



Surrey Faith Links Newsletter

March 2019



“Turn yourself not away from three best things: Good Thought, Good Word, and Good Deed.”
Zoroaster

Interfaith forums are busy planning events, please do have look on page 7 onwards. It is more important than ever to get involved and support interfaith dialogue.

If you would like to get involved somewhere in Surrey, please do get in touch.
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Inside this issue:	
Spiritual Crisis—connecting with	2
Faith & Cultural Awareness Training	3
Visit My Mosque Day	4
Is Woking just for rich people?	4
New Health & Wellbeing strategy	5
Making Surrey Safer Plan	5
Funding Opportunities	6
Upcoming Events	7

Faith Communities unite following New Zealand Terror Attacks

Faith communities across Surrey and the UK have condemned and expressed their deep sympathies over the double Mosque terror attacks in New Zealand on Friday 16th March.

The shootings at the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch, which occurred during the Friday prayer, left 51 people dead and injured dozens more, including men, women and children.

Faith communities have held prayer vigils for the victims, their families and all those affected by this attack.

The Inter Faith Network Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators in their statement said:

“As we said after the murderous attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh USA last year, attacks on churches, gurdwaras, mosques, temples and other places of worship of different faiths here and around the world are a



- Main Faith Festivals in March 2019**
- 4th: Mahashivratri (Hindu)
 - 5th: Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
 - 6th: Ash Wednesday (Christian)
 - 6-20: Lent (Christian)
 - 11th: Fravardigan (Zoroastrian)
 - 20th: Ostara (Pagan)
 - 21st: Naw Ruz (Baha'i)
 - 21st: Magha Puja (Buddhist)
 - 21st: Holi (Hindu)
 - 21/22: Hola Mahalla (Sikh)
 - 21st: Purim (Jewish)
 - 21st: Jamseedi Noruz (Zoroastrian)
 - 24th: Ava Mah Parab (Zoroastrian)
 - 26th: Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)

Any views and comments expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Diocese of Guildford or the Communities Engagement Team (CET).

reminder of the need to condemn extremist violence in the strongest terms and to stand together and to continue to work together with ever greater urgency against ignorance, prejudice and hatred.

Hatred targeting any community because of its faith and belief is a scourge that cannot be tolerated. There must be freedom to worship and practise our faith freely and without fear."

Many organisations have issued statements or are holding vigils and standing in solidarity with their Muslim neighbours. A list can be found at:

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/christchurch-mosque-attacks-responses-by-faith-and-inter-faith-bodies>

The South East England Faith's Forum have said in a statement: "It is more important than ever that we, as people of all faiths and none, unite against all forms of violence, extremism, racism and terrorism.

There have been many examples of people coming together in solidarity and prayer all over the UK and indeed, the world.

In recent days and months we have seen killings in places of worship of different faiths. As a faith forum representative of various faiths we pray for tolerance so that each may sit under their vine or fig tree and none shall be afraid."

A prayer and peace vigil is being held at the Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking on Saturday 23rd March, 2.00 pm where faith leaders and people from the community will come together to pray for the victims and their loved ones. All are invited to attend.

Spiritual Crisis- Reconnecting with God

A truly inspiring and heart warming event which connected peoples of different faiths to come and listen to two well informed and inspirational speakers on the topic of 'Reconnecting with God'. This very first event for Runnymede and Spelthorne Faith Forum (a new interfaith forum) took place on Saturday 23rd February at the Ashford and Staines Community Centre (ASCC).



Nisar Shaikh, a trustee of ASCC and member of the interfaith forum welcomed everyone and introduced the event.

Simon Perfect, a Christian scholar and researcher from the Theos ThinkTank spoke first on the subject. He asked: Where we are in terms of secularisation in this country? Are we a Christian country? Secular country? Multi-faith country? Our laws and history suggests we are Christian and half of population in the UK describe themselves as Christian. Islam is the fastest growing religion, with 5% of population of the UK describing themselves as Muslim

Religion is in the media a lot now due to extremists and faith based social action which can be seen in times of austerity. Secularisation is still ongoing, many now say they have no religion. Of all 18-24 year olds, 70% say they no religion. There is also poor religious literacy with 52% thinking Christmas is the birthday of Santa (sample of 1000 school children). Do we have a crisis when it comes to passing on faith to the next generation? A shift in the default position in the U.K. from Christian to Atheism, even by those who hold some beliefs. It seems like there is a lot of consumer based religious practice (eg. Easter eggs, Christmas presents etc.) 85% world population - has a religion so the U.K. is not in line with the rest of the world.

What is the future of Christianity? As numbers of Christians are declining, social action by faith groups is actually going up. Half of churches in this country are involved in running a food bank for example 10million adults have used church services in last 12 months (not weddings, funerals or mass) so people are

still depending upon kind of services they provide as when council funding gets cut faith organisations step up to fill the space. Faith groups provide key role in bringing reconciliation in such polarised country.

Shaykh Sulayman Van Ael of the Ark Institute spoke about belief and faith in God; it is easy to utter but sometimes this faith is shaken when we experience some form of difficulty or loss. We should be concerned about the quality of our prayer, this is where we find God. If we have a strong belief in God, life's pain should disappear. When you admit there is something wrong with you, it is you looking for God. He wants you to find him, this is God's way of reviving your heart.



Social media has an impact on our path to God; it makes us self centred not God centred. As social media users, we want us to be observed, we are inviting others towards ourselves. God would say, are you so important that people knew your name but not mine?

Patience and steadfastness are what we need to remove ourselves from spiritual crisis—we are used to



getting instant gratification from social media, we then expect the same from God. Ways to prevent spiritual crisis: Having sincere intention before everything you do. Even changing a child's nappy is a form of worship if you have intention of removing a burden from your child. If you eat well, then your intention is to take care of what God has given to you. If we live our lives making this intention, then when we come to prayer we'll have the perfect environment in which to pray. We should be always looking for God's face in everything he has given to us.

There was a Q&A session after which attendees were invited to observe the evening prayers. The ASCC arranged some delicious food for all attendees, which everyone enjoyed and continued with conversations.

Watch a recording of the event on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/cU4BftuzNGo>

Faith and Cultural Awareness Training for Staff & Volunteers

It has become evident in today's increasingly multicultural society that constructing and developing relations between people of all faiths and none is important for work life as well as social cohesion.

Employers should have a basic level of knowledge of different faiths to get a better understanding of staff/customer needs and requirements.

It is also good for staff to have some level of knowledge and awareness of faiths and cultures for a better experience with the people they work with.

For more information or to organize a training session please contact:

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Visit My Mosque Day

#VisitMyMosque Day is a national annual campaign facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that saw to 250+ mosques across the UK holding open days to welcome in their neighbours from all faiths and none.

The last #VisitMyMosque took place on 3 March 2019. The open days are about building bridges and breaking down stereotypes.

Despite rising hate crime and recent attacks on mosques, thousands of Muslim volunteers across the UK have defied the odds and welcomed in members of the public on #VisitMyMosque day.

Over 250 mosques took part in a day that saw neighbours and visitors welcomed with food, stalls, calligraphy, henna art and tour guides.

Last October the Home Office reported that religious hate crimes rocketed by 40% across England & Wales in just one year, with over half of attacks directed at Muslims, whilst two mosques in Newcastle and Manchester have been attacked in the last two months with Nazi swastika symbols graffitied on their premises by the perpetrators.

To celebrate the fifth anniversary of #VisitMyMosque, Mosques promoted the [Great British Spring Clean](#) campaign in collaboration with the national environment charity [Keep Britain Tidy](#). Harun Khan, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain said, "Whatever faith or background you come from, care and cleanliness for our local environment is a unifying force that brings communities together."

Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking and Al Karafi Mosque, Camberley regularly have their doors open for visitors. [Read more about the Shah Jahan Mosque visit here](#) and also reported in [Woking News and Mail](#).

Further information at www.visitmymosque.org



Is Woking Just for Rich People?

On Saturday 9 March approximately 50 people gathered for the Woking Debate to consider Social Housing.

Ronan Leyden from Bioregional Homes opened the Debate. Bioregional is an innovative enterprise concentrating on high quality environmentally friendly and affordable housing developments. Their first project was BedZED Eco village in Sutton where they developed zero carbon homes and a vibrant community. Compared with the national average of people knowing four neighbours people here know 20. With the price of housing going up they provide housing for the squeezed middle. They are working on six projects in the South East including one at Chobham. In Chobham their project will have 30 homes of which 22 will be affordable.

Cath Stamper, Chief Executive of York Road Project, began by talking about the project. Set up in the 1990s it is a night shelter for homeless people with an outreach team, a well being worker and they teach skills. It supports 350 people a year. Ten people are sleeping on the streets in Woking each night. The age of clients is dropping and most are now in the 25-34 age group. About 70% have mental health issues. New developments in Woking do not sufficiently cater for people on low incomes. 1,546 people are on the waiting list for council housing, a rise of 156% in the last ten years. Local authority housing is now only 6.7% of the housing stock in England. The price of a one bedroom flat in Woking is now £274,000 and £208 a week to rent. If you are lucky enough to be in Council housing the cost is £170 a week. There is no Government legislation requiring local councils to provide housing for homeless people and there are only two night shelters in Surrey in Woking and Guildford.

Debby Harlow, Portfolio holder for housing on Woking Council asked should we have the right to buy our house. She told us about a new scheme whereby people who are renting will be able to claim a proportion of their rent towards a deposit. Woking last year started 25% of all new council housing building in the country. You need to be earning £30,000 a year to rent here in Woking. Parts of Woking have been designated areas where landlords have to meet certain criteria. Woking has an ageing population and people need to be encouraged to downsize as they get older but often people do not accept what can be offered to them. The Council is targeting empty property. The new tower blocks being built will all be for rent and are one and two bed flats. With the green belt around Woking land for building on is restricted and the Council is identifying brown field sites.

The debate was concluded with some questions from the attendees.

To read the full report and get more information about the Woking debates, please visit:

<http://wokingdebates.com>

A new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Surrey



A new draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed for Surrey. It is the product of unprecedented collaboration between the NHS, Surrey County Council and wider partners, including the voluntary and community sector and the police, and we would like to test it with you. Please take part in the online survey and let us know what you think.

We have provided an [Easy Read summary of the overall aims of the strategy](#) and an [Easy Read explanation of pages 16-18](#) of the strategy which relates to Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or adults with a learning disability and/or autism. Additionally there are two Easy Read survey formats: an [interactive edition of the survey](#) and a printable PDF.

This consultation closes on Wednesday 27th March 2019

For more information and to complete the Survey:

<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/adult-social-care-and-public-health/hwbstrategy/>

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Making Surrey Safer Plan

Have your say

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Making Surrey Safer Plan is a document that Surrey County Council is required to produce to show what we do, why we do it, and what our plans are for the future. In this plan we take into account factors that affect the way we can run Surrey's fire and rescue service, like the budget we are given, the population of Surrey and how the types of calls we respond to are changing.

Our proposals for 2020 - 2023 are explained in the [Making Surrey Safer Plan - full version \(PDF\)](#) and [Making Surrey Safer Plan - summary version \(PDF\)](#).

Please let us know what you think by completing our [consultation questionnaire](#) by 26 May 2019. Our [Equality Impact Assessment \(EIA\) \(PDF\)](#) and the [appendices to the EIA \(PDF\)](#) provides more information about the consultation.



For more information please visit: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/fire-and-rescue/about/our-vision-mission-and-aims/priorities-plans-and-governance/plans-strategies-and-legislation/public-safety>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



**Surrey
Mental Health
Fund**

The Community Foundation for Surrey have launched a new Mental Health Fund for Surrey, which will focus on helping improve mental health amongst children and young people.

The Mental Health Foundation notes that approximately 70% of people with a mental health problem have not had support at a sufficiently early age, and that 50% of mental health problems are established by the time a child reaches 14.

Therefore, initially grants will be made to early intervention projects helping children and young people aged 8-13 develop emotional resilience and self-esteem. Consideration will be given to innovative

new ideas and pilot projects as well as existing work.

Grants will typically be between £5,000-£10,000, however smaller projects are welcome to apply

For more information and the apply, please visit: <https://www.cfsurrey.org.uk/fund/mental-health-fund/>



**Community
Foundation
for Surrey**

Community Foundation Surrey supports local charities, community and voluntary groups in Surrey whose work benefits our communities. We welcome applications from both new and established groups and also have two funds that award grants to support individuals. For more information please visit:

<https://www.cfsurrey.org.uk/>



**Heathrow
Community
Fund**

Communities Together

Are you working to boost the community spirit in your neighbourhood? Do you have ideas for creating a community garden, starting an arts festival, tackling loneliness amongst old people, boosting health and fitness or cleaning up the streets where you live? If so, you could qualify for a grant from our Communities Together programme. For more information, please visit:

<https://www.heathrowcommunityfund.com/need-funding./for-community-projects>

ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund has four broad funding themes now and in future years.

- removing barriers to family life;
- extra support after service for those that need help;
- measures to integrate military and civilian communities and allow the armed forces community to participate as citizens;
- non-core healthcare services for veterans

For more information please visit: <http://www.covenantfund.org.uk/about/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

'Tackling Prejudice and Embracing Diversity in Multi-faith Britain'

Date: Tuesday 19th March 2019:

Speaker: Michael Wakelin

Michael Wakelin (the brother of Mark Wakelin at Epsom Methodist Church') was formerly Head of Religious Broadcasting at the BBC having worked at the corporation for 23 years across all radio and TV networks. He's now a media and interfaith consultant, Coexist House Project Lead for the University of Cambridge and continues his broadcasting work as an Executive Producer at TBI Media, and is responsible for Pause for Thought on BBC Radio 2 and Something Understood on BBC Radio 4.

7.00 for refreshments. The talk and discussion starts at 7.30.

Venue: Christchurch Epsom Hall (parking just before the church on your way out of Epsom). Hosted by Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum - All welcome

**Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum Events 2019**

Monday 29th April: Refugee event (refugee speakers and much more) 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start. Further details to follow.

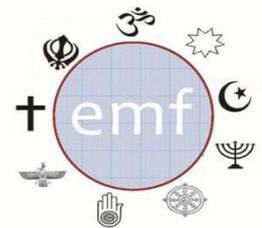
Tuesday 25th June: AGM and Conference. 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start at St John's Church, 1 The Furrows, Walton-on Thames, Surrey, KT12 3JQ

Saturday 12th October: Evening Gala/Cultural Celebration, 6.00 pm at St John's Church, 1 The Furrows, Walton-on Thames, Surrey, KT12 3JQ

For more information please email:

Secretary: Kausar.Akhtar@cofefeguildford.org.uk

For more information please visit: <https://www.elmbridgemultifaith.org.uk/>

**Woking People of Faith Events 2019**

Ladies' Coffee Morning: Monday 25th March, 10.30 – 11.30am New Life Church, GU22 9BX

Football Tournament: Saturday 15th June, 10am - 4pm, Winston Churchill School, Woking

Refugee Week Event: Tuesday 18th June, 6pm – 8pm, HG Wells, Woking

Last Post Multi-Faith Service: Sunday 4th August, 2pm, Brookwood Cemetery, Dawney Hill, GU24 0JB

International Day of Peace: Saturday 21st September, 12 noon - 1pm,

Mercia Walk, Woking

More information E: administrator@wpof.org.uk

Or visit: www.wpof.org.uk



Woking People of Faith

Woking Debates 2019

13 April: Over the Top, a play by the Journeymen Theatre about militarism in schools.

11 May: Where do we come from? Where do we go? Travellers tales.

10.30 am Refreshments for 11.00 am start till 12.30 pm

Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG

Entrance is free, donations welcome.

The Woking Debates are organised by: Woking Action for Peace, Friends of the Earth, Surrey Faith Links, Woking LA21, Woking Quakers and Woking People of Faith.

For more information please contact: Keith Scott: 01483 824980 | keithsc_2000@yahoo.com

www.wokingdebates.com

This is the seventh year of the debates. Started by Woking Action for Peace to encourage active participation in our community by looking at underlying issues facing us, they are organised with the support of several local groups. We believe that together we can find ways forward to a more equal, peaceful and united world.



Title **Marriage, from ancient to modern**

Date: Tuesday, 9th April at 7.30pm

Speaker: Dr John Nichols

John will cover three main areas: History of marriage and religion; Modern marriage, parenthood and fertility; Civil partnerships, registry office weddings & humanist weddings update. He graduated from Liverpool Medical School in 1967 and has spent 42 years as a Guildford GP. He has done research in numerous areas, from measles immunity to folic acid. Although he retired from general practice three years ago, he is still involved in research and is a visiting research fellow at the University of Surrey.

Where: The Guildford Institute in Ward Street, Guildford, GU1 4LH.

Tea/coffee and biscuits break at about 8.40. All are welcome.

There is no charge for the talks, but a small donation is requested to cover expenses (but not from students).

For further information, please phone David Simmonds (01483 800397) or Mike Adams (01483 233324), or see our website <http://guildfordwoking.humanist.org.uk> We are also on Meetup, Facebook and Twitter.



Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum Events 2019

Interfaith Service to mark Interfaith Week

Sunday 17th November, 3 pm—5pm,
St Nicholas Church, Bury St, Guildford GU2 4AW

For more information please contact: Bernard Jones (Secretary)
T: 01483 424257 E: bernard.jones10@btinternet.com

Or Carolyn Neogi: E: carolynneogi@aol.com | T: 01483 415773



GGIFF

Interpretation and Translation Survey

Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are developing a new interpretation and translation services contract for Surrey Heartlands CCGs. The service will offer patients interpretation and translation support during GP appointments. This could include providing information in different languages, having an interpreter present during the appointment or making sure people can access information in different formats such as braille.

An online survey has been launched to hear from service users or those who would benefit from the service in the following languages and can be found here:

- In English – <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/T3PRW/>
- In Polish – <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/QQ4LT/>
- In Urdu - <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/E2NGL/>
- In Punjabi - <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/5Y0MJ/>
- In Italian- <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BNAR1/>
- In Chinese - <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/K1H3L/>

Surrey Faith Links c/o CET, Diocese of Guildford

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Diocese of
Guildford 
TRANSFORMING CHURCH
TRANSFORMING LIVES
Communities Engagement