for its member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations. It has also been in touch, offering help and support, to Local Inter Faith Organisations and will shortly be holding a special focus meeting for its member Educational and Academic Bodies.

As noted above, on 31 March IFN's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators issued a statement on 'Faith Communities and Coronavirus'. This can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus-a-statement>.

Guidance from faith communities

Most faith communities have issued guidance for their communities and are updating this on a regular basis. IFN has been collating and updating a list of these on its website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus>.

Places of worship

Places of worship were among the premises closed when the 'lockdown' phase began on 23 March. The UK Government's guidance of that time, as shortly thereafter updated, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>

As step 3 of its plans for the next steps on responding to COVID-19 in England <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy> the UK Government speaks of an ambition to reopen places of worship. However, this is expected to be no earlier than 4 July, subject to further scientific advice.

On 15 May, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, said that "Faith leaders and government have agreed to develop a plan to enable the phased and safe reopening of places of worship when the evidence shows it is the right time to do so". He announced that the Government was setting up a task force to look at how to safely reopen places of worship. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-taskforce-developing-plan-to-reopen-places-of-worship> The press release explains that Faith Action has been funded "to consult and engage with different community groups and places of worship up and down the country to ensure their views are represented at the Taskforce's meetings". The Taskforce has so far met twice, on 15 and 20 May, chaired by Faith Minister, Lord Stephen Greenhalgh. On 23 May, Sikh member, Jasvir Singh, stood down from the Task Force. No replacement has as yet been announced.

On 12 May the Northern Ireland Executive set out its plan for relaxing restrictions. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-recovery-plan> Opening of places of worship for private prayer and permission for drive-in church services has already been agreed. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-52711301>

The Welsh Government's roadmap for easing the lockdown in Wales includes three phases for the re-opening of places of worship: Red - Opening of places of worship for private

prayer under physical distancing; Amber - Limit services and size of congregations linked to ability to ensure physical distancing; and Green - All places open with full range of services, alongside physical distancing. <https://gov.wales/unlocking-our-society-and-economy-wales-roadmap-published>

The Faith Communities Forum of the Welsh Government met on 29 April. At the meeting, members expressed concern about possible phased lifting of COVID-19 restrictions on places of worship. The Welsh Government has subsequently invited each constituent member of the Forum to nominate a representative to a 'task and finish group' with a view to preparing a protocol for the Welsh Government and the Faith Communities Forum to consider at the meeting of the latter on 3 June.

On 21 May the Scottish Government published a route map for changing the current restrictions. In Phase 2 places of worship would be able to open for private prayer with physical distancing and hygiene safeguards. In Phase 3 Places of worship would be open to extended groups subject to physical distancing and hygiene safeguards. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

The Scottish Government has been keeping in touch with faith communities on a fortnightly basis since the COVID-19 epidemic began, through meetings arranged by its Cohesive Communities, Connected Communities Unit. These meetings are also attended by Interfaith Scotland. On the present agenda is reopening places of worship following the publication of the Scottish Government's route map last week.

Online worship and rites

National and local faith groups began early on providing online support and in some cases livestreaming services. For example, the BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden has been livestreaming darshan of its murtis each morning and the arti ceremony each evening, and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has provided a page with details of where people can access masses that are being livestreamed by priests and bishops. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/health-social-care/coronavirus-guidelines/live-catholic-mass-online/>

Devotional resources and links have also been made available through such routes as the Sikh Press Association <https://twitter.com/SikhPA/status/1242189774389207040> and the Pagan Federation Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/paganfederation/>.

Particular rites have also been livestreamed, for example Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue livestreamed a bar mitzvah ceremony for the first time. <https://www.thejc.com/community/community-news/first-united-synagogue-online->

[barmitzvah-attracts-a-worldwide-audience-1.498311](#) Funerals are also, in some cases, among those rites also being live streamed, given limitations on the number of people who can safely gather and the need to enforce social distancing.

A number of communities have recently had major festivals or times of special observance: Easter, Passover, Vaisakhi, Ridvan, Ramadan and Eid. This has prompted extensive and creative use of social media and online resources such as online seders. The Archbishop of Canterbury recorded a service on his iPad from his kitchen to mark Easter Sunday. <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/archbishop-canterbury-will-call-resurrection-our-common-life-easter-sunday> For Vaisakhi in the West Midlands the Mayor encouraged a virtual Vaisakhi with people sharing images of their celebrations on social media using the hashtag #VirtualVaisakhiWM <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/mayor-joining-virtual-vaisakhi-celebrations-on-social-media/> The Muslim Council of Britain produced guidelines for marking Ramadan https://mcb.org.uk/general/ramadan2020_guidance/ as did the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board and many iftars have been taking place virtually. There was also guidance for the forthcoming Eid celebrations as Muslims get ready to mark Eid in lockdown, see for example https://twitter.com/MINAB_UK/status/1263490912862208000/photo/1.

The BBC announced in April a range of programmes covering, and providing support to, faith communities in the context of COVID-19, saying that “With public worship curtailed as social distancing measures have been introduced, the BBC is providing a wide range of different faith groups the opportunity to reflect, worship and mark key religious festivals during these challenging times.” The offerings have included online worship, programmes related to major faith festivals such as Passover, Easter, Vaisaki, Ridwan and Eid and also, in May, a series of reflections from Hindu presenters. The call to prayer was broadcast during Ramadan in the early morning on BBC local radio in a number of areas. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2020/religion-coronavirus>

Faith communities and their local members and faith-based organisations have also been making available online prayer and learning groups and teaching and entertainment for young people. See for example, the Network of Buddhist Organisations. <https://www.facebook.com/NBOpages/photos/a.650895638303079/2999351226790830/>

Funerals and bereavement

Public Health England issued the following advice on funerals: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic> – this guidance was issued on 31 March, with a revised version following on 19 April.

On 9 April the Government clarified the position on cemeteries and burial grounds, now listed as an 'exception' and therefore able to remain open. The latest guidance, updated on 13 May, is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>.

Following concerns about the inability of families to attend funerals, MHCLG Minister of State Simon Clarke MP wrote on 17 April to local authorities in England <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plans-to-ensure-bereaved-families-can-attend-funerals-during-pandemic>. The MHCLG guidance, last updated on 14 May, is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-death-management>.

The following advice, targeted more at health and funeral professionals, updated 15 May, is relevant to handling of care of the deceased. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19>

IFN's website has a page containing guidance from faith communities and faith community organisations on funeral rites and practices in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-funerals>

Spiritual/pastoral support to members

Spiritual and pastoral provision is challenging in a context where face to face visiting is very limited under the social distancing rules. Faith community bodies have been seeking to support their members with guidance. See for example, https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/570443/Coronavirus_advice_for.aspx and a series being held by Unitarians at the end of May: <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/ministry-in-a-time-of-pandemic>

Voluntary action to aid those in need

COVID-19 has prompted many volunteering initiatives. These range from major schemes such as volunteering for the NHS through to area based Mutual Aid groups.

Faith has inspired a flowering of acts of practical kindness. Just a few examples are below. Many more can be seen highlighted through post and tweets on the Facebook and Twitter accounts of IFN and others.

BBC's Ross Kemp's Volunteer Army programme recently highlighted the efforts of Sikhs at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Southall in London which has been providing over 3,000 meals a day to those in need. Neasden Temple in London has provided special meals to

thank soldiers for their work at COVID-19 testing units

<https://twitter.com/bktimes/status/1263099285198868481> as well as to NHS workers and others. In Liverpool, the Liverpool Region Mosques Network and St Andrews Food Bank came together with local MPs and the Rector of Liverpool to deliver food across the north of the city. Faith communities have come together to support the Felix Project with emergency food operations <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-help-the-hungry-campaign-food-muslim-sikh-christian-hindu-a9483326.html>

A churches' initiative www.yourneighbour.org has been set up to provide callers with pastoral support and links to a church nearby "who can help with a friendly phone call, shopping, prescriptions, and advice." The Oshwal Association of the UK of the Jain community, in collaboration with others, has been providing free meals and or snacks to 'frontline heroes' serving hot meals to housebound elderly and vulnerable people. A broad range of Hindu and other bodies are involved in Sewa Day's wide-ranging programme of support. In some cases faith organisations are uniting across their community to support it and the wider public, for example the coalition of Muslim bodies through a national solidarity campaign organised by the Muslim Charities Forum https://www.launchgood.com/project/national_solidarity_campaign_covid19#!/ of which the Muslim Council of Britain and MINAB are a part.

Sikhs in Scotland have been delivering food to night shelters and other locations <https://twitter.com/sikhsinscotland/status/1262102260865282048>. The Welsh Latter-day Saints partnered with local organisations and volunteers to purchase, assemble and deliver 8,000 hygiene kits to 35 locations across South Wales <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/3082824995101388>. In Northern Ireland, L'Arche, with assistance from local churches, is supporting Root Soup which is preparing and delivering 240 home-cooked meals to older higher-risk people in South-East Belfast area each week <https://lovebelfast.co.uk/power-ni-support-gets-to-the-root-of-local-communities/>.

There have also been faith community linked initiatives such as those of Mitzvah Day which has inspired many groups to get involved including through such initiatives such as an online cooking event with Maureen Lipman <https://www.facebook.com/Mitzvahdayuk/posts/10158493316898829> and a JW3 Jewish community hub initiative with local partner organisations, hostels, homeless shelters and Camden Council, <https://www.jw3.org.uk/help-us-now>.

[Back to the top](#)

COVID-19 and inter faith organisations

A number of groups are using online postings and such programmes as Zoom, Teams and Blue Jeans to keep existing programmes going. For example, Building Bridges Pendle is

posting weekly live cooking demonstrations of dishes as part of ‘Marhaba Munching Mondays’ for viewers to watch, learn and cook at home.

Some groups have been exploring online dialogues and meetings. For example, Faith Network 4 Manchester is running a series of online inter faith dialogue sessions <https://www.facebook.com/FN4Man/photos/a.580259045329671/2999828166706068/>. The first of these explored ways to cope with COVID-19 and the closure of faith buildings.

Websites are a particularly important resource at this time, alongside social media, emails and WhatsApp. For example, Cornwall Faith Forum’s website carries a message from its Chair and numerous helpful links and a list of faith leaders. <https://dorkemmyn.org.uk/covid19/>

National and regional inter faith organisations and programmes have been taking forward a number of COVID-19 related initiatives. For example, in May the Council of Christians and Jews has been holding a series of ‘Pilgrimages’ during which its Presidents are visiting key workers at their places of work and expressing Jewish and Christian prayerful solidarity. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=602107133724592>
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=276570903732612>

The Faith and Belief Forum has been running a special online series of ‘Quarantine Questions with some conversation starters and discussion tools from its Linking and Workshops programmes. <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/quarantine-questions/> and the Women’s Interfaith Network has been working with Faiths Forum for London and Strengthening Faith Institutions on a social media campaign to highlight the issue of domestic abuse among faith communities and signpost support.

Local inter faith organisations are playing their part in the sharing of information about COVID-19 and also helping members and local faith groups to explore aspects of this – from social distancing to holding funerals.

A number of local inter faith bodies have been helping those in need through acts of kindness. For example, volunteers from Bristol Multi-Faith Forum have been helping those who were stranded and homeless due to Coronavirus. They are also offering community support for the distressed and the marginalised.

Some local inter faith organisations have drawn together leaders from local faith communities to share messages and prayers. For example, Leeds Faith Forum held an ‘Interfaith Messages and Prayers of Hope’ session on 26 April YouTube with faith and inter faith leaders. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luO5RK_eYDM&feature=youtu.be

Other local inter faith organisations have been sharing prayers and readings online as part of sustaining connection and providing spiritual support. For example, Watford Inter Faith

Association (www.wifa.org.uk) has a weekly online joint prayer for all who want to join and share their favourite prayers. Each morning since the middle of March a small group in Northern Ireland has been meeting at 9am for a time of online inter faith sharing lasting about 20 to 30 minutes. Over the weeks, a group of up to 16 people – varying from day to day – has met via Zoom to share readings from different faiths and beliefs – with sources ranging from the scriptures of the major faiths, through spiritual writings and even the occasional song (further information from the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum).

[Back to the top](#)

COVID-19 and other types of initiative

In April, a number of faith leaders made a statement of reflection responding to the COVID-19 crisis. <http://faithsforum.com/faiths-leaders-produce-a-statement-of-reflection-during-the-covid-crisis/>. This was an initiative of a temporary coalition of faith leaders and representatives responding to the pandemic, chaired by Maurice Ostro OBE of the Fayre Share Foundation, with the name ‘Faiths United’. IFN staff contribute on an *ad hoc* basis to the discussions.

The initiative was set up in late March to discuss how faith communities have been coping with the pandemic and to drive joint responses. It is serviced by Faiths Forum for London. More information can be found at <http://faithsforum.com/faithsunited/>. This includes a list of its members and examples of its work, such as a Clap for Carers video and setting up a new youth network <https://twitter.com/FaithsUnitedYN> (FUYN) the aims of which are bringing together young people from different faiths and none with common goals and passions to make a real difference“.

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/FaithsUnitedYN/about/>

[Back to the top](#)

COVID-19 and charities

Many faith and inter faith organisations are registered charities. Information and advice that may be useful to charities and other voluntary organisations at this time can be found on IFN’s website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-and-charities>.

Challenges for charities at this time

Charities and other kinds of voluntary organisations are strongly committed to helping the vulnerable at this time of COVID-19 in all ways that they are able and they work year round to help the public in multiple ways. At the present time, a significant number of them –

including faith based and inter faith charities – are seriously affected by the impacts of the pandemic.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (of which IFN is a member), which has led the sector in campaigning for Government support for charities during the current crisis, has estimated that the income lost by UK charities during the first 3 months of the COVID-19 crisis will be £4.3bn. A number of faith based bodies have taken part in this campaign.

Package of Government support for charities

In April the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, announced a package of Government funding for front line charities across the UK totalling £750m. Further information on this, and other examples of financial support during the crisis are in the [Funding section](#) below.

Scottish programme

Interfaith Scotland has been hosting regular on-line meetings for faith communities, local interfaith groups, and university chaplains as well as hosting regular public dialogues on topics of more general interest.

The Scottish Government has provided £29,000 to Interfaith Scotland to distribute small grants to help faith communities and local interfaith groups respond to COVID-19 at the grassroots level. To date over 40 local faith groups and inter faith bodies have accessed grants of up to £500. The projects funded include food and medicine distribution, translating government messages into BME languages, funding on-line platforms for keeping in touch with the lonely and isolated and preparing and distributing appropriate PPE.

[Back to the top](#)

INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2020

This year's Inter Faith Week takes place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Last year was the biggest Week to date, with an amazing array of different activities and organisations holding these.

The aims of Inter Faith Week 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 people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The Week begins 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.

Below are some pointers and ideas which are provided in a context where the nature of the impact of COVID-19 in the Autumn cannot yet be known.

If you plan a physical gathering, ensure that it is held in a way which reflects the Government's COVID-19 guidance at the time (this may vary depending on the particular nation in the UK). Plan for any physical gathering with a 'virtual' fall back version of the event through use of technology such as Zoom and social media.

If you are thinking about an online opportunity for learning, mixing or helping your community to come together there are a number of things you might do, for example:

- Work with a selection of local places of worship to create online tours of these and assemble them into a faith trail that people can take part in online
- Hold a 'virtual' civic reception for local faith leaders and perhaps record a joint Inter Faith Week message about the importance of good inter faith relations in your area
- Hold an art or photo competition which can be judged online if necessary
- Create a calendar for 2021 with pictures taken of inter faith events, places of worship in your area or artwork from different communities
- Create an online quiz about the world's religions and hold the quiz online during the Week
- Create a blog or oral history project about the history of faith communities in your area, when inter faith activity began and how it has developed

- Interview members of local faith communities and non-religious belief groups about the idea of ‘service’ in their tradition and how their beliefs inspire them and their colleagues to work to help the wider community
- Hold an online ‘bake-in’ or ‘cook-in’ where people of different faiths share their recipes and show the finished item!
- If you are a member of a local inter faith group, across the coming months work with members to produce a short history of your group (if you don’t already have one!) with some reflections about why it’s work is so important and publish it during Inter Faith Week
- Set up an ‘inter faith buddy’ system where two people of different faiths are partnered and keep in touch across the months up to Inter Faith Week and share their reflections online during the Week (more details available if you would like to try this idea)
- If there are people still needing to self-isolate or be ‘shielded’ during Inter Faith Week, consider a safe way that you might encourage an inter faith team to volunteer and deliver a special ‘Inter Faith Week’ lunch with samples of foods from some of the different faith communities in the area
- Create an on-line ‘faith fair’ for your workplace or Student Union with information about different faiths and beliefs and opportunities to engage in online chats.
- Develop a new website or update your website – or the faith or inter faith section of it – and launch that in Inter Faith Week
- Create an exhibition about different faiths with display panels about each faith group in your area that could be exhibited in an open air space such as at your local rail/ bus station
- Host a webinar or other educational activity for the public
- Create an online exhibition of some of the artefacts in your museum linked to particular faiths, perhaps with talks from people of those faiths

These are just a few ideas. If you have more, we would love to hear! For further information, contact the Inter Faith Week team, interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk.

[Back to the top](#)

Meetings of Faith Communities Forum

Virtual meetings of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum were held on 30 March and 30 April focusing on faith communities and COVID-19. The first of these looked at how faith communities are responding, with a particular focus on: places of worship; burial and cremation; and financial and management matters. It also considered: guidance; providing online worship, pastoral and educational resources; providing pastoral and practical support to members; the ‘digital gap’; and encouraging voluntary action to aid those in need. The second meeting looked at a number of the same issues relating to COVID-19, as well as funerals, chaplaincy, financial impacts, ethical principles and

decisions on care and the issue of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people from BAME backgrounds.

[Back to the top](#)

Meetings for National Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

Among IFN's member bodies are inter faith organisations and programmes whose work is carried out at UK or national level or which, while regionally focused, are used by people across the country. They are important resources for people who want to get involved in inter faith activity. A number of these work primarily with particular religious traditions; others work with people of any religion or belief. Some of the organisations have a particular focus for their work, such as peace or education. To find out more about the work of these organisations, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/list>.

A joint meeting for these bodies was held on 2 March. On the agenda were: Responding to the climate concerns, with presentations by the Revd Adam Dickens, the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby and Ms Atmica Reddy, a post graduate student at Derby University, and Jamie Cresswell, Chair, Religions for Peace (UK); round table updates on member bodies' current inter faith work; issues of current interest and concern; and teaching and Learning about inter faith activity in the secondary phase.


A virtual meeting was held for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations on 27 April to share news of how they are responding to COVID-19 and to discuss any particular COVID-19 related issues of interest and concern.

[Back to the top](#)

IFN meetings for local inter faith practitioners

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. Meetings took place as planned in Maidstone, in late February, for local inter faith bodies in Kent, and in early March in Preston for groups in the North West of England. A meeting for groups from across the UK in Reading due for late March had to be cancelled due to the increased impact of COVID-19.

At both meetings there was sharing of news from each of the groups represented, and discussion of topical issues of interest and concern. There were also Agenda Items on Inter Faith Week, and on experiences and views of places of worship 'open door' days. At the Kent meeting, there was a presentation by Kent County Council on its involvement in Inter



Faith Week and at the North West meeting, there were opening reflections from Preston Faith Forum about its Inter Faith Week activity. The Preston meeting was kindly hosted by the Oasis Faith and Spirituality Centre at the University of Central Lancashire.

[Back to the top](#)

RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

IFN Annual Review and National Meeting report

Since the last issue of the e-bulletin the latest Inter Faith Network for the UK Annual Review has been published: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/annual-reviews>. It records a year of extensive activity on many fronts to which members contributed. Key themes in the year were grassroots local inter faith activity; deepening of understanding and cooperation at many levels; solidarity in the face of terrorism, extremism and hate crime; broadening of inter faith engagement, for example through the biggest Inter Faith Week to date; religious literacy; and sharing of good practice.

The report on IFN's 2019 National Meeting on 'The changing face of local inter faith dialogue and cooperation' has been added to IFN's website.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/the-changing-face-of-local-inter-faith-dialogue-and-cooperation-report-on-ifn-national-meeting-2019>

[Back to the top](#)

ONS statistics on religious identities in England and Wales

In 2017, the Office for National Statistics' (ONS's) Centre for Equalities and Inclusion began an audit of equalities data to identify the sources of data available to understand the experiences of people in the UK across the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. The audit aimed to highlight where gaps exist in the quality and coverage of equalities statistics and was a starting point to take forward work with others to prioritise and fill the gaps.

Coming out of this work, the ONS has published five documents which present the statistics that are currently available to describe the experiences of people of different religious identities in England and Wales. They aim to take stock of what statistics currently exist and to describe plans to address the gaps in what we know. The topics covered are:

- Exploring religion in England and Wales
- Religion and health in England and Wales
- Religion and crime in England and Wales
- Religion and participation in England and Wales
- Religion, education and work in England and Wales

The publications are available at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/exploringreligioninenglandandwales>.

[Back to the top](#)

Faith Action follow on report on loneliness

In July last year, FaithAction published a report on faith and loneliness, *Right Up Your Street*, highlighting the breadth of faith-based provision in tackling loneliness. Since then it has been researching the involvement of faith groups in social prescribing connector schemes, and in March it launched a follow-on report, *Extending Our Reach in Tackling Loneliness: How social prescribing can achieve its aim by involving faith-based provision*. The report can be found at <https://www.faithaction.net/news/2020/03/12/new-report-from-faithaction-extending-our-reach-in-tackling-loneliness/>.

[Back to the top](#)

CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

NATRE Spirited Arts competition

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)'s annual Spirited Arts competition is still open for entries until 31 July. This year's theme is 'Art in Heaven'. A number of RE teachers are using the competition for home learning. To enable schools and pupils to still take part, NATRE is accepting entries sent in by teachers or individual entries sent by pupils/parents from home. For full details of the competition, and a webinar to inspire teachers and pupils, visit <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2020/>.

[Back to the top](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 funding

In April the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, announced a package of Government funding for front line charities across the UK totalling £750m. This figure is made up of:

- £360m allocated by different Government departments to charities working in areas under the purview of their department;
- £370m for smaller charities, including a grant to the National Lottery Community Fund (which will then distribute it); and
- A minimum of £20m which the Government pledged to contribute as part of matching pound-for-pound donations to the National Emergencies Trust which were generated through the BBC's Big Night In fundraiser on 23 April.

Funding from this overall package is being allocated to the devolved nations using the Barnett formula (<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7386/>). Further information about the funding is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-sets-out-extra-750-million-coronavirus-funding-for-frontline-charities>.

The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) programme for smaller charities opened on 22 May. Grants will allow organisations to meet service costs, where they are experiencing increased demand and/or short-term income disruption. Grants will also allow organisations to refocus services to address more immediate beneficiary needs in light of COVID-19.

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/news/press-releases/2020-05-20/statement-about-the-coronavirus-community-support-fund>

The link for applying for up to £10,000 is

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/covid-19-funding-under-10k> and for over £10,000 is

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/covid-19-funding-over-10k>.

The Government funding is being distributed by the NLCF, alongside Lottery funding. The information notes that “If you're a group that's looking for government funding, because you can't accept funding from The National Lottery, please tell us in your application.”

The Department for Food and Rural Affairs has set up a Food Charities Grant Fund, which may be useful to faith and inter faith organisations running food banks. Grants of up to £100,000 are available. Charities may apply as a group in order to meet the criteria.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-apply-for-the-food-charities-grant-fund>

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a helpful 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](#)

Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours programme of the Church Urban Fund of the Church of England has been re-funded by Government for 2020-21. As part of this, it runs a small grants programme which is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £5,000 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: bringing people together, working locally, working sustainably, committing to diversity, and improving the community.

For information on the eligible areas and to be updated when the next round of funding opens, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

[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 3 June. The next round then opens on 17 June. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

[Back to the top](#)

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.

[Back to the top](#)

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.

[Back to the top](#)

Veolia Environmental Trust community funding

The Veolia Environmental Trust is now accepting applications for projects that will start between 23 June and 22 September. Not-for-profit organisations can apply for funding for environmental or community-based projects that are located within five miles of an operating Veolia site in England. The closing date for Stage 1 Application Forms has been extended to 4 June. For more information, visit <https://www.veoliatrust.org/funding/>.

[Back to the top](#)

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/>.

[Back to the top](#)

Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation offers funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. For further information and to apply, visit <https://www.transformfoundation.org.uk/funded-website-programme>.

[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 in March and April can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

[Back to the top](#)

SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day will now be taking place 4 times a year – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Future dates are yet to be announced. These are days of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/> <https://www.facebook.com/sewaday/>

The Big Lunch will take place on 6-7 June but this year will be virtual.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

Refugee Week is due to take place from 15 to 21 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.

<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

VisitMyMosque Day is due to take place on Sunday 21 June. It is a national campaign facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that encourages mosques across the UK to hold an open day to welcome in their neighbours from all faiths and none. The MCB is currently re-evaluating its plans for this year's campaign. www.visitmymosque.org

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from 19 to 21 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Srebrenica Memorial Day takes place each year Saturday 11 July. This year's theme is 'Every Action Matters'. <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/> It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica. It has recently launched some new resources for marking of the week by faith communities: <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/resources/faith-resources/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 10 October to Saturday 17 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week is due to take place from Sunday 18 to Sunday 25 October. Its theme this year is 'It's our world: Let's make it better'. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will be from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will be from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will be on Sunday 15 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/

[Back to the top](#)

DIARY DATES

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

The **Council of Christians and Jews (Birmingham)** will be holding its next meeting online on Tuesday 26 May. This will be the first of two meetings focusing on Abraham. Rabbi Margaret Jacobi will be speaking. The meeting will be held at 7.30pm. To find out more, visit <http://www.ccj.org.uk/branches/birmingham/>.

The **Muslim Jewish Muslim Forum Greater Manchester**, in partnership with the **Faith Network for Manchester** and others, is holding a dialogue event on Sunday 31 May. The topic will be 'Has the COVID-19 crisis strengthened or weakened people's faith?'. It is being held at 4.30pm on Zoom. Visit www.muslimjewish.org.uk prior to the event to register and participate.

Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum is holding a meeting on Monday 1 June on 'Faith, Community & Coronavirus'. Speakers will include the Revd Alan Green, Chair of THIF, Mayor John Biggs, Tower Hamlets Council, and PC Rich Poolman, Metropolitan Police. The meeting is being held online from 2pm to 4pm. For further information, and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tower-hamlets-inter-faith-forum-faith-communities-and-coronavirus-tickets-103912880222?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is holding a meeting on Tuesday 9 June. This will be the first of a series of online meetings, following a similar format to its spiritual days, including meditations, songs, poems, prayers and reflections with contributions on a variety of themes. It will be held from 11am to 12.15pm. To register an interest, email hello@herefordshireinterfaith.org.uk, or telephone Mike on 01981 500764.

The **St Philip's Centre in Leicester**, is holding an event on Tuesday 16 June on 'Sikhs and Christians in the Media'. How do Sikhs and Christians use the media? What's narrow-cast? What's broadcast? What about print, social media, TV, Radio and more? How has Covid-19 changed the media landscape? Dr Jasjit Singh and Liz Hudson will discuss these issues and more. The event will be held online at 3pm. To book a place, email onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is launching a new online series, in collaboration with The Future is Beautiful, titled 'Listening to each other, Listening to Earth' to explore climate justice. The launch event will be on Wednesday 17 June from 6.30pm to 8.30pm, with speakers Amisha Ghadiali and Muslim spiritual ecologist Rabiah Abdullah. To register, visit https://stethelburgas.org/event/listening-to-each-other-listening-to-earth-launch-event-with-rabiah-abdullah-and-amisha-ghadiali/?mc_cid=d48ae2d1a4&mc_eid=91aaa813ea.

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 **19 June** 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.

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

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

Registered charity no. 1068934

Company limited by guarantee no. 3443823 registered in England.