



IFN e-bulletin

November 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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Current COVID-19 rules - Places of worship, weddings and funerals

England

On 12 October the UK Government introduced a new three tier system of local COVID Alert Levels for England: Medium, High and Very High which took effect from 14 October.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-new-local-covid-alert-levels> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-levels-what-you-need-to-know>

However, on 31 October the UK Government announced that new national restrictions would be in place across the whole of England from 5 November, for at least 4

weeks. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november#weddings-civil-partnerships-religious-services-and-funerals>

In a statement in the House of Lords, Faith Minister Lord Greenhalgh said:

“...[We] have come to a critical point in the fight against Covid-19. The R rate is above one across England, and the ONS estimates that an average of one in 100 people has the virus. To protect the NHS and get the R rate below one, we must limit our interaction with others. Therefore, with great regret, while places of worship will remain open for individual prayer, communal worship cannot take place at this time.”

The main guidance on safe use of places of worship is expected to be updated today (6 November). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

The rules on weddings, civil partnerships, religious services and funerals are as follows:

- Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people, and it is advised that only close friends and family attend. Linked ceremonial events such as stone settings and ash scatterings can also continue with up to 15 people in attendance. Anyone working is not included. Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a support bubble.
- Weddings, civil partnership ceremonies will not be permitted to take place except in exceptional circumstances.
- Places of Worship will be closed, unless they are being used for:
 - Funerals
 - To broadcast acts of worship
 - Individual prayer
 - Formal childcare or where part of a school
 - Essential voluntary and public services, such as blood donation or food banks
 - Other exempted activities such as some support groups

A number of faith community leaders have written to the Prime Minister with concerns about the prevention of communal worship:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/03/faith-leaders-challenge-england-lockdown-ban-on-communal-worship-coronavirus> .

Scotland

On 23 October the Scottish Government announced the introduction of five protection levels, which came into effect on 2 November.

Level 0:

- Places of worship - open, restricted to 50 people
- Weddings/civil partnerships – 50 person limit
- Funerals – 50 person limit
- Wakes and receptions permitted - 50 person limit

Levels 1, 2 and 3:

- Places of worship – open, restricted to 50 people
- Weddings/civil partnerships – 20 person limit
- Funerals – 20 person limit
- Wakes and receptions permitted - 20 person limit

Level 4:

- Places of worship – open, restricted to 20 people
- Weddings/civil partnerships – 15 person limit
- Funerals – 20 person limit
- Wakes permitted - 20 person limit
- No receptions

The Scottish Government's guidance for the safe use of places of worship, last updated on 8 October, is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/pages/capacity/>.

Wales

A two week national lockdown began in Wales on 23 October. Places of worship are not allowed to open to the public, other than for wedding or civil partnership ceremonies or funerals, where people can attend at the invitation of the organiser. Guidance is at <https://gov.wales/guidance-funerals-covid-19> . Ministers may access the place of worship to broadcast (without a congregation) an act of worship or funeral, whether over the

internet or as part of a radio or television broadcast. <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-circuit-break-frequently-asked-questions#section-53267>

A new set of rules will apply in Wales from 9 November. <https://gov.wales/new-national-covid-measures-for-wales-first-minister-says-people-not-rules-are-key-to-our-response>
Under these, places of worship will be able to reopen and resume services.

Northern Ireland

New restrictions for the whole of Northern Ireland came into force on 16 October for four weeks. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

Places of worship can remain open. Religious activities can continue to take place in line with relevant guidance. There is no restriction on numbers attending religious activities, but a limit of 15 otherwise applies in places of worship (25 for weddings and funerals).

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The impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities

On 22 October the Government published the first quarterly report on progress to address the findings of Public Health England's (PHE) review into disparities in the risks and outcomes of COVID-19. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities> This report summarises the work undertaken by the Minister for Equalities and government departments on COVID-19 disparities. The PHE review set out some of what was known at the time about COVID-19 and ethnicity. As there is a significant overlap between some ethnic groups and faith communities, IFN assisted PHE England on the stakeholder input process and this Review was highlighted at the time by IFN and a focus of discussion by its Faith Communities Forum. The Race Disparity Unit has been working collaboratively across government and with the Office for National Statistics, and is liaising with universities and researchers to build an evidence base and to get a better understanding of what is driving these disparities.

On 27 October the report was published of the Labour Party review, led by Baroness Doreen Lawrence, into the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. <https://www.lawrencereview.co.uk/>

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COVID-19 and faith communities

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 held monthly meetings of its Faith Communities

Forum and been regularly sharing faith and inter faith responses on social media and sending regular updates by email to its member bodies.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/social-media>

It has also created a special section on its website about faith and inter faith responses.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>.

Festivals

The coming two months include a number of festivals and days of observance of different faith communities including Diwali and Bandi Chhor Diwas; the Martyrdom Of Guru Tegh Bahadur; Advent Sunday; the Birthday of Guru Nanak; Bodhi Day; Hanukah; the Winter Solstice/Yule; Christmas; and Zaratost no Diso.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals>

The UK Government guidance on marking religious festivals during the pandemic is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/special-religious-services-and-gatherings-covid-19-checklist>. The new lockdown in England will affect more significantly than the previous restriction level the marking of those which fall from now until 2 December.

Faith communities continue to explore new ways to celebrate online and many local authorities, museums and other institutions are adding to this with online celebrations, specially themed programmes and exhibitions. For example, the city of Leicester's celebrations <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/citys-diwali-day-celebrations-go-4622137>, the fourth annual West Midlands Combined Authority and Indian Consulate, Birmingham Diwali celebration <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/west-midlands-diwali-celebrations-go-online-this-year/>, an online celebration in Northampton, where residents are being invited to make their own lights to join in <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/whats-on/things-to-do/northampton-residents-encouraged-make-their-own-lights-display-virtual-diwali-festival-3015197>, digital Diwali in Edinburgh, <https://www.whatsoninedinburgh.co.uk/event/091912-digital-diwali-2020/>, 'Diwali online' at the National Maritime Museum <https://www.rmg.co.uk/see-do/exhibitions-events/diwali-festival-of-light>, and the University of Durham's Diwali Festival <https://www.dur.ac.uk/attractions/explorefromhome/festivals/faith/diwali/>.

Assistance to those in need

The National Emergency Trust (NET) has been raising and distributing funds to grassroots organisations during the pandemic. Details are at <https://nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk/coronavirus/>. NET is in the process of developing case studies of how funding is being used and is planning to share some of these as part of Inter Faith Week.

IFN's Assistant Director was invited to give a presentation to NET's Equity Security Group in October about the responses faith communities and inter faith bodies have made to the crisis.

Faith-based volunteering continues to be a vital resource for many in need at this time. Although shielding is not required during the new lockdown in England or under current restrictions in other nations, a number of initiatives are continuing to provide food to those in need – including through food banks and support of those.

For example, Darlington Gurdwara has been donating its large supply of foods and ingredients to Food For Thought Darlington, a volunteer run initiative which salvages food destined for the skip in order to provide hot meals for those in need across the community. <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/18776726.darlington-sikh-gurdwara-donates-food-supplies-vulnerable-people> Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council has been delivering food parcels, 70% of which have been delivered to members of the BAME community. The Council has also partnered with the Borough Council to provide breakfast to families whose children were in receipt of free school meals. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/telford/2020/09/15/telford-faith-councils-work-to-help-communities-during-lockdown> The BAPS mandir in Neasden, has been supporting its local community in Brent distributing food to those in need in partnership with Brent Youth People Thrive and Kilburn (Brent) COVID-19 Mutual Aid.

Government/faith community engagement

There continues to be a pattern of meetings by Government with individual faith communities in England (including recent faith community roundtables and a task force meeting) and with cross-faith groupings in Scotland and Wales.

There is also extensive engagement by local authorities with local faith groups and inter faith structures, for example the Essex Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) led by Essex Council established a Faith and Communities Working Group and Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets held a joint workshop on what to do in an outbreak. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tower-hamlets-faith-and-covid-19-series-what-to-do-in-an-outbreak-tickets-117016801403>

The West Midlands Combined Authority is working with faith communities to create a new faith strategic partnership group which will work together and with the WMCA to respond to urgent challenges, including Covid-19 and its consequences. <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/call-to-join-new-strategic-faith-partnership/>

Research projects

There are a number of academic projects exploring responses to the pandemic by communities and faith based organisations. For example, the University of Wolverhampton, Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council and Coventry University are working on behalf of the West Midlands Combined Authority to understand / capture the range of responses from the social economy sector including voluntary and community organisations, faith groups, mutual aid groups, neighbourhood groups and the social enterprises.

Financial impacts

Faith communities and inter faith organisations are among the many charity and voluntary organisations which continue to be impacted financially by the pandemic.

According to data collected as part of a new research project, *Respond, Recover, Reset: The Voluntary Sector and Covid-19*, led by Nottingham Trent University, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Sheffield Hallam University, the devastating financial impact of coronavirus has left nearly 40 per cent of charities and community groups in a worsening financial situation. <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/covid-19-crisis-force-one-10-charities-close-within-year-research-warns/management/article/1698282> The difficulties are highlighted in a recent blog relating to the national lockdown in England by Karl Wilding, Chief Executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2020/11/04/the-impact-of-a-second-lockdown/> The NCVO has a number of resources and guidance relating to the potential impacts of coronavirus on the operations of charities and voluntary organisations. <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/coronavirus/contingency-planning-and-financial-implications>

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Remembrance Sunday

Around 10,000 people usually gather at the Cenotaph in London each year for the National Service of Remembrance and the two minute silence at 11am. This year, for the first time in history, the event will be closed to members of the public in line with the latest medical and scientific advice. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-asked-not-to-gather-at-the-cenotaph-for-remembrance-sunday-due-to-coronavirus>

Remembrance Sunday events will still be able to go ahead across the UK, but in line with restrictions in each of the nations. Updated guidance on this for England is now at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday>.

Information on holding Remembrance events in Scotland is at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-remembrance-2020/>.

Information on holding Remembrance events in Wales is at <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-firebreak-frequently-asked-questions#section-53846>. Remembrance events are among the exemptions for gatherings in the highest tier areas of Northern Ireland.

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/1105/pdfs/uksi_20201105_en.pdf (Exception 14)

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EHRC report of Investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party

On 29 October the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published the report of its investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party, which it began in May 2019. The EHRC says that the investigation “identified serious failings in the Labour Party leadership in addressing antisemitism and an inadequate process for handling antisemitism complaints. The Party is responsible for three breaches of the Equality Act (2010) relating to: political interference in antisemitism complaints; failure to provide adequate training to those handling antisemitism complaints; and harassment.”

The EHRC has said that, “despite some recent improvements, the Labour Party must do more if it is going to regain the trust of the Jewish community, the public and many of its members”. It has set out “clear, fair and achievable recommendations to help the Party make positive changes to its policies, processes and culture”.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/investigation-antisemitism-labour-party-finds-unlawful-acts-discrimination-and>

The Labour Party has until 10 December to draft an action plan to implement the recommendations, which is legally enforceable by the court if not fulfilled.

The full report and recommendations can be found at

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/investigation-antisemitism-labour-party>.

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Terrorism

On 30 October a statement was issued on behalf of the Board and Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum, in the wake of recent terrorist attacks, including on 29 October at the Notre-Dame Basilica in Nice in France. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-recent-terrorist-attacks>

A police appeal to the public early in the lockdown, to take part in the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) e-Learning course while working at home, has resulted in nearly 70,000 signing up to be ‘CT Citizens’. Overall half a million participants have signed up since the

course was launched two years ago. ACT Awareness can be found at <https://ct.highfieldelearning.com/>.

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Faith communities and safeguarding

Safeguarding in faith-based organisations during the COVID-19 crisis

In September the Social Care Institute for Excellence updated its guidance on 'Safeguarding in faith-based organisations during the COVID-19 crisis'.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/safeguarding/faith-based-organisations>

Safeguarding in out of school settings

On 21 October the Department for Education published guidance on keeping children safe in out of school settings which has relevance to faith communities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings>

The current rules on out of school settings, during the national lockdown in England, are at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020#ooss>.

IICSA inquiry

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) is currently carrying out an investigation into child protection in religious organisations and settings. The investigation is thematic and has been reviewing the current child protection policies, practices and procedures in religious institutions that have a significant presence in England and Wales. Religions with a significant presence in England and Wales including "non conformist Christian denominations, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism". Religious settings such as mosques, synagogues, churches and temples are in scope. Places of faith tuition such as Muslim madrassahs and Christian Sunday schools and places where children and young people gather in connection with their religious beliefs, including youth groups and camps have also been investigated by the Inquiry. The last one-week public hearing took place from 10 to 14 August. A report on the investigations is currently under preparation.

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigation/child-protection-religious-organisations-and-settings>

On 6 October IICSA published a report on its investigation into child sexual abuse in the Anglican Church. The report, based on the Inquiry's public hearings held during July 2019, contains eight recommendations, directed to both the Church of England and the Church

in Wales, including a recommendation that the Church in England and Wales funds mandatory support for victims and survivors that takes into account their lifetime needs. <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/news/inquiry-report-finds-anglican-church-failed-protect-children-sexual-abuse> <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/overview/iicsa>

IICSA is also currently concluding an investigation into the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. The report on that has been announced as due for publication on 10 November.

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Kruger report - *Levelling up our communities*

In June, the Prime Minister asked Mr Danny Kruger MP for “proposals to sustain the community spirit seen during the lockdown”. A report was developed by Mr Kruger across the summer, following a request by him for submissions. IFN’s Co-Chairs made, on behalf of its Board, a short, informational, submission based on relevant past discussions within IFN.

The report, *Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant*, was published on 24 September and can be found at <https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/communities-report>. As described by Mr Kruger, it “sets out a vision for a more local, more human, less bureaucratic, less centralised society in which people are supported and empowered to play an active role in their neighbourhoods.”

One section (pages 35-6) is given over to ‘A new deal with faith communities’. This includes the author’s views (a) on how faith groups can/should contribute to society; and (b) on faith communities and tolerance/intolerance. It also makes a recommendation that “the Government should invite the country’s faith leaders to make a grand offer of help on behalf of their communities, in exchange for a reciprocal commitment from the state.”

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Faith communities to receive funding to support the homeless

In October Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced a package of support for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This includes £2 million for faith and community groups to help them provide secure accommodation for rough sleepers. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rough-sleepers-to-be-helped-to-keep-safe-this-winter>.

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Hate crime

England and Wales Hate Crime figures for 2019/20

On 13 October the Home Office released statistics about hate crime offences in 2019/20 recorded by the police in England and Wales and estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925968/hate-crime-1920-hosb2920.pdf The total number of offences recorded by police increased overall year on year. There was a decline between March and May, when the UK was under a coronavirus lockdown but then an increase in June (up 34% to 6,697) and July (up about 17% to 6,677).

According to the release, “Religiously motivated hate crimes fell by five per cent, from 7,203 to 6,822, the first fall in these offences since 2012/13, when there was a one per cent fall”. Pages 10 to 12 of the release covers what are termed in the release ‘Religious Hate Crimes’. Where the perceived religion of the victim was recorded, half (50%) of religious hate crime offences in the year covered were targeted against Muslims (3,089 offences). The next most commonly targeted group were Jewish people, who were targeted in 19 per cent of religious hate crimes (1,205 offences). These proportions were similar to the previous year.

A concern that has in the past been raised by the Hindu, Jain and Sikh communities has been about how hate crimes are categorised when there is ‘mistaken identity’. Pages 10-11 of the report explain the current system, in operation since April 2016, whereby the Home Office collects information from the police on the perceived religion of victims of hate crime.

Law Commission and reform of hate crime laws

The Law Commission is making proposals to reform hate crime laws to remove the disparity in the way hate crime laws treat each protected characteristic – race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity. The proposals are outlined in the consultation paper published on 23 September. The consultation closes on 24 December. <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/reforms-to-hate-crime-laws-to-make-them-fairer-and-to-protect-women-for-the-first-time/>

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill

A new Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in April. <https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill> Stage 1 is due to be completed by 18 December. The Scottish government announced on 23 September that it would change the bill in a bid to ease some of the

concerns about its impact on freedom of speech. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-53580326>

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2020

This year's Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org takes place in England, Northern Ireland and Wales from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. The aims of the 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

IFN's Co-Chairs Rt Revd Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela said:

“Inter Faith Week is a time when the spotlight is on the tremendous contribution that faith communities make to society and on work for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Work to build connections between people of different faiths and beliefs is enormously important, and at this time of COVID-19 finding new ways to make connections is vital.

We are delighted that hundreds of organisations will again be taking part: from faith communities and inter faith initiatives, to schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, hospices, national and local government, housing organisations, workplaces, the police and other emergency services, chaplaincies, museums and libraries, and many others.”

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. A dedicated page about this can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>.

This year, in the context of COVID-19, the majority of activities will be online and their organisers are taking advantage of this to broaden involvement yet further. There are also some socially distanced activities planned, in keeping with local and national restrictions, such as tree and bulb plantings, as well as activities taking place in schools, hospitals and other settings that remain open (the position differs in England, Northern and Ireland and Wales). The Inter Faith Network for the UK will be holding a round table virtual discussion about youth inter faith engagement on the first working day of the week. Details of activities can be found at www.interfaithweek.org/list and, once the Week begins, lists of all activities taking place on a particular day can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/day>.

Event organisers holding activities which are not online are reminded to follow with care the relevant guidelines for their nation.

A press release about the Week issued on 2 November is at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/press-release-inter-faith-week-2020-begins-this-sunday-8-november> and an accompanying taster of events can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/a-taster-of-activities-being-held-for-inter-faith-week-2020-8-15-november>.

To keep updated on what is happening during Inter Faith Week, please search for the hashtag #InterFaithWeek and follow the Inter Faith Week accounts on social media:

- www.facebook.com/ifweek
- www.twitter.com/ifweek
- www.instagram.com/ifweek

You can also subscribe to the Inter Faith Week mailing list at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/mailling-list-sign-up> to ensure you receive updates and press releases about the Week directly.

IFN leads on the Week, in consultation with the Inter Faith Council for Wales and Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum in relation to the Week in their respective nations, and provides a dedicated website at: www.interfaithweek.org Scottish Interfaith Week takes place at the same time and Interfaith Scotland leads on that: <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

Scottish Inter Faith Week, which has been led by Interfaith Scotland since 2004, takes place on the same dates. Its theme this year is 'Connecting'. More information about the Week in Scotland, and activities taking place, can be found at <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> or by searching the hashtags #SIFW2020 and #keeponconnecting. The social media channels are <https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>, <https://twitter.com/SIFWEvents> and <https://www.instagram.com/sifwevents/>.

For further information about Inter Faith Week, contact the Inter Faith Week team at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 21 October. The agenda included items on: COVID-19 matters (Places of worship, Financial impact on places of worship and faith institutions, Government/faith community engagement, Response to

needs during the pandemic); the Kruger report: *Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant*; Safeguarding at a time of COVID, with a presentation by a Senior Practice Development Manager of the Social Care Institute for Excellence; Hate Crime; Other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities; and Inter Faith Week.

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IFN 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 West Midlands region, was held virtually on 22 October. It began with a short overview of IFN and its work relating to COVID-19 from the Executive Director and then included sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges, and plans and ideas for marking Inter Faith Week.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Faith for the Climate capacity-building work with smaller faith communities

For the next phase of a capacity-building project funded by Religions For Peace (UK), Faith for the Climate (FFTC) will be working with the newly-formed Hindu Climate Action (HCA). HCA has developed Facebook and Instagram accounts, is welcoming sign-ups to its mailing list, and is working on a website which will host resources for Hindu organisations and the wider community. EcoSikh UK is also seeking new contacts to sign up to its monthly newsletter. FFTC's Muslim partner, the Bahu Trust, has met with the chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), to discuss engaging mosques, imams and young Muslims in climate action. The Network of Buddhist Organisation's Eco-Dharma project has been hosting monthly workshops in conjunction with the Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds. <https://www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/>

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Little Squares of Hope

The 'Little Squares of Hope: Shelter from Storm' project, is an initiative which was launched by The Council of Christians and Jews in commemoration of Sukkot, the Jewish festival marking the 40-year post exodus period of displacement. In partnership with the Jewish Museum, the project is creatively exploring the contemporary significance of shelter through art, which has been created by refugee and faith communities across the UK. <https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/little-squares-of-hope/>

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Foundation Stones national memorial

Foundation Stones is inviting people to paint a stone to contribute to a memorial for the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of Nazi persecution. Foundation Stones builds on the Jewish tradition of laying small stones on graves and those painting a stone are making a commitment to remember the past and to build a future free from all forms of hatred. Stones can also be dedicated to victims of subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. Every stone painted will become part of the new UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in London when it is built.

Inter faith groups wishing to get involved can email foundationstones@big-ideas.org to be sent a free resource. For more information, visit <https://www.big-ideas.org>.

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Study of new relationships between local authorities and faith groups

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society has 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. It will also investigate how and why these relationships have come about, how they have worked in practice, and what their implications might be for local authorities, communities, and faith groups themselves. For more information, contact FaithAction, which acts as Secretariat to the APPG on Faith and Society, at assistant@faithaction.net.

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Roundtable discussions on Cohesive Societies: Faith and Belief

The Faith & Belief Forum is hosting a series of roundtable discussions in November and December on the findings of *Cohesive Societies: Faith and Belief* by Madeline Pennington. The report is available at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/report>. The discussions will bring together practitioners, local authorities, and faith and belief groups to explore the impact of the faith and belief sector on social cohesion at a local level.

For further information on this event and the later roundtables, email Jessica Hazrati at jessica@faithbeliefforum.org.

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Worldviews in Religious Education

Theos, the Christian based think tank, with Canterbury Christchurch University, has published a report by Professor Trevor Cooling, with Dr Bob Bowie and Dr Farid Panjwani, on Worldviews in Religious Education, exploring and developing the recommendation by the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE – <https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/>) that RE in England’s schools should include an exploration of worldviews as well as religion. The report can be found at <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Skills for Dialogue lesson plans

The Faith & Belief Forum has launched a suite of lesson plans with accompanying films, presentations and worksheets for KS3 on ‘Skills for Dialogue’. Further information, including the lesson plans, can be found at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/resources/school-ks3-lesson-plans/>.

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Report on Minority communities in the time of Covid and Protest

A report by the Hope Not Hate Charitable Trust on ‘Minority communities in the time of Covid and Protest: A Study of BAME Opinion’ explores the diversity of opinion within Britain’s ethnic minority communities at the present time. The survey, conducted by HOPE not hate Charitable Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Trust looked at opinion on a range of social and personal issues from Black Lives Matter protests, debates over statues and historical racism, the effects of Covid-19, views on policing, intercommunity relations, identity and more. The report can be downloaded at <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/BAME-report-2020-08-v3-00000003.pdf>.

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Hate crime and security training and workshops

A number of organisations run training and workshops relating to hate crime and security, such as Strengthening Faith Institutions and the Community Security Trust. The latter’s ‘Safe’ project will be running a number of workshops during Inter Faith Week. Links to these can be found on the Inter Faith Week website: www.interfaithweek.org

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Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter

Bookings are now open for the Woolf Institute's online course on 'Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter'. This 15-week course, will explore the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting both on similarities and differences as well as discussing the major challenges. It runs from 11 January to 25 April and there is a fee to attend, with bursaries available. The deadline for applications is 13 December. For more information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/online-courses/bridging-the-great-divide-the-jewish-muslim-encounter>.

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Community reconciliation training for emerging faith leaders

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is facilitating a 6 month community reconciliation training course (from February to July 2021) for 20 emerging faith leaders. The course, called Journey of Hope, is being run in partnership with faith based peace & reconciliation centers in the UK & Ireland. Its aim is to "equip faith leaders to creatively and courageously respond to issues of crisis and conflict in their communities, cultivating a more relational and resilient society". Paid and bursary places are available. The deadline for applications is 31 December. For more information and to register an interest, visit www.reconcilerstogether.co.uk.

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MPA in Faith-Based Leadership

Applications are open for the Masters in Public Administration in Faith-Based Leadership at the University of Birmingham. It is understood that there is some Government funding available to partly cover tuition fees for the December 2020 entry only. For more information, visit <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/thr/mpa-faith-based-leadership.aspx>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Greater Manchester essay competition

The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester is holding an essay competition to honour the memory of Abdol Hossein Sardari, an Iranian diplomat who risked his career by disobeying orders to save the lives of many Jews during the Holocaust. 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. The prize is £100 plus the choice of one of a selection of special experiences: spend an

afternoon with a Member of Parliament; spend an afternoon with a world-famous novelist; or receive a personal a tour of a Town Hall in Greater Manchester with an elected Councillor. The deadline for entries is 15 December. For full details, visit <https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Past-events/Sardari-essay-competition-2020.html>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

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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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Internships

From time to time IFN has paid internships and 'mini internships' which give a chance for learning new skills and contributing to inter faith understanding and cooperation. These are listed at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 funding

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>

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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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Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £3,000 as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities. To be eligible, projects should meet the following criteria: bringing people together, working locally, working sustainably, committing to diversity, and improving the community.

This year there are two application forms: a simpler form for 'micro grants' up to £1,000 and another for projects between £1,000 and £3,000. For more information, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

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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 2 December. 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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Veolia Environmental Trust community funding

The Veolia Environmental Trust is now accepting applications for projects that will start between 22 March and 23 June. 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 is 3 December. For more information, visit <https://www.veoliatrust.org/funding/>.

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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

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. Its theme is 'Connecting'.
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/

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>

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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>.

Inter Faith Week 8 to 15 November

Inter Faith Week event listings can be found at www.interfaithweek.org.

South East England Faiths Forum is holding its AGM on Monday 16 November. This will be held at 1.30pm using Zoom. For more information, contact Kawther.Hashmi@cofeguildford.org.uk.

The **Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham Commission on Interreligious Dialogue** is holding a series of virtual meetings promoting dialogue, listening and sharing among people of different faiths in the West Midlands. The series is called 'Dare to Hope' and will be looking at 'What gives hope to people of faith & how do they cope with the challenges of the covid-19 crisis?' The next meetings are being held on Thursday 12, Thursday 19 and Thursday 26 November from 7.30pm to 8.45pm. To register, email interreligdialogue@rcaob.org.uk.

Faiths Forum for London and **Faiths United Youth Network** are holding a webinar on Thursday 19 November about the plight of the Uyghur Muslims and what UK citizens can do to help. For more information and to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_c7EOotVcTZCBw7CJkOLxsQ.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding the first in a series of meetings on Holy Places on Monday 23 November. This will be on 'Holy Places in Paganism', with an illustrated presentation by Jay Anderson. It is being held at 7.30pm on Zoom. For more information, contact chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Maidstone Inter-Faith Network is holding its AGM on Monday 30 November. It is being held by Zoom at 7.30pm. For more information, visit www.mifn.org.uk.

Council of Christians and Jews and **Churches Together in Britain and Ireland** are holding an event on Thursday 3 December on 'Race and Jewish-Christian relations'. Richard Reddie from CTBI speaking on what he learned on the CCJ Yad Vashem study tour and how it could be fruitfully applied to remembering the transatlantic slave trade. Historian Robert Bieber from CCJ Southwest London and Dittons will consider the significance of Black British history in Jewish perspective. Discussion leaders will include Dionne Gravesande, Senior Ecumenical Relations Manager for Christian Aid; Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallet, Archdeacon of Croydon; and others. To register, email cjrelations@ccj.org.uk.

InterFaith Wolverhampton is holding its AGM online on Thursday 10 December. This meeting will hear of the work of InterFaith over the last year, receive the financial statements and trustees report as well as conducting elections. It will take place on Zoom at 7pm. For further information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk.

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

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

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.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 1 December** 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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