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**"My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness."**

**—The Dalai Lama**

There is information on page two of the newsletter about the Afghan refugees in Surrey and how you can help; some shocking statistics on the rise in hate crime on page 3 and climate change remains a huge concern, more on page 4 about it.

Not long to go till International Day of Peace (21st September); two virtual events have been planned in Surrey and Interfaith Week in November!

Faith Links Adviser

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**Interfaith week 14-21 November 2021**



[Inter Faith Week](#) is about highlighting the contribution of faith groups to society; spotlighting inter faith cooperation and understanding; and encouraging dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. It's a fantastic platform to share, learn and build relationships with neighbours, colleagues and service users of different backgrounds, and to come together in service for the common good.

**Taking Part**

Join the thousands of people who will be taking part and the hundreds of organisations: such as: faith community bodies, belief groups, inter faith initiatives, schools, colleges, universities, youth organisations, hospitals, hospices, national and local government, housing organisations, voluntary organisations, workplaces, the police and other emergency services, chaplaincies, the armed forces, sports organisations, media outlets, museums and libraries.

You'll find lots of activity ideas at:

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas>

**Main Faith Festivals in September 2021**

- 1: Installation of Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh)
- 3: Fravardin Mah Parab (Zoroastrian)
- 7-8: Rosh Hashannah (Jewish)
- 10: Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)
- 10: Samvatsari (Jain)
- 11-19: Paryushan Parva (Jain)
- 16: Yom Kippur (Jewish)
- 21-28: Sukkot (Jewish)
- 29: Simchat Torah (Jewish)

For a description of the festivals please visit: [Religious Festivals](#)

### **Afghan Refugees in Surrey**

Agencies across Surrey are currently helping with the repatriation of Afghan migrants to the UK. Surrey is a welcoming county, and several local boroughs have already opened their doors to help house individuals and families fleeing to the UK. Surrey County Council is also working closely with District and Boroughs, health providers, the voluntary and charity sector, other local partners and central government to ensure families can be resettled safely.

While the immediate need is to find accommodation to house people once they have completed their stay through Managed Quarantine Service hotels, there are wider needs to be considered, including health, social integration and basic supplies.

Our communities stand ready to support this effort and many Surrey residents are asking if they can help. Due to operational and logistical challenges, as well as COVID control considerations, we are asking that any donations at this point are financial ones, to charities that are best equipped to immediately support Afghan refugees. The [Community Foundation for Surrey](#) is set up to administer these donations locally and information on how to donate can be found on their website.

Alternatively, the [Red Cross](#) are already active in managing donations and supporting arrivals from Afghanistan, and wider local support will be needed from foodbanks and other charities, which can be found via [Surrey Information Point](#).

Thank you for your generosity and support. For more information please [click here](#)

### **COVID-19 and safe use of places of worship**

On 19 July England moved to Step 4 of the 'roadmap'. There are no longer legal requirements for physical social distancing or the wearing of face masks in indoor spaces. However, the UK Government has emphasised that COVID-19 remains a serious health risk and that it is important to remain cautious to help protect one another. Updated guidance on the safe use of places of worship can be found [here](#).

There are no longer legal limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events or the receptions that follow. All restrictions on chanting and singing have also been removed.

### **Near Neighbours Network**

The Near Neighbours Network is a new opportunity for individuals and organisations to connect with other likeminded people and groups beyond the 11 Near Neighbours areas in England. Near Neighbours notes: "We remain committed to creating strong and cohesive communities at local level, but we also want to create a wider national network where all the groups and individuals involved with Near Neighbours can share good practice and expertise and build new partnerships. The Network will also enable our hubs and partners to offer knowledge and training, online events, and downloadable resources, to a wider audience."

For more information, and to sign up, please [click here](#)

### Surrey Launches New Greener Transport Plan

Earlier this month, [Surrey County Council](#) launched a three month consultation on [Surrey's new Transport Plan](#) which includes plans to reduce the 46% of carbon emissions currently generated by transport.

Proposals include increasing walking and cycling routes to encourage people out of their cars, providing more charging points and parking for electric vehicles, more bus services, charging for transport use and introducing car clubs, as well as improving internet connections for home-working and redesigning neighbourhoods that enable easier access to local services, lessening the need to travel by car.

The consultation survey is available on [Commonplace](#) until 24 October 2021

### Hate Crime

Hate crime Home Office data released in July shows that a total of 61,851 racially and religiously aggravated offences were recorded in 2020, a 7% increase on 2019. The analysis was compiled by the PA news agency from data published by the Home Office and can be found [here](#).

[CST's Antisemitic Incidents Report January-June 2021](#), published on 5 August, shows 1,308 anti-Jewish hate incidents nationwide recorded by CST in the first half of this year. This is a 49% increase on incidents recorded in the first six months of 2020, and is the highest total CST has ever recorded in the first half of any year. The number for this 6 months is higher than every full-year incident total prior to 2016 since CST began recording antisemitic incidents in 1984.

[Tell Mama's recent reports](#) on Islamophobic incidents include graffiti in Northumberland.

A [report on the Public Inquiry](#) into Islamophobia in Scotland by the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia, published by Newcastle University, speaks of increasing verbal and physical assaults on Muslims.

As well as antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents, other communities continue to express concerns about incidents. In a response of 10 June from Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government Luke Hall to a Written Question from Navendu Mishra MP about tackling Hinduphobia, the Minister referred to "the refreshing by the Government of its hate crime strategy."

[An Early Day Motion](#) was tabled on 23 June which condemned racism faced by British Indians and made reference to "research by the 1928 Institute which revealed that 80 per cent of British Indians have faced prejudice because of their Indian identity, with Hinduphobia the most prevalent".

### Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Planning permission was granted by the Government on 29 July to build the country's first national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, next to Parliament. The Memorial will be the national focal point to honour the 6 million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered in the Holocaust, and other victims of Nazi persecution, including the Roma, gay and disabled people.

The co-located Learning Centre will also focus on subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.



### **Faith communities, climate change and the environment**

The 26th [UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties \(COP26\)](#) is scheduled to take place in Glasgow from 1-12 November.

It will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Together with the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Faith for the Climate convenes a COP Faith Task Group called 'Make COP Count' to enable diverse faith groups to contribute meaningfully to climate action before, during and after COP26. Its priorities are: Transformation; Advocacy; and Hospitality. [More information here](#)

Among the activities it is supporting are:

- Climate Sunday – An initiative led by CTBI, which encourages the holding of a climate-focused worship service any time before COP26, and which will culminate in a Nations Climate Sunday service on 5 September. A number of Churches have created downloadable resources for this initiative.
- Rise to the Moment – A relay pilgrimage from St Ives to Glasgow, organised by the Young Christian Climate Network. This is a relay rather than a full pilgrimage because of the restrictions on gathering in person. The relay enables people to take part in different ways. It is taking place through August, September and October

### **Inter Faith Buddies**

Inter Faith Buddies is a scheme designed by Interfaith Network UK to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue.

- The scheme involves two people of different faiths or beliefs: keeping in touch on a weekly basis for 6 weeks;
- choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and
- if they wish, sharing at an in-person or online event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they have gained from the experience.

It is an opportunity for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time, about what is important to us, in the context of our wider community. The process may, of course, lead to longer term conversations and new forms of practical co-operation.

Interested in taking up the idea within your organisation?

If you are an organisation interested in taking up the Inter Faith Buddies idea, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers.

### **Cambridge Inter Faith Programme podcast**

Cambridge Inter Faith Programme (CIP) has launched a new podcast on 'Religion and Global Challenges'. This explores "how religious narratives and ideas, practices and experiences inform some of the most crucial challenges facing our world today." The podcast is part of CIP's Religion and Global Challenges Initiative. For further information [please click here](#).

### Faith Communities and Covid-19: Learning from the Journey

The Interfaith Network UK held a national meeting earlier this year, which explored a wide range of issues. These included how places of worship had coped with periods of closure and with social distancing; health care chaplaincy and the handling of funerals and bereavement; and responding to loneliness and domestic abuse during the pandemic. It heard from faith communities with high BAME membership responding to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on them and about initiatives to address vaccine hesitancy. The gathering also considered how digital communication has been being used for inter faith dialogue and cooperation and the future possibilities of that; how faith communities, local authorities and other statutory agencies have been working in partnership; how schools have adapted during the pandemic and a new IFN teacher resource to help 11-14 year olds learn about inter faith activity, with examples from inter faith responses to the pandemic; the financial impact of the pandemic on faith community organisations; how the pandemic experience is being captured through research; and the practicalities of standing in solidarity and issuing statements.

The report is now available [online here](#)

### Wellbeing in Surrey Survey

Surrey County Council would like to hear your views and experiences if either yourself, or a loved one, has been feeling low, out of control or worried about wellbeing. This is so that anyone experiencing difficulties in coping with challenges in life, can get the best help in the easiest way. Thank you for taking the time to tell us about your experiences, your views are vital and valuable to us in helping to deliver the best services we can, to support the health of everyone. As a thank you completing the survey respondents can chose to enter a prize draw for "Love to Shop" vouchers.



The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. All your answers will be confidential and kept anonymous, so will not be linked to you individually. The survey will be open for 4 weeks and will close on September 10th 2021. The survey is available in the following languages: Bengali, Urdu, Polish and Nepalese. Please contact us if you would like to request a copy in one of these languages, or alternative format, please call 03456 009 009, text 07860 053 465 or email us at [my.views@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:my.views@surreycc.gov.uk)

[Wellbeing in Surrey - Surrey County Council - Citizen Space \(surreysays.co.uk\)](https://www.surreysays.co.uk)

### Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals

The Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals for 2021-22 is available to order from <http://www.shapcalendar.org.uk/>.

The e-calendar provides: 3 A4 calendar sheets and a booklet giving a brief description of each religious festival in 12 of the world's faiths and traditions, from Baha'i to Zoroastrian, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Pagan festivals. A hard copy wallchart is also available.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### The Surrey Crisis Fund

Funding has been provided to the [Surrey Crisis Fund](#) which can help Surrey residents in emergency need. Depending on your circumstances which will be considered when you apply you could be eligible for some of the following support: - food and toiletries - essential white goods and furniture; please note we do not provide replacement items - certain utilities - emergency travel costs (hospital appointments, job interviews, etc). Other financial support available in Surrey: [surreycc.gov.uk/coronavirusfinance](http://surreycc.gov.uk/coronavirusfinance) or call 0300 200 1008 Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm. SMS 0786 0053 465 for Deaf and hearing impaired residents only (Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm)

### 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](#)

### Supermarket Voucher Hardship Scheme

The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton has obtained a grant from the Albert Gubay Foundation to provide free supermarket food vouchers for people in need. The scheme has helped over 2,500 families so far, though there are still vouchers for Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda and Morrison's available for our parishes and schools to distribute to those in need.

If your parish or school has already applied for vouchers you can still apply for more - please contact our [Fundraising Officer](#) to request these. To find out more about the scheme, [visit our website](#).

### Breathing Space

The new Government scheme "Breathing Space" gives you temporary protection from most types of debt collection, while you work with a debt adviser to take action to get on top of your finances. You can be protected from creditors for 60 days, with most interest and penalty charges frozen and enforcement action halted. Certain types of payments including ongoing housing costs, utility bills and taxes will still need to be paid during this time. To find out more about other possible options and others provided by District and Borough councils please visit Financial help - [Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)

### Listed Places of Worship grant scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark.

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum AGM

My Hinduism: Differences among Hindu

EMF have been organizing a series of events looking at variations among different faiths. Earlier in the year there have been two events looking at Buddhism and Sikhism. This will be the third such event in the year.

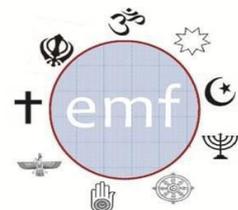
Tuesday 21st September, 7.30 pm on zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/93072296287?pwd=MmFMZzVvdGdBRTlJWmNGVDI1eHVSQT09>

Meeting ID: 930 7229 6287

Passcode: 070531

For more information please contact [KawtherH@smef.org.uk](mailto:KawtherH@smef.org.uk)



### Woking People of Faith Events 2021

**International Peace Day** - This year's theme is 'Climate Action for Peace'. We have asked children to produce a poster or poem in answer to the question: 'What is causing climate change and what can people of faith do to help solve it?'

We would normally hold an event to mark the occasion and invite the Mayor of Woking to give prizes to the winners at Woking Town Centre, along with other activities. However, this year, we are having to do things differently and are working with RHS Wisley Gardens to mark the event on Zoom on Tuesday 21st September 2021 at 6.30 pm till 7.15 pm. Winners of the competition will be announced and a short talk from RHS Wisley Gardens. All welcome to join on zoom.

**Interfaith Cricket Tournament** - September TBC

**Interfaith Week Event** - November TBC

For more information please visit: [www.wpof.org.uk](http://www.wpof.org.uk) or email: [administrator@wpof.org.uk](mailto:administrator@wpof.org.uk)



Woking People of Faith

### Charity Commission webinar on trustee duties in a faith charity context

The Charity Commission's Faith Charities Outreach Team is running a webinar on 'Trustee Duties in a Faith Charity context' on Tuesday 14 September.

The following topics will be covered: what being a trustee means; the six main trustee duties; the role of the Charity Commission, (including when things go wrong); common issues that arise in faith charities and how to avoid them; and signposting to further help and guidance.

[Note: this webinar is being re-run due to demand but will cover the same content as previous sessions.]

To book a place, visit <https://bookwhen.com/fcot#focus=ev-sfo4-20210914120000>

### **IFN local inter faith webinar on dialogue – save the date**

On Thursday 23 September Interfaith Network UK is planning to hold a further webinar in its series for local inter faith groups. This will be based on the IFN Let's Talk booklet and will focus on some of the practicalities of enabling successful dialogue, particularly bearing in mind the local context. If you are a local group interested in this, please would you send Hannah Cassidy an expression of interest (at [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)) and further information will follow.

### **GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK**

A NATIONAL WEEK OF EVENTS CELEBRATING ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Great Big Green Week will take place 18 – 26 September 2021, and will be the largest event for climate and nature ever seen in the UK. Thousands of events will celebrate how communities are taking action to tackle climate change and protect green spaces, and encourage others to get involved too

Events will range from art installations, to concerts to community stalls, to climate cafes, and everything in between; hosted by teachers, bus drivers, sport clubs, artists, community groups, places of worship, builders and anyone who cares about climate change. You can [find out more here](#).

### **FAITHS 4 CLIMATE JUSTICE**

**A Global Multi-Religious Action: 17-18 October 2021**

Two weeks before global climate negotiations, people of diverse religions will rise to send a message: destroying the planet is against our religions. [More information](#) and Join us, find out about events [here](#):

### **Guildford & Godalming Interfaith Forum Events**

Annual Interfaith Week multi-faith event at St. Nicolas Community Centre, Bury Street, Guildford. Sunday 21st November at 3.00p.m.

Details from Carolyn Neogi : [gg\\_interfaith\\_friends@aol.com](mailto:gg_interfaith_friends@aol.com) tel. 01483 415773

New members are welcome at our bi-monthly meetings

Details : [bernard.jones10@btinternet.com](mailto:bernard.jones10@btinternet.com). tel. 01483 424257



**GGIFF**

### **SMEF Reflection and Devotional Meetings**

Since the beginning of the Pandemic SMEF's Bahá'í Trustee, Hayet Shahrezaey, has hosted weekly SMEF Reflection and Devotional meetings for all SMEF member groups, meeting every Wednesday at 11.00a.m. on Zoom. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82043959919?pwd=dE8zZE9OZUtoTXFocGtKbFFxTjQ1QT09>

Meeting ID: 820 4395 9919 | Passcode: 686479

For more information please contact: [hayetaskri@hotmail.com](mailto:hayetaskri@hotmail.com)

### Discover the Soroptimist story during October 2021 at Surrey History Centre

This is a doubly important year for Soroptimists in Woking & District. Their members have supported charities and initiated local projects since 1976, so this is their sapphire anniversary. And Soroptimist International, founded in 1921, celebrates its centenary.

Soroptimist international is now a global voice for women as well as actively contributing, through its Clubs, to local causes. Discover the Soroptimist story during October 2021 at Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Rd, Woking GU21 6ND



### The Changing Face of Nursing: Black Nurses in Surrey Hospitals

#### A talk for Black History Month by Dr Catherine Babikian

1 October, 5.30pm to 6.45pm

From its launch, the National Health Service relied on the labour of thousands of nurses, doctors, and health care workers from overseas. Surrey hospitals were no exception. For Black History Month, this talk draws on the Surrey History Centre's rich health care collections to explore the experiences of Black nurses in Surrey. The talk will begin with some framing context for how and why Black nurses from the Caribbean and Africa came to staff the NHS, before diving into the archives of Surrey hospitals such as West Park Hospital, Epsom, and Netherne Hospital, Coulsdon.

Dr Catherine Babikian is an historian interested in the relationship between migration and health care. Her PhD thesis examined the history of overseas nurses in the NHS and the impact of nurse migration on Britain and its former colonies.

Tickets £5. Please book a place online at <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/heritageevents>. After payment has been received you will be emailed a unique link and password to attend the talk on Zoom.

**Family Learning**



Surrey Family Learning offer FREE online courses for parents, grandparents and carers who live in Surrey. New courses can be found here:

[Supporting Parents](#)

### Anti Slavery Talk by 'Hope for Justice'

Saturday 23 October 2021. The talk will last for 45-50 minutes followed by at least 15 minutes discussion so it would be a different format.

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



### **Charity Golf Day – Age Concern Epsom & Ewell**

On Tuesday 26th October 2021, Age Concern Epsom & Ewell are holding their very 1st Charity Golf Day at the prestigious Royal Automobile Club, Woodcote Park, Epsom. Woodcote Park is set within 350 acres of the Surrey Countryside and the site itself is steeped in local history dating back to the Domesday Book.

The charity golf day will start with bacon rolls and coffee, followed by a prompt shotgun start on the Old Course, one of the 18-hole downland golf courses, set within Woodcote Park. To conclude the day, they will also host a 3-course Silver Service evening meal and a fundraising raffle.

Why not make a day of it and invite guests to join you for the evening meal. Whilst you and your team play golf, your guests can make use of the Cedar's Leisure Facilities by pre-booking one or more of the treatments available (additional fees apply – information available upon request). Tickets are £660 per team of 4 players. Tickets are available to attend just the evening meal for £60pp (drinks not included).

Our aim is to provide a fantastic day of golf and to raise vital funds for Age Concern Epsom & Ewell. To register your interest in this event or to find out more please email [charlotte.hornblow@ageconcernepsom.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.hornblow@ageconcernepsom.org.uk) or call 01372 732 451

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

**[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.

### **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/>

### **Surrey Faith Links, Surrey Ethnic Minority Forum**

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