



"We have to fight climate change like we actually want to win."

(Jagmeet Singh)

With COP26 round the corner, many faith communities are taking an active role to raise awareness, more about this below and on page 8 (Ring Out for climate). If you haven't already planned something for interfaith week., why not consider climate change as a topic?

Becoming a 'welcoming' County for those forcibly displaced has become another huge area of discussion, read about an event related to this on page 3.

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Main Faith Festivals in November 2021

- 4: Diwali (Hindu/Jain/Sikh)
- 6: Anniversary of the birth of the Bab (Baha'i)
- 7: Anniversary of the birth of the Baha' u'llah (Baha'i)
- 12: Loy Kryatong (Buddhist)
- 19: Birthday of Guru Nanak (Sikh)
- 24: Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Sikh)
- 27: Ascension of Abdul Baha (Baha'i)
- 28: Advent Sunday (Christian)
- 29-6 Dec: Hanukah (Jewish)

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

Surrey MP's asked to do the right thing ahead of COP 26

More than twenty faith leaders in Surrey have written to the region's MP's, ahead of the COP 26 Climate Meeting in Glasgow next month, calling for them to do the right thing over the global climate emergency.

In the letter delivered on Monday 18th October they note that, "Our ecological crisis doesn't fit easily with the shorter-term priorities which governments are more used to setting." But, "We believe that doing the right thing now will also prove a vote-winner, even if it involves some short-term pain along the way".

The Multi Faith leaders urge the representatives to read "Code Red for Humanity", the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change's recent report of the climate crisis. One of the main recommendations of the UN group's report



is the need to, "Provide affordable decarbonisation options for all, in homes, diets, transport and work".

"We are committing

ourselves to transformational change in our own lifestyles and those of our faith communities,” say the leaders, “As well as to prayer, meditation and the work of advocacy.”

The local leaders close their letter by aligning themselves with the statement issued by faith leaders meeting at the Vatican in Rome this month. “We have inherited a garden: we must not leave a desert to our children. Scientists have warned us that there might be only one decade left to restore the planet. We plead with the international community, gathered at COP26, to take speedy, responsible and shared action to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and the home entrusted to our stewardship”.

Inter Faith Week

[Interfaith Week](#) (14-21 November) 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 is 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.

Not got an activity planned yet but interested to take part?

With a month to go, there are lots of activities that are possible. If you'd like inspiration visit our '[Inter Faith Week Quick Plan](#)' page, with ideas for activities like social media marking of the Week, inter faith walks, quizzes and coffee mornings.

One idea you may like to try is '[Inter Faith Buddies](#)', where you and a colleague of another faith or belief meet for some conversations online or by phone to discuss issues of common interest, for example about how your faith or belief shapes your day to day life. You can hear people who've done this talking about the experience at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHgNwAQsJyk>

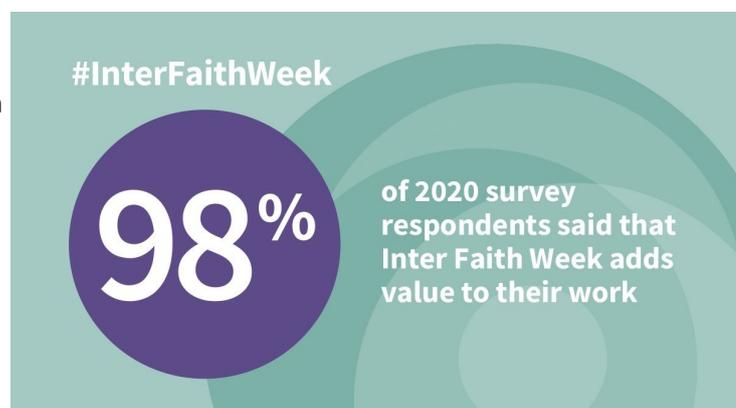
Whether or not you are already planning an activity, why not share a message online about/for the Week? You can [download a blank, branded IFW message board](#), write your own message about the Week or its themes, and share a selfie of yourself (or yourself and someone of another faith or belief) on social media with the hashtag #InterFaithWeek.

Find an activity

We maintain an [interactive map](#) and calendar listings which show events happening as a calendar list, and by town/city across the country. Many activities this year will take place virtually, so you can choose between online or in-person events to find the activities that are right for you.

If you are holding an activity please do submit basic details at www.interfaithweek.org/submit. This helps to get the word out about your event, and to inspire others to engage with Inter Faith Week!

You can also download the Inter Faith Week poster, flyer and logo here: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/publicity-and-branding>



Building connected communities through creativity and collaboration

Surrey Arts and Big Leaf Foundation organised a networking event with presentations, music and discussions and on Thursday 21st October at the River House Barn, Walton-on-Thames.

The UK's commitment to a warm welcome for those recently evacuated from Afghanistan has again highlighted the importance for communities to pledge support to people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes. The networking event explored this pledge through the following key questions:

What are the needs of people with lived experience of displacement and their host communities, and how can creativity be used as a tool to address these needs?

How can different organisations and practitioners work together to build stronger partnerships and thereby provide an effective and lasting welcome to people who are seeking refuge?

Attendees included musicians, social workers, police officers, refugee community organisations, health workers, artists, children's services, people with lived experience of resettlement, faith communities and people who just want to know more.

Darren Abrahams from '[The Human Hive](#)' spoke about the word 'refugee' and said it is an 'experience', not an 'identity'; he said, refugees are unique individuals with hopes, dreams, talents, skills and have their own perspectives on life in general and life in the UK. Darren spoke about how their experience disrupts them biologically, psychologically and socially; music and the arts interact with humans on all three of these levels. He concluded by talking about three things that all humans need to flourish—to feel safe, to have a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose.

Kayte Cable spoke about the work of the '[Big Leaf Foundation](#)'; from 2018 they have worked with 145 young displaced people in Surrey. Kayte said, 'Our vision is of a community where displaced young people are valued, supported and given the ability to create better outcomes for themselves'.

K (unnamed for safety reasons), a young displaced person from Iran spoke about his harrowing journey to the UK and the circumstances under which he had to flee his home. The Kurds are a persecuted community, said K, and the security group 'Etella'at' were after him as he had attended a protest against the government. He knew at this point his life was in danger and so he had no choice but to leave home. He arrived in Calais after several months and was placed on a boat by force, heading towards the UK. He was met by the border force at Dover and interrogated him for 9 hours as the officers didn't believe he was 16. K received support from the Refugee Council UK who after three months, were able to help with an assessment to verify his age and confirm he was actually 16 years old. K was part of the national riding team in Iran; with the help of Big Leaf he has now completed his level coaching and is working towards level 2 in riding. He plays the daff beautifully and you can watch his recordings from the event here:

Playing the daff: <https://youtu.be/D0mgbj57HNs>

Everyone joining in: https://youtu.be/6cQ_gvWP_Zw

James Pinchen spoke about '[I Speak Music](#)', a programme delivered in partnership by Surrey Arts and Big Leaf Foundation. The initiative uses music to promote understanding, empathy and cultural exchange between diverse communities. I Speak Music focuses not only on working with people who have been forcibly displaced but also on supporting host communities so that everyone can have access to a safe and equal platform for cultural curiosity, friendship building and creative collaboration. One of the key points to the success of I Speak Music has been through the connection with different agencies and practitioners, with music as the uniting force.



In the Summer of 2020 I Speak Music, a project that uses the power of music to build bridges between displaced people and host communities, wrote a song to celebrate the talents and contributions of displaced and diverse people during the challenging times we've been living in. With Together Productions, a ground breaking arts and social change organisation based in the UK, they invited people from across the globe to be part of an ambitious new music video. This was

the result. Over 120 people from 14 countries around the world took part in the project, with amazing footage and audio sent in from Afghanistan, Belgium, Egypt, El Salvador, Germany, Holland, Iran, Jordan, Mexico, Palestine, South Africa, Syria, the UK and the USA.

Watch the video here: [Walk With Me - Imagine: Imagine - YouTube](#)

Centenary of the Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

This year marks 100 years of the passing of a unique human being. He distinguished himself not for any social position or material characteristic, but for His selfless service to humanity. He was known as 'Abdu'l-Bahá, meaning "Servant of the Glory of God".

He visited the sick, fed the hungry, gave money to the poor. He gave hope to the hopeless, cheered the disheartened, counselled those seeking guidance and brought hearts together in unity. He looked for the good in every human being and was well-known for asking: "Are you happy?" with a smile, to those He met, although His life was marked by difficulties and suffering. He worked tirelessly to promote the principle of the Oneness of Humanity, proclaimed by His Father, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh.

During His historic travels to Europe and North America from 1911 to 1913, He spoke with men, women and children from all backgrounds, religions and walks of life. From officials, clergymen, activists, scientists, writers and educators to workmen, servants, the jobless and the destitute he spoke about the equality of men and women, the need to eliminate racial prejudice and other social conditions necessary for the establishment of peace.

His was a spiritual life, in deed and in word. He exemplified the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and guided it through difficult times as the Centre of the Covenant made by Bahá'u'lláh with His followers. During the First World War, 'Abdu'l-Bahá prevented a famine among the poor in Palestine by growing and storing grain. He was honoured with a knighthood from the British Empire in April 1920.

He chose for Himself the title of "servant", and that is how He lived His life. Although ten thousand mourners of various religious backgrounds attended His funeral, millions today are inspired by His life and writings and strive to follow His sterling example in their daily lives.

Join us for a commemoration of the centenary of His passing where a short film will showcase His life at Jacobs Well Village Hall, Jacobs Well Road, GU4 7PD on Saturday 27 November from 7 pm.

Also: Birth of the Bab over zoom 5th November at 8.30 pm.

Day of the Covenant over zoom 24th November 8.00 pm

Please RSVP to: hayetaskri@hotmail.com by 20 November.

For more information visit: <https://www.bahai.org/>

Have your say

Woking Borough Council are inviting residents to have their say and help shape the future priorities of the borough as part of a comprehensive programme of engagement and consultation, which will assist with the development of a new five-year corporate strategy.

As part of the consultation, a series of evening roadshows are being held during the coming weeks at venues across the borough, led by Leader of Woking Borough Council, Cllr Ayesha Azad, and Chief Executive, Julie Fisher. All roadshows will be held between 7pm and 8.30pm

For dates, venues and more information please [click here](#)

Guidance for Religious Establishments

Religious establishments across the UK are crucial components of society; they offer spiritual guidance, support to the vulnerable and a place for the community to come together. The very spirit of religious venues and events make them open and welcoming. However, this spirit and the beliefs that these venues and events represent make them attractive targets for people seeking to undertake criminal acts.

Religious groups regularly publish detailed information about their venues and events which, whilst useful for their congregation and community, can also be useful for another audience - those wishing to undertake a hostile act against their venue, event or people. These acts could range from petty criminality, such as theft, to ideologically, religiously, or politically motivated acts, like terrorism.

This new guidance is important for all those who have contact with the public; the more interaction a member of clergy, staff or volunteer has with the public, the more opportunity they have to inadvertently provide information that would be useful to a hostile. To access the new guidance please [click here](#)



The Queen's Award

On Wednesday 13th of October 2021, Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF) received the Queen's Award from Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Michael More-Molyneux. This was in recognition of SMEF's work in advocating for the needs, strengthening the voice and building the capacity of the Black Ethnic Asian Minority communities.



The event was also attended by the Lord Lieutenant's dignitaries: His Honour, Christopher Critchlow; The High Sherriff of Surrey, Dr Julie Liewlyn; and Mrs Sarah More-Molyneux. The award was received by Mrs Neelam Devesh DL, Chair of SMEF and Suzanne Akram, Chief Executive Officer.

The event was attended by SMEF's Member groups, Trustees, Funders, Partners, Staff, Facilitators, friends, and family. Performances included Florence Joelle from the Gypsy and Roma Traveller Community, Kabila Gurung performing Nepali folk song and dance, Anita Ho doing some Thai Chi and a couple from the Csillagszeműek Anglia Hungarian Folk Dance Group.

Find out the latest from Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum [here](#)

If you would like to receive the newsletter, please [click here](#)



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Household Support Grant Funding

The Department of Work and Pensions announced a Household Support Grant of £500 million to be allocated across the UK. Surrey County Council has been allocated £5.3m to help those most vulnerable residents who are struggling financially. The funding has been provided to help with food, energy bills, water and other essentials.

Criteria for allocation is that 50% of the funding needs to be allocated to those families most in financial need with households with children under 19 as at 31 March 2022. At this stage funding has already been allocated to those families whose children are entitled to benefits-related Free School Meals with a £15 supermarket voucher for use over the October half term. Surrey County Council are reviewing whether this can be extended further to other upcoming school holidays this winter and spring. More information here [Surrey County Council to continue providing vulnerable families with supermarket food vouchers over October half term | Surrey News \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

The Comic Relief Community Fund is supporting community led organisations with an income of less than £250,000 to deliver projects within four strategic themes.

The fund will provide grants of up to £10,000, supporting project delivery and organisational capacity building, helping organisations flourish.

Applications must sit within one of the four key themes:

A Safe Place To Be: Supporting people to rebuild their lives because of homelessness or forced migration.

Children Survive & Thrive: Supporting children up to the age of 11 to grow, play and learn

Gender Justice: Championing those who identify as women and girls, including initiatives tackling domestic violence, abuse or exploitation

Mental Health Matters: Supporting good mental health in communities and tackling stigma and discrimination.

The deadline is 29 November 2021, but the fund may close earlier if enough applications are received.

More information here: [HOME - Groundwork](#)

Waverley Borough Council launches a new funding scheme for non-for-profit organisations

Waverley Borough Council has launched the new Thriving Communities Commissioning Fund offering financial support to local not-for-profit organisations delivering health and wellbeing services in Waverley.

The scheme offers an exciting opportunity for local voluntary organisations to work in partnership with the council to meet its corporate objectives and support people who may be vulnerable, disadvantaged or have higher needs.

The deadline for applications is 4pm on 18 November 2021. Decisions on funding will be made in mid-December.

Successful applicants will receive funding to deliver specific services or activities over a three-year period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025.

For full information, including the application criteria and how to apply, visit [Waverley Borough Council's website here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Remembering & Celebrating Lives Affected by the Pandemic

Peace Garden, Monument Road, Woking, GU21 5LW

Saturday 20th November, 3pm - 4pm



Woking People of Faith

Please join Woking People of Faith at our Interfaith Week Prayer Vigil as we remember and celebrate everyone whose lives have been affected by the pandemic. Included are those who have passed away, those who gave us incredible service and as we look to the future.

We will have short prayers from the Baha'i, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu and Quaker faiths. The Lord Mayor of Woking will open the ceremony and the Lord Lieutenant will give closing remarks. The High Sherriff will also join us.

Refreshments will be available. LED candles will be available for you to light. Please bring umbrellas in case of inclement weather.

Festive Winter Shortbread Cookalong

Saturday 4th December, 3pm- 4pm via Zoom

Join WPOF and make shortbread together in the comfort of your own kitchens. The simple recipe is easily adaptable for vegans or those who are gluten intolerant.

We have allowed an hour for the cookalong which will give us plenty of time for cooking and we can eat our freshly prepared shortbread together afterwards. This will give us an opportunity to chat and get to know one another. If you have children with you, they could come along and help you.

You will need to have your phone, tablet or computer in the kitchen, so that you can access the Zoom meeting and join in with the cooking and conversation. The recipe we will be using is a straightforward but delicious one, which is easy to follow and virtually foolproof. Of course if you are experienced with making shortbread, you can use your own variations and pass on your own ideas on the day.

The ingredients to make the shortbread are below so you can have everything to hand before we start. If you don't have all the spices, you can simply make a plain version. The full recipe will be sent out with the Zoom link once you have registered your attendance to: administrator@wpof.org.uk

Guildford & Godalming Interfaith Forum Events

Annual Interfaith Week multi-faith event on the theme: "Humanity's Awakening – rebuilding our World" at St. Nicolas Community Centre, Bury Street, Guildford. Sunday 21st November at 3.00p.m.

There will be a short presentation including music, dance or song from each Faith.

Details from Carolyn Neogi : gg_interfaith_friends@aol.com tel. 01483 415773

New members are welcome at bi-monthly meetings

Details : bernard.jones10@btinternet.com. tel. 01483 424257



GGIFF

Ring Out for Climate!

We mostly associate church bells with the call to worship, weddings and very special national celebrations such as the millennium or the ending of the 2nd World War. But they also have another historic function: to ring out warnings.

Normally those warnings have been local: to warn of fire, floods or shipwrecks. But they were very much on standby to warn of possible invasions by Hitler, Napoleon or the Spanish Armada. Times of real national crisis.

On Saturday 30th October at 6pm churches will be ringing their bells for 30 minutes.

What is COP26 and why does it matter?

COP is the 'Conference of the Parties' and the 2021 meeting in Glasgow this November will be the 26th meeting. They started following the UN conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, but despite all the conferences since then, our global emissions have continued to rise. From 5 billions tonnes in 1950, 18 billion in 1980, 23 billion in 2000 and 33 billion in 2020. we are speeding in the wrong direction!

At the Paris Agreement in 2015, countries agreed to try to keep global warming down to 2 degrees or lower. Currently we are way off track to meet the target and the IPCC report this August was most forceful in outlining the irreversible effects that we will suffer and many are already suffering.

The bells on Saturday 30th September will be ringing out our warning to remind the delegates of the urgency of the dangers we now face. We need our politicians to take the courageous and, if necessary, selfless actions that times of extreme emergency require.

Reconnections – Meet us @

Many residents are now lacking in confidence to go back outside, and the Reconnections Meet us @ pilot in Guildford and Waverley provides the chance for those aged 65 and over to do this safely and with company. The scheduled events allow residents to discover venues, activities, or other individuals right on their doorstep. The aim is for it to be small informal groups where people take part as fully or as little as they wish, ideally where some will form friendships, who may then bond over a period of time and perhaps organise their own meet ups.

Upcoming events:

Thursday 18 November 2021 1:30-3:30pm. Meet at Squires Garden Centre, Milford for walk around the Christmas displays.

Tuesday 7 December 2021 1:00 - 3pm. Meet at Cranleigh Arts Centre for lunchtime concert. To book a free ticket, please visit [Cranleigh Arts](#).

For more information on these or future events, please contact Eloise on:

Telephone: 01483 654422 | Email: gw@reconnetionslocal.org



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

[Supporting Parents](#)

Levels 1 and 2 - Health and Safety for Places of Worship, Fire Safety and Fire Marshal courses



The aim of this course is, at level 1, to develop awareness of Health and Safety, fire safety and fire marshal matters for your faith institution, especially if you run supplementary religious education classes for children.

After covering level 1 material, those interested in Health & Safety Officer certificate, will need to stay for the Level 2 part.

At level 2, it will also cover the duties of a Health & Safety Officer.

Upon completion, participants will receive course notes and a certificate of completion if they secure at least 75% marks in the written assessment.

The course is delivered by Shakil Ahmed Khan MBA, trained in Health & Safety (IOSH), Fire Risk (RoSPA), and Safeguarding (NSPCC).

Fee: FREE for SFI members. Non-members pay £45 per head unless they join the free membership by completing a free health check at <https://www.sfitogether.org/health-check/>.

For more information or to register for the training please [click here](#)

Death Café encourages conversations about death and dying

The Brigitte Trust is encouraging honest and thoughtful conversations about death and dying over coffee and cake. Death is an inevitable part of life yet most of us find it a very difficult topic to talk about. The Brigitte Trust wants to normalise the conversation and help lead the discussion by providing a safe and informal space to talk about thoughts and feelings around death and dying.

The [death cafes](#) are free and open to anyone, to speak freely and without judgement. There is no set agenda for a death café meeting just facilitated discussion following the interests of those attending.

Places can be booked online at the [death cafes](#) or alternatively, please contact The Brigitte Trust:

Telephone: 01306 881816 | Email: mandy.east@brigitte-trust.com

Please note that the Death Café is not a grief support session and is, therefore, not suitable for newly bereaved people. For anyone who is recently bereaved and in need of support, there is [Bereavement Support](#) information on the Brigitte Trust website.

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



Reigate and Banstead Volunteer Forum invites discussion

Voluntary Action Reigate and Banstead (VARB) is inviting all volunteers to a local forum to discuss what makes the volunteering experience a rewarding one and how VARB and host organisations can offer great volunteer opportunities.

On Tuesday 30 November 2021, 12pm-1pm, VARB will be hosting a free forum via zoom. Please [register for the event online](#) via Eventbrite.

Find more information about the [Volunteer Forum](#) on their website or contact VARB as follows:

Telephone: 01737 763156 | Email: info@varb.org.uk

Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum invite you to their **next free Health Event** which is in Dorking on 6th November 2021, 1– 4pm at St Johns C of E primary School, Goodwyns Road, Dorking, RH4 2LR. Free food would be available. Professor (Dr) Aftab Ala, Consultant at Royal Surrey County Hospital, Guildford, would be present to answer any health-related queries. For further details please contact Mr Monjur Elahi at monjurelahi@msn.com or Jasmine Kapoor at jasminek@smef.org.uk.

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

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/>

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