



"It was through the Hindu religion that I learnt to respect Christianity and Islam."

(Mahatma Ghandi)

Climate change can be said to be the biggest and most urgent challenge facing humanity and this is reflected in what faith communities as well as wider groups have been focusing on in this newsletter. It is great to see collaboration and partnership working in this area; read about it on page 4 and under upcoming events.

Kawther Hashmi

Faith Links Adviser

E: KawtherH@smef.org.uk

W: www.surreyfaithlinks.org.uk

Inside this issue:

What is Gender?	2
Board Director Vacancy	3
Covid-19 Update	3
World Hijab Day	3
Community Action on Climate	4
Surrey Interfaith Forum	4
The Platinum Jubilee	5
A Great Example of Interfaith	5
Hate Crime	5
Funding Opportunities	6
Online Events / Information/	7

Godalming Unitarians Mark Holocaust Memorial Day

On Sunday 23rd January Godalming Unitarians held a Zoom service to mark Holocaust Memorial Day (which falls on 27th January). It was led by Interfaith minister and friend of Godalming Unitarians - Edie Campbell - who's



grandfather received the 'Righteous amongst the nations' award for assisting and saving the lives of Jewish people in Holland. The service focussed on the inspirational life and writings of Etty Hillesum 'the Mystic of the Holocaust', 1914-1943 (Amsterdam - Westerbork - Auschwitz).

She wrote: "I am ready to bear witness in any situation and unto death that life is beautiful and meaningful."

"What matters is not whether we preserve our lives at any cost, but how we preserve them."

"As if suffering - in whatever form and however it may come to us - were not also part of human existence."

"Against every fresh horror, we shall put up one more piece of love and

Main Faith Festivals in February 2022

1. Candlemas (Pagan)
2. Candlemas (Christian)
- 4/5. Sarasvati Puja (Hindu)
- 15) Parinirvana (Buddhism)
- 16) Magha Puja (Buddhist)
- 28) Mahashivratri (Hindu)

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

goodness."

"Ultimately what matters most is to bear the pain... and to keep a small corner of one's soul unsullied, come what may."

"God is not accountable to us, but we are to Him."

On the transport to Auschwitz, where she was murdered on 30 November 1943, Etty wrote: "We left the camp singing."

What is Gender? Does it need to affect how we relate to each other?

The 53rd Woking Debate was held on Zoom and streamed on Facebook and attended by over 40 people on Saturday 15 January 2022.

Bea McDonald opened the Debate. She is a transgender woman and spoke about the science of gender and reminded us that science is the pursuit of questions. In each cell of our body we have 46 chromosomes in 23 pairs. One pair decides our sex. For 99.5% of us this is an adequate explanation but behind this there is a lot of complex biology and psychology. Our sex relates to our genital configuration and our gender and our sex can and do usually overlap but not always. The World Health Organisation describes gender as a social construct. In our bodies the Y chromosome provides the switch converting some of us to males. There are many parts to the Y chromosome but these are only active for a short time and conditions have to be right for them to operate. Other genes then prevent the body switching back. There are no exclusively male or female hormones. Ranges vary between individuals and male and female.

Similarly there are no exclusive characteristics for males and females. Aggression has a difference of 0.6 of a standard deviation between men and women while empathy has a 0.8% difference. There is no difference in IQ but females do tend to do better on verbal tests while males do better on spatial tests. It has been found that very young children girls will stare longer at actual faces while boys will stare longer at a faces in a picture on a mobile. A brain scan cannot tell if the person is male or female.

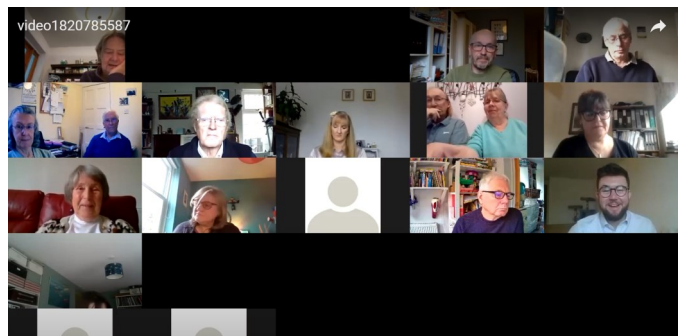
0.3% of births are inter sex or 1 in 3,000. To put that in perspective the problem of blood clots with COVID vaccines occurred in 1 in 200,000 cases. Biology describes how things are.

Evan Ridgeon then spoke. He told us that gender and sex should be separated when we discuss this issue as we are all on a spectrum between male and female. Where we peak on that spectrum matches our physical sex. Many people instead of having two sex chromosomes have three - xxy or xyy. Gender has three important elements = how people feel, how society recognises you and how the law sees you. Evan grew up as a girl but a Tom boy. He felt masculine and was fortunate to grow up in a liberal family. Legally he has now changed his name, his passport and his driving license. However he has been unable to change his status at the tax office which only recognises male and female. To change your gender there you need to apply to a panel which you will never meet. The fee to change was reduced last year from £140 to £15. When Evan accomplishes this he will then apply for a new birth certificate.

We can change how we think about gender. In our language we can express gender neutral in you and they. They has been used in the singular for a long time when unsure of someone's gender. One can have xx genes but identify as a man.

Questions and discussion followed.

[Watch the recording here](#)



Become a Board Director for a Disabled People's Organisation in Surrey

Surrey Coalition of Disabled People and Surrey Independent Living Council are both looking for new Board Directors

Board Directors provide strategic leadership to the organisation, and challenge to the executive team, to achieve the best result for Disabled people in Surrey. Board Directors are expected to contribute their expertise at board meetings and can also choose to become active members of a sub-committee.

Both organisations are specifically looking for those with skills and experience in communications, fundraising, legal, marketing, strategic leadership, or volunteer management. Lived experience as a disabled person, or as a carer for a disabled person, is very much an advantage.

To apply, or for an informal discussion, please contact:

Phone: 01483 456 558 SMS text: 07563 997 932 Clare.Burgess@surreycoalition.org.uk

Phone: 01483 662 680 SMS text: 07908 551 075 r.davy@surreyilc.org.uk



Update on COVID-19 restrictions

As of Thursday 27th January:

Face Coverings: There will no longer need to be a legal requirement to wear face coverings, in crowded and enclosed spaces where you might come in to contact with people you do not normally meet. This includes in places of worship. Face coverings will no longer be necessary for staff and students in communal areas of secondary schools or staff in communal areas of primary schools. Directors of Public Health will only be able to recommend students and staff wear face coverings in communal areas where there are outbreaks or where the local public health situation justifies it and it is signed off by the Secretary of State for Education.

NHS COVID: Venues and events will no longer be required to check visitors' NHS COVID Pass. The Pass can still be used on a voluntary basis.

Guidance for Funerals and Commemorative events can be found [here](#)

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will be updating their [guidance for the safe use of places of worship](#) to reflect these new changes. Places of worship should continue to follow good practice advice about keeping each other safe

World Hijab Day—1st February



February 1st, 2013, marked the first annual [World Hijab Day](#) (WHD) in recognition of millions of Muslim women who choose to wear the hijab and live a life of modesty. WHD is an annual event which takes place on 1 February each year in 150 countries worldwide. The day is to encourage women of all religions and backgrounds to wear and experience the hijab, in recognition of millions of Muslim women who choose to wear the hijab and live a life of modesty.

Enabling Community Action on the Climate Crisis in Surrey

Surrey County Council has declared a climate emergency and committed the county to becoming net zero carbon by 2050. As part of this, Surrey County Council have teamed up with Community Energy South to provide support for the development of community-led projects throughout Surrey.

Are you interested in local low carbon community energy?

Come along to this webinar to find out how Community Energy South can support Your Fund Surrey projects. They want to know about any community-led energy projects that may already be in place in Surrey or if you are a group planning a local low carbon and renewable energy project.

What is Community Energy?

Community energy is all about drawing on local skills and people power to create ground level, community-based solutions to the climate crisis. It's about people wanting to act now to secure a low carbon future, local green jobs and ethical investment. It's about making our energy work for us and the environment in our communities and becoming more resilient.

Community Energy South would be grateful if you could complete this survey to capture what is happening in your community, hear about your ideas and find the best ways for Community Energy to Support new and existing projects. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes and is a valuable way for you to contribute to taking action on the climate crisis.

If you have any questions or would like to suggest other groups to contact as part of this project, please email contact@communityenergysouth.org. [Click here to register for this webinar](#)

Surrey Interfaith Forum explores Faith and Climate Change

The [Surrey Interfaith Forum](#) was inaugurated on Thursday 2nd September 2021 to harness and build on the work that has been carried out during the pandemic with faith leaders and partners to support the communities of Surrey.

On Thursday 22nd January, Katie Sargent, (Surrey Greener Future Group Manager) shared a presentation on Surrey's Greener Future. She said transport and buildings are the largest carbon emitters in Surrey. SCC are aiming for the Council to be net carbon zero by 2030 and for the County to be net zero carbon by 2050 with an aim to reduce 1.3m tonnes of carbon



across Surrey by 2025. The SCC Climate Change Delivery Plan has recently been endorsed by Cabinet and includes 75 initiatives to help achieve these targets. Part of the delivery plan is to engage communities; this includes faith communities, to help reduce carbon. Katie gave some examples of work SCC have done to date.

Peter Harwood, Director of Mission from the Diocese of Guildford and Chair of the Diocesan Net Zero Working Group shared the Diocese of Guildford's plan and progress to achieve zero carbon by 2030. Peter highlighted faith motivates us to take action and the greener futures work is rooted in the fundamentals of faith. He said the Diocese is currently measuring their carbon footprint. There are 30,000 people connected to the Diocese of Guildford, 159 parishes, 220 houses and 86 schools and bringing about changes across these could have significant positive impact. The aim is to bring change to buildings and behaviour.

A page is being dedicated to [Faith and Climate Change](#) on the Surrey Faith Links website, resources coming soon!

The Platinum Jubilee



6 February marks 70 years since the accession to the throne of Her Majesty The Queen.

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>.

One of the activities that is particularly relevant during January to March is tree planting for The Queen's Green Canopy. More information about this [here](#).

If you are a faith group or an inter faith organisation, why not get involved and plant a tree or trees? Tree planting is under way from now until March and will then start again in October 2022, through to the end of the Jubilee year (reflecting the time when trees are best planted). The Woodland Trust is a partner of the QGC. Across 2021 and 2022 they have over three million saplings in tree packs, available on a first come first served basis. Information on how to apply for the free saplings is available through the [Woodland Trust website](#).

The city in Pakistan where church, mosque and temple stand side by side

Located on the city's Shikarpur Road, this religious complex representing three different faiths is considered by locals to be a hub of interfaith harmony and tolerance in a time of growing religious extremism. These places of worship are built in a row.

Any evening, worship takes place in all the three holy places. In the temple, bells are rung and hymns are sung over loudspeakers, while in the church, the sound of religious songs is heard. The Muslim call to prayer, the adhan, resounds from the mosque.

Sharon Yousaf, pastor of the Baptist church in Jacobabad told Independent Urdu: "The three places of worship are together and their walls are side by side. But despite this, no untoward incident has taken place since the establishment of Pakistan. Believers of all three religions respect each other's places of worship and treat each other with respect. "During religious festivals, we invite one another to join in. This place is a perfect example of religious harmony. If anyone is facing a problem, we all help them regardless of faith."

Read the full article [here](#)

Hate Crime

The UK Government have published the [2020-21 hate crime figures for England and Wales](#) 2021. The report notes that religious hate crimes fell by 18 per cent (to 5,627 offences), down from 6,856 in the previous year; this was the second successive fall in religious hate crimes since a peak of 7,202 offences in year ending March 2019.

There have been a number of high profile hate incidents. These have included antisemitic incidents, for example targeting Jews on a bus on [Oxford street at the start of Chanukkah](#). Among recently reported hate incidents targeting Muslims was one about [two teenage girls being assaulted](#) by four unknown women who tried to remove the girls' traditional Muslim dress and hijab. Muslim girls assaulted by group of women who tried to yank their hijabs off (tellmamauk.org) Islamophobia Awareness month in November saw a number of events looking at hate incidents (as well as prejudice) linked to Muslim identity.

Report hate incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

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. <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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 | 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. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/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

Some dates for you to pencil in your dairies for 2022:

My Judaism, differences among Jews—Wednesday 9th February at the North West Surrey Synagogue, 7.00 pm (refreshments) for 7.30 pm start.

My Islam, differences among Muslims. May (date TBC), 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start.

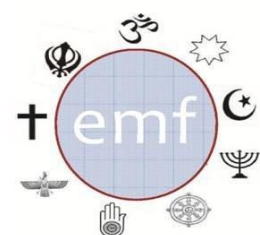
EMF AGM, Tuesday 21st June, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start

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 | M: 07827 974792



Woking Debates Programme 2022

19 February: Local Democracy: Is it working?

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

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



Woking People of Faith

Faith in Action...A Conversation...

with Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Executive Director, Interfaith Network UK
Tuesday 1st February, 7.30pm via Zoom

Join us during Interfaith Harmony Week as Kawther talks to Harriet about how the faith of people and communities has influenced shaping their actions in everyday life. Before coming to work for IFN in 1990, Harriet studied and worked in the United States, starting in 1981, living at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School, where she received her masters and doctorate in theology.



There will be ample opportunity to ask questions. Feel free to extend the invitation more widely.

A Conversation with Zareena Linney

Tuesday 22nd February, 6pm via Zoom

Please join us as Zareena shares how she puts her Christian faith into practice into everyday life. Zareena works for Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF) and is passionate about introducing young Muslim ladies to the exciting world of boxing.

Faith In Action ... A Conversation With ... is a series of conversations with real people. These are interfaith conversations run by WPOF where individuals talk about their own faith and how it works out in practice in their everyday lives.

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. 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. 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

May (date tbc), 7pm

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



Woking People of Faith

Friends Against Scams Training (Free)

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards have organised the following training:

Friends against Scams—Wednesday 9th February at 2.00 pm

The “Friends against Scams” course raises awareness of scams and what to look out for and is aimed at anyone who would like to learn more about scams and how to deal with the different ones operating. After the course you will be recognised as a “friend” of the scheme and will be encouraged to talk to your friends and family about it, to help others become more scam aware. An hour long webinar, but additional time available at the end for questions. For more information and to register please [click here](#).

SCAMchampion—Wednesday 16th February and Tuesday 15th March at 10.30 am

The SCAMchampion course will give you the tools and resources to enable you to deliver the Friends Against Scams training to others! You will need to have carried out the online FAS training prior to attending. For more information and to register, please [click here](#).



Meet us @ new groups starting

These small groups are for residents (with no age limit) in the Guildford and Waverley area who have become less active and more isolated during the lockdowns with the aim of getting small groups of people meeting up where they can go on a form friendships.

The next two sessions are on 26 January at 2pm at Watts Gallery Artists Village, Down Lane, Compton, GU3 1DQ for a cup of tea, chat and walk around the exhibitions and for a Coffee Concert with Rhythm of Life Community Choir on Thursday 17 February at 10.30am at Guildford Cathedral.

For more information on Meet us @:Telephone 01483 65 4422

Creating a Community-led Climate Hub

Join speakers from Surrey's existing climate hubs and the Surrey Climate Commission to discuss how to create community-led climate hubs. Thursday 10th February 2022 at 19:00 – 21:00. HYBRID EVENT: In person at ZERO & livestreamed

Zero Carbon Guildford and The Surrey Climate Commission invite you to a discussion on collaborative climate action across our communities in Surrey and beyond. We'll be chatting about how we created climate hubs in Surrey, as well as what councils can do to support community-led climate action.

Speakers will include Surrey Climate Commission and groups from across Surrey who are already pioneering community-led spaces focused on the climate emergency, including ZERO Guildford, Talking Tree in Staines, What Next Godalming, and Dorking Climate Emergency.

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

Death Café—The Brigitte Trust

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 want to normalise the conversation and help lead the discussion by providing a safe and informal space to talk about your thoughts and feelings around death and dying.

The death cafes are free and open to anyone, to speak freely and without judgement. Come along to the next Death Café and join in the conversation!



Death Café Dates

Byfleet: Thurs, 17 Feb 2022, 10.00 – 12.00 pm

Horley: Thurs, 2 Mar 2022, 10.00 – 11.30 am

For more information [please click here](#) or E: mandy.east@brigitte-trust.com

Please bear in mind that the Death Café is not a grief support session and is therefore not suitable for newly bereaved people. If you are recently bereaved and in need of support please refer to the [Bereavement Support](#) page to find out about our free 8-week structured bereavement support Programme.

Using Your Finances To Protect The Planet—Tuesday 22nd February, 19:00 – 21:00

ZERO, 14 Friary St, Guildford GU1 4EH, UK

All of us have the power to change the finance industry to be a force for good - [join us to find out how](#)



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

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

Wey Valley Circuit livestream:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsE8kb2QxNnmyrqBbMQLNg>

<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

Astolat, Coniers Way, Burpham, Guildford GU4 7HL

E: KawtherH@smef.org.uk

W: www.surreyfaithlinks.org.uk

