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**Main Faith Festivals in March 2021**

- 11: Mahashivratri (Hindu)
- 11: The Prophet's Night Journey (Islam)
- 15: Start of Lent (Christian)
- 20: Naw-Ruz (Baha'i)
- 21: Jamshedi Norus (Zoroastrian)
- 25: Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)
- 26: Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)
- 28-4 Apr: Passover (Jewish)
- 28-3 Apr: Holy Week (Christian)
- 28/29: Holi (Hindu)
- 29: Hola Mahalla (Sikh)
- 29: Night of Forgiveness (Islam)

For a description of the festivals please visit: [Religious Festivals](https://www.surreyfaithlinks.org.uk/religious-festivals)

**“All of our humanity is dependent upon recognising the humanity in others”  
(Archbishop Desmond Tutu)**

Almost a year on from the lockdown in March 2020 and we are begging to see light at the end of the tunnel! The people of Surrey have not let things stop them from getting on with what they do, you'll find some reports in this newsletter and plenty of upcoming events. March appears to be a busy time with faith festivals too!

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**My Buddhism – A guide to differences amongst Chinese, Thai, Tibetan and Zhen Practices**



This was Elmbridge Faith Forum's first attempt to use Zoom's potential for incorporating international speakers and participants in a meeting held on Tuesday 2nd February 2021.

What an excellent start it was. Thanks to some speedy collaboration between Piyobhaso and our 'technical expert', Kawther, we were treated to some excellent visual aids, showing how boys could become monks from age twelve, and including one picture of Piyobhaso himself in a group of young monks. We learnt how Thai men could spend periods, at various points in their lives, living as monks as part of 'growing up' or enjoying a period of 'retreat'. As monks, they would earn their food by asking for alms and sharing the results. They followed the eight

-fold path, had periods of meditation, were celibate and built up 'good karma', which would benefit them in future lives and the pursuit of Nirvana.

Wayne Lee talked about his life as the pupil of a Tibetan Lama. As he spoke, we were treated to excellent photographs of spectacular landscapes, amazing pieces of stone imprinted by the hands of Lamas, life in a Tibetan family, the shrinking body of a dead Lama, small outdoor closed booths in which people would spend periods of meditation and, most surprising of all, an amazing structure, with Wayne climbing up to reach a very small cave, which a deceased Lama had occupied. Wayne was told that there was no 'ladder' before the Lama's death, because the Lama could 'fly' up and down.

Martin Goodson was previously a monk, now a lay follower from the Shobo-an Zen Centre (Rinzai Zen sect of Japanese Zen Buddhism). He came to London in the mid 80s and joined the Buddhist Society. He had been on a Zen retreat and had read books on Zen Buddhism with a Western slant as written by D.T.Suzuki, for example. He was encouraged to convert to Zen Buddhism. He described his personal experience and although he didn't have supporting pictures he spoke very well. He outlined how Zen in the West has focused on meditation and mindfulness, whilst Zen in Japan focused on monastics guiding lay followers in their practice. He talked about Buddha nature being the spiritual power in Buddhism. Through the 'Eightfold path', meditation and wisdom practice the Zen Buddhist is geared toward recognising the spiritual power in all beings/things. They will therefore understand compassion towards all beings and all things. He understood Zen Buddhism to be non theistic.

The final speaker, Chung Lo, is currently working as teacher and researcher at Hong Kong University and has worked with John and myself in putting together this webinar. He gave us some insights into current publications that he is preparing on the basis that nothing is 'real' or permanent but is constantly changing form. To the surprise of his Catholic family, he decided to become a monk and has lived a life mixing academic work with monastic life and service in various parts of the world.

The thirty-five zoom participants were then able to ask questions to the panel of speakers. Margaret closed the meeting, thanking all who had contributed and commenting on the high level of commitment shown by Buddhists to unselfish behaviour. To read the report online with photos and recording please [click here](#).

Geoff Morris, Committee Member of Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum

### **COVID lockdown easing:**

On 22 February the Prime Minister announced the 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021', setting out the roadmap out of the current lockdown for England. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021>

This set out a number of provisional dates for easing of restrictions. Places of Worship have been able to remain open for communal worship through the most recent restrictions. That continues to be the case. For the present, the advice in regard to marking religious festivals is "to remain cautious; to plan for celebrations and events to be restricted and to avoid building expectations too soon."

### Your Faith Institution can become a vaccine centre with the NHS

The NHS is keen to expand the number and type of vaccination locations across the country to support delivery of the vaccination programme. Places of worship, alongside other new sites, are being considered provided they can meet certain criteria.

NHSE/I undertakes an assessment of all potential sites which may be considered under the Vaccinations programme. This will include size, location, availability, suitability and will include an assessment around accessibility (aligned to the Equality Act 2010). Where there are running costs to be incurred, the site will also be subject to a value for money assessment. Sites will be secured under formal lease or licence.

Should venue owners have sites which they may wish to put forward for use by the Programme, submissions may be made to the National team and in conjunction with regional and local teams, an assessment of the offer will be made.

As a minimum, the venues should be:

- Accessible
- Available on exclusive use through the period of the Programme
- Able to provide at least c350sqm plus staff/public facilities (ideally, ground floor), with parking on site or close by.
- Able to provide separate entrance & exit points to assist with social distancing and support a natural flow of patients through the building to comply with social distancing guidance.
- Wi-Fi enabled – the site will need appropriate Wi-Fi connectivity depending on the use of the venue
- Well ventilated
- Accessible via local transport or in the local community

The NHS can fully kit the sites in terms of clinical and non-clinical equipment.

All sites will be assessed on their ability to provide three key areas:

1. Arrival and check-in
2. Clinical assessment
3. Delivery of vaccination

There are minimum space requirements for each area. However, there is a degree of flexibility in the configuration. For example, re purposing large venues (sport stadiums, conference centres etc.) could potentially house the entire end to end user journey in a single room. Alternatively, smaller venues might find it better to carve out distinct areas in to separate rooms.

If you own a venue that meets the requirements above which you would like to put forward as a vaccination location, please email [aya@sfitogether.org](mailto:aya@sfitogether.org) with the subject line: POW Vaccination site query.

We will share your details with the NHS who will contact you accordingly.



### COVID-19 advice in different languages

Big Leaf Foundation have produced recent COVID tier rules in languages representative of displaced communities. They are available to download at: <https://www.bigleafoundation.org.uk/covid-19-advice.html>

They have also produced videos about fake news in different languages which can [be found here](#)

### Creating community spaces for patient well-being

Social prescribing networks are growing across the UK and the NHS are looking at how best to develop community space and social prescribing hubs to fit the needs of charities and community groups and the people they support. Read more about this [here](#) and participate by completing this [short survey](#)

### IFN Youth Inter Faith Engagement Project

Interfaith Network UK is currently undertaking a short project which includes gathering and signposting resources for youth inter faith activity, including in Further Education and Higher Education contexts. Intern Carrie Gealy is currently making contact with students' unions, chaplaincies, national student religious organisations and a number of youth organisations and initiatives to ask them about what resources they have been finding useful and their thoughts on current challenges and possibilities. You can find out more about this project at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/activity/young-people>. If you would like to offer information, you can do so through the relevant survey on that page or by emailing [intern@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:intern@interfaith.org.uk).

The project also includes work to develop a new online resource for secondary school pupils to help them learn about inter faith activity and develop skills for dialogue, and also increase the capacity of secondary school teachers to teach about inter faith relations. IFN's primary resource, produced in 2019, will give an idea of the approach: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource>. Work on the secondary resource is already well under way but there is still time to suggest examples that you think might be helpful illustrations of this. If you would like to contribute a possible example Dr David Hampshire would be glad to hear from you at [david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk).

### SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

**Sadaqa Day** will take place on Sunday 21 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. [mysadaqaday.org](http://mysadaqaday.org)

The Big Lunch is held in the first weekend of June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch-faqs>

**Refugee Week** will take place from 14-20 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2021 Week is 'We cannot walk alone'.

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

### It's OK to not be OK

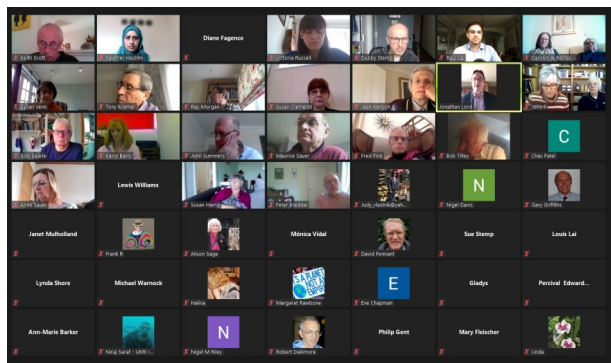
2020 has been a tough year for everyone and with lockdown can often come loneliness so if you or someone you know is struggling mentally then [visit adult mental health and wellbeing on Healthy Surrey](#) where you'll find tips on mental wellbeing and information on how to access specialist support locally.

You can also get help from by visiting [Mind.org.uk](http://Mind.org.uk) or call 0300 123 3393 Text: 86463

If you, or someone you know is in crisis visiting [Samaritans.org.uk](http://Samaritans.org.uk) or call them on 116 123

Young people who are feeling particularly anxious or depressed can visiting [Kooth.com](http://Kooth.com)

## Woking in 2050: Dream or Nightmare?



On Saturday 20 February 71 people got through on zoom to attend the Debate on Woking in 2050: Dream or Nightmare?

Susan Venn has just retired as researcher at the University of Surrey and lives just outside Guildford. She was studying What makes a good life and asked how society can change from its carbon loving lifestyle. The study looked at three places, Stoke on Trent, Hay on Wye and Woking. Woking was included as an affluent commuter

town. She spent time understanding Woking and what people liked about it. She found that the regeneration that is happening is painful, challenging and difficult but people see it as ultimately of benefit to Woking and improving the physical facilities. There was a worry that the poorer will become more marginalised and if Woking is for the current residents or becoming a commuter town for London. Affordability is an issue. Can young people stay here? It is expensive to live here and move within the town. Woking is valued for its community and its connectivity. Older people enjoy accessing all Woking has to offer but are worried about the cost of living and public transport. People were worried about the communities within Woking valuing them.

Victoria Russell is in her 20s and has lived in Surrey for her whole life and in Woking since secondary school. She established her own accountancy practice two years ago and moved out of her home when she was 20 but has a problem in getting on the property ladder. She loves Woking for its greenery, the good links to London its sustainability policies and its many eco-friendly businesses, the range of events such as Party in the Park and its groups and opportunities for volunteering. Downsides are the roads being so busy, litter, that it is becoming less rural and more built up although trees are being planted. In 2050 she hopes that Woking would be no more built up, that help will be available for people getting on the property ladder and there will be a reduction in waste. She fears that instead Woking will have a larger population, be more built up and house prices have risen even more. She hopes she will be able to afford to live here.

Raul Lai then shared his views as someone who has been living in Woking for the last seven years; he spoke about child poverty in Sheerwater and said post codes are a real indicator of educational achievement at GCSE and A level. We need a better funded public service and to do more about climate change. The Council needs to invest in more lower cost housing but Raul recognised the investment there has been in the Sheerwater refurbishment, the Light Box, the Victoria Theatre and the Library.

Jonathan Lord, our MP, spoke last and said Woking has a tension between providing more housing and protecting its green spaces being smaller than Guildford and Waverley boroughs. There are great plans for West Byfleet replacing Sheer House with a retirement village. There are 500 affordable units in the Sheerwater development. A resident's panel is being created to hear your views. (See <https://www.woking.gov.uk/residentspanel>.) The new development plan will protect almost all the Green Belt until at least 2040. Woking has a strong community with its mosques and churches, sports clubs and charities. Ashford and St Peter's hospital and the Woking Community hospital are both rated well. He identified a need for more technical education in Woking concentrating on IT and AI.

Read the full report here: <http://wokingdebates.com/>

Watch a recording of the event here: <https://youtu.be/zx14XtMtTrw>

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### The Surrey Crisis Fund

The [Surrey Crisis Fund](#) is a discretionary fund run by Surrey County Council. It offers financial help to Surrey residents who have nowhere else to turn in an emergency or following a disaster.

### What would you do with a £100m in Surrey?

[Surrey County Council's 'Your Fund Surrey'](#) has launched £100 m for local communities. Visit their website for details and the interactive map showing what is going on in your community.

### Community Foundation for Surrey Donor Funds

Funding to support groups addressing the Community Foundation Priority areas:

- Health & Wellbeing – Advance people’s physical and mental health, wellbeing and safety
- Education & Skills – Improve life skills, education, employability and enterprise
- Disadvantage & Exclusion – Promote reduction of isolation and disadvantage and access to local services
- Stronger Communities – Maximise ability to strengthen community cohesion and build social capacity

CFS are currently accepting applications on a rolling basis with the next awards made in January 2021.

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

### COVID-19 funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. [Click here to read the list](#)

### FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility.

The current round closes on 3 March. For more information please [click here](#)

### New Black and Ethnic Minority community-led foundation

Baobab Foundation will be “a new type of foundation, led by the communities it serves”, and aim to address the chronic underfunding of community organisations led by people of colour.

For more information please [click here](#)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Peace One Day 21: Sharpening Focus

From 2021 Peace One Day is marking a second critical day in the global calendar, 21 March, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In doing so, Peace One Day is sharpening its focus on Anti-Racism as a key driver towards a more peaceful, diverse, equal and just world.

In order to reach its target of making 3 billion people aware of Peace Day by 2025, Peace One Day is focusing its activities on a total of four interconnected calendar dates, all driving towards Peace Day 21 September:

21 March, "Anti-Racism 21"

21 June, "Climate Action 21"

21 September, "Peace Day 21"

21 December, "Space Transformers 21"

Peace One Day are planning for the Anti-Racism Live Global Digital Experience on 21 March, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in association with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and are coming together in an exciting way. [Click here](#) to find the latest line-up, more information on the broadcast and a link to our new free education resources to accompany Anti-Racism Day on 21 March.

You can watch the Anti-Racism Live Global Digital Experience exclusively at [peaceoneday.org](http://peaceoneday.org). We hope that you tune in on the day and if you're doing anything to observe 21 March please do let us know on social media by tagging us and using the hashtags #peaceoneday #doyourpeace #fightracism #standup4humanrights

### The Common Room: The Power of Intergenerational Connection



On Tuesday, 9 March, 7.00 pm (during Intergenerational Week!), join our [More In Common Network](#) in the Common Room on to discuss the power of intergenerational connect.

You'll hear from intergenerational experts including the [Cares Family](#) about the benefits of connecting across the generations, and explore practical ways to foster intergenerational connections within your community.

SAVE THE DATE: **The Great Get Together 2021** will take place from 18 - 20 June 2021. Watch this space for more exciting details to come soon!

### Woking People of Faith Events 2021

**Virtual Tour of Shah Jahan Mosque** - Monday 8th March, 7.00 pm—please see poster on page 10 for details.

**Interfaith Football Tournament** - Saturday 22nd May

**Refugee Week Event** - June, tbc

**International Peace Day** - Saturday 18th September

**Interfaith Cricket Tournament** - September, tbc

**Interfaith Week Event** - November, tbc



Woking People of Faith

### Woking Debates 2021 Programme

11.00 am—12.30 pm on Zoom

20th March—Is knife crime and gang culture a growing problem in Woking? What is being done?

17th April—What value is arms and military expenditure to the UK?

15th May—Air Pollution: the hidden threat in Woking?



For zoom joining details, please contact Keith Scott: [keithsc\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:keithsc_2000@yahoo.com) or 01483 824980

For more information please visit: [www.wokingdebates.com](http://www.wokingdebates.com) and/or follow on Facebook

### Guildford and Woking Humanists Talk on Artificial Intelligence

There is no charge for the talks. All are welcome!

For further information, and the Zoom link, please phone David Simmonds (01483 800397)

When Tuesday 9th March, 7.30pm

Title Risks and opportunities of artificial super-intelligence".

Speaker David Wood

Where Zoom talk

Artificial Intelligence - what is it? How intelligent could machines become? What factors could accelerate the development of ASI? How could powerful ASI go wrong? And how can we ensure that ASI is beneficial rather than destructive for humanity?

David will consider these questions and their ethical implications. He is an entertaining and very experienced speaker and has researched this subject for many years. He has written a number of books and is the chair at London Futurists.

**Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference**  
Thursday 18 March 10am – 1pm

**The Power of Partnership**  
Via Zoom and live streamed to @SurreyMilitary Facebook

#SAFCC21

ARMED FORCES COVENANT  
EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME  
GOLD AWARD

[Click here to register for this event](#)



**Employability and Schools and Parenting course offer**

WEA East Surrey works in partnership with East Surrey College. These courses (unless otherwise indicated) are for residents living in East Surrey districts (Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Tandridge, Caterham, Reigate and Banstead).

To access the list of courses currently available please [click here](#)

To find other courses in your area please visit: <https://www.wea.org.uk/>

Latest job opportunities: <https://www.surreyca.org.uk/jobs/>

**Surrey County Council's public health team offers the following training:**

**COVID-19 related training**—Virtual Adult Introductory Mental Health First Aid Course

**Suicide prevention** to help improve understanding and confidence to intervene with people at risk of suicide.

**Wellbeing workshops** promote positive, emotional and mental wellbeing through six everyday actions

**Connect 5** – Ways to work with Mental Wellbeing in everyday practise. This course will enable people to have conversations about mental health and offer information on local service. Connect 5 is aimed at everyone.

**SafeTALK** - half-day alertness training that prepares anyone 15 or older, regardless of prior experience or training, to become suicide-alert.

**Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)** is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid.

**Other training and useful resources** - including online training and training provided by other organisations.

**Free Online Learning**

How to teach online, free course: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/teach-online>

National Emergency Library: <https://archive.org/details/nationalemergencylibrary>

Free online courses from top Universities: <https://www.classcentral.com/>

Free learning from the Open University: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>

**Live Streaming of Religious Services:**

A Church Near you: [https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live\\_stream](https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live_stream)

Diocese of Arundel and Brighton: <https://www.dabnet.org/>

Surrey Muslim Association: <http://www.surreymuslims.org/Resources/>

Join Wat Phra Dhammakaya Buddhist Temple in daily meditation: <https://www.facebook.com/DMCtvLondon/>



# Virtual Tour of Shah Jahan Mosque (First Purpose-Built Mosque in UK)

Monday 8th March 2021  
7.00 pm—8.30 pm on ZOOM

Join live on zoom— find out the connection between Shah Jahan Mosque  
and International Women's Day



Muhammad Habib  
Mosque Manager



Hafiz M S Hashmi  
Head Imam

Concludes  
with Q&A  
Session  
All Welcome!

Supported by



Woking People of Faith

For zoom details, email: [administrator@wpof.org.uk](mailto:administrator@wpof.org.uk)

Follow us on Facebook | [www.wpof.org.uk](http://www.wpof.org.uk)

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