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**"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."  
(Martin Luther King Jr)**

The scenes we are seeing in Ukraine are very disturbing; our prayers and thoughts are with all the people who have been displaced, the soldiers who have been put in this difficult position on both sides, all those who have lost their lives and all those affected.

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- Main Faith Festivals in March 2022**
- 1: Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
  - 1: Isra wal Me'raj (Muslim)
  - 2: Ash Wednesday
  - 2-15: Lent (Christian)
  - 3: Losar (Buddhist)
  - 11-20: Fravardigan (Zoroastrian)
  - 17/18: Holi (Hindu)
  - 17: Purim (Jewish)
  - 18/20: Holla Mahalla (Sikh)
  - 19: Laylatul Bara (Muslim)
  - 21: Naw Ruz (Baha'i)
  - 21: Jamshedi Naw Ruz (Zoroastrian)
- For a description of the festivals please visit: [Religious Festivals](#)

**My Judaism: Differences Among Jews**

As part of this year's series of talks, Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum organised a zoom event to explore the different ways in which Judaism is practised.

Dr Dov Softy, who is the headteacher of the North West Surrey Synagogue spoke first. Dov was born in Israel and came to the UK as a migrant 20 years ago. He is from the first generation in his family to be born in Israel; his mum was born in Iraq and his dad was born in India and they met in Israel.

Dov said there were around 250,000 Jews in Iraq but in the 50's many fled to Israel, including his mother and her family as it was no longer safe. His dad was born into a Indian Jewish family and they moved to Israel in the 60's because they yearned to live with other Jews; there were around 50,000 Jews in India at the time. Hebrew was the



common language for his parents and each had their own tradition from the countries they were born in. Dov said the Jews lived in Iraq for 2000 years, and it was a peaceful time until recent history; they were left to express their own Judaism in a relaxed way opposed to Europe. The Synagogue was the hub of the community, there was no real pressure to stick together so they would mingle together with the rest of population around them; they had a good relationship with local people in Iraq and practised a relaxed Judaism.

If Judaism is split into two, Orthodox adhere to most of the commands written in the Torah and, Progressive Jews believe the Torah is open to interpretation. In his family everything was open to interpretation.

Dov's parents looked for a synagogue that Iraqi Jews went to. They brought all that they knew from Iraq to the Synagogue in Israel for example, Orthodox Jews seat men and women separately, his synagogue was like that too where the men and women sit separately but could see each other. There was a use of a lot of songs in the synagogue. For Dov and his family, the Synagogue was the glue and hub to meet other people and develop friendships, not just for sabbat and prayers. At home his parents developed their own system of Judaism, Sabbath day was a day of complete rest, they would go to the synagogue or sit at home, not do any work, and watch tv. His mum would go to the synagogue in the morning, but at home she would use the mobile and watch tv together. In Orthodox law of kosher, the dairy and meat must be separated but in his family, they were somewhere in the middle and would make it work for modern times. He said they were not progressive Jews, but more traditional Jews, expressing Judaism but leaving a lot of room for modern interpretation to what it is to be Jew.



Meir Vardi's parents working at the Kibbutz

Meir Vardi spoke next about his Kibbutz upbringing in Israel. His mother was born into a Ultra Orthodox family in Eastern Europe (Czech Republic) before World War II. Her father taught the Torah, dressed in long dark clothes and they lived in mountain areas in an extreme orthodox life. When she was 12, World War II broke out and they were kicked out of the village. For the next four years she simply tried to survive, she lost her parents and 4 siblings - all of whom were murdered at Auschwitz – only she and her sister

survived. Once she reached Israel at the age of 16, she didn't have a lot of faith left in her.

Meir's father was born in Turkey to a Sephardi Jewish family, which is a relaxed form of Judaism. In 1943 he faced trouble in Turkey and so at the age of 15 decided to travel to Israel where he joined a Kibbutz.

The idea of a Kibbutz is to combine nationality and life, to build and is mainly agricultural. There are 360 Kibbutz in Israel, from these 15 are religious and the remainder are secular. The kibbutz took on all the traditional things such as celebrations but took God out of the occasion. So for example, when a child reaches the age of 13 he/she becomes an adult and this is marked by a Bar Mitzvah where the child learns a portion from the Torah and recites it in front of all the community. The Kibbutz broke this apart, where the child would take on some form of responsibility and there would be an end of year celebration with the community, the Torah was not a part of it, so it was a secular thing.

Kath Vardi who is the Rabbi at the North West Surrey Synagogue shared her experiences; she went to Israel as a Kibbutz volunteer during her time at University and that is where she first met her husband Meir Vardi, but it wasn't until 13 years later they got married. Kath was born into secular family of mixed origins. Her father

came from. Catholic Irish family; her mother was a protestant, but she was brought up as an atheist. Her family were politically active and there was no room for God in her life for some time.

When Rabbi Kath and Meir were considering raising a family together, Jewish identity became part of the discussion and Kath decided to convert to Judaism. She said her Judaism is progressive, which came about at in Germany at the beginning of the 20th Century in response to the emancipation of Jews and opening of opportunities in civil society for Jews.

There were many different innovations and Reform Jews began to use vernacular in sermons in the turn of the 20th century; the big question was, was there a place for religion in civil society, mixed, and/or combined? There was development of a desire to build religious world views that can look outwards and think about what is professed in worship, how that sits with the intellectual and spiritual.

For Rabbi Kath, it is central in Judaism to be able to ask questions and to be encouraged to ask, and her biggest question is, why not? Judaism for her, needs to be radically pluralistic and inclusive, and to be able to open its arms wide and welcome in who wants to be part of that.



Within Jewish story, when the Temple was destroyed, teachers were developing that are now termed Rabbis. It was a group of men, really thinking hard about Judaism and how they take it from the temple to the home.

Judaism has a rich history of thought, moral intuitive and instruction. Rabbi Kath said 'One of the things talked about a lot is idea of moral intuition – how do we build a world that is governed by rules that we intuit are morally correct, that are open and inclusive and just?

A recording of the zoom event is [available here](#).

### **Faith in Action...A conversation with...**

Working People of Faith organised two zoom events, one with Dr Harriet Crabtree, OBE (Executive Director of Interfaith Network UK) interfaith on Tuesday 1st February and a second with Zareena Linney (Executive Manager of Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum) on Tuesday 22nd February.

Dr Harriet Crabtree took the position at IFN UK for an initial 3 month project and has ended up staying for 30 years. She has found that small events prompt big change. She said that during the millennium faith leaders were more on display. The London bombings triggered angst and debate however they also encouraged friendship on a smaller scale. Sadly it is the negative things which seem to bring unity. Kawther interviewed Harriet who came across very warm and friendly. The audience then asked Harriet questions which she was happy to answer.

Zareena has a twin sister, her Dad is Welsh and her Mum is South African Indian. Growing up she wasn't focused on God but after the birth of her son she became more focused on creation and became a Christian. She now prays with her husband every morning and doesn't find this a chore. She finds God in creation each day. Zareena started painting at the beginning of the first lockdown and expresses her faith through that. She is also a keen photographer. "I am integration" was the favourite quote of the evening. Simon interviewed Zareena about how she uses her Christian faith in everyday life and then the audience asked her questions which she willingly answered. Everyone thanked Zareena and two people personally blessed her for the work that she does.

### Creating A Community Climate Hub



Climate hubs are community-led spaces that aim to bring together residents, businesses, local authorities, universities, churches, and schools, to build a climate action plan that can protect the future of the towns, cities, and communities we belong to, whilst helping to mitigate the global climate crisis. This involves trying to reach out past the 'usual suspects' to engage as much of your community as possible in building a plan to avert and adapt to the worst of climate change.

Zero Carbon Guildford have written a detailed article about how to set up a community climate hub, which can be [read here](#) and they have a blog which can be found [here](#).

### Resilience, Trauma, and Pastoral Recovery: A briefing for faith communities

FaithAction have launched a new report: Resilience, Trauma, and Pastoral Recovery: A briefing for faith communities—in partnership with the Healthy Healing Hub project from The Guild of Health and St Raphael.

“...with FaithAction, we commissioned this report as a first step. And an important first step it is—to understand what we have gone through, and what this has done to our leaders and the communities they are serving. It is both a toolkit and the beginning of a vital conversation we must have if we are going to grow the church and be a source of healing and hope in the community. We must take a both/and approach, and this is what this report does – to understand what our leaders have gone through AND how to lead. And you cannot do either of those things without examining trauma.” Revd Dr Gillian Straine, CEO of The Guild of Health and St. Raphael.

Read more about it [here](#) and access the report.

### Mental Health COVID Impact Survey

New research uncovers the challenges faced by health and social care services in England and highlights the importance of feedback for improving care. The Care Quality Commission has published a new survey showing the [impact of lockdown on mental health and dignity](#).

The research, carried out as part of the ‘Because we all care’ campaign, found that nearly three quarters of carers said that lockdown restrictions has had an impact on the mental health of the person they care for. Over half of carers say that lockdown restrictions have had an impact on the dignity and independence of the person they care for.

People can give feedback on their experiences of care, or those of someone they care for via:

Online: [Care Quality Commission website](#)

Telephone: 03000 616161

Alternatively if individuals wish to raise a concern about their care, or about the care received by a loved one or by someone they care for, they can let the Care Quality Commission know by filling out a [Give feedback on care form](#).

## The Platinum Jubilee



A special 4-day weekend of events to mark the Platinum Jubilee will take place from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June. More information can be found at <https://www.royal.uk/platinum-jubilee-central-weekend>.

As well as planting trees for [The Queen's Green Canopy](#), there are a number of other ways for individuals and communities to take part.

These include the [Jubilee Beacons project](#), for which over 1,500 beacons will be lit throughout the UK and the Big Jubilee Lunch which is encouraging people to take part through big and small events, such as street parties or picnics, tea and cake or garden barbeques. More information [here](#).

Last July the first 'Thank You Day' was held. This is a UK-wide initiative inviting people to get together to say thank you to one another, to family members, key workers, good neighbours and volunteers. It has a particular link to the pandemic and how people have responded. It is managed by the Together Initiative. This year 'Thank You Day' will be a collaboration with the Big Jubilee Lunch on Sunday 5 June to say thank you to Her Majesty The Queen as well as to one another.

The official Government website for the Platinum Jubilee can be found [here](#).

## Surrey Matters website relaunched

Surrey County Council has unveiled a new look [Surrey Matters](#) - the council's online magazine for residents. The website has been completely redesigned to make it easier to use and with residents' interests at heart, so they don't miss out on what's going on in their county. With new features such as an interactive What's On map showing events by event type.

Residents can also sign up to the monthly Surrey Matters newsletter to keep informed with the latest updates and news in the online magazine, listen to the podcast and find out what's going on in their local area.

## Look out for scams on energy prices increases

Fraudsters are likely to exploit the concerns around gas prices in various ways, for example, knocking on residents' doors offering scam deals, phone calls around new gas takeovers or phishing emails and texts asking the recipient to update personal and/or financial information.

There have also been reports of 'gadgets' that can reduce power bills. Please be vigilant and report any scams that you may be made aware of [here](#)

## Better Points

Want to be rewarded with the brands you love? Feel great about making the place you live better for everyone? Download the [free BetterPoints app](#) and find out how.



## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### COVID-19 related funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

### 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 Top-mark. For more information please [click here](#)

### Community Foundation for Surrey Funding Surgeries

The Community Foundation for Surrey offers thirty minute virtual (via Teams) one to one Funding Surgery sessions with a Grant Officer for advice and guidance when thinking of making an application to them but have some questions.

The next sessions are Wednesday 26 January, Tuesday 22 February and Wednesday 23 March 2022. Various times are currently available.

For more information: Email: [grants@cfsurrey.org.uk](mailto:grants@cfsurrey.org.uk) | Telephone: 01483 478092

### FCC Community Action Fund

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

The current round closes on 2 March. [FCC Community Action Fund](#)

### Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum Events 2022

#### My Islam, differences among Muslims.

Tuesday 10th May, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start. Venue TBC

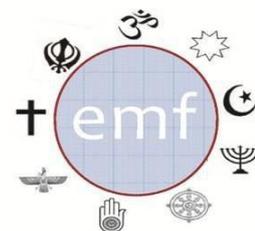
EMF AGM, Tuesday 21st June, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start

**Visit to the Peace Garden (Woking) and Brookwood Cemetery.** Tuesday 13th September

**My Christianity, differences among Christians.** Wednesday 16th November, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start at St John's Church, Walton-on-Thames

Further updates to follow in the next newsletter. For more information please contact: Kawther Hashmi, Secretary, Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum

E: [KawtherH@smef.org.uk](mailto:KawtherH@smef.org.uk) | M: 07827 974792



### Woking Debates Programme 2022

12 March: Disunited kingdom: How much longer will the UK hold together?

23 April: Do we have an effective welfare state?

21 May: 'The Bundle', a play by Journeymen Theatre about immigration

18 June: Does military intervention work?

The debates will take place at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG

10.30 am Refreshments for 11.00 am start till 12.30 pm. Entrance is free, donations welcome.

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

The Woking debates are organised by: Woking Action for Peace, Surrey Faith Links, Woking Environment Action, Woking People of Faith, Woking Soroptimists and Woking Quakers.

For more information please contact: Keith Scott: 01483 824980 | [keithsc\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:keithsc_2000@yahoo.com)

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



### Walk Against Hunger

The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development are asking people to join their 'walk against hunger' for lent this year. Find out more [here](#)



## Woking People of Faith

### Horsell Common Environmental Working Party

Saturday 26th February, 10am - 12pm

If you would like to help preserve the heather on Horsell Common, please email [treasurer@wpof.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@wpof.org.uk). This involves pulling up pine saplings and cutting back new growth on the silver birches. All guidance and instructions will be given - along with biscuits!

### Tomato Tart Cookalong

Saturday 19th March 11am via Zoom

Join us as we make tarts together in the comfort of our own kitchens. The simple recipe is easily adaptable for vegans or those who are gluten intolerant.

### Interfaith Football Tournament

Winston Churchill Sports Centre, Hermitage Road, St John's, GU21 8TL

Saturday 21st May, 9am - 4pm

Book your six-a-side team now by emailing [treasurer@wpof.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@wpof.org.uk). There will be medals for all players as well as a trophy for the winning team. Lunch will be served. More details to follow.

### Faith in Harmony

Parkview Community Centre, Blackmore Crescent, Sheerwater, GU21 5NZ

Thursday 26th May 6.30 pm (refreshments) for 7pm start.

Join us as we listen to musicians from all different faiths and cultures followed by a meal. More details to follow.

For more information: [administrator@wpof.org.uk](mailto:administrator@wpof.org.uk)



Woking People of Faith

## MONDAY WALKS - SURREY HILLS

The schedule for 7th March: We will meet at SMEF's Astolat car park at 3:45 pm to take a coach to Sheeples for a one mile walk amongst the beautiful nature fields. Coach returns to Astolat car park by 5:30 pm. Chennai Dosa, Woking would be providing refreshments at 5:45 pm.

The schedule for 21st March

We will be going to Ockham Commons. Please arrive by 3:30 pm to SMEF's Astolat car park. The address is: Astolat, Coniers Way, Burpham, Guildford GU4 7HL

Please bring a warm jacket and a water bottle, also wear layers and comfortable and suitable walking shoes. If you are unable to walk the full distance that will be fine. You will be welcome to take just a few steps and wait for the others to return.

As part of this engagement, two free gifts will be given to reward you for taking active steps towards a green and healthy life.

Registration is essential! Please send in your interest for one or both wonderful trips by 1st March 2022 via the following e-mail address: [zareenal@smef.org.uk](mailto:zareenal@smef.org.uk)



## FaithAction COFFEE HOUSE

*Come in for a while...*

**The FaithAction Coffee House will be open on Wednesday 9th March at 11am to look at faith and tackling inequalities**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the essential role that faith leaders and faith-based organisations play in the health of local communities.

The pandemic has also paved the way for stronger relationships between faith groups and local authorities, particularly public health teams. There has been a growing awareness of each other's aims and achievements and this has led to closer partnership working on issues such as the vaccine drive and providing clear messaging about how to stay safe and well during COVID-19.

As we recover from the pandemic, there is the opportunity for these relationships to further develop, and for faith groups to play a bigger part in tackling health inequalities. Faith leaders often have a unique insight into the health needs of their communities, and many local authorities are now increasingly aware of the valuable support that faith can offer for health issues extending beyond the COVID-19 response.

Join us to discuss the future of faith and public health partnership working:

- What are successes and challenges of partnerships between faith and public health?
- How can relationships be built and sustained?
- How can it help tackle health inequalities?

[Book your place here](#)

### **Get Men Talking initiative launched**

"Get Men Talking", is a new Surrey initiative commissioned by Surrey County Council Public Health and delivered by [Time to Change Surrey](#) to support men's mental health in Surrey, raise awareness of suicidal behaviours and teach people how to start supportive conversations through free mental health training that could help to save lives.

Suicide is the most common cause of death for men aged 20-49 in the UK. The aim is to target different male audiences across Surrey and encourage men to open up and have honest conversations. The campaign primarily engages with occupations which have a high ratio of both male staff and clients such as builders, merchants, barbers, footballers and taxi drivers, but it is open to anyone living and/or working in Surrey or any organisation based in Surrey.

The initiative offers a combination of free Mental Health and Suicide First Aid training to support people to: feel more confident in having conversations about mental health with men, spot the signs of a suicide crisis, know how to interact, signpost to safety.

The project will begin rolling out in three of the highest risk areas for suicide in Surrey: Elmbridge, Woking and Guildford. Training will take place in Surrey and online from March 2022. To [register for Mental Health and Suicide First Aid training, please visit the Time to Change website](#).

For further information, please contact Joe Stroud:

Telephone: 07841724938 | Email: [joe@endstigmasurrey.org.uk](mailto:joe@endstigmasurrey.org.uk)

## END OF LIFE MATTERS MARKETPLACE —The Brigitte Trust

You're invited to drop in to their first End of Life Matters Marketplace in Surrey.

Meet a range of professionals from different types of funeral businesses and from end of life care services  
Funeral Directors, Crematorium managers, Natural Burial grounds, Celebrants, Doulas, Health professionals,  
Coffin makers, Florists, Hospices and many more.

May 5, 2022 2 - 7 pm Holiday Inn Guildford, GU2 7XZ

Free Entry | no booking required.

[www.brigitte-trust.org](http://www.brigitte-trust.org) | 01306 880862



## \*Free Courses Leading to a Qualification from Surrey Adult Learning

Improve maths and English skills to GCSE level: [SAL English and maths courses for adults](#).

[English for Speakers of Other Languages \(ESOL\)](#). From basic everyday vocabulary to being ready to move on to English Functional Skills and then GCSE courses.

[Essential Digital Skills](#): To develop digital skills to support adults keep up in this increasingly digital world.

\*Free to those meeting the ESFA funding eligibility requirements

For more information and other courses, please visit: [www.surreycc.gov.uk/adultlearning](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/adultlearning)



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

[Supporting Parents](#)

## 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/>

Wey Valley Circuit livestream:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsE8kb2QxNnmyrqgBbMQLNg>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/GodalmingUnitedChurch/featured>

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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