



Surrey Faith Links Newsletter

May 2022

“God has given us many faiths but only one world in which to co-exist. May your work help all of us cherish our commonalities and feel enlarged by our differences.

(Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)

I recently watched ‘the melting pot’ by Uncle Ben’s and thought it was brilliant and resonates nicely with the quote above by the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks so I am sharing it here with you: [Uncle Ben's 'The British' Directors Cut - YouTube](#).

This is the last Surrey Faith Links newsletter you will be receiving from me in this form. Since April 2021, Surrey Faith Links became a project of Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF), who also have a monthly newsletter, so to avoid duplication and too many emails being sent out to you, we have decided to merge the newsletters. From June, you will receive the monthly Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum newsletter with all the Surrey Faith Links updates. The Surrey Faith Links website will also come under the SMEF website soon!

Please continue to support our work and feel free to send information about the work you are doing so we can share it with our networks.

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Main Faith Festivals in June 2022

- 4: Chokor (Buddhist)
- 5: Pentecost (Christian)
- 5/6: Shavuot (Jewish)
- 16: Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Sikh)
- 16: Corpus Christi (Christian)

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



The Surrey Interfaith Forum held a meeting at the University of Surrey on 5th May hosted by Rabbi Alex Goldberg, the Dean of Religious Life and Belief.

There was a discussion around the Ukraine Crisis and faith leaders shared how faith communities were supporting the Ukrainian refugees. Saba Hussain from Surrey County Council gave an update about households sponsoring refugees and the number of Ukrainians that had been matched in Surrey.

Concerns were raised about refugees from other parts of the world e.g. Syria and



Afghanistan, not being treated in the same way as Ukrainian refugees. Faith leaders made a plea that they are engaged early to support with this to ensure this is managed better.

There was a discussion about poverty. There are clear indicators (e.g., number of children on free school meals increasing) which are showing communities are increasingly under pressure and finding themselves in challenging situations. Faith groups already actively

support vulnerable communities and the role of Faiths is of huge importance. For e.g., Bahadur spoke about 'Langar', where the Sikh communities provide free food to anyone in need. The group talked about the sensitivity relating to the word 'poverty' and in certain communities there are taboos, in accepting help and aid – differs across ethnic groups and religion and approaches to support need to be mindful of this.

The expectation is that as the cost of living continues to rise, the challenges for communities will do so in parallel. It was thus agreed to put this on the agenda for the next meeting and all Faith Leaders to actively keep abreast of needs, keep their ears to the ground and bring live insights, and to come together to address this, identifying and plugging gaps.

Faith Leaders formally acknowledged the wonderful contribution of the Queen and talked about the broad range of events and activities planned to mark this occasion.

The meeting ended with all colleagues attending the unveiling and official launch of the Tree of Life which represents and marks in history friends, family and colleagues lost to Covid. It will be a place of peace and reflection.



My Islam: Differences among Muslims

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum in partnership with Surrey Faith Links and Molesey Islamic and Cultural Association (MICA) organised an event at the MICA Centre in East Molesey on Tuesday 10th May. It was the first in-person interfaith event in Elmbridge in two years and there was a great turn out of approximately 45 people. Watch the event [online here](#).

The event was a part of a series looking at how people of the same faith practise their faiths i.e. the differences among the same faiths. This event was focused on different Muslim sects.

Imam Abdis Salaam welcomed everyone and delivered a brief introduction to the basic beliefs of Islam; he

— urged all to continue working for unity and peace.

Fatima Martin follows a sufi tareeqa (path) and she spoke about her journey to Islam through her Shaykh in Jerusalem from the 'Shaziliyah tareeqa', which originates from a Saint in Morocco. She spoke about the importance of purifying the heart and



drawing Closer to God. Fatima explained how she had developed some bad addictions prior to becoming a Muslim and told her Shaykh she would not be able to become Muslim as she would not be able to give up these things. Her Shaykh's response changed her way of life, he said, 'your job is to surrender to God, the rest is for God to do'. So, the most important thing for her is submission to God, realising she was not in charge and ultimately God is all Powerful. The main act which is emphasised in her tareeqa is doing 'dhikr', which is remembrance of God in all aspects of life.



Dr Syed Abbas Naqvi is the Imam at Al Asr Community and Education Centre from the Shia sect of Islam. Dr Naqvi spoke about diversity quoting the fowling verse from the Qur'an: O mankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing of you. God is All-knowing, All-aware (Qur'an 49:13). Dr Naqvi said, the Qur'an highlights the importance and necessity of racial diversity, and it is to be celebrated. He concluded by saying, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) left guidance for all humanity in the form of the Qur'an and his teachings. The Shia sect believe there are 12 Imam's who are a continuation of this guidance.

Sadia Irfan, who is a Sunni Muslim, spoke about the Muslim greeting 'Assalaamu 'alaykum' and that it's meaning is much more than wishing peace for others; it's root words in Arabic come from 'salama' which means being free from all physical and internal ailment and also the word 'silm' which is a pure peaceable state, free from warfare and a state of accountability. For sadia, this means a when a Muslim extends that greeting, he/she is saying, you have nothing to fear of me and you are in a state of safety around me both by my hand (physically) and my tongue (verbally). Sadia said the three things she valued most of her faith are character, compassion and cognisance.

There was a lively Q&A session addressed to all speakers and the event concluded with sharing of food

Interfaith Celebration at Willow Grange with the Bishop of Guildford

The Bishop of Guildford, Rt Rev Andrew Watson invited faith leaders and people actively involved in interfaith work particularly over the pandemic to his residence at Willow Grange for 'Tent Week' on Tuesday 17th May. Approximately 40 faith representatives from different interfaith forums across Surrey attended; the Bishop welcomed everyone and mentioned April being a month of festivals for most faiths and to use these opportunities to unite and learn about each others faiths and beliefs.

Kawther Hashmi, Faith Links Adviser for Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum introduced the Surrey Interfaith Forum and invited Shahid Azeem to talk about the aims and purposes of the forum. Rabbi Alex Goldberg spoke about the last meeting held by the SIF at the University of Surrey.

Phil Simpson, Interfaith Adviser for the Bishop of Guildford set some questions to answer:

1. How did you get on during lockdown? - share an



example how your faith group responded to Covid-19

2 “Faith Groups Working Together to Build Back Better” suggest one practical thing we can do as people of faith to build a better society, post-covid? There were some interesting discussions and sharing of experiences over the pandemic in a relaxed informal environment.



Baha'i Conference

Surrey Bahá'ís were very happy to welcome local friends and fellow believers from Kent & Sussex to a 3-day Conference in the Rik Medlik Centre at Surrey University from 30th April - 2nd May, the biggest gathering since the start of the Pandemic with several hundred people attending, and there were many joyful reunions. This was one of a wave of more than 10,000 Conferences around the world dedicated to bringing people together to carry forward an ever-advancing civilisation and provided an opportunity to come up with practical ways of combining our efforts with friends & associates in the wider community. The days started and ended with beautiful Devotional programmes and inspiring films about the activities of Bahá'í communities across the globe as well as the history of the Faith in the U.K., with County-based workshops throughout the day dedicated to the 5 main themes. These were: Bahá'u'lláh's Vision for Humanity; The Distance Traversed; Building Vibrant Communities; Educational Endeavours & the Training Institute; Contributing to Social Transformation.



The Youth and Junior Youth joined in some of these whilst the children had their own activities on the same themes and gave presentations each day. After weeks of planning behind the scenes the event was seamless, with volunteer ushers, book sellers, flower arrangers, facilitators and runners keeping everything on track throughout the weekend. We hope and pray that we can build on this event and work together whilst the Old World Order crumbles.

Celebrating Surrey's COVID heroes



Surrey County Council are celebrating Surrey's COVID heroes with an e-book of thanks as a countywide record to recognise all those residents who put themselves at risk, protected others, kept services running and boosted morale during COVID-19.

This e-book will be a space to thank each and every one of you. Not just those on the front line, but those who delivered groceries to their neighbour, who sat at home sewing masks, who got their communities up and dancing in the streets and to the charities and businesses who enabled and supported that fantastic effort too. This book is for anyone and everyone who selflessly helped another. For more information [please click here](#)

Faiths in Harmony

On Thursday 26th May, Woking People of Faith organised their first in-person event, supported by Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum. It was a harmonious and musical evening uniting people of all faiths and cultures and appreciating the language of music from different faith traditions including Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh, Baha'i and Jewish practises.



Phil Simpson (Chairman, Woking People of Faith) and Kawther Hashmi (Faith Links Adviser, Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum) were co

MC's of the evening. The performances started with ['Sing Gold'](#) singing 'Amazing Grace, A little bit of love and Thank you for the Music', followed by a Punjabi Islamic Nasheed sung by [Amaaniya Najib](#) with a daff and [Murtaza Hashmi](#) singing a Muslim Nasheed 'You are my life'. [Meeta Joshi](#) performed a Hindu chant from Nirvanashatakam, followed by [Simon Trick](#) who sang 'Listen' and 'Blessed is the spot' by Baha'ullah with the guitar. [Mike Cope](#) from Phoenix wrote a song specially for this occasion 'Lover of my soul' which he performed with a guitar and harmonica. Joanna Clayton Self performed a Buddhist chant followed by the [Pirbright Gospel Singers](#) who sang 'Love calls me home' and 'Lean on me'. [Gurdeep Sing Sarl](#) played the harmonium and sang from the Sikh Kirtan with Balvinver Kaur Sarl, followed by [Abdu Fawaz](#) who performed 'Travelling Alone' on a Syrian Oud. The performances were concluded with the lively [Erev Shabbat Choir](#) who sang the Jewish Ivdu (Ps, 100), Zamru (Ps, 98), L'Chah Dodi and Oseh Shalom, which is a prayer for peace at the end of the Amidah.



[Mr Michael More-Molyneux](#), HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey thanked all those who performed and attended the event; everyone joined in with the [National Anthem](#) and continued conversations while enjoying food from Chennai Dosa.

Over 90 people attended the event; you can watch the performances by clicking on the names above or watch the [playlist here](#).

Interfaith Football Tournament

Woking people of faith organised their annual interfaith tournament at Winston Churchill school on Saturday 21st May, where four teams participated.

One of the teams from Emmeus won the cup this year and the Shah Jahan Mosque won the plate. There was a very positive vibe to the tournament and we look forward to it again next year.



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 Topmark. For more information please [click here](#)



Charity Excellence Funder List

Funding Finder Grant Directory - Most grant funding directories, for trusts and foundations, are paid for, with annual costs of up to £400. The Funding Finder database gives you click through to a huge range of funders, with the latest uploaded weekly into the Recent Additions search category. Funding Finder is not only completely free, it's a lot more than just another funding directory.

[Learn more](#)

BA Better World Community Fund

British Airways has teamed up with Crowdfunder to support communities to create a better world. With up to £50,000 in +Extra funding, the BA Better World fund aims to support projects and organisations that create positive impact across several categories including; Environment, Diversity, inclusion & wellbeing, Education & employability and Thriving communities. [Learn more](#)



Great Big Green Week Community Fund

The Great Big Green Week Community Fund supports community groups to organise local events, activities and festivals during the Great Big Green Week 2022. These should engage the local community and celebrate action and progress being made on climate change. There are 3 sizes of grants available:

Small Grant: £200 to £500

Medium Grant: £500 to £5,000

Large Grant: £5,000 to £10,000

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Woking Debates Programme 2022

18 June: Does military intervention work? (On zoom)

5 November: 'The Bundle', a play by Journeymen Theatre about immigration

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.

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

For more information please visit: www.wokingdebates.com and/or follow on Facebook



Woking People of Faith

Dates for your diary:

Refugee Week Event, 20th - 26th June

Last Post Service, Brookwood Cemetery, Sunday 7th August

International Day of Peace Event, Saturday 24th September

Interfaith Cricket Tournament, September tbc

Interfaith Week Event, November tbc

For more information: administrator@wpof.org.uk | www.wpof.org.uk



Woking People of Faith

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum Events

Appreciating interfaith friendships—Tuesday 19th July, 6.00 pm by the river

What do we mean by prayer? perspectives from different faiths—Tuesday 20th September, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start at the Christian Science Church, Godalming

Interfaith Service—20th November 3 pm – 5 pm at St Nicholas Church

For more information please contact Bernard Jones: bernard.jones10@btinternet.com



GGIFF

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum Events 2022

EMF AGM and talk on refugees

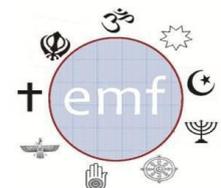
Tuesday 21st June, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start on zoom

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

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HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

A **special 4-day weekend** of events to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen will take place from **Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June**. More information can be found [here](#) and information on how to get involved can be found [here](#).

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has published a **toolkit** for the Platinum Jubilee, including activities, music and decorations to help people with their celebrations in June. This can be found [here](#).

The Queen's Birthday Parade (**Trooping the Colour**) will be held on Thursday 2 June starting at 11am.

For the [Jubilee Beacons project](#) the principal Beacon will be lit at special ceremony at Buckingham Palace at 9pm on Thursday 2 June. Thousands of community beacons will also be lit by communities, charities and different groups throughout the regions of the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories and 54 beacons will be lit in capital cities of the Commonwealth.

The morning of Friday 3 June sees a **Thanksgiving Service** at St Paul's Cathedral in London, preceded by a peal of bells from Great Paul, the largest church bell in the UK.

On the evening of Saturday 4 June there will be a **Platinum Party at the Palace**. This will be a special live event that will bring together some of the world's biggest entertainers and will be broadcast live on the BBC. During the bank holiday weekend, the BBC is offering local communities a special one-off TV Licence dispensation. This will allow those arranging community events in venues across the UK, where TV is not usually watched, to screen the live programmes throughout the weekend without needing to purchase a licence.

On Sunday 5 June, [the Big Jubilee Lunch](#) will take place where people are encouraged to take part through street parties or picnics, tea and cake or garden barbeques. While not part of the Platinum Jubilee Central Weekend programme, [Thank You Day](#) will be taking place on 5 June and is encouraging people to say thank you to Her Majesty The Queen as well as to one another. It has linked in with the Big Jubilee Lunch and is also encouraging other activities.

From 2.30pm to 5pm on Sunday, a **Grand Jubilee Pageant** will also be taking place along the Mall and surrounding streets. The Platinum Jubilee Pageant has commissioned artists and communities from around the country and Commonwealth including military personnel, performers, key workers and volunteers from across the UK, to come together to tell the story of The Queen's 70-year reign and changing society.

The [Queen's Green Canopy programme](#) continues through to the end of 2022. It is encouraging the planting of trees to mark the Jubilee. The next planting season is from October to December.



The Great Get Together - 24-26 June 2022

On the weekend closest to Jo Cox's birthday - 24-26 June 2022 - ordinary people up and down the UK will unite their communities with [Great Get Together](#) events that bring people from different backgrounds together around a common cause. This could be showing support for refugees, looking after your local park, or getting to know each other through crafting or gardening.

When we bring different people together, Jo's words - "we have more in common than that which divides us" - come to life. This year, we're encouraging people to embrace the idea of 'welcome' as part of their Great Get Together celebrations and using these events as an opportunity to show your community is welcoming to all.

WEBINAR: ARCHIVES AND RECORD-KEEPING IN THE MEDIEVAL EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.



TUESDAY 7 JUNE @17:00

It is well known that writing was important in medieval Muslim societies and research is increasingly showing there to have also been considerable energy invested in the production and preservation of written documents. In a region whose history has been written disproportionately using narrative texts rather than original documents, the recognition of its archival history has major potential to reshape our understanding of this period and region. In this webinar we discuss archiving in the medieval Arabic-speaking Eastern Mediterranean, covering an extended period from the time of the Fatimid caliphs to the demise of the Mamluk sultans (10th to 16th centuries CE). We present three case-studies which showcase a diverse range of historical actors, exploring state record-keeping, the archival practices of religious scholars, and the preservation of legal documents, to illustrate the rich and complex archival history of this region.

The speakers are Prof Marina Rustow, Dr Benedikt Reier, Dr Daisy Livingston. The session will be chaired by Dr Alessandro Silvestri. [Click here to register](#)

The Written Word: Timeless Arabic & Hebrew Calligraphy

SUNDAY 12 JUNE @14:00

Three award-winning calligraphy artists come together to showcase the beauty of the written word. Featuring Arabic and Hebrew text in a range of styles, these original masterpieces present modern works inspired by the classical calligraphic tradition. As an institute dedicated to educating the public about the heritage of the Abrahamic faiths, this exhibition offers an exciting event that explores some of the creative, artistic productions developed across various Abrahamic communities over time.

Featuring works by Joumana Medlej, Michel D'Anastasio, and Maaida Noor, all of whom will join us on the opening day to share their insights working as calligraphy artists over the years. See back page for artist biographies.

Please join us in the Shasha Suite for a reception at the Woolf Institute on Sunday 12 June 2022 from 14:00 - 17:00 to meet the artists and browse the collection of the original works. There will be an opportunity for attendees to purchase these originals. The artwork will be reproduced and featured in the building in an exhibition until the end of the year. [Click here to register](#)

INTER FAITH WEEK 13-20 NOVEMBER 2022!

The ever more popular Inter Faith Week takes place in November each year, helping to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

[Inter Faith Week](#) has grown steadily ever since it was started by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in 2009, in partnership with Government for the launch year. This will be the 14th Inter Faith Week.

Surrey Wide Creative Hope Project

Public Health at Surrey County Council are going to be running an exciting project across the county – it will be based on the theme of ‘Hope’ and is for anyone who wants to get involved.

This project is for anyone living in Surrey aged 18 years old or above, either as a group or an individual. There is also the possibility for 16-18 year olds, who are already in groups run by local organisations, to take part too. Surrey Public Health would like to find out what kind of activities you’d be interested in, and they will pull these ideas together to create inspiring experiences where you can express what HOPE means to you, whilst connecting with others, and maybe trying something new.

[Hope Project Questionnaire - Surrey County Council - Citizen Space \(surreysays.co.uk\)](https://surreysays.co.uk)

Refugee
Week



The Great Walk Together

Refugee Week have teamed up with the Jo Cox Foundation again this year to invite you to take part in The Great Walk Together 2022, in celebration of Refugee Week and the Great Get Together.

The Great Walk Together [toolkit](#) has everything you need to plan your walk. Walk Together is one of eight Simple Acts you can do for Refugee Week 2022. To view them all, visit the [Simple Acts page](#).



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

[Supporting Parents](#)

Earth Day Events

Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum are organising Earth Day events in Woking, Redhill and Camberley.

There will be talks from experts on recycling, climate change and how to be eco-friendly. They are free family friendly events with workshops for children (and adults!) on upcycling, sustainable fabric art and gardening.

Woking Event: 11th June, 12.00 pm—3.00 pm at The Maybury Centre, 27 Board School Road, GU21 5HD. [Click here to register](#)

Camberley Event: 12th June, 2.00 pm—5.00 pm at High Cross Church, Knoll Road, GU15 3SY

[Click here to register](#)

For more information please contact kriszkoch@smef.org.uk



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