

# Inter Faith Week 2020

## Connection, learning and cooperation at the time of COVID



# The Inter Faith Network for the UK

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) leads on Inter Faith Week, in consultation with the Inter-faith Council for Wales/ Cyngor Rhyng-ffydd Cymru and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum in their respective nations. IFN was founded in 1987 to “advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and their common ground and to promote good relations between persons of different faiths”.

IFN’s role is unique: linking national faith community representative bodies, inter faith organisations, and academic and educational bodies with a focus on inter faith or multi-faith issues and working with them to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. It carries out its work through raising awareness within wider society of the importance of inter faith issues, creating opportunities for linking and sharing good practice, and providing advice and information to help the development of new inter faith initiatives and the strengthening of existing ones. Working with its member bodies is an important part of this. Each of those makes its own contribution to inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To find out more or to support IFN’s work of promoting inter faith understanding and cooperation, please visit [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk).

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## Cover photographs

Front cover:

- St Mary the Virgin Church/Merchant Seafarers Association/Muslim friends on Remembrance Sunday, Butetown, Cardiff
- Blue Coat School, Coventry, learning about Diwali and Bandi Chorr Divas
- Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK) with Planting for Peace at OneJAIN Ahimsa Peace Garden, Harrow

Back cover:

- Executive Director and Founder President of the Woolf Institute, Cambridge
- Diwali lunch at Rowan Preparatory School, Esher

The Inter Faith Network for the UK closed in 2024, with outward facing operations ceasing in April.

In order to ensure that the material in IFN's publications remained available to the public, to inter faith practitioners, and to scholars after IFN's closure, the copyright status of publications has been changed.

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Inter Faith Week 2020

**Connection, learning  
and cooperation  
at the time of COVID**



RESPECTEDUCATIONDIALOGUEINTEGRITYVALUES  
COMMUNITYCOOPERATIONDISTINCTIVENESSACTION  
BELONGINGCOMMONGOODFAITHUNDERSTANDING  
NEIGHBOURLINESSTACKLINGPREJUDICERESPECT

# Foreword

## the Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network

The vision of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is of “a society where there is understanding of the diversity and richness of the faith communities in the UK and the contribution that they make; and where we live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.” It is this vision that led it to establish Inter Faith Week in 2009, in partnership with the Government for the first year, and why each year IFN leads on the Week and supports the programme.

We are delighted to provide the foreword to this report on the 2020 Inter Faith Week: a remarkable Week which took place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thousands of people used the Week to connect digitally and through multimedia in new ways and many found solace and encouragement in the contact they made at this time of isolation.

The 2020 Week ran from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Thousands of people of different backgrounds connected to talk; celebrate; learn; make music; visit places of worship as part of virtual exploration trails; and much more. A number of events highlighted and celebrated the powerful response of people of different faiths and beliefs to need in their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Near Neighbours programme of the Church of England encouraged and supported a wide range of activities for the Week.

It was wonderful to have special Inter Faith Week messages from many faith leaders about the importance of faith communities working together for the common good and being in dialogue.

One of IFN’s direct contributions to the Week this year was a special roundtable on youth inter faith engagement, reflecting its continuing commitment to this vital area.

Thank you to all who took part and made the Week such a success and to those who kindly responded to the post-Week survey to help IFN continue to



Narendra Waghela  
Co-Chair, the Inter Faith  
Network for the UK



The Rt Revd Jonathan  
Clark, Co-Chair, the Inter  
Faith Network for the UK

develop the Week strongly. Also to IFN’s staff and Inter Faith Week volunteers who worked with commitment and dedication during the very difficult circumstance of the pandemic.

Inter Faith Week could not happen without the much valued support of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and of trusts and individual donors towards the work programme, as well as a grant from the Inlight Trust towards Inter Faith Week. Thank you.

We hope that reading about the activities highlighted in this report will inspire and encourage you to take part in Inter Faith Week in 2021 and into the future, providing ever more opportunities for people to learn about and engage positively with those of different faiths and beliefs.

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The one on the left is 'Jonathan Clark' and the one on the right is 'Naghela'.

**The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela**  
Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network for the UK



# About this report

This report has been put together by the office of the Inter Faith Network for the UK which leads on Inter Faith Week. It conveys a sense of the wide variety of activities that took place and the range of organisations that held these. There were over 700 activities. The report can only cover some of the excellent activities held but a full list of all those of which IFN is aware can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/reports>.

The report draws on a mixture of sources: social media coverage of the Week; information submitted to the Inter Faith Week website about activities; further information researched online across the period following the Week, including reports by some activity holders; and a detailed survey sent to activity holders.

There has been a survey following the Week since it first began in 2009 and this enables some comparison with comparable statistics in previous years.

The report on the 2020 Week includes two special sections: one on the backdrop of the pandemic and how this shaped activities and participation; and one on how online and digital opportunities for engagement helped people to connect and interact.

It is clear from the surveys and the comments and reports found through online research and also comments at subsequent IFN meetings that the Week was even more important than usual for many people: it connected, encouraged, informed and inspired at a time of deep need.

**Harriet Crabtree OBE**  
Executive Director

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# 1. About Inter Faith Week

## The aims of the Week

Inter Faith Week's aims are to:

- Strengthen 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 they make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

These aims are linked to IFN's vision of "a society where there is understanding of the diversity and richness of the faith communities in the UK and the contribution that they make; and where we live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good".

**95%** of survey respondents believed that their activity had helped participants to learn more about different faiths and beliefs.

The Week is a practical and powerful contribution to tackling ignorance, prejudice and hatred and to increasing understanding, respect, cooperation and partnerships rooted in shared values.

## The story of the Week

The Week was established in 2009 by the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN), in partnership for the first year with the then Department for Communities and Local Government. It is marked in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

It drew its inspiration from the pioneering Scottish Interfaith Week which has been led by Interfaith Scotland since 2004. There is a close working relationship between the two Weeks.



*"Inter Faith Week draws attention to the work of different faiths, inter faith organisations and the good work that faith communities do."*

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

## A Week with impact

Each year, thousands of people get involved in activities. In recent years, millions of people have encountered the Week and its positive messages through social media. In 2020 – the first mainly virtual Inter Faith Week – this developed further still.

Hundreds of organisations hold activities for the Week, using it as a platform for activities which share its aims. Many also use it to try out new approaches and create new partnerships.

*"Inter Faith Week helps raise awareness of the diversity of religions that exist and helps strengthen interfaith relations"*

– LOCAL AUTHORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

## Why a special Week?

Special Weeks – and Days and Months – are a popular way to shine a spotlight on a key issue or area of activity: to raise awareness of the important work that goes on year round; provide a platform for celebrating and growing that; and to launch new initiatives. Schools, businesses, local authorities and other organisations often structure annual activity calendars around key Days, Weeks and Months. In an ever busier world, it helps preserve a space to give special focus to important issues and to plan for that in advance.

Inter Faith Week has become an important fixture in the calendar of many organisations – a special time to highlight the importance of faith and belief in the lives of many people, the contribution of faith groups to society, the importance of good inter faith relations; and also to develop relationships and new partnerships.

**88%** of respondents said that their activity helped them to reach new people or groups.

For many the Week offers the first chance to learn in any depth about the faiths and beliefs of workmates, neighbours and others or who might use it to encourage their organisation to engage more broadly and deeply with different communities.

46% of survey respondents said that they worked with organisations they had never worked with before as part of Inter Faith Week.

***“Inter Faith Week allows us to become more widely known – we are a small organisation but being linked with IFW helps us reach a wider audience.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

**98%** of survey respondents said that Inter Faith Week adds value to their work

## Why November?

The month of November was chosen when the Week began, following consultation with schools and universities. It is a time when educational bodies are in session and a helpful distance from other Weeks and Days with related but distinct themes.

***“Inter Faith Week gives a particular focus to interfaith engagement during one week of the year. Its timing introduces interfaith dialogue early in the academic year and acts as a prompt for further engagement through the course of the year.”***

– UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

The Week has in recent years been timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday, encouraging remembering together of the service of people of different faiths and beliefs and reflection on peace.

Inter Faith Week has had, since its outset, a close working relationship with Mitzvah Day – which usually happens on the first or last Sunday of Inter Faith Week – with each adding value and impact to the other. Mitzvah Day is a special day of social action led by the Jewish Community, but with many activities held on an inter faith basis. At other times in the year, IFN profiles Sadaqa Day and Sewa Day.

## Inter Faith

The term ‘inter faith’ refers to interaction between different faith communities and traditions. It is used in this context as inclusive of non-religious belief groups (while recognising that not all would use it in that way).

# What's so important about Inter Faith Week?

*Inter Faith Week 2020 survey respondents were asked what they saw as most important about Inter Faith Week. Here are some of their answers:*

*"The Week helps raise awareness of the diversity of religions that exist and helps strengthen interfaith relations."*

*"The national focus on interfaith encourages local activities."*

*"Opening up dialogue. Getting to know others as individuals helps create respect and tolerance as well as focusing on similarities and positives rather than differences causing fear and alienation."*

*"It is national and creates the space to organise and deliver activities/projects relevant and suitable for local need and interests."*

*"... it inspires and provides a focus for celebrating diversity."*

*"The Week is a focal point for activities and for promoting interfaith."*

*"Inter Faith Week Increases bonds between different faith and belief groups. It also recognises communities that might not otherwise be [recognised]."*

*"It highlights that religions are important in the community and that religions can [work] and are working together happily and successfully."*

*"Inter Faith Week has a national presence and provides a catalyst for schools to focus on Inter Faith. It also provides resources and ideas."*

*"Countering negative stereotypes in social and other media"*

*"The Week promotes interfaith understanding and therefore supports friendship against fear and prejudice."*

*"The Week encourages positive connections and understanding between people of different backgrounds."*

*"The Week focusses our attention and that of the media (and hence general public) on interfaith issues."*

*"[The Week] promotes interfaith collaboration for the good of the local community."*

*"It encourages faiths to reach out to each other, learn more about each other and work together."*

*The Week increases awareness among people who would not usually be involved in interfaith/religious activity."*

*"It gives visibility to the important work happening."*

*"It brings together the range of events happening in one place so that those who are interested can learn about new events, projects, organisations."*

*"The Week provides a stimulus for local action, and a framework for planning and evaluation."*

*"It helps nationwide to promote mutual respect and peace."*

*"Personal encounters between people of different faiths."*

*"The opportunity to gain insights into other faiths."*

*"Bringing people together."*

*"It draws attention to the work of different faiths, interfaith organisations and the good work that faith communities do."*

*"Building understanding and raising the profile of the positive benefits of faith and worldviews."*

*"Widening/celebrating understanding of other faiths and common ground."*

*"The Week promotes awareness and understanding of the various faith groups and provides a focus nationally, along with good practice."*

*"Inter Faith Week gets people talking and makes interfaith connections."*

*"Inter Faith Week is a time for reflection, listening and appreciation of others."*

*"Raising awareness and interaction between faiths."*



## 2. The Inter Faith Network for the UK and Inter Faith Week

### Helping Inter Faith Week happen

Providing the framework and resources to enable a successful Inter Faith Week is a big part of IFN's work each year.



### Promoting and publicising the Week

IFN promotes and publicises Inter Faith Week in the months leading up to it. It does this through its [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org) website and its dedicated Inter Faith Week Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts, as well as through targeted mailings to a wide range of different types of organisation. The Inter Faith Week logo and branding are made available through the Inter Faith Week website.

Each year, IFN updates the Inter Faith Week website and creates new resources for the Week, from activity ideas to thematic guides. It also sends registration packs to those who list their activities on the website to publicise their own events and given even greater profile to the Week.



Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner, Executive Director and Dr Edward Kessler MBE, Founder President of the Woolf Institute, share a message of support for Inter Faith Week 2020.

Reproduced with permission from the Woolf Institute

## A selection of ideas for marking the Week virtually, in the context of COVID-19

If you are thinking about an online opportunity for learning, mixing or helping your community to come together there are a number of things you might do, for example:

- Work with a selection of local places of worship to create online tours of these and assemble them into a faith trail that people can take part in online
- Hold a 'virtual' civic reception for local faith leaders and perhaps record a joint Inter Faith Week message about the importance of good inter faith relations in your area
- Hold an art or photo competition which can be judged online if necessary
- Create a calendar for next year with pictures taken of inter faith events, places of worship in your area or artwork from different communities
- Create an online quiz about the world's religions and hold the quiz online during the Week
- Create a blog or oral history project about the history of faith communities in your area, when inter faith activity began and how it has developed
- Interview members of local faith communities and non-religious belief groups about the idea of 'service' in their tradition and how their beliefs inspire them and their colleagues to work to help the wider community
- Hold an online 'bake-in' or 'cook-in' where people of different faiths share their recipes and show the finished item!
- If you are a member of a local inter faith group, across the coming months work with members to produce a short history of your group (if you don't already have one!) with some reflections about why its work is so important and publish it during Inter Faith Week
- Set up an 'Inter Faith Week Buddy' experience where two people, each of a different faith or non-religious belief keep in touch across September and October and share during Inter Faith Week some of what they have gained from this (more details available here if you would like to try this idea)
- If there are people still needing to self-isolate or be 'shielded' during Inter Faith Week, consider a safe way that you might encourage an inter faith team to volunteer and deliver a special 'Inter Faith Week' lunch with samples of foods from some of the different faith communities in the area
- Create an on-line 'faith fair' for your workplace or Student Union with information about different faiths and beliefs and opportunities to engage in online chats.
- Develop a new website or update your website – or the faith or inter faith section of it – and launch that in Inter Faith Week
- Create an exhibition about different faiths with display panels about each faith group in your area that could be exhibited in an open air space such as at your local rail/ bus station
- Host a webinar or other educational activity for the public
- Create an online exhibition of some of the artefacts in your museum linked to particular faiths, perhaps with talks from people of those faiths

**Produced for Inter Faith Week 2020 by the Inter Faith Network for the UK**

***“What I found most helpful was really the fact that the week was driven and generated by IFN and that you supported our event by someone attending.”***

– A NATIONAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“Thanks to @IFNetUK for their exceptional work in coordinating @IFWeek”***

– NEAR NEIGHBOURS

Inter Faith Week is part of IFN’s year-round work and is supported by its staff rather than by a separate team. It draws from, and feeds into, its wider work of promotion of inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK.

***“It is not just about Inter Faith Week, but the Inter Faith Network generally has been providing support and encouragement over the years, which enables local organisations like ours to do what we do locally so well in terms of enabling people and communities to live well together.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

From April through to October, IFN staff reach out to a wide variety of different organisations to encourage them to use the fantastic platform that the Week provides for increasing religious literacy, promoting good inter faith relations, celebrating, and highlighting their own work. An example of this is outreach to statutory services. For the 2020 Week, liaison by the IFN office with the National Police Chiefs Council’s Religion and Belief Sub-group fed into mailings to every Police Force in the UK with ideas about how police forces, stations and officers could mark Inter Faith Week 2020. This also included the national network of Police Chaplains, supporting their work with officers and staff and encouraging them to celebrate the role that faith and belief play in their lives and service to the community.

IFN staff members contributed to a number of Inter Faith Week events. For example its Executive Director, was invited by Building Bridges Burnley to



*A virtual scriptural reasoning session led by Maysoon Shafiq, of Al Mu'minun (The Believers), a Kirklees' Community Diversity Champion*

<https://youtu.be/7n8WXLgqWZw>

speak at its AGM about the importance of local inter faith organisations to good inter faith relations.

Inter Faith Week activities are held by independent organisations and they are invited to register them. As details on planned activities come in, they are added to an interactive map on the website which is designed to enable people to search by area, topics and date. During the Week, the team continues to add events as they come in and also to source and add details for activities that were not preregistered. This enables people to find activities near them or that they can join online. It also helps ensure that the media can easily find information about the Week and its activities.

In the run up to the Week and during it, the IFN office works to ensure maximum social media impact – for example to ensure that tweets have as wide a reach as possible – and to respond to media enquiries. This increases the impact of the Week and adds to positive narratives about faith and belief groups and the generally good relations that exist in the UK.

**In 2020, IFW related tweets reached a very wide audience – far beyond those who participated directly in Inter Faith Week activities. Tweets about Inter Faith Week appeared on the feeds of 11million Twitter users (the ‘potential reach’), a total of 34.7million times (the ‘potential impressions’) during October, November and December.**



## Developing and supporting Inter Faith Week during the pandemic

In the context of the pandemic, IFN created and circulated new activity lists for organisations such as local authorities, schools, faith and inter faith bodies, hospitals and hospices, and workplaces and businesses. These included both in-person and online options since the course of the pandemic was so uncertain that different options were needed. Most of the in-person suggestions were easy to switch from in-person to virtual if needed. It also produced a short list of online activity ideas (see page 10).

A particular push was made to support digital activities including online dialogue – and also to help ready people to do that. In the run up to the Week, IFN held a special webinar on preparing for Inter Faith Week, with a particular focus on planning virtual activities in the context of the pandemic. This included presentations from a number of local inter faith groups and projects.

A recording of the webinar can be viewed at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/webinars>.



As part of its wider work, IFN also included sessions at member body meetings on the new ways that bodies were bringing people together during the pandemic, and ran a special webinar for local inter faith groups on ‘Getting Together at a Time of COVID-19’. This helped to build the capacity of inter faith initiatives – many of which had expressed prior to the pandemic a lack of confidence in using digital technology.

In 2020, additional features were added to the website to make it easy to filter between online/virtual activities and those held in person (such as in schools, hospitals, and hospices) and to view listings of activities taking place on particular days. A number of people commented that the

virtual nature of the Week meant that it was much easier to participate in activities that might usually be too far away to attend.

## Analysing the Week’s impact to help develop it for the future

At the end of each Week a survey is sent out to activity organisers which asks a number of questions about the Week, for example: “Did your Inter Faith Week activity help you to engage with new people/ groups?”, “Is your organisation planning any kind of follow-up activity in the coming months?” and “Do you think your Inter Faith Week activity helped participants to learn more about different faiths and beliefs?”

The answers, together with media coverage, reports from individual activity holders and reflections offered at subsequent IFN events, help tell the story of the Week that you are reading here. They also help IFN develop the Week to ensure that its impact grows, helping it contribute to the development of a society where there is respect, tolerance, neighbourliness, religious literacy and a shared commitment to working for the common good.

Feedback through this year’s survey included comment from several respondents about the desirability of securing more national media coverage of the Week (which had been lower in 2020). However, overall, the feedback – which underlies a number of the charts and other statistics in this report – was exceptionally positive and reflected a desire both to take part again and also to see the Week, with its vital aims of cooperation and understanding, thrive.

## The Week that is not just a week!

Finally, the Week is not just a week! IFN’s Inter Faith Week programme is a year-round one: planning for the next Week, publicising it, helping ever more people and organisations get involved, surveying and reporting on the Week, and developing new partnerships which can strengthen the Week and particular areas of work such as youth inter faith engagement.

IFN also aims to provide two internships a year with a particular focus on Inter Faith Week, giving young people an opportunity to gain skills and knowledge for their future careers and to benefit their communities.

# 3. Inter Faith Week – Inspiration and encouragement during the pandemic

## The backdrop of the pandemic

In March of 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit the UK. Life changed in all sorts of ways as people strove to respond to the kind of medical threat not seen for over a century.

The succeeding months saw faith communities and their members playing a major role on many fronts during the pandemic: supporting their own communities, working with Government and other agencies to maximise COVID awareness and safety and responding to help people in need of food and other basic necessities.

Inter Faith Week 2020 took place at a time when all nations of the UK were under strict social distancing and lockdown measures. Ahead of the Week organisers had wondered whether there would be less keenness to engage or less ability to do so because of social distancing and other pandemic impacts. However, the Week turned out to be one with real impact.

Inter Faith Week helped people in some significant ways and was a bright point for many at a very difficult time.

***“... It felt even more needed this year!”***

– INTER FAITH CHARITY

***“The Week made space for connection between people who have never met, or who have not interacted since before the pandemic. Our target audience are particularly isolated and vulnerable, and so making spaces for them to be together was very valuable.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“We were all in it together, made a big effort to have a successful event, and it worked.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“At a time that people were struggling physically, emotionally and financially, spiritual support became the most important point in ordinary peoples’ lives. Any event held during the Inter Faith Week this year was particularly important from this point of view.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“The 2020 Interfaith Week has been like no other as it came in during the second lockdown due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Consequently, we find many people suffering with anxiety, loneliness and fear. Yet, always, without fail, faith enhances our mind, uplifts our spirits and fills our hearts with strong feelings of courage and determination. More than ever, caring and sharing with others in our community, becomes more important than ever. It gives us all the strength to go through this difficult time by sharing love and reaching out with friendship in our hearts. With the current situation in mind promoting interfaith relationships in our local communities and bringing some peace and security...”***

– GURDWARA SRI GURU SINGH SABHA HOUNSLOW  
[HTTPS://WWW.SGSS.ORG/DOCS/GOBINDMARG/GM%20DEC%202020.PDF](https://www.sgss.org/docs/gobindmarg/GM%20DEC%202020.PDF)

***“We had speakers sharing how they have been impacted by the pandemic, talking about festivals and holy days that have been different this year, and sharing elements from their faiths that have helped them and given them strength during this difficult time.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

## Creating powerful webs of connection

The Week provided a valuable channel for creating and celebrating connection and highlighting the amazing response of faith and inter faith initiatives during the pandemic to help those in need.

***“Interfaith week provides us with a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the significant contribution our faith communities in Swansea make in both good and challenging times such as Covid-19....This week we are able to bring all our communities together to increase interfaith dialogue and to better connect with our communities of faith and belief in the broadest sense.”***

– CHAIR OF SWANSEA INTERFAITH FORUM AND FAITH AND COMMUNITY MANAGER AT SWANSEA UNIVERSITY  
(SWANSEA COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE)

A staff member of a children and young people's hospice in the West Midlands wrote:

***“Since April the hospice has been working differently, lots of staff had been furloughed, some are still part time furloughed, lots of staff are working remotely, our respite provision has reduced as a result. Our [Inter Faith Week] activity where the children created a mountain scenery built their self-esteem contributing to a project, inviting staff families and volunteers and local faith communities to join with us to #ShareTheLight lighting a candle at home, brought everyone together and made us visible to our service users who may not have been able to have the usual support from us that they normally get outside of a pandemic. A lot of families often tell us, knowing we are there provides support in itself; this interfaith activity reinforced that.”***

**93%** of survey respondents said that, in the COVID-19 context, Inter Faith Week provided a focal point for making or celebrating positive connections between people of different backgrounds

AgeUK did an online article, ‘The role of faith during the coronavirus pandemic’ with interviews with five older people of different faiths about how their faith had been affected by the ongoing pandemic.  
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/discover/2020/11/the-role-of-faith-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

The Week saw an exploration of topics relating to the impacts of the pandemic, such as mental health, discussions on the way forward, the role of faith in difficult times, and celebrations of unity. Many also used the Week as a platform to celebrate the contribution of faith communities and faith and belief-based organisations in responding to the pandemic.

Norwich Inter-Faith Link brought together people from Norwich's Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim communities in an online conversation about the ways in which COVID-19 was affecting faith communities. The video showed the key role of faith communities across Norfolk during the COVID pandemic. Assistance on creating the video was provided by Rosedale Funeral Homes. The video recording can be found here:  
<https://youtu.be/PXJVOWL17UQ>.

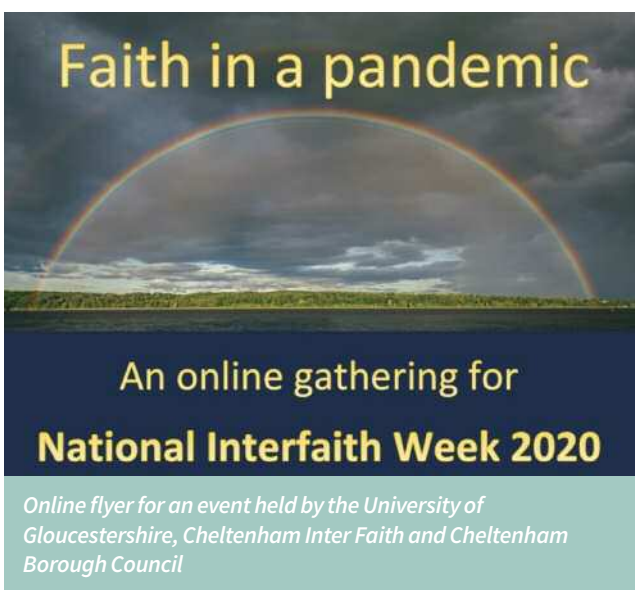
A number of other inter faith organisations held webinars on how faith communities in their areas had been coming together during difficult times, for example Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum; Interfaith Wolverhampton; Richmond Inter Faith Forum; and Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum.

The University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham Inter Faith and Cheltenham Borough Council held an event ‘Faith in a Pandemic’ – looking at different communities’ and individuals’ experiences of the





Five people of different faiths interviewed by Age UK about how their faith was affected by the pandemic



COVID-19 pandemic from a faith perspective, with voices from local faith communities through short films, talking pieces and breakouts for participants to come together in smaller groups to discuss their own experiences.

Wellsprings Together in West Yorkshire/Near Neighbours produced a series of videos celebrating the contribution of grassroots faith and community groups who had been working during the pandemic to support one another and the most vulnerable: More in Common, Batley; BEAP Community Partnership, the Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara, Khidmat Centre, Unity Boxing Academy, and Touchstone Centre in Bradford; the Good Shepherd Centre in Keighley; and the Black Health Initiative, Circles of Life Women Together, the Hamara Centre, Leeds Jewish Housing Association, Makkah Mosque, Rainbow Junktion, St Aidan's Church and Sikh Elders Service in Leeds. These can be viewed at <https://wellspringstogether.org.uk/interfaith-week-2020>

They open with a video of the Church of England Bishop of Bradford talking about the important work of communities during the pandemic – rainbows at dark times – and taking the time of Inter Faith Week to express thanks.

Near Neighbours also joined forces with London's City Hall to mark Inter Faith Week with an event to celebrate the work of faith organisations to support Londoners of all faiths and none in dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on their lives. Near Neighbours Teams were also active in a number of other areas (see the list of their hubs at: <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/local-hubs>).

Birmingham Council of Faiths in collaboration with Bahu Trust held an online celebration of the contribution of the Emergency Services.



## INTER FAITH WEEK SNAPSHOT 1

### Tower Hamlets: Testing Times – A report on an event

Like so many other events this year, our 2020 Inter Faith Week event took place online. This didn't deter the faith community of Tower Hamlets and beyond coming together to mark the occasion – we were pleased to be joined by nearly 50 attendees. We had a fantastic line up of speakers; for those that could not attend, the event was recorded and is available here.

Our first speaker was Janet Daby MP, Shadow Minister for Faith, Women and Equalities. Janet paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of faith leaders, volunteers and congregations throughout the pandemic. She acknowledged that there has been much disruption for faith communities due to the closure of places of worship, and confirmed that she works hard to represent the views of faith leaders to the government, stating that faith and places of worship should not be an afterthought. Janet also highlighted the importance of religious education starting from a young age, to aid community and cohesion. [She] went on to talk about bereavement and the impact that will be felt for some time due to so many people losing loved ones throughout the pandemic.

Our next speaker was Senior Imam at East London Mosque, Sheikh Mohammed Mahmud. The Imam spoke about the hard work that went into making the mosque covid secure. He explained about the calls to prayer being adapted to tell people to pray at home. Prayers are now recorded and broadcast via Facebook, YouTube and Zoom and classes are also carried out online. Counselling services are also done remotely – with weddings taking place via Zoom! The Imam spoke about the many ways that they supported the local community, for example by running a food bank and supplying PPE to other mosques and care homes. You can see presentation slide here.

Acting Chief Inspector Pete Shaw was next and he explained that the police are focused on the 'three E' approach to the public and coronavirus law – engage, encourage, explain. He said that enforcement as an approach is low down on their list of priorities, especially with faith

communities. He highlighted the importance of worshipping safely at a venue and underlined that wearing a mask is a requirement by law. Pete then gave an overview of the current guidance around individual prayer and gatherings such as weddings, before giving some tips on how to make a venue covid secure.

Following on from Pete's advice, Abigail Knight, associate director of LBTH Public Health and Polly Ashmore, public health specialty registrar, defined the guidance further. Highlighting the circumstances in which places of worship can be open:

- Independent prayer;
- Service broadcasting;
- Funerals (with up to 30 people), and linked ceremonial events (such as ash scattering, with up to 15 people), with social distancing maintained;
- Education and training;
- Childcare purposes and supervised activities for children;
- Support groups;
- Essential services, inc blood donation and food banks;
- To provide medical treatment.

Full details can be seen on the presentation slides. Polly went on to explain about project starting in the near future that will involve engagement officer/s distributing PPE to places of worship in the borough. This will help get practical feedback on requirements. Abigail highlighted the Community Champions Network, which meets online each week and is a great way to stay up to date with all the latest advice and ask questions.

Lastly, Peter Okali, CEO of THCVS spoke about the funding that is currently available. The two main pots of funding at the moment are the LBTH small grants fund and the National Lottery.

<https://www.faithintowerhamlets.org/2020/12/01/inter-faith-week-2020-event-review>





[https://youtu.be/AqssY-\\_NhYI](https://youtu.be/AqssY-_NhYI)

The London Borough of Hillingdon Council, with the assistance of Hillingdon Inter Faith Network (HIFN), put out a Week-long series of videos with faith leaders on how they had helped to keep communities safe and connected throughout the pandemic. HIFN recorded the conversations with

leaders from the local Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh communities. A playlist of the video series can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHgUbmOJNk9f9bGbWT4cjdbEV0yN92ufc>

In Bournemouth, the Mayor chaired an event on 'Coronavirus and Congregational Cohesion' with Bournemouth Islamic Centre and Mosque, Bournemouth Reform Synagogue and St Peter's Parish Church.

In the London Borough of Haringey, the Haringey Faith Forum arranged for a number of pairs of clergy of different faiths to meet virtually. This video shows the Rabbi of Muswell Hill Synagogue and the Vicar of Christ Church in West Green each speaking and talking together about their role and experiences ministering to their congregations during the pandemic, while showing each other round their respective place of worship via video call.

[https://youtu.be/AqssY-\\_NhYI](https://youtu.be/AqssY-_NhYI)

The National Emergencies Trust marked the Week by highlighting a number of case studies of work that had been taking place with support of funds raised through the Coronavirus Appeal, including the Link Family and Community Centre in Newtownards, Northern Ireland, the Jewish Community Council of Gateshead and the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre.

<https://nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk/inter-faith-week/>

Other organisations also held events on a pandemic theme. For example, Barnardo's and Action for Children, supported by the Association of Muslim Schools UK, held an online discussion where faith and community leaders shared their experiences of how they had supported their communities during the pandemic and reflected on the impact of the pandemic on communities, including what this has meant for children, young people and families and how a wider charity response might support faith communities to which many of their service users belonged.



<https://twitter.com/NPTCouncil/status/1326962972409946112>

## INTER FAITH WEEK SNAPSHOT 2

### West Yorkshire: Wellsprings Together

*Near Neighbours West Yorkshire Coordinator talks about its Inter Faith Week project at a subsequent IFN meeting for local inter faith organisations in Yorkshire.*

“During Covid, when everything got shut down, we saw how many people from faith communities went into action to support people who had lost jobs, or were on the breadline with not enough benefits to support them. Amazing work was done across the whole of the country. The value of faith communities at times of crisis was really clear – how everybody stood up. I saw this first hand across West Yorkshire: Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, everyone was going nonstop from March to help others.

“It got harder for faith communities as food and financial needs increased and loneliness, mental health, suicide and self-harm rose. But the work still had to be done or some people would have gone hungry or possibly even died. The faith communities stepped in and we wanted to celebrate that. I was seeing so many ‘thank yous’ for frontline workers and others but I did not see that same type of appreciation being expressed for what was going on within the faith communities. So for Inter Faith Week, I wanted to show what the West Yorkshire, Faith and Community sector had been doing to support people during the Covid pandemic and I wanted a thank you to be said.

“We put together a series of small short films. For two weeks I travelled around the whole of West Yorkshire with my mask on and I interviewed different groups. They were videoed, with the assistance of Pishdaad Modarresi Chahardehi, and photos were taken as well. We created twenty two 20 second videos in total and a 4 minutes one encompassing all the groups covered. We used the photographs as a taster so people knew that something was coming. The videos were released during Inter Faith Week, with the 4 minutes overview shown on the final Sunday. We were so proud of the videos. I felt “That’s it I’ve shown it, I’ve given the space for recognition that faith communities needed in a national way, through a



Byron Francis of Unity Boxing Academy, for a video by Wellsprings Together

<https://youtu.be/dFYG3iRkt8>



Sofia Buncy of the Khidmat Centre, for a video by Wellsprings Together

[https://youtu.be/fVZl\\_WGVv88](https://youtu.be/fVZl_WGVv88)

Yorkshire lens.” Through those videos we showed our appreciation and the importance of what the faith communities were doing and why they should be centre stage alongside the nurses and doctors and other front line workers who have given so much.”



Gian Singh holds a sign to introduce the Wellsprings Together video for the first day of Inter Faith Week 2020

<https://youtu.be/YXlHbaeXGY>



School Inter Faith Week events also saw pupils exploring this key issue, as this example from Oldham Sixth Form College illustrates:

### **Inter Faith Week at Oldham Sixth Form College.**

***“Staff and students attended (virtually, of course) with members of the 4 major religions: Father Phil Sumner, Rabbi Daniel Walker, Mufti Helal Mahmood and Mr Jit Kara. Students had the opportunity to discuss key topics with leaders of the faiths. The first topic discussed was an obvious one. Students posed questions about how the coronavirus pandemic had impacted on the number of people accessing support from their faith. The leaders discussed how they had been working together to ensure the Oldham community as a whole was supported, such as using the Mosques to provide food packages for those in need. The overall message was that there has been an increase in the number of people accessing support, but it has been increasingly difficult to provide support in a meaningful way without face-to-face meetings.***

***The first topic discussed was an obvious one. Students posed questions about how the coronavirus pandemic had impacted on the number of people accessing support from their faith. The leaders discussed how they had been working together to ensure the Oldham community as a whole was supported, such as using the Mosques to provide food packages for those in need. The overall message was that there has been an increase in the number of people accessing support, but it has been increasingly difficult to provide support in a meaningful way without face-to-face meetings.”***

Conveying a message of hope was an important part of a number of COVID-focused activities for the Week, for example, the Archdiocese of Birmingham Inter Religious Dialogue Commission’s Dare to Hope online event and the ‘Messages of Hope’ video created by North Kent Council for Inter-Faith



Relations with contributions from different local faith communities (<https://youtu.be/l60fWfTC0sl>).

North Kirklees Interfaith shared ‘messages of hope from people across Kirklees around faith and community’ through Petals for Peace, supported by the Cohesion team at Kirklees Council.

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha held an online conference, ‘Kindness during Covid’.

**BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha**  
UK & EUROPE

## KINDNESS DURING COVID

Online Interfaith Conference

Inter Faith Week

---

**#PetalsForPeace**  
sharing a message of hope

A North Kirklees Interfaith project supported by Kirklees Cohesion team and local communities

This year has really shown how well we can all care, support and love one another during really difficult times. I hope that we can hold onto this and continue to treat one another this way in the future.

**Joely Chambers**

One of the messages shared as part of Petals for Peace

## 4. Embracing digital for a vibrant virtual week

### COVID-19 drives exploration of digital and multimedia

The social distancing measures in place for COVID-19 led to Inter Faith Week 2020 being held mainly virtually.

During the months that led up to it, however, many people were getting to grips with the world of virtual meetings, and by the time Inter Faith Week took place there was widespread and enthusiastic engagement through routes such as Zoom and MS Teams, with participating organisations finding creative new ways to host activities and celebrate the Week.

There was a significant increase in use of videos and video messages – notably among local authorities, ranging from individual messages for the Week such as the Mayor of Bradford's video message on Inter Faith Week and Islamophobia (the Week falls during

**74%** of activities took place online or had a strong virtual element

Islamophobia Awareness Month), to video series such as that produced by South Tyneside Council:



Councillor Norman Dick, the Mayor of South Tyneside

<https://www.facebook.com/STyneside-Council/videos/356966412199860/>

### INTER FAITH WEEK SNAPSHOT 3 York Interfaith Group

Our Inter Faith Week 2020 will be certainly one that we will all remember because of the strange situation and uncharted waters we found ourselves in. We had to be creative with thinking of different ways to put on our events virtually instead of actually and I have to report that it worked amazingly well. We had over 330 people 'attending' our events, which is far more than we usually get under normal circumstances. We think that the actual number may even be closer to 350 but it was not possible to count all the faces on some of the screens. It was an amazing turn out given the current situation though.

The majority of the faith groups that make up membership of York Interfaith Group were able to put on an event this year which was really fantastic given the difficulties

caused by the pandemic. There were events organised by the Mormon Church, the York Buddhist Network, The Baha'i's, the Quakers, the Liberal Jewish Community, the Muslims, the Hindu and Sikh communities, plus additional events from the University of York and the York LGBT Forum regarding young people and their faiths. Our Interfaith Service to close the week's activities was hosted by members of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints Church and it was attended by 65 people, including the Lord Mayor of York Janet Looker and the MP for Central York Rachel Maskill. The service was entitled 'Faith in Unusual Times' and that is most certainly what it has been this year.

– York Interfaith December newsletter

***“This week South Tyneside is paying tribute to Inter Faith Week – a tremendous opportunity for us to demonstrate and strengthen links with the diverse local community and to encourage new links and partnerships which contribute to integration and cohesion. We have put together a series of virtual talks from religious leaders of different faiths ... through these videos we hope to highlight the importance of positive engagement between people of different backgrounds, tackling prejudice and standing up to hate, solidarity at times of difficulty and inter faith understanding and cooperation.”***

– MAYOR OF SOUTH TYNESIDE

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/EMBED/P7P\\_39RFLAW](https://www.youtube.com/embed/P7P_39RFLAW)

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham celebrated the Week by flying an Inter Faith Week flag above the Town Hall throughout the week, and shared a video from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement and faith leaders from the borough.



In some cases, those whose activities were restricted used videos to highlight relevant work past and present, for example Harrow Interfaith held its first ever Zoom activity, Inter Faith Week 2020, bringing together a collection of memories of Harrow Interfaith over the years.

[https://youtu.be/vyQ\\_5JQ0XaQ](https://youtu.be/vyQ_5JQ0XaQ)

Dudley based Active Black Country put out a video celebrating faith centres across the Black Country, noting that places of worship are unique community touchpoints for cohesion, development and regeneration and identifying challenges and opportunities in communities in getting people active.

The Faith and Belief Forum created a special Inter Faith Week video message series with a wide range of contributors.



Canterbury and District Interfaith Action and Sheffield Interfaith both took their walks online. CANDIFA shared videos of their chair and two members reading ‘spiritual texts from a range of faiths, beliefs and worldviews’ <https://candifa.gbsite.org/2020-interfaith-week-text-readings/> <https://candifa.gbsite.org/final-text-reading-from-our-interfaith-week-woodland-walk/>

Sheffield Interfaith took a different approach, with members joining a Zoom call to share images and stories of places that had been important to them during the pandemic.

Even food got a digital treatment, with lots of lunches and cooking sessions going online, such as Cardiff and Vale’s Students’ Union ‘Inter Faith Week big lunch’ where people were invited to join on their computer or mobile app, bring along a traditional meal from their own faith or just join in and say hello while people chatted and ate lunch together.

Some in-person activities took place in schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, hospices and other settings that remained open during lockdown/ tiered restrictions.

<https://twitter.com/faithbelieforum/status/1326539931339030530>

**75%** of survey respondents said the online element of the Week was beneficial

There were also hybrid activities, for example speakers linking in to talk to school classes and respond to questions virtually.

There were also prayer and meditation sessions where people followed a suggested order of service separately, at a particular time, without any kind of digital link.

### On-line inter faith engagement – a new world of possibilities

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions, most events took place virtually. While noting some challenges, 75% of event organisers that responded to the feedback survey said they found the online element of the Week to be beneficial.

57.5% of survey respondents said that they believed more people had participated in their activities as a result of their being online: it had made it easier for them to find speakers where distance and travel costs might previously have been a barrier and enabled them to engage a wide range of participants.

***“We saw participation from various faith communities in the Swindon area; overall throughout the week, we reached around 100 individuals. All of the events featured a positive discussion between those of different backgrounds.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

***“Due to meeting online, this year speakers and participants had no boundaries and joined us from 6 countries.”***

– LOCAL FAITH COMMUNITY BODY

***“We had a wider audience and wider list of people able to contribute”***

– UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

Holding meetings online meant these were often a bit shorter than usual and that – together with no need for travel – enabled people to take part who might otherwise have been too busy to do so due to other commitments or accessibility.

***“Holding an online event enabled people to just take an hour out of their day to participate. It could have been their lunchtime. Those who joined us really enjoyed the event.”***

– LOCAL AUTHORITY

The online experience may also have encouraged some who would have been reticent about in person involvement:

***“We know that some people are daunted to attend our in-person events as they don’t know what to expect, but online people were able to observe and take a more back-seat role, which I think is a brilliant start, and hopefully they may attend in-person in future.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

### Looking to the future

A number of survey respondents wrote in their general comments that they would continue to use a mixture of virtual and in-person events in the future or find ways to run hybrid activities, such as through live streaming.

***“We hope in future to run a live stream link alongside a face-to-face event so that people who are unable to attend in person can still attend online”***

– FAITH GROUP



# 5. Messages of encouragement and support for the week



The UK Government's Minister for Communities provided the message above for the Week.

The Deputy Minister in Wales shared a video on Twitter in support of the Week.

[https://twitter.com/WG\\_Communities/status/1327529235083390977](https://twitter.com/WG_Communities/status/1327529235083390977)

She also made an oral statement in the Senedd on 17 November:

***“Diolch, Dirprwy Lywydd. Interfaith Week celebrates the contribution people of faith across this country have made to their communities. It’s hard to imagine when than in the recent history of the COVID-19 pandemic this contribution has been more necessary or more appreciated by so many, and it is at times like this, times of adversity, that care and compassion in people and communities of faith and no faith shine through. It’s no surprise that a great many of those who have come forward have been from our faith communities.***

***In Wales, we have a unique opportunity to bring our faiths together in the interfaith council, which co-exists alongside our interfaith forum, which has played a vital role in the collective response to the pandemic”***



Shadow Communities Minister, Janet Daby MP, took part in an Inter Faith Week event in Tower Hamlets. See page 16.



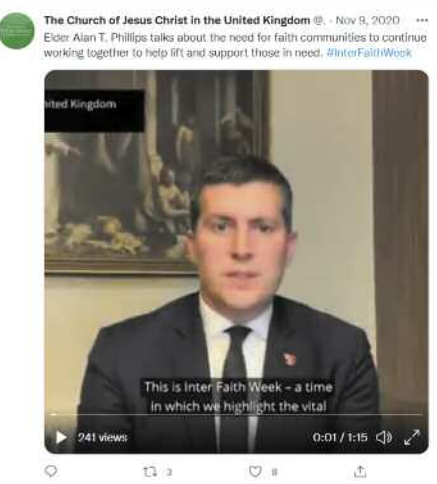
There were also many messages from high sheriffs, lieutenants and mayors.

# 6. Inter Faith Week reflections from Faith Leaders

The Inter Faith Network for the UK invited faith community leaders/ bodies to offer a message which highlighted the vital contribution of faith communities to society – especially at this time of COVID-19 – and spoke of the importance of faith communities working together for the benefit of society.  
<https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-faith-communities>.









## 7. Who took part?

An amazing range of organisations took part in the Week. 720 are known to have taken part overall. The chart on page 30 gives a breakdown of these by type.

The pattern of participation in the 2020 Week was distinctive due to the impact of social distancing and other necessary restrictions. Thus, for example, there were significantly fewer activities held by sports organisations, museums, galleries and libraries because most of their premises were closed or operating restrictedly and possibly also because of levels of staff on furlough. By contrast, school participation went up 90% on the previous year and a much higher number of hospitals and hospices took part.

### Faith communities and inter faith organisations

Faith organisations played an active part in the Week locally and nationally.

National faith community leaders were invited by IFN's Faith Communities Forum to mark the Week by sharing reflections on social media during the Week. (see pages 24-25).

Many local inter faith bodies and local faith communities ran their own activities and/or supported those run by others, such as through providing speakers for events, advice, contacts and information.

### Employers and staff networks

This year saw a number of employers and staff networks joining in with marking the Week, for example, Transport for London, Anchor Hanover Care Homes, Admiral Jobs, LexisNexis Risk Solutions, PWC and Inclusive Employers.

The Civil Service saw a wide range of activities arranged by civil servants working in multiple Departments, celebrating and building on the contribution that people of different faiths and beliefs make to the Civil Service and wider society.

For example, Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion hosted a staff quiz in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions; the FCDO created a blog series; the Ministry of Defence shared a series of blog posts; the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Faith and Ethnic Minority (FAME) Network hosted a 'lunch 'n' learn' event with the Chairperson of the Civil Service Hindu Connection network; and the Department for Education hosted a poetry event. Agencies, such as the Office for National Statistics, also held activities to mark the Week.

### INTER FAITH WEEK SNAPSHOT 4 Transport for London

Each year, we come together to celebrate the various religions and beliefs across our organisation during our Inter Faith Week. This is led by our Faith Staff Network Group, with colleagues encouraged to get involved. From 8 to 15 November, posters with quotes from colleagues talking about their faith were displayed in stations and across our social media channels, including Yammer, as part of a series of events held during the week. Additionally, we held an online panel discussion tackling questions such as why faith is important in the workplace, how have faith communities have coped with the pandemic and lockdown, and what more we can do to support a faith-friendly culture.

– <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/tfl-commissioners-report-9-december-2020-acc.pdf>

***“There are 17 different religious or belief systems followed by staff at Admiral... We celebrated Inter Faith Week in November by sharing videos from our colleagues on what their faith means to them, which was received positively throughout the business.”***

– ADMIRAL GROUP PLC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PACK

[HTTPS://ADMIRALGROUP.CO.UK/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES\\_PUBLIC/ADMIRAL%20DIVERSITY%20PACK%202020.PDF](https://ADMIRALGROUP.CO.UK/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES_PUBLIC/ADMIRAL%20DIVERSITY%20PACK%202020.PDF)

<https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/more-than-300-faith-communities-and-40-schools-take-part-in-mitzvah-day/>



Caroline Stock, Mayor of Barnet, participates in Age UK's Bringing Smiles To Your Door campaign

## Local authorities

Local authorities played a key role in the Week. Some local councils also took part in or hosted events in collaboration with faith communities and other organisations. In Kirklees, for example, the authority's cohesion team supported development of a week-long programme. Others, such as the London Borough of Hammersmith, used their websites and social messaging to get across the aims of the Week and encourage involvement.

A number of mayors issued messages or videos, for example, the Mayor of London and the Mayor of LB Enfield. Some played an active part in events, for example the Lord Mayor of Birmingham who launched the week-long programme in Birmingham, and the Mayor of Watford.



Tulip Siddiq MP attends a card making event run by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

[https://twitter.com/HMD\\_UK/status/1326520190109147137](https://twitter.com/HMD_UK/status/1326520190109147137)

## Schools

The number of schools participating in the Week increased by 90% on Inter Faith Week 2019. From Ystradowen and Haverfordwest, to Exeter, Blackburn, Morpeth and LB Newham, many different kinds of school took part: primary and secondary; state-maintained and independent.

71% of the schools were primary, just under 26% were secondary, and just under 3% were independent schools that catered to both the primary and secondary age ranges. One nursery school also took part.

## Higher and Further Education

The pandemic affected involvement from students in higher and further education. Even so, a wide range of universities took part through activities arranged by their Student Unions and Faith and Belief Societies or through their chaplaincies or university welfare services. So, too, did some academic institutes such as the Woolf Institute.

### Universities known to have taken part in Inter Faith Week 2020

Anglia Ruskin University; Aston University; Bath Spa University; Bournemouth University; University of Brighton; Bristol University; City, University of London; Coventry University; De Montfort University; Durham University; University of East Anglia; University of Exeter; Goodenough College; University of Gloucestershire; Goldsmiths University; University of Hertfordshire; Imperial College; Lancaster University; Leeds Trinity University; University of Leeds; Liverpool University; LSE (Faith Centre); Nottingham Trent University; Nottingham University; Oxford Brookes University; Roehampton University; Solent University; University of Southampton; St Mary's University; University of Sunderland; University of Sussex; Swansea University; Teeside University; University of Warwick; University of Westminster; University of Winchester; University of the West of England; Wrexham Glyndwr University; and York St John University.

A number of colleges also took part such as Cardiff and Vale, South Dartmoor Community College, Tresham College, and Wirral Metropolitan College.

## Youth organisations

A number of youth organisations took part, from national associations such as the Scouts, the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade, the Army Cadet Force, and Faiths United Youth Network to locally focussed initiatives such as 495 Air Cadets (Sutton Coldfield), and Islington Youth Council.

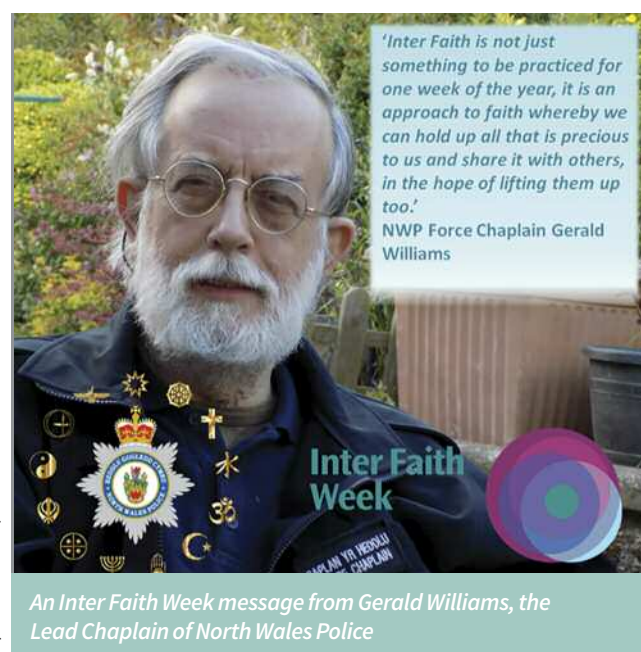


## Police

Police Chaplaincy UK and a number of police forces took part, such as those in the London Boroughs of Greenwich, Enfield, and Edmonton (which

visited Rumi Mosque) and Merton. This year saw the first involvement from the States of Jersey Police.

In Wales, the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner shared a blog of reflections on the Week and the North Wales Police Force shared an image of the NWPF Chaplain with a special message (in English and in Welsh) about Inter Faith Week. The English version is reproduced below.



**95%** of survey respondents said that taking part in Inter Faith Week helped to raise the profile of their work

## The Armed Forces

There was involvement this year from the Royal Air Force, Strategic Command and an event at Permanent Joint Headquarters.



## The NHS, hospitals and hospices

NHS Blood and Transplant and NHS digital took part in the Week. A number of hospital Trusts took part, such as Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals, Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS FT, Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust, Solent NHS Trust, West Herts NHS Trust, and West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust.

The number of hospices participating grew by 80%, including, for example, St Luke's Hospice in Sheffield and a number whose mission is to support terminally ill children, young people and their families, such as



Aaron shares an Inter Faith Week message as part of a themed learning activity run by the Medical Needs Teaching Service, Leeds Children's Hospital





Richard House Children's Hospice, the Donna Louise Hospice for Children and Young People in Stoke-on-Trent, and Chestnut Tree House Children's Hospice in Arundel, West Sussex.

## Museums, libraries and archives

A few museums and libraries took part, such as Kirklees Libraries; Headstone Manor and Museum in Harrow, London; Kirkstall Abbey in Leeds; and Winchester Discovery Centre. However, numbers were low by comparison to other sectors as so many were closed and/or with staff on furlough. Some archives such as Kent Archives and the Surrey History Centre took part. Archive holdings lend themselves well to digital sharing.

## Sports initiatives

The pandemic, with social distancing and closed venues, also led to much lower involvement from sports initiatives except through the online routes mentioned in the digital section.



## Charities and community organisations

Nationally, a number of charities and voluntary organisations took part, such as CAFOD, the Great Get Together, Kidney Research UK, the Small Charities Coalition, Stop Hate UK, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and Remembering Srebrenica.

There was also involvement from a broad spectrum of local and regional community organisations of different types, such as Caritas Salford, Faiths4Change (an environmental charity in the Wirral), North Somerset Bangladeshi Association, the Dacorum Indian Association, Birmingham City of Sanctuary, Oxford Sexual Assault and Rape Crisis Centre, and Voluntary Action Leicestershire.

## Equality bodies

A number of organisations working for equality or raising awareness of particular strands took part, such as Race Equality First and Inclusive Employers. There was a greater involvement this year from LGBT+ initiatives, such as the Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust, the Proud Trust, Just Like Us, York LGBT Forum, the Open Table Network, House of Rainbow, London Queer Muslims, Sarbat LGBT Sikhs, and KeshetUK.

## Media organisations

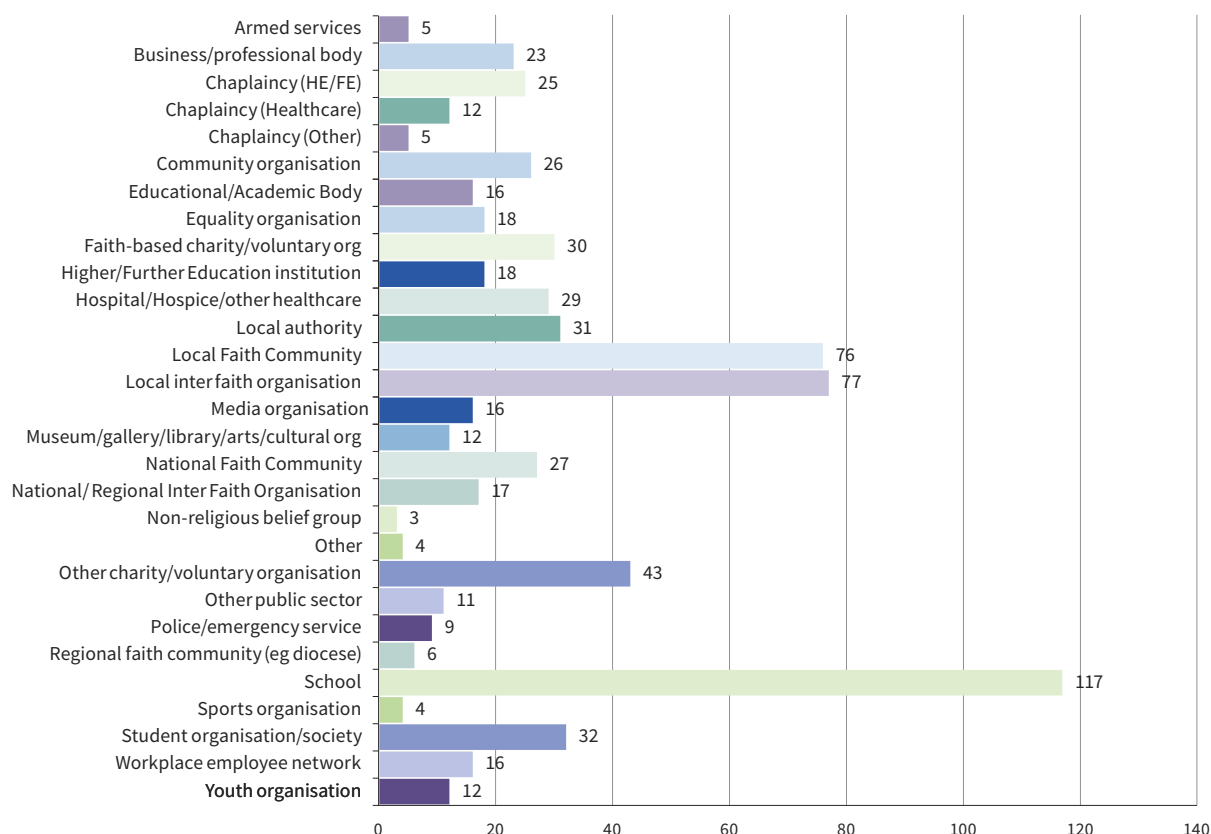
A new category was added this year for recording the participation of media organisations, following a significant increase particularly from radio stations. Those taking part included Manx Radio, Unity FM (Birmingham), EAVA FM (Leicester), BBC Radio Manchester, BBC Radio Humberside, Voice of Islam Radio, Premier Christian Radio, Nottingham Hospitals Radio, and Unity 101 Radio (Southampton). IFN staff and Trustees were interviewed about Inter Faith Week on a number of the programmes.

## Other types of organisations

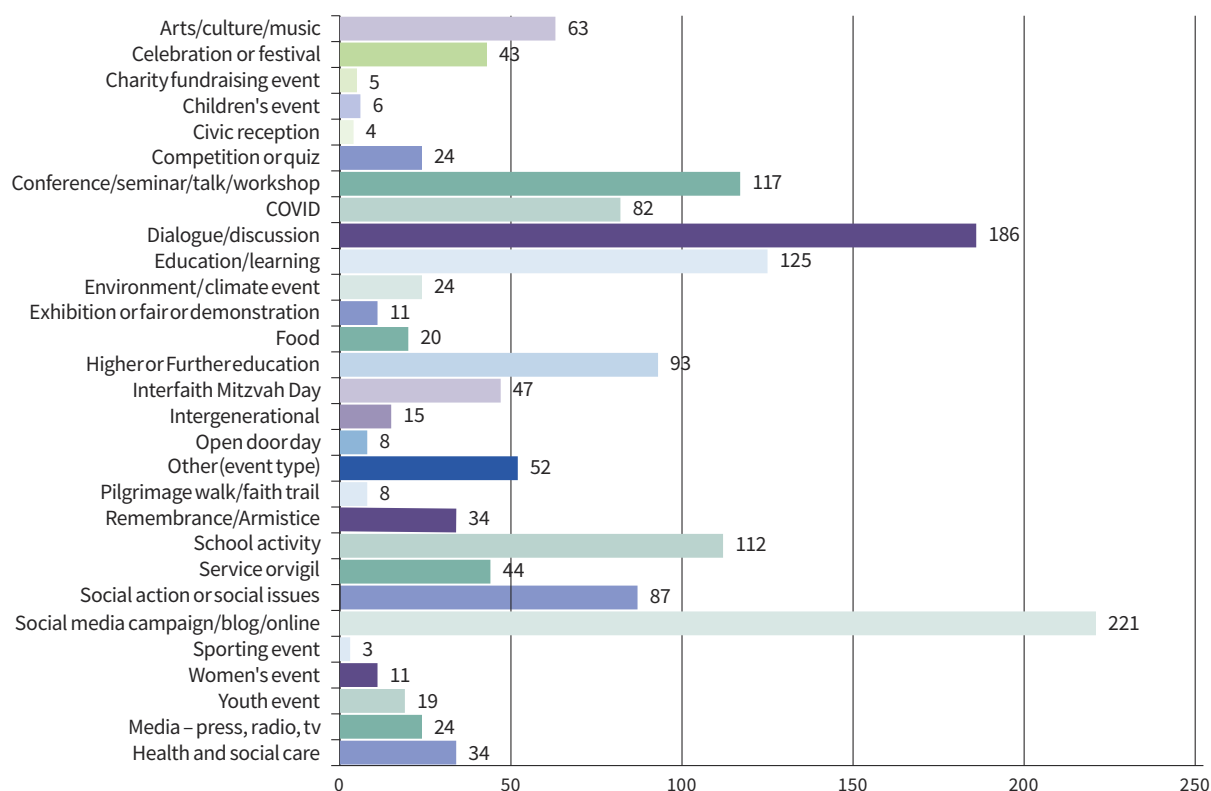
The Week continued to draw in an increasing range of different types of organisations such as care homes, embassies and funeral homes.

The chart overleaf shows how many of each type of organisation were involved in the Week. Organisations can only be assigned to one type and are listed according to their main characteristic. The figures are based on organisations which held activities. The range of organisations from which individual participants in events came was of course much wider. For example, panels generally included speakers from several different bodies.

## Inter Faith Week 2020 – Participating organisations in England, Northern Ireland and Wales by type



## Inter Faith Week 2020 – Activities by type



Footnote: Except those marked 'Interfaith Mitzvah Day', activities can be assigned to multiple topic categories, reflecting the fact that many activities touch on multiple themes. There is significant overlap between the categories 'School activity' and 'children's activity'; and 'Higher and further education activity' and 'youth activity'. The total number of activities with a youth/ children's dimension was 210.

## 8. What types of activities were held?

A huge variety of activities were held as part of Inter Faith Week 2020: celebrations; exhibitions and cultural activities; charity fundraisers and social action projects; volunteering activities; webinars; virtual services; virtual concerts; virtual tours; dialogues; competitions; quizzes; videos; blogs; podcasts; radio broadcasts; book clubs; school activities; virtual cooking and recipe sharing; and more. Overall a total of 717 activities are known to have taken place.

This report can, of course, only give a flavour of the Week by sharing some of the 700+ activities. A full list of activities for the Week can be seen at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/list-of-all-2020-inter-faith-week-activities>

### Week long programmes

Some towns and cities such as Birmingham, Kendal, Kirklees, Preston, Swansea, Swindon and York saw ambitious week-long programmes of activities.

***“This year presents a particular challenge because of the need for social distancing as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. However our regular team of Interfaith Week organisers have risen to the challenge in an amazing way with 22 events, mainly virtual.....***

***Whether you enjoy debates; spiritual activities; hearing the stories of migration to Birmingham; understanding how people of different faiths are working together; taking part in meditation; learning about the challenges and opportunities experienced by people with mental health issues; or taking part in a quiz – there is something here for everyone.”***

**– FROM THE EVENTS PROGRAMME OF BIRMINGHAM COUNCIL OF FAITHS**

A number of organisations also held week-long programmes for the Week, for example, the Faith and Belief Forum shared video messages from different faith and belief communities alongside other events and

activities and Solent NHS Trust held a number of events throughout the Week including radio broadcasts, a remembrance service, and a number of blog posts.

A number of other towns and cities such as Leeds, whilst not having formal city-wide programmes, saw a very dense concentration of activities. Contributory factors included the existence of active local inter faith bodies (in the case of Leeds, two bodies: Leeds Concord Interfaith Society and Leeds Faiths Forum), universities, voluntary organisations, and active involvement from the Near Neighbours programme.

### Impact of the pandemic

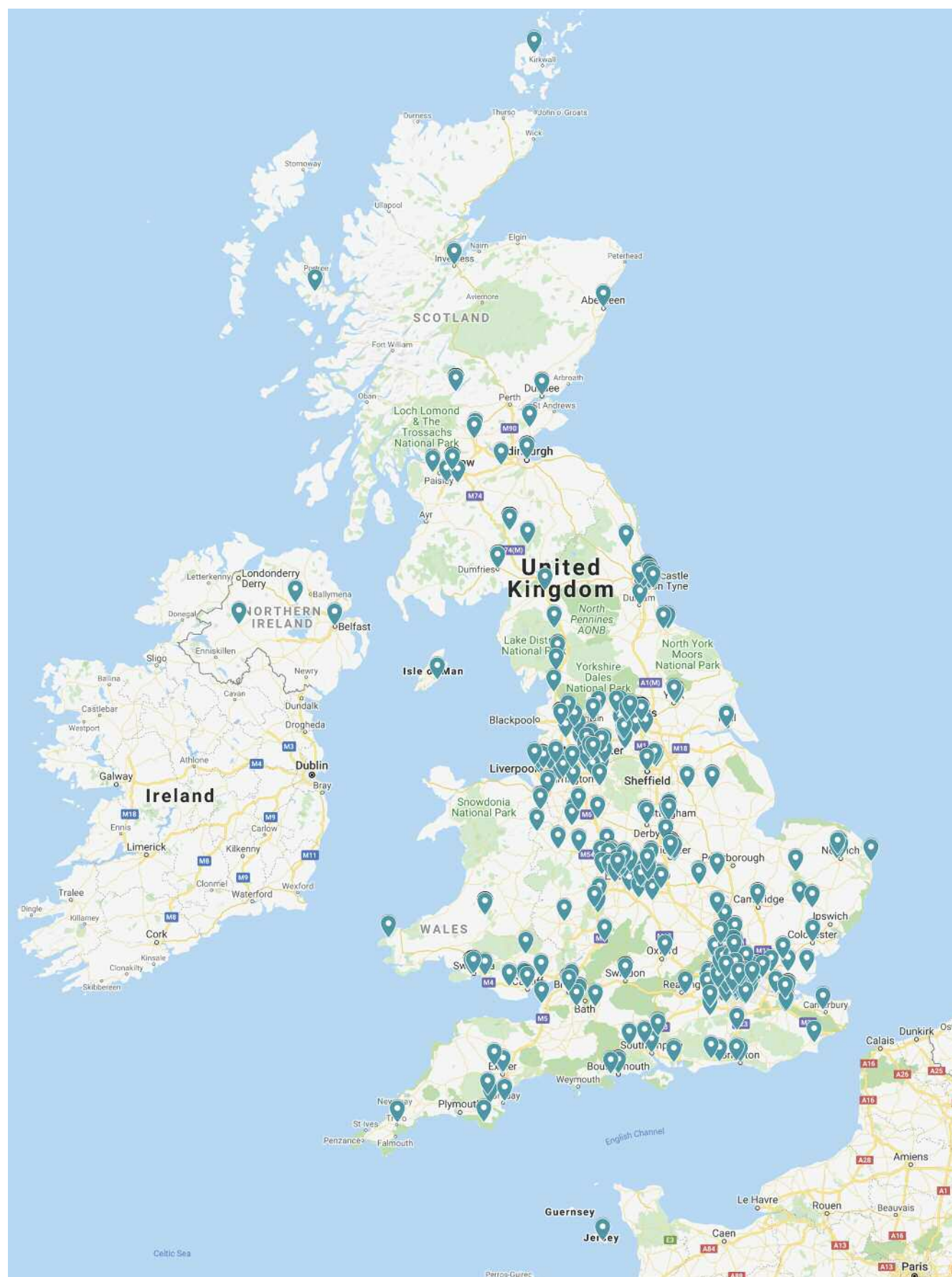
Some Inter Faith Week events were hosted virtually from places of worship and many other locations such as libraries and museums, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and hospices, community centres and outdoors.

As might be expected, due to social distancing and other restrictions, some types of activities were down significantly on the usual numbers, for example social action volunteering together, sports activities and children’s activities outside of school. By contrast, activities such as dialogues and meetings which translated well to Zoom and MS Teams were higher than usual.

### Events in Scotland

Led by Interfaith Scotland, Scottish Interfaith Week, or SIFW, has taken place since 2004 and provided important inspiration for the Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each year, it has a theme. In 2020, the theme was ‘Connecting’, which was selected to develop a programme of events which reflected the pressing need for human connection during a time of isolation. Over 70 events took place to mark Scottish Interfaith Week. These were included on the Inter Faith Week map but are not included in the activities in the chart below. For more information about Scottish Interfaith Week 2020, visit <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

## Map of Inter Faith Week 2020 activities



*Footnote: Where events were held virtually, in most cases the location of the main organisation holding the activity has been used on the map. 56 activities known to have taken place are not included on the map because they were entirely virtual, and led by national or UK-wide organisations. Scottish Interfaith Week events are shown on the map for information by agreement with Interfaith Scotland.*



## A selection of flyers and posters for the Week

### INTERFAITH EXPERIENCES

A PANEL DISCUSSION AND Q&A  
NATIONAL INTERFAITH WEEK 2020

With speakers who have participated in various forms of Interfaith Dialogue, we will explore the impact of this on their own faith, their faith communities and the wider world.

12/11/20 | 6pm  
Link posted on social media

**DISN**

**Durham Interfaith Student Network**

Hosted by five faith societies forming the Durham Interfaith Student Network and supported by the Durham University Chaplaincy Network.

### What are religions doing about race inequality?

Supported by **Woking**

Join the discussion live on zoom

Thursday 12th November 2020  
7.00 pm—8.30 pm on ZOOM

Guest Speakers for the event:

Gwyneth Blair Introduction	Rev Paul Davies Christian	Monisha Taylor Baha'i	Rabbi Danny Rich Jewish

Concludes with Q&A Session  
All Welcome!

**Woking People of Faith**

FAITHS TOGETHER IN CROYDON

16th November 2020  
Monday  
Time: 12.50-1.50pm

### INTERFAITH WEEK 2020

FTIC INVITES YOU TO YOUTH PANEL  
TALKING ABOUT FAITH  
AND  
**Kahoot! QUIZ TO WIN amazon VOUCHERS**

Register your interest at [fticroydon@gmail.com](mailto:fticroydon@gmail.com)

### Interfaith Week Nov 2020

Will YOU accept the CHALLENGE?  
Let our individual efforts together make a difference

**Cynghorffwrdd y Cymry Interfaith Council for Wales**

**Sunday 8th** It being an unusual Remembrance Sunday, take the time to quietly visit a cemetery or graveyard or other quiet spot in order to ponder and meditate.

**Monday 9th** Help the homeless in Cardiff by buying something from the Muggard Centre. Amazon collects wish-list attached.

**Tuesday 10th** Spend time reading one or more sections of holy writings from another faith (selections set out below).

**Wednesday 11th** Plant something.

**Thursday 12th** Write down 3 things that you are grateful for, be specific.

**Friday 13th** Do a kind deed and reflect on the recipient.

**Saturday 14th** Ring someone who comes to your mind that might need you.

**Sunday 15th** Post an inspiring interfaith message on social media.

### Unity in Diversity Interfaith Reflections

Tuesday 10 November at 10:00am

Fernanagh and Omagh District Council in partnership with Fernanagh and Omagh Interfaith group invite you to attend an online event to mark Interfaith Week 2020.

This is an on-line public event where participants are encouraged to join in to hear and share readings from different faiths and beliefs followed by discussion, helping to grow interfaith understanding and co-operation. At this time of Covid-19 Interfaith Week is more important than ever, helping people continue to come together and strengthen good inter-faith relations at all levels.

To register please email [pauline.clarke@fernaghmagh.com](mailto:pauline.clarke@fernaghmagh.com) or telephone: 0300 303 1777

#InterFaithWeek

### BRISTOL INTERFAITH WEEK

BRISTOL SU  
MULTIFAITH NETWORK

9 NOVEMBER - 13 NOVEMBER

**Monday 9th November**  
AM: MINDFULNESS WITH THE WELLBING VOUCHERS, TM, DTC, ZEN DTC AND YOGA DTC  
PM: ALLEGATION LESSON WITH YU JINAO  
EVENING: 10th NOVEMBER  
AM: ISLAM IS NOT A RELIGION OF VIOLENCE WITH ISLAMIC NETWORK  
EVENING: 11th NOVEMBER  
AM: VIRTUAL FAITH CRASH WITH THE MULTIFAITH AGENCY

**Tuesday 10th November**  
EVENING: CHALLENGING MISCONCEPTIONS WITH INTERFAITH REPS

**Wednesday 11th November**  
EVENING: FAITH AND FEMINISM PANEL EVENT WITH RECLAIM THE NIGHT AND THE WOMEN'S NETWORK

**Thursday 12th November**  
EVENING: INTERFAITH QUIZ AND SOCIAL

Find out more, and book your places to these free events at [www.bristoliv.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.bristoliv.org.uk/campaigns)

### Interfaith Week 8th- 15th Nov 2020

- Monday 9th, 5pm-** A discussion on reconciliation between Israel and Palestine with 'The Parents Circle'
- Tuesday 10th, 7pm-** Interfaith Debate with Debating Society
- Wednesday 11th, 5pm-** Interfaith Meditation with Buddhist Meditation
- Thursday 12th, 5pm-** Interfaith Irish dancing with Irish Dancing Society

Food bank drive

Hog-friendly Lockdown Litter Pick challenge

Leeds Marrow Stem cell donor register

Care home pen pals

Interfaith Buddies

### Interfaith week

**Monday 9th November**  
Launch of Inter Faith week with a video from Emma O'Leary and her live interview on Unity 101 radio at 3pm

**Tuesday 10th November**  
12-1pm: Inter Faith Panel Questions and Answers with guest panellists including a Chief Druid and Buddhist Nun

**Wednesday 11th November (Armistice Day)**  
10.50am: Act of Remembrance Service  
Also will be posted on Team Solent and Twitter on the day to join our act of remembrance at 11.00am

Throughout the day you can:

- Read powerful blogs from colleagues who served in the armed forces
- Listen to two First World War poems read by Jackie Aroley and Jaggi Wilkinson

**Thursday 12th November**  
Read Emma's reflective blog on Interfaith Week

**Friday 13th November**  
Watch videos of different faiths and places of worship around Southampton on the Multi Faith Resource Group page on SolNet.

**NHS Solent NHS Trust**

### FAITH AND REMEMBRANCE

CHRISTIAN, JEWISH AND MUSLIM REFLECTIONS ON REMEMBRANCE DAY AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR US  
THE IMPORTANCE OF REMEMBRANCE IN OUR FAITHS

**WEDNESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2020  
8PM TO 9PM  
HOSTED VIA ZOOM**

FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO JOIN US ON THE EVENING PLEASE EMAIL EITHER [A.SLATER@BURY.GOV.UK](mailto:A.SLATER@BURY.GOV.UK) OR [WARREN@FN4M.ORG](mailto:WARREN@FN4M.ORG)

## 9. Inter Faith Week: A launch pad for new initiatives and partnerships

Inter Faith Week is a very good time for organisations to highlight or launch new initiatives or take them to new stages. 2020 was no exception.

A number of national faith community bodies developed new initiatives linked to the Week. For example, the Salvation Army UK, Muslim Council of Britain, Baptist Inter Faith Working Group, Christian Muslim Forum, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church launched and celebrated a pilot twinning programme between 20 churches and mosques across Britain to mark the start of Inter Faith Week 2020. The pilot brought mosque and church leaders together for a series of online conversations between clergy and Imams, as well as lay leaders and volunteers, to foster deeper levels of friendship and understanding.

The Week also saw new local inter faith initiatives launched. For example, Glyndwr chaplaincy hosted, in collaboration with Wrexham Council's Community Cohesion team, the first meeting of a new Interfaith Forum for North Wales. In London, the London Borough of Newham launched a new Forum of Faiths in Newham to bring together faith communities to tackle inequalities. It is a programme framed within the council's 'Newham United Dialogue' initiative which was established formally to recognise and celebrate the contributions of the faith sector and to enable residents with an interest in faith-based dialogue and those with a particular faith persuasion to have a greater understanding and connection with others.

The Week was also the time for the launch of initiatives in other sectors, for example of a new project by Barking and Dagenham Clinical Commissioning Group; Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospital Trusts; Barts Health NHS Trust; NELFT NHS Foundation Trust; and faith communities in the London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, and Redbridge.



***“The NHS and faith communities in Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge have joined together and created the BHR Health and Faith Network. The group began meeting informally in April in response to the pandemic with an aim to understand different communities’ needs and to share important messages with faith groups. The members decided that the end of the pandemic, whenever this should be, shouldn’t be the end of them meeting and so they developed a terms of reference and planned the official launch event as part of Inter Faith Week 2020.”***

– [HTTPS://WWW.BARKINGDAGENHAMCCG.NHS.UK/BARKING-NEWS/FAITH-COMMUNITIES-JOIN-TOGETHER-WITH-A-COMMON-GOAL/129738](https://www.barkingdagenhamccg.nhs.uk/barking-news/faith-communities-join-together-with-a-common-goal/129738)



Faiths Against Child Sexual Exploitation (FACES) launched a Community Safeguarding Forum, to connect, inform, and support local organisations to improve the safeguarding of children and young people in Luton.

46% of survey respondents said that they worked with an organisation or organisations that they had never worked with before to hold their activity.

The Week is also a seedbed for new partnerships. Some local inter faith bodies work in partnership for the first time during the Week and many organisations of all kinds find it a great time to partner with others on activities.

***“This is the first time we have worked with another organisation, and we had only fairly recently built links with the hospice. That association has been greatly strengthened and we hope to plan other activities and support theirs.”***

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

Birmingham Scouts launched a ‘More in Common Badge’ in partnership with the Jo Cox Foundation. The badge is designed to encourage Scouts and Guides to show compassion, kindness, and friendship to others.

The post-Week survey asked activity organisers whether they used the Week to do something they had not done before, such as trying a new kind of activity, reaching out to a different audience, or launching a new resource/ initiative. 88% of respondents said ‘yes’. Examples included 2 books launched during the Week, a number of groups getting the taste for film-making and using digital communications, and the pilot of a virtual ‘faith visitors’ project for schools in Cumbria.

As well as formal joint initiatives and partnerships, activities held off the Week often enabled organisations to engage with other organisations with expertise on particular topics, with the prospect of further interaction. For example, the Board of Deputies held a webinar on Religious Freedom with Christian Solidarity Worldwide, the UK Baha’i community, and the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.



Christian Muslim Forum  
@ChrisMusForum

We're delighted to be supporting these church-mosque encounters as part of #InterFaithWeek this year with partner orgs. @muslimcouncil @UnitedReformed @salvationarmyuk @baptistuniongb @MethodistGB  
Read about a pairing in Eccles -



Eccles mosque and church pair up for Interfaith Week to improve understandin...  
Muslims and Christians in Eccles have joined a Mosque – Church Twinning scheme as part of the UK's Interfaith Week.  
mancunianmatters.co.uk

7:41 PM · Nov 16, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Abbas  
@Abbasmirza70

Proud to have helped set up the Health and Faith Network across @BHR\_CCGs & @BHRUT\_NHS and @NELFT today great listening to the chair Joe Fielder and Mohamed Omer from Redbridge Faith Forum and @NHSBartsHealth head of chaplaincy Yunus Dudhwala this morning #InterFaithWeek



12:46 PM · Nov 12, 2020 from Ilford, London · Twitter for iPhone

# 10. Inter Faith Week: Positive messaging

## The power of social media

Positive messages on social media about people of different faiths and beliefs learning about one another and working together reached a very wide audience beyond those who participated directly in Inter Faith Week activities. This amplified the impact of the Week, and of positive narratives about faith and belief groups and the generally good relations that exist in the UK.

*Tweets about Inter Faith Week appeared on the feeds of 11million Twitter users (the 'potential reach'), a total of 34.7million times (the 'potential impressions') during October, November and December.*

Information about the Week and posts about activities were also shared widely on Facebook and on Instagram, particularly through 'stories'. For example, De Montfort University in Leicester shared videos on its stories of students of different faiths and non-religious beliefs answering questions related to their beliefs.

Many organisations chose to mark the Week by sharing messaging about the Week on their social media channels, blogs, websites and intranets. For example, Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council shared a series of inspirational quotes during the Week on Twitter and each day Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum shared a quote from a different faith, as well as information about key dates/ festivals for that faith. Walsall Together created a series of blogs for the Week by members of faith communities on community spirit in Walsall. Safer Swansea Partnership held a week-long online campaign sharing what faith means to some members of Swansea's communities.

*"We got the local paper to support us with an article; as well as a short local radio interview."*

– LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATION

## On the airwaves

During Inter Faith Week 2020, radio stations both covered the Week and were a place for significant stories and dialogues. For example:

- EAVA FM in Leicester hosted a special three-hour radio show marking the launch of Inter Faith Week 2020 with inspirational readings and special guests. A series then continued throughout the Week with a wide range of guests.
- BBC Radio Manchester interviewed a Christian and a Muslim about a Church and Mosque twinning programme.
- Unity FM in Birmingham hosted two Connecting Communities Programmes about Inter Faith Week, one ahead of the Week featuring guests from IFN, BCF Footsteps for a Low Carbon Future, and Near Neighbours, and one during the Week on 'Faith, Diversity and Health'.
- Premier Christian Radio interviewed Aled Jones on his spirituality and his recent album and book which draw inspiration from different Christian traditions and other religions.
- Solent NHS Trust held an inter faith Q & A panel on Unity 101 Radio, with panelists including a Chief Druid and a Buddhist Nun.
- BBC Radio Humberside dedicated a Sunday Breakfast slot to Inter Faith Week.
- Voice of Islam Radio in London had a radio discussion on topics linked to the theme of inter faith harmony and included a guest from IFN.
- Nottingham University Hospital celebrated the Week by inviting its chaplains to choose tracks to play through the Nottingham Hospitals Radio.





## Articles and blogs

There were also press articles such as one that a member of the Focolare Movement wrote for the Polish language Polonia 24 UK about the importance of inter faith understanding and Inter Faith Week. <https://polonia24.uk/informacje/wielka-brytania/tydzien-miedzyreligijny-w-uk> and a piece by the Chair of MINAB for the Jewish News: <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/interfaith-unity-will-allow-us-to-get-through-this-national-lockdown-together/>



Lord-Lt Bedfordshire  
@LLieutenantBeds

Thank you to @GrassrootsLuton for the article in the @LutonNewsDesk Faith Matters column during #InterFaithWeek. So important to celebrate peace, respect and harmony - something we do very well in #Bedfordshire

### Faith Matters

What's happening in  
Luton's faith communities

## Celebrating Inter Faith Week with peace, respect and harmony

Written by  
**David Jonathan**

Grassroots & Luton Council Of Faiths

Inter Faith Week (November 8-15) begins with Remembrance Sunday. HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis produced the Bedfordshire Service of Remembrance online due to the pandemic. She said: "The service shows connections between people from different faiths, who clearly share a joint aspiration for peace, respect and harmony in our world."

Luton Council also streamed online a service and a commemoration event. In Luton, various other activities were held during Inter Faith Week, including Security Awareness (SAFE) webinars by the Community Security Trust (CST) to prepare and prevent places of worship from any potential terror attacks.



Dignitaries mark Remembrance Sunday

Luton-based charity FACES launched the Community Safeguarding Forum, which connects local communities, schools and places of worship to support, improving the ways we can safeguard children and young people in Luton.

In an online event, 'Sharing Stories of Hope', tens of people shared how they have been helping communities during these difficult times, with help from the Near Neighbours Programme.

A 12-hour Akhand Bhajan (non-stop devotional sing-

ing) for world peace was held online by Shri Sathya Sai Service Organisation.

Inter Faith Week is timed to encourage remembering together the service of soldiers and civilians of many different backgrounds in making our nation The Great Britain.

This year, in the Covid-19 context, it is important that we remember our key workers and many other unsung heroes too, who have kept the hope alive for many who are vulnerable and in need of help.

10:07 AM · Nov 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

David Jonathan, the Director of Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots, wrote an article for the Faith Matters column of Luton News about an Inter Faith week prayer and reflection event. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LutonFaiths/posts/3133676166737983/>



CHAOS Radio  
@ThisIsCHAOSUK

This week we've been celebrating different beliefs for #InterfaithWeek @IFWeek speaking to people practising Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in Cornwall.

We asked them... what do you love about your faith? #KeepItChaos

@LeeChantler2 @freerangechef @hasancornwall



3:43 PM · Nov 13, 2020 · TweetDeck



solentnhstrust  
@SolentNHStrust

We're looking forward to celebrating Interfaith Week, next week. Check out the exciting things we have planned below. Get ready for Emma D'aeth's live interview about Interfaith. Listen Monday 9 November, 3pm on Unity 101community radio. @NHS\_chaplain @Dandi\_SolentNHS @Unity101FM



6:26 PM · Nov 6, 2020 · Buffer



# 11. Inter Faith Week and Remembrance: Remembering together



*A wreath being laid on behalf of Watford Interfaith Association by its Chair, Harjit Singh.*

<https://www.facebook.com/WatfordInterfaithAssociation/photos/3688234331199790>

Inter Faith Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday, encouraging the remembering together of the service of soldiers and civilians of different faiths and beliefs and also thinking about peace.

The beginning of Inter Faith Week encouraged many different bodies to hold multi-faith remembrance services and events. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, acts of remembrance continued, both virtually and in socially-distanced ways.

Faith communities and inter faith organisations were among those who held special events. Some were in-person socially distanced services, for example at the Parish of St Mary's the Virgin in the Diocese of Llandaff with Muslim friends and the Merchant Seafarers Association present.

Most, however, were virtual services and events, such as those held by Community House in Newport, Bury Faith Forum, and Faiths Together in Lambeth. Halifax Minster, which plays an active role in Calderdale Interfaith Council, held a 'Civic Evensong on Remembrance Sunday'.

A number of universities and colleges held remembrance events and activities. For example, Bath Spa University Students' Union and Chaplaincy arranged a 'Remembrance Cairns' event where the names of those who had died were painted onto stones in a special act of remembrance. The University of Southampton held a Remembrance Service; and the University of Westminster Interfaith Team held an activity 'On Silence and Remembering'.

https://mobile.twitter.com/IFWeek/status/1326465797288497153



In Warwickshire, Southam College's pupils created a whole school Remembrance display, remembering all who fought for their country. Millwood Special Needs Primary School in Bury made rainbow wreaths and Year 3 pupils at Boothroyd Primary Academy in Dewsbury created artworks on Remembrance themes.

Some Remembrance activities focused on the diversity of those who fought in the First World War. For example, South London Interfaith Group hosted an event on the sacrifice of BAME soldiers; 495 Air Cadets hosted a Remembrance service with a guest speaker talking about Sikh soldiers who supported

https://twitter.com/ChurchinWales/status/1326791230936723457



the British Army on the Western Front and their memorial in Birmingham; and Barclays Embrace Sikh Forum did an online presentation about Sikhs in the World Wars, bringing stories to life through individuals and artefacts. Makkah Mosque in Leeds created a video 'Remembering the sacrifices of soldiers in WW1' and the International Imam Hussain Council, the London Institute of South Asia and Interfaith Exchange collaborated on a Diversity and Inclusion Interfaith Conference during the Week, where the contribution of diverse members of the armed forces during the First World War was commemorated.

<https://www.facebook.com/lisauk.org/videos/2680847438911724>

The theme of peace was picked up in a number of remembrance events such as Medway Inter Faith Action's Thoughts for Peace and Hope for the Future, and Redbridge Faith Forum's 'Love and Remembrance: Virtual Walk of Peace'. Sunderland Interfaith Forum's opening event for the Week was a Peace Gathering with a prayer from each major faith tradition, and "a chance to remember those who have died in all the wars since World War I, as well as a focus on the recent incidents in Kabul, Vienna and Nice."



https://twitter.com/MarkUmp/status/1325415145779105792?s=20



## 12. Inter Faith Week: Increasing religion and belief literacy and mutual understanding

Religion and belief literacy is vital in a diverse society. Inter Faith Week helps increase people's knowledge and understanding of the different faiths and beliefs in the UK and it provides opportunities for this with a real personal dimension.

The Week saw a very wide range of activities that increase learning and understanding, from simple (and not so simple!) quizzes to in depth dialogues.

***The importance of Inter Faith Week: an excerpt from AgeUK's online article for Inter Faith Week based on interviews with older people of different faiths:***

***"Talat believes it's vital for people of all faiths, and none, to learn more about each other. "Lack of knowledge leads to fear. The less you understand, the more stories your mind conjures up."***

***Rahda agrees: "To understand someone else's religion and faith, means that you get rid of any assumptions or misunderstanding. I wouldn't criticise anyone else's religion because, at the end of the day, we all pray to one God. Just do good to people. Whether they're atheist or a believer, just do good things for other people."***

***"We are all in the same boat with a lockdown and COVID," says Rajinder. "We are all part of one human race and we should learn from one another's faith and belief, and celebrate them."***

[HTTPS://WWW.AGEUK.ORG.UK/DISCOVER/2020/11/THE-ROLE-OF-FAITH-DURING-THE-CORONAVIRUS-PANDEMIC/](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/discover/2020/11/the-role-of-faith-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/)

***"[Our] event provided an opportunity to increase social awareness on religious and cultural issues and deepen understanding of different faith traditions."***

– A LOCAL AUTHORITY

### Faith groups throwing open the virtual doors to increase understanding

A number of faith communities marked Inter Faith Week by throwing open their virtual doors. For example, Chatham Memorial Synagogue held an open Friday evening service for Inter Faith Week and the Buddhist Group of Kendal held an online open meeting for those of all faiths and none.

Learning through virtual faith tours was also popular. For example, Bradford Cathedral shared an online version of the special tour it had created with a number of nearby places of worship of other faiths. Bath Spa University SU provided tours of local places of worship on Youtube.

Bristol University Chaplaincy normally takes students and staff on a guided tour around different local faith centres in Bristol as an opportunity to learn about different faith traditions in Bristol and meet new friends. The 'Faith Crawl' is one of its most popular events of the year. This year it went online. Leaders from three different local faith centres – Bristol Baha'i Centre, Humanism in Bristol and St Thomas Mar Thoma Church – each tuned in to give a short talk about how faith is lived out in their community, with time to ask questions. It was so successful that they are planning to do this again.

Bolton Interfaith Council also used Inter Faith Week as an opportunity for wider discussion of inter faith issues and activities in Bolton.

***“After our success in November with the first virtual Faith Crawl, UoB Multifaith Chaplaincy have decided to continue with the Faith Crawl being an online event! Join us on Zoom for a great opportunity to learn about different faith communities in Bristol and to meet new people!”***

– UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL CHAPLAINCY

[HTTPS://SPRINGACTIVITIESLIBRARY.BLOGS.BRISTOL.AC.UK/2021/02/05/UNIVERSITY-OF-BRISTOL-MULTIFAITH-CHAPLAINCY-FAITH-CRAWL-11-MARCH](https://springactivitieslibrary.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/2021/02/05/university-of-bristol-multifaith-chaplaincy-faith-crawl-11-march)

## Quizzes

Quizzes were very popular during the pandemic and that was certainly the case in Inter Faith Week where they enabled people to test their knowledge about different faiths and beliefs.

Quizzes featured in the activities of organisations such as Faiths Together in Croydon; Barnet Multi Faith Forum; Kirklees Library; Outreach Ealing; the Jewish Museum London; and Swindon Interfaith and Swindon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. A number of universities such as the University of Bristol and Anglia Ruskin University also held quizzes.



***“To celebrate National Inter Faith Week, you’re invited to join ARU & the Mid Essex Inter Faith Forum for an online Inter faith quiz. Test your knowledge in a fun, interactive quiz and see if what you think you know about other faiths is really true. Event hosted by The Rev’d Canon Ivor Moody, Vice Dean and Canon Pastor of Chelmsford Cathedral and quiz mistress Sidra Naeem.”***

– [HTTPS://ARU.AC.UK/COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT/INTER-FAITH-WEEK-QUIZ](https://aru.ac.uk/community-engagement/inter-faith-week-quiz)

In Cumbria, a teacher from Dallam School in Milnthorpe produced an Inter Faith Week quiz based on celebrities and this was shared between schools in Cumbria through the RE Teach Meet network.



*Pupils at Mayflower Primary School, Tower Hamlets, hear from a faith leader*

## Learning in schools

Most schools were in session despite COVID and the need for ‘bubbles’ and they held many activities that contributed to the religious literacy of their pupils and staff. It is a challenge to choose just a few examples of their activities, but the following give something of a flavour!

The National Association of SACREs and the Welsh Association of SACREs had given encouragement to schools to take part and many schools used the Week to help their pupils learn more about particular faiths. This was usually within RE or whole school activities where participation in the Week was used to add value to their year-round learning.







*Pupils at Rowan Preparatory School, Esher, listen to a presentation about Diwali*

[https://twitter.com/Rowan\\_Prep/status/1327264450844499970](https://twitter.com/Rowan_Prep/status/1327264450844499970)

There were also some ambitious programmes. Cumbria SACRE members, for example, ran a ‘Talking Heads’ activity with six representatives from different religions and worldviews. See the Snapshot below.

Many schools – particularly primary schools – held classroom activities with a focus on Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikism and other traditions. For example, Lapworth Church of England Primary School near Solihull had a special focus on learning about Sikhism, East Ward Primary in Bury explored Islam and Buddhism, and Mayflower Primary in Tower Hamlets in London had learning sessions about Christianity with local Christian clergy by video link and a general learning session on different faiths and beliefs. The St Philips

Centre in Leicester held three assemblies and workshops for St Margaret’s School, Stoke Golding on Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism.

Some school sessions had a special personal dimension. For example, Gurukula Hare Krishna Primary School in Watford had a presentation from a rabbi through the Jewish Community of Berkshire: <https://mobile.twitter.com/jcobschools/status/1331631666046132228> The Faith and Belief Forum hosted their first virtual ‘Encountering Faith and Belief’ session with Year 7 pupils from Forest School in London.

Pupils of different ages also learned from each other. For example, at St Columba’s College in St Albans several events were held for Inter Faith Week. At one

## INTER FAITH WEEK SNAPSHOT 5

### Cumbria SACRE

Six representatives from Cumbria SACRE produced a series of 3-5 minute ‘Talking Heads’ for use in school during Inter Faith Week. These included representatives from Baha’i, Buddhism, Christianity, Humanism, Islam and Judaism. Teacher representatives on Cumbria SACRE piloted these across their own schools, giving valuable feedback as a preliminary exercise for the Culham St Gabriel’s Project. Questions included: What does it mean to live a religious life? How does your religion or worldview impact on your daily life? Head of RS at Dowdales School, Victoria Bunter said: “Talking Heads

has been an amazing way to interact with students over a digital platform. They have had the opportunity to learn about different Faiths from ‘real people’ in the local community of Cumbria.” Head of RS at The Queen Katherine School, Katherine France said: “We were able to use the ‘Talking Heads’ across the school during Inter Faith Week, not only in RS lessons. They gave a really personalised and local reflection for our students. A fantastic resource for future use too!”

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/6381/6528/17360/44154115931.pdf>

## Diwali and Inter Faith Week 2020

Diwali, which took place during Inter Faith Week, was the focus of many activities.

In schools it was an opportunity for many learning activities, such as learning about the story of Ram and Sita in a number of schools, including Hale Broadoak Primary in Manchester, Holy Trinity C of E Primary in Oswestry, Usworth Colliery Primary in Washington, Rowan Prep in Esher, and St Andrew's Church of England Primary School in Kettering.

Some local inter faith organisations provided opportunities to learn about Diwali and to enjoy the festive celebrations of friends marking it. Barnet Multi Faith Forum, for example, held: "Diwali: What you always wanted to know about Diwali (but were too afraid to ask!). A unique opportunity to appreciate and celebrate this Festival of Light in Song, Dance, Words and Virtual food!"

To mark Diwali, and as part of Inter Faith Week, Headstone Manor & Museum shared an online exhibition documenting the festival celebrated in Harrow and

Bournemouth University Students asked the university community to "to join together in hope by sharing an image of light, wherever they are in the world", putting their images on social media using the hashtag #spreadalittlejoy, or take a moment to browse the images shared by others.

Crawley's St Catherine's Hospice catering team produced special star shaped biscuits for patients and staff to celebrate both Diwali and Inter Faith Week.

Marking Diwali and Inter Faith Week, Anchor Care Homes featured a blog from a Hindu employee talking about Hinduism/Sanatam Dharma, the impact this has on her work, and Diwali.

<https://www.anchorhanover.org.uk/news-events-blogs/blogs/inter-faith-week-hinduism>

The Jain Network held a joint virtual celebration of Diwali and Christmas, and used this occasion to donate food to a local food bank.



*Pupils at Rowan Preparatory School, Esher, enjoy a special Diwali lunch*

[https://twitter.com/Rowan\\_Prep/status/1327235023867686913/photo/1](https://twitter.com/Rowan_Prep/status/1327235023867686913/photo/1)

Many other kinds of organisations put out messages about Diwali and Inter Faith Week, sharing festival facts, for example the local authority of Neath Port Talbot as part of its week-long Inter Faith Week series "celebrating the interfaith community" by having a look at different traditions and celebrations happening at this time of the year for different faith communities.

<https://www.facebook.com/NeathPortTalbotBC/posts/350710992601242>



<https://twitter.com/BMFForum/status/1324375246858821633>



*Pupils from Blue Coat School, Coventry, learning about Diwali and Bandi Chorr Divas*

of these, the Head Boy and an Upper Sixth student shared their faith experience with Form 3, enhancing 3's study of Islam and celebrating one of the many faith traditions that make up the St Columba's College community. They spoke about their experiences of Ramadan, attending the mosque, the sense of community they feel, and what it has been like attending a Catholic school as a Muslim. At South Bank Primary School, Middlesbrough, the Week focused on bringing pupils together to help improve understanding of faiths and share what we have in common. Each class studied a different faith and learned from each other at a whole school assembly where they shared their research.

There was also exchange learning between schools. For example, pupils at three schools in Coventry:

***"As part of Interfaith Week, pupils from Eden Girls joined pupils from Blue Coat School and Seva School to take part in a virtual interfaith panel. This provided an opportunity for our pupils to work collaboratively with pupils from different cultures and backgrounds to learn about other faiths, beliefs and practices. Along with this, pupils in Year 7 shared a postcard of peace and collaboration with their peers from Blue Coat School."***

***– [HTTPS://WWW.EDENGIRLSCOVENTRY.COM/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2020/12/EDEN-GIRLS-COVENTRY-NEWSLETTER-ISSUE-13-SM.PDF](https://www.edengirlscoventry.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/EDEN-GIRLS-COVENTRY-NEWSLETTER-ISSUE-13-SM.PDF)***

Sometimes major faith festivals fall within Inter Faith Week. This year it was Diwali during the Week, as well as the Sikh festival of Bandi Chorr Divas.

## Employers and workplaces

The Week is often used by employers, workplace networks and professional organisations to explore and learn more about different faiths and beliefs. For example, Trowers & Hamlins shared reflections on Inter Faith Week from staff and partners, including members of its staff Inter Faith Network on social media during the Week; Inclusive Employers hosted a webinar on religion and the importance of beliefs; Morgan Stanley Faith Forums held an inter faith panel; and Aviva celebrated the Week by encouraging its staff Origins Community Group to share their faith stories across the company. A wide range of faith networks of employees in different UK Government Departments took part.

As with most Inter Faith Week events this year, the majority of business and workplace events were online. For example, Cadent Careers held a 'Lunch and Learn' event on MS Teams – an interactive session "aimed at celebrating Inter Faith Week together by sharing stories, asking questions, listening and learning."

## Online learning opportunities from museum, libraries and archives

There were a number of opportunities to learn more about different aspects of faith communities and their histories from online offerings of museums, libraries and archives.

The Khalili Collections in partnership with Google Arts & Culture and Good Faith Partnership presented 'A Visual History of the Hajj from the Khalili Collections'; and the Jewish Museum London held an online session exploring one of the Museum's objects as part of both Mitzvah Day and Inter Faith Week. The Jewish Museum's activity included step-by-step instructions for creating a care package. The Huddersfield Library and Past Truisms provided an online talk: 'Hidden History of Faith: The Working Class Victorian Muslim – With Jewish and Christian Footsteps'.





Archives provided further opportunities for learning. For example Surrey History Centre posted a week-long series of tweets featuring a selection of faith-related images from the Surrey archives, starting with the Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking, the first purpose built mosque in Northern Europe.



Similar archive sharing also took place by some others such as @SouthamptonStories which explores the stories behind the objects, archives and artworks in the care of Southampton City Council Cultural Services.

## Discussions and dialogues

An example of the kind of creative inter faith conversations and learning seen in Inter Faith Week was one held by NatWest Sikh Network between two senior Christian and Sikh women: the Ethos and Formation Director for Oasis and the CEO of the Sikh Assembly and Managing Director at JP Morgan Chase

Bank, its topic: Servant Leadership: 'What do our faiths Teach and how does it influence the way we lead in our workplace?' Conversations between those of religious and non-religious beliefs were also important.

The Week gives people a chance to explore this in a very personal way – in conversation. For example, Slough Faith Partnership brought local women together for an 'inspirational discussion' about what faith means to them in Britain in 2020.

***"By listening to each other we become educated about different faiths, thereby taking away the stigma that evolves through fear and the unknown. That results in actually learning that we have things in common with each other and liking the other person that we were wary of in the beginning. Friendships are made this way!"***  
– A FAITH GROUP

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council held a virtual event in which members of the public were encouraged to share readings from their faith. The World Congress of Faiths held its annual Youngusband Lecture on the topic 'One Mystery, Two Stories – Science and Religion in Dialogue' with



speakers attending from around the globe. County Durham Faith Network held an event at which members of different faith and belief communities shared their personal perspectives on pilgrimage. The IMOS Foundation hosted a discussion in the Romney Marsh Sculpture Park in Kent, which has "inter faith,

multiracial, international, and Humanist sculptures". Members of the public met for individual, in-depth conversations and to explore the developing sculpture park.

University of Sunderland Chaplaincy released a video in which its Inclusion Manager and University Chaplain discussed the importance of Inter Faith Week, celebrating faith and belief communities. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=810855566362771>





Interfaith Buddies Debby and Annabelle, from Surrey Faith Links, speak about their experiences

## Inter Faith Buddies – connecting differently, connecting deeply

The Inter Faith Network for the UK developed a special ‘Inter Faith Week Buddies’ scheme for the Week. This was specially designed to enable and deepen communication at a time of social distancing. The scheme involved two individuals of different faiths or of a faith and of a non-religious belief choosing to ‘buddy together’ and having conversations by phone, virtual meeting, email or messaging. The guidelines it provided can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-buddies>

In the weeks leading up to Inter Faith Week they chose or developed questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences. During Inter Faith Week, they shared online or at a socially distanced event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they had gained from the experience.

A number of IFN’s Trustees took part in the scheme. One wrote:

***“We spoke on several occasions during September and October. Like many interesting conversations, we began our chats by exploring our roots and interestingly our politics. ... Although coming from very different faith and political perspectives [we] found ourselves considering where we would start in addressing social justice. [...] Both of us explored ideas, and made a start on possible answers of what an equitable society might include.”***

– AN INTER FAITH NETWORK TRUSTEE

A number of local inter faith groups, such as Cornwall Faith Forum, Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group, Leeds Faiths Forum, the Isle of Man Interfaith Group and Surrey Faith Links took up the scheme. Three of the Isle of Man pairs were interviewed by Manx Radio. Surrey Faith Links made a short video about their very positive experience <https://youtu.be/wHgNwAQsJyk>

***“The people taking part were members of the Muslim and Jewish Communities and Christian and Pagan Communities and someone with an interest in all Faiths. Everyone said that they learned a lot and really appreciated the rare opportunity to ask personal questions in a safe environment. We also talked about what the most surprising thing was, we had learned. I learned from my Buddy that whenever times were difficult, she would pray more and ask for more help. I found that really helpful to hear because although it makes sense to pray more, it is often more difficult during times of stress and strain. We all decided that the Inter-Faith Buddies Scheme was a good experience and it doesn’t have to take a lot of time.”***

– [HTTPS://DORKEMMYN.ORG.UK/FEEDBACK-FROM-INTERFAITH-WEEK-2020/](https://DORKEMMYN.ORG.UK/FEEDBACK-FROM-INTERFAITH-WEEK-2020/)

Humanists UK also took up the scheme, and worked with the Inter Faith Network office to arrange a series of buddy links between Humanists and people of different faiths. Feedback from those involved in the 12 buddy pairs in different areas was very positive.

***“The buddy scheme worked very well and both my assigned “buddy” and I intend to continue for the foreseeable future on this. When COVID allows we intend to meet and I look forward to seeing what his community programme does in the region.”***

– A HUMANIST PARTICIPANT

The inter faith buddy scheme was also very successfully adapted by Interfaith Scotland for Scottish Interfaith Week.

# 13. Inter Faith Week: Building respect, understanding and cooperation

Inter Faith Week plays a part in highlighting and strengthening respectful and positive relationships between people of different backgrounds in our diverse society.

For example, pupils at some schools, such as Archbishop Tenison's Secondary School in London and Moreton Say CE Primary School in Market Drayton learned about broader themes such as shared values and inter faith understanding and cooperation. The Medical Needs Teaching Service, Leeds, and Leeds Children's Hospital arranged for the children to mark Inter Faith Week by "exploring the different faiths and cultures followed throughout the world, focusing on the importance of tolerance and equality".

*"... [E]ach day we focused on one religion in our assemblies. Children completed knowledge organisers for each religion and posters to celebrate the British values of mutual respect and tolerance."*

– HAYWARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, CREDITON

Building Bridges Pendle held, with In-Situ, a 'Digital Talking Society' event exploring such questions as: How have interfaith relations been impacted by Covid-19 and what does this mean for the future? How are people of different faiths and backgrounds working together to support their communities and wider society? How can we strengthen good interfaith relations at all levels?

The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester held an event titled 'What I like about Religion X', at which three speakers gave their view on what they liked about another's religion and the audience had chance to contribute their own positive thoughts on a religion that wasn't their own.

Cohesion Plus in Gravesend created a special visual montage of the values highlighted in Inter Faith Week.



<http://www.kenteccc.org.uk/national-interfaith-week-2020/>

## INTER FAITH WEEK SNAPSHOT 6 Kent Equality Cohesion Council

As part of National Inter Faith Week, in the midst of a pandemic, Kent Equality Cohesion Council worked with local community and faith organisations on this special image. Faiths represented in the image include the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu and Sikh. Gurvinder Sandher CEO of Kent Equality Cohesion Council commented, 'Each year we work hard to arrange events for National Inter Faith Week working with local community and faith partners. Unfortunately due to the national lockdown this has not been possible this year. Nonetheless I wanted to mark the week somehow and the result was this image with everyone holding up a sign sharing one of the values of Inter Faith Week. I am grateful to all partners who supported us with this.'

**76%** of people think that their activities are likely to have helped contribute to developing stronger/more positive relations within their workplace or institution

Values such as respect and tolerance were the focus of a number of discussions. For example, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association of Hounslow North held an online inter faith event to discuss the nature of tolerance, with Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish and Muslim perspectives.

The Birmingham based Universal Peace Federation, Women's Federation for World Peace explored how people of faith can contribute to healing divisions.

Nottingham Interfaith Council, with the help of Nottingham City Council and One Nottingham, invited people of different backgrounds to a Zoom session to celebrate Inter Faith Week and to share their experiences of faith and friendship, following opening talks by speakers from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions talking about their perspectives on friendship.

**SikhPressAssociation**  
@SikhPA

As part of the #InterFaithWeek initiative, @SikhPA's @Dawinderpal Singh sat down with @MuslimCouncil Britain's @HassanJoudi\_ to discuss how faith has helped their respective communities during the pandemic.

Watch their conversation here:  
[youtu.be/mHnesuk3x5g](https://youtu.be/mHnesuk3x5g)



Dawinderpal Singh  
Press Officer  
Sikh PA



Hassan Joudi  
Mosques Affairs Coordinator  
Muslim Council of Britain

MCB and 9 others

Good relations in the workplace were also a focus, as this Facebook post by PwC's Sikh Network reflects:

**"PwC LLP UK – Inter Faith Week (8 to 15 November) symbolises the importance of coming together and learning about each other's faith. To our PwC Sikh network, it is about having respect for each other irrespective of gender, faith, culture and wealth. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj is the Living Guru of the Sikhs, and says "No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone".**

**In Sikhi 'Sewa' is a core value which means 'selfless service'. Sikhs perform 'Sewa' in a variety of ways, including feeding hot served meals and providing clothes to the homeless and those in need. In all Gurdwaras (place of worship), anyone of any faith is welcome to seek the blessings of Guru Ji (spiritual teacher).**

**Our Sikh Network encourages greater interaction between people from different backgrounds and faiths to celebrate our differences while having a better appreciation for each other's beliefs. Inter Faith Week is also a great time to start a conversation with someone from a different faith. You may find that you share more in common than you think: from cherishing the same hopes and dreams for yourself and others, to sharing the same values we each live by. #InterFaithWeek #EverydayInclusion | Facebook"**

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PWCUK/PHOTOS/A.10152358586148526/10157894102748526](https://www.facebook.com/PWCUK/PHOTOS/A.10152358586148526/10157894102748526)

Good relations, as well as religious literacy, was also the focus of a webinar held by Platform Housing Group about 'What we have in Common'. This was designed "to explore how to strengthen inter faith relations, awareness of different and distinct faith communities in the UK, and understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs." <https://www.facebook.com/291177615056159/posts/as-part-of-interfaith-week-were-holding-a-webinar-what-we-have-in-common-to-expl/785552478952001/>



# 14. Inter Faith Week: Tackling social issues together

Each year, Inter Faith Week provides a platform for faith communities and belief groups to address issues of common concern from the environment to tackling hate crime.

A number of activities ranged across a number of different social issues and were often very practically focused. One such activity was 'Towards a better understanding of Judaism and Quakerism in Birmingham'. This was a sharing of perspectives between Birmingham's Jewish and Quaker communities. Speakers talked about their communities in Birmingham with particular reference to social action and welfare, climate change and prison chaplaincy.

## The environment and climate change

The UK Government had originally been due to host COP26 in Glasgow in November 2020. Due to COVID-19 it was postponed for a year. However, many events still took place focusing on the environment and climate change. IFN worked with Faith for the Climate to encourage that.

Hope for the Future and Faith for the Climate hosted a special event which brought together people from all faith traditions and backgrounds, including MPs from across the political spectrum, to reflect, share, and consider the vision for the coming year as the UK prepares to host the UN's annual international climate negotiations in November 2021.

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum and the Green Party Northern Ireland collaborated on a virtual meeting on 'Faith in the Environment, an Inter Faith Perspective', with contributions from Belfast Islamic Centre, Jampa Ling Buddhist Community, Indian Community Centre, NI Humanist Association and Eco-congregations Ireland.

Religions for Peace UK's Women of Faith Network held 'The Role of Women of Faith in Protecting the Earth', showcasing examples of inspirational women.



Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK) attending the Planting for Peace event at OneJAIN Ahimsa Peace Garden, Harrow

<https://youtu.be/qwwKiHo27Jo>

Many local activities took place, such as:

- Harrow Interfaith, Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur UK (part of OneJAIN), and Harrow Recreation Ground Community Gardeners held a socially-distanced Planting for Peace event at the Ahimsa Peace Garden.
- Footsteps – Faiths for a Low Carbon Future (Birmingham) and Faith for the Climate held an event 'Countdown to the Glasgow UN climate summit 2021: Faith voices from Birmingham', exploring how grassroots communities, especially faith groups, can contribute to more ambitious climate action in the run-up to COP26;
- Warwick District Faiths Forum held an activity called '8 Days to Help Creation – Call for Action' to encourage communities to get involved, and do a good deed to protect and heal creation;
- Participants of St Denys, Evington, 'Footpaths' course held an event with various faith communities on why caring for the planet matters to them;
- Faiths4Change, in the Wirral, held an event with reflections on Community and Eco action in the current climate involving the Bishop of Warrington,



Operation Noah and local congregations participating in the Eco Church scheme.

- Manchester Cathedral and FN4M held a session on 'Our Faith, Our Planet, Our Challenge: Caring for God's Creation' to "inspire actions in our faith communities and neighbourhoods towards reducing carbon output and preventing more damage to our world".
- An interfaith dialogue on the theme of 'Saving the Earth' took place with representatives from different faith groups from the University of Southampton Faith and Reflection Centre.

## Black Lives Matter and racial justice

Inter Faith Week 2020 took place during a time of heightened awareness of the importance of working for racial justice due to the impact of the murder earlier in the year in the USA of George Floyd and the renewed urgency of the Black Lives Matter campaign. This prompted a number of special focus discussions. For example, as part of its response to the issues, the Board of Deputies of British Jews held an Inter Faith Week podcast on 'Navigating Faith, Race and Identity in 2020' with guest speakers from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim backgrounds discussing the Black-Jewish relationship.

https://twitter.com/BoardofDeputies/status/1323265419369713664?s=20



Local inter faith discussions in a number of areas focussed on racial justice. For example Woking

People of Faith held an event exploring what religions are doing about race inequality and Preston Faith Forum and the Christian Muslim Forum explored the question 'Has interfaith effectively tackled racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism?'. At a Devon Faith and Belief Forum event, 'What can we learn from the Black Lives Matter protests?', Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh and other participants discussed the relationship between faith and belief and unconscious bias and shared their experiences and perspectives.

Stafford and District Friends of Faith members contributed to a recording on the theme of Faiths for Racial Justice. <https://sdff.org.uk/SDFF-FOP-2020.mp4>

***"The best aspect of our activity this year was raising awareness around race inequality"***  
– FAITH GROUP

***"As a nation and indeed a school, we have been challenged these past few months to confront racism and discrimination entrenched within our society. I have said in previous communications that, as a school community, we will not tolerate racism and discrimination of any kind and acknowledged that we have an important role in promoting inclusion and overcoming prejudice. This week is Interfaith Week, and our Chaplain has put together some resources for our students. She will be delivering assemblies to the whole school to remind us that we are all in this together, and that we are all responsible for cultivating an anti-racist community, that embraces and celebrates our wonderfully diverse multi-racial, multi-ethnic community."***

– WOODHOUSE GROVE SCHOOL, APPERLEY BRIDGE, WEST YORKSHIRE  
[HTTPS://WWW.WOODHOUSEGROVE.CO.UK/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2020/11/ALL-PARENTS-NOVEMBER-2020.PDF](https://www.woodhousegrove.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ALL-PARENTS-NOVEMBER-2020.PDF)



## Responding to refugees

Brent Multi Faith Forum used Inter Faith Week to further their roles as a partner in the Brent Borough of Sanctuary scheme. During their programme 'Reflections of Sanctuary' faith and community leaders in Brent heard reflections from the Mayor of Brent and a variety of faith and community representatives including about Brent Shelter of Sanctuary, a winter night shelter coordinated by BMFF which supports homeless men in Brent, particularly 'those who have no rights and no recourse to public funds'.

Birmingham City of Sanctuary held an online event 'In Celebration of Sanctuary – Faiths Welcoming the Stranger'.



## Tackling prejudice and hate crime

Hate crime linked to religious and racial identity continues to be a concern across the UK. Inter Faith Week provided an opportunity for both discussion and practical training. For example Standup! Education against Discrimination, a programme led by Maccabi GB and the Community Security Trust (CST), offered councillors, faith leaders and those working in the community free bespoke anti-discrimination training with a focus on antisemitism and Islamophobia.

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation arranged two Foundation Stones stone painting workshops as part of Inter Faith Week where people could paint and share a Foundation Stone live on Zoom and then contribute it to become part of the planned UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in London. Each stone represents a commitment from communities and faith groups across the UK to remember the past and build a future free from discrimination and hatred. Remembering Srebrenica held a webinar on the importance of faith and inter faith events and activities as a powerful tool to counter the hatred that causes discrimination and marginalisation of religious minorities.

The Director of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust wrote a piece for Asian Image about learning from Sister Agnes Walsh and Abdol Hossein Sardari who risked their lives to help Jews during the Holocaust:

***“... It is on each of us to remember with purpose and stand firmly united against prejudice and division. In Interfaith Week and beyond, I urge everyone to follow the example set by Sardari and Agnes and to shine a light on injustice wherever you see it. It is not enough to celebrate our diversity; we must also actively defend and support it.”***

– OLIVIA MARX-WOLDMAN OBE ASIAN IMAGE  
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/3TFT1JK](https://bit.ly/3TFT1JK)

## Violence against women and girls

During the pandemic, an increase in domestic abuse was a serious concern.

A number of activities were about responding to this. Colchester Borough Council and J9 Domestic Abuse Initiative held training sessions for church and other faith group leaders to raise awareness and increase knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse.

Oxford Sexual Assault and Rape Crisis Centre and Oxford Brookes University held a an inter faith discussion about the role of faith in protecting women and girls from violence, and in perpetuating violence.

## Health and wellbeing

A wide range of health and wellbeing issues were explored during the Week.

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, St Nicholas Hospice and Wedgwood House in Bury St Edmunds jointly created a video describing how their chaplaincy services offer a place for people to deal with moments of great joy and great tragedy. Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) produced a video about spirituality and kindness. Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust held a webinar with various faith representatives on religion and mental health. Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospital Trust's Chaplains posted a series of Tweets for the Week. Rotherham

NHS Foundation Trust launched a Handbook of Faiths and Cultures for all of its wards. The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust held a 'My Role Monday' to spotlight an individual member of staff. Nottingham University Hospitals shared a series of videos on Twitter of their chaplains of different faiths and beliefs.

NHS Blood and Transplant ran an awareness campaign during the Week and also held a webinar about the different faiths' and beliefs' perspectives on organ donation to encourage people to think about organ donation within the context of their faith or belief.

NHS Digital published a cookbook, an online faith poster exhibition and an online discussion on faith in lockdown.

A number of hospices played a part in the Week. For example, the Marie Curie Hospice in Solihull held an event with Solihull Faiths Forum on 'Finding Peace during the Pandemic'; the Donna Louise Hospice for Children and Young People in Stoke on Trent held a special Inter Faith Week celebration and Richard House Children's Hospice in London shared a blog about faith and belief. St Barnabas Hospice in West Sussex shared a series of tweets about the multi faith support provided by the hospice's Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy Team.

Mind in Mid Herts marked the Week with interviews with three people of different faiths about faith and mental wellbeing and the Centre for Reconciliation (Lincoln) held a webinar across three days on 'Mental Health Support and Strategies from faith and religious perspectives'. Old Kent Road Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre hosted a discussion with a multi faith panel exploring 'Faith and Mental Health'. Alzheimers Society Essex and Colchester Borough Council held a joint session on Dementia Awareness.



[https://youtu.be/\\_G7DZdJ3H5I](https://youtu.be/_G7DZdJ3H5I)



# 15. Inter Faith Week: Working together for the common good

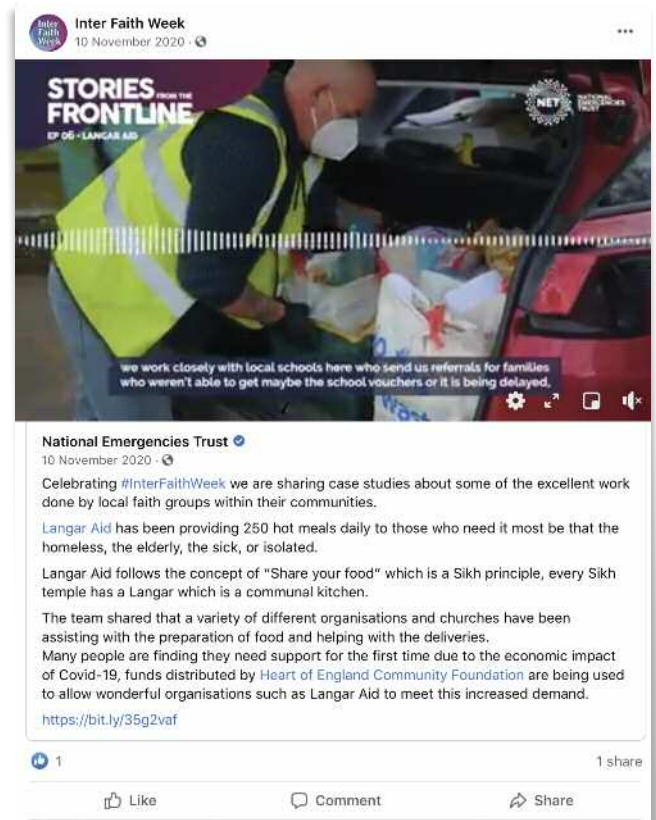
Inter Faith Week is a great opportunity for people of different backgrounds to come together to help their communities in practical ways, and to celebrate the ways that this takes place at other times of year.

## **“A HOMILY**

*Today is the last day of Interfaith Week 2020. I have been an active member of Watford Interfaith Association since I came to St Michael's, and took the chair for 4 years. Interfaith work recognises that we are different, and we don't try to water down our beliefs to fit in with others. Often, talking with people of other faiths can strengthen our own, not weaken it. We understand our own faith better through explaining it to others. There are certain commonalities and many differences between the faiths. Each of the mainstream faiths, however, stresses the need to do good in the world, and to make a positive difference to the existence of all human beings, not just their own adherents. We should remember such things as Watford Interfaith Association when people tell us that religion causes hatred and warfare. Love and prayers Fr Geoff”*

– FROM THE PARISH NEWSLETTER OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, WATFORD  
[HTTP://WWW.STMICHAELS-WATFORD.ORG.UK/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/A5MESSENGER201115.PDF](http://www.stmichaels-watford.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/A5MESSENGER201115.PDF)

The COVID-19 pandemic made some forms of joint voluntary service more challenging, but working together to help the most vulnerable was reflected in a number of events. For example, the Inter-faith Council for Wales / Cyngor Rhyng-ffydd Cymru held a ‘help the homeless’ activity in Cardiff where people could buy something from the Huggard Centre Amazon toiletries wish-list for those in need and the RE Department at the Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School encouraged pupils, staff and parents to make donations of items needed by Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre.



## **Mitzvah Day**

Inter Faith Week has had, since its outset, a close working relationship with Mitzvah Day – which happens at or very near to the Week – with each adding value and impact to the other. Mitzvah Day is a special day of social action led by the Jewish Community, and this year, it was largely focused around COVID-19 response, and due to the nature of the pandemic the Day was expanded into a ‘Month of Mitzvahs’. Where activities are held on an inter faith basis to mark both Mitzvah Day and Inter Faith Week, these are listed as ‘Interfaith Mitzvah Day’ activities. In 2020, these included only activities that took place in Inter Faith Week or the week either side of it.

Schools, universities, charities, inter faith organisations such as Worcestershire Interfaith Forum, faith communities, emergency services, and businesses were some of many organisations that took part in Interfaith Mitzvah Day activities in 2020.

<https://www.facebook.com/ifweek/posts/4179007638792586>

# 16. Inter Faith Week: Increasing youth inter faith engagement

A large and varied range of activities took place in schools, colleges, and universities across Inter Faith Week. A number of these are highlighted in earlier sections but some have been grouped together here to convey the significance of youth engagement with the Week now and for the future.

Earlier sections of this report have highlighted a wide range of activities involving schools and higher education institutions.

The numbers participating and the breadth of events was evidence of wider involvement of young people benefitting from the opportunities that the Week provides for learning and skills development.

***“[The meeting] was a great opportunity and I definitely feel more connected with other Interfaith Youth organisations which is very helpful for our Network.”***

– PARTICIPANT AT IFN ROUNDTABLE EVENT.

A number of activities held by and/or for young people focussed on the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Islington Faiths Forum with Copenhagen Youth Project & Young Creators, Islington Youth Council, and Islington Council organised a debate on ‘Keeping the faith in a pandemic’.

Initiatives of Change (Sustainable Communities Programme) UK worked together with the International Centre for Eritrean Refugees and Asylum Seekers (ICERAS) and the Muslim Welfare House to hold ‘Hope - A Youth Perspective’. This was an evening of celebration with music, poetry, and reflections from young leaders of different faiths and beliefs on the impact of COVID-19.



**Inter Faith Week**



[www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)

#InterFaithWeek

Facebook Instagram Twitter @IFWeek

The Inter Faith Network for the UK held a by-invitation Zoom which brought together a number of youth inter faith initiatives and national student faith bodies to talk about their work and discuss the significance of youth inter faith engagement for the future of the UK.

The focus of this discussion was activities involving, and in some cases run by, young people in approximately the 16-25 age range. It served as the launchpad for further outreach to HE and FE student religious organisations and other youth inter faith organisations, and the development in the following four months of a new section of IFN’s website.

The following bodies were represented at the Roundtable: The Feast; Barnet Multi Faith Youth Forum; British Organisation of Sikh Students; Catalyst/Near Neighbours; Catholic Student Network; CCJ Campus Leadership Programme; Devon Interfaith Forum 4 Youth; Faith and Belief Forum; Faiths United Youth Network; Inter Faith Network for the UK; Inter Faith Youth Trust; Interfaith Scotland; LSE Faith Centre; National Hindu Students’ Forum; Religions for Peace UK Youth Network; Student Christian Movement; and Union of Jewish Students

***"I think that having experiences like this are really helpful for everybody because it makes you feel more involved, and able to ask more questions. The more conversations you have, even if you disagree, will disintegrate the walls and the barriers between us."***

– BECCA BROWN AT 'HOPE – A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE'

[HTTPS://IOFC.ORG.UK/NEWS-POST/YOUTH-SHINE-A-LIGHT-ON-INTERFAITH-COOPERATION/](https://iofc.org.uk/news-post/youth-shine-a-light-on-interfaith-cooperation/)

Over 60 participants attended to hear from panellists aged between 16-25, who spoke about how COVID has impacted their lives, and how their faith or belief have provided them with hope.



Zoe speaks about her experience as a child in the pandemic as part of Coventry City Council's 'Together we can get through this' video

<https://youtu.be/WyS4OeKeRNo>

Croydon ran an event which combined a youth panel about faith with an online quiz.

Some faith communities also encouraged youth engagement. For example, the United Reformed Church ran a URC Youth Trialogue Discussion during which three young panellists from different faiths (Muslim, Jewish and Christian) responded to questions submitted live. Newcastle Diocese's Voices of Faith Group's youth forum discussion video asked seven young people from the Muslim and Christian communities about their thoughts at the end of 2020. They shared their reflections on the Black Lives Matter and Climate Change movements, and their thoughts for the future.



[https://twitter.com/Jose\\_Davidoff\\_/status/1326922921638567936](https://twitter.com/Jose_Davidoff_/status/1326922921638567936)

Coventry City Council produced a video called 'Together we can get through this', a video with local faith communities highlighting the thoughts and feelings of children during the COVID-19 pandemic and how they marked faith festivals during this difficult time.

Kumon Y'all held 'The Imam, the Priest and Kumon Y'all (Old heads / Young heads)', a live question and answer session for young people. It also shared a series of videos on social media throughout the Week, looking back at some of its past inter faith activities with young people. Faiths Together in



Khadija discusses the climate change movement during Newcastle Diocese's Voices of Faith Group's youth forum

<https://youtu.be/wJ0FoPi50Ig>



# 17. Inter Faith Week: Arts and culture

Faith and belief is often expressed through the arts. Poetry, music, film, art and crafts featured strongly in the Week. Live dance, theatre, and other types of activity which would have involved in person gatherings without social distancing did not.

## Inter Faith Week Multi media events

A number of multi media events took place during the Week. For example, the Inter-faith Council for Wales / Cyngor Rhyng-fydd Cymru hosted an online evening of music, readings and personal experiences of faith; the All Faiths Network held a celebration event with music, dancing, poetry, and prayer; and

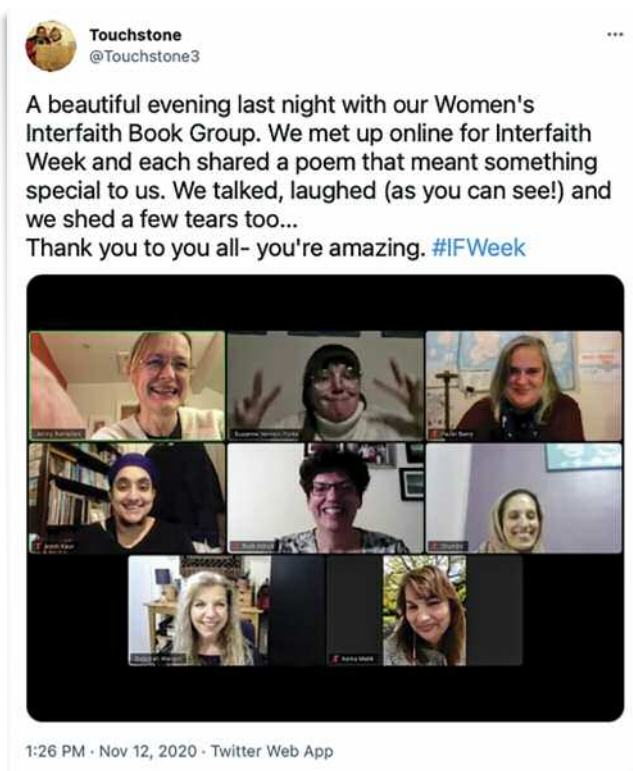


A collage of photos from the All Faiths Network's virtual inter faith celebration

the Greater Yarmouth Inter Faith and Belief Network held a week of poetry and prayer.

The Women's Interfaith Network hosted an online 'unexpected connections' activity where members shared poems, drawings, written accounts and stories showing how their involvement in inter faith work had brought about enriching and surprising relationships. This video from a member of its Sussex group reading her poem gives a flavour of the event. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EszgZNCvxdw>

Students at the University of Derby projected a short film about pilgrimage onto the Multi-Faith Centre building as well as a special message.



## Poetry

Bradford Touchstone Women's Interfaith Bookclub connected with one another during Inter Faith Week by sharing a poem that meant something special to them.

<https://twitter.com/Touchstone3/status/1326878950409314305>



The Batley poets regularly hold an activity for Inter Faith Week. This year they held a special Virtual Inter Faith Poetry Session.

<https://www.facebook.com/BatleyPoets/posts/2776097749320648>

Staff of 'all faiths, beliefs or none' at the Department for Education shared poetry that gives them a sense of connection, with a special reading by its Permanent Secretary.

Westminster City Council and Westminster Faith Exchange held an art and poetry competition for schools on the theme 'Covid-19, Lockdown and My Faith'.

## Music

There were almost no live musical events in 2020 because of social distancing requirements and restrictions on singing. A number of online events with music did take place, in particular a number with music forming part of a wider activity. For example as part of a Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum activity about faith and mental health there were contributions of devotional music from the Bahá'í, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim communities.

## Art

For Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day, the Torah Team at Mosaic Jewish Primary School collaborated up with the Quran Crew at the Muslim voluntary aided Gatton Primary School to create a piece of art for Gatton to hang in their school.

For Tuxford Primary Academy's first Inter Faith Week, they made mandalas while learning about Hinduism and Buddhism. Year 6 pupils at All Saints Benhilton C of E Primary School also made mandalas to celebrate Vesak, as well as clay hands showing henna art when learning about Muslim celebrations.

Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum ran an Art and Creative Competition in advance of the Week, inviting entries of artwork, drawings, paintings, poems, and essays on the theme of Faith, Hope and Peace. Shortlisted entries were showcased during Inter Faith Week, and the top entries were awarded a certificate at BDFF's Inter Faith Week event on 13 November.



*The 'Lockdown Quilt' produced by members of York Interfaith*

The Safer Swansea Partnership ran an Inter Faith Week photo competition, asking people to capture the place where they feel most connected to their faith, explaining why they chose the place.

## Crafts

York Interfaith worked with local faith communities to create a special Lockdown Quilt.

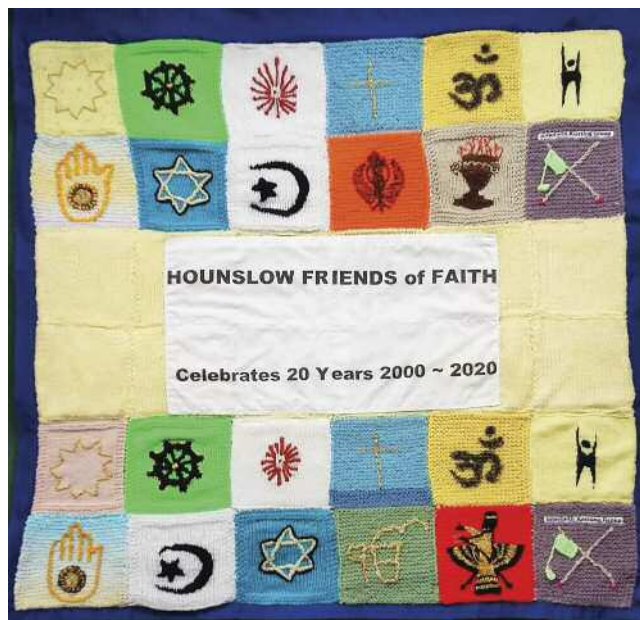
Hounslow Friends of Faith celebrated their 20th anniversary during Inter Faith Week with a special event, and also published a 'History and Memories' booklet and exhibited a specially knitted banner with different faith symbols.

Bournemouth University Faith and Reflection Team distributed knitting packs.

Many schools, sixth form colleges and youth focused organisations also had Inter Faith Week art projects. For example, Greenhead College, Salisbury Primary School, and Murdishaw West School asked children to design and create a 3D Church.

Reproduced with permission from York Interfaith





A banner featuring different faith symbols knitted by Hounslow Friends of Faith for their 20th anniversary during Inter Faith Week 2020

## Dance

Leeds University Students' Union, Leeds University Union Interfaith Group and Leeds Irish Dancing Society hosted a virtual Irish dancing class. Devotional dance also formed part of some activities, for example that of Guildford and Godalming.



A video sketch produced by Faiths United for Inter Faith Week

## Videos

Many videos were produced and shared for the Week, a number of which are featured elsewhere in this report. Faiths United created an Inter Faith video sketch with faith leaders of different religions and beliefs.

## Competitions

Competitions were widely used to mark the Week, particularly in activities involving young people. For example, Oldham Council and Oldham Play Action Group with Oldham Inter Faith Forum held art competitions with the following themes: We have more in common than the things that divide us; What Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Hindus or Muslims believe; Festivals from different faiths; Pictures of your family celebrations; and Pictures of places of worship. Overleigh St Mary's Church of England



Primary School in Chester held a photography competition; Harris Church of England Academy in Rugby held a 'Design an inter faith place of worship for the 21st century' competition; and Carmel Catholic Sixth Form College in St Helens held an essay competition. Nottingham University Chaplaincy held an art competition titled: Faith in a Time of Crisis.



# 18. Services and devotional activities

As might be expected, there were a number of activities for Inter Faith Week 2020 which were either 'services' or had a devotional aspect. Those which were particularly linked to Remembrance are covered in that section of this report.



Shree Ganapathy Temple hosted a virtual service

The Shree Ganapathy Temple in Wimbledon, London, held prayers and hosted an online inter faith service for Inter Faith Week with contributions from different places of worship in the service.  
<https://youtu.be/vngxCa88gKo>

The Cardiff Baha'i Community hosted Ddefosiwn Rhyng-Ffydd (Cymraeg)/Welsh language 'Interfaith Devotional for Interfaith Week' on Zoom, where sacred verses from different faiths were read in Welsh with inspirational music.

A number of services responded particularly to the pandemic, for example 'A Fragile Hope: Interfaith Responses to the Coronavirus'. This was a special inter faith service with a message of hope and reassurance. It was held at Kendal Unitarian Chapel and arranged by the minister with colleagues of others faiths.

In Leeds, All Hallows C of E church closed the Week welcoming the imam from Makkah Mosque Leeds, and the rabbi from Sinai Synagogue, to its morning worship service.  
<https://twitter.com/AllHallowsLeeds/status/1328022779724255234>

## Interfaith chanting, prayers and blessings Saturday 14 November 16.00 – 18.00

*London Buddhist Vihara held 'Interfaith chanting, prayers and blessings' where contributors of different faiths came together.*

"We chant and pray for those who had become victims of Covid-19 and left us.

We chant and pray those who are suffering from this illness, for a speedy recovery and back to their normal self.

We chant and pray, wishing for every one of you to be free from this deadly covid-19 and for the world to be free from this pandemic disaster."

As well as services, many more general events included contributions of prayers and devotional music. There were also special reflections offered for Inter Faith Week such as one from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster:  
<https://vimeo.com/479261144>



Birmingham Partnerships  
@BrumPartnership

Today the ECO will be joining the Bahu Trust for an interfaith service in honour of NHS/Emergency Services who are on the frontline in keeping us safe from harm #InterFaithWeek  
Reps from NHS, police, ambulance & fire service + thanksgiving from faith leaders.



Supt. Sarah Burton and 5 others

# 19. Inter Faith Week: Cooking up understanding!

Food was at the centre of many activities, even where people were unable to come together in person! Some shared recipes, others held virtual lunches.

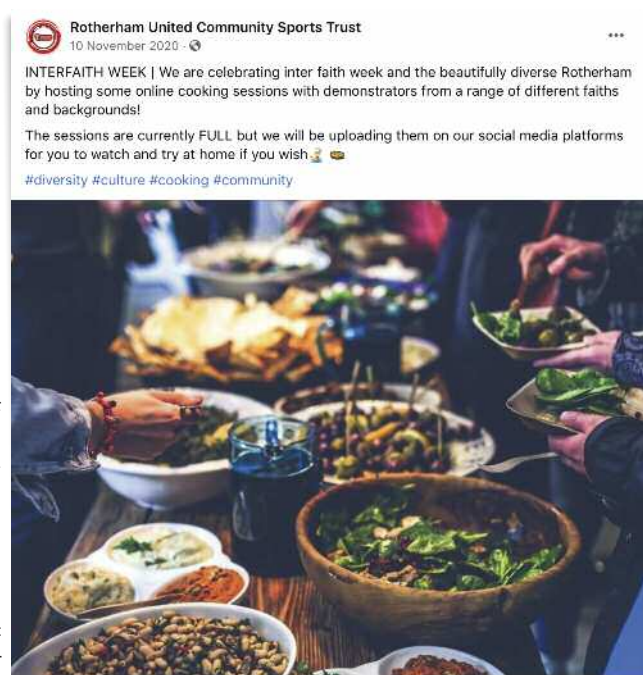
Virtual interfaith cooking sessions were popular, such as those held by Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, which held an online inter faith cooking session, and Star Primary School in Newham's online family cooking session. So, too, were 'bake-off's such as Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in Coventry's bake off where they encouraged pupils to create a cultural cuisine of their choice and send in recipes and photos; and the University of East Anglia Jewish Society's virtual Challah bake.

Safer Swansea Partnership shared recipes inspired by community members of different faiths and beliefs on their Facebook page.

NHS Digital 'Faith-a-licious Cookbook Display' encouraged staff to cook / bake items which are either faith related or culturally important. Recipes and images were then published during Inter Faith Week in the form of a cookbook.



<https://mitzvahday.org.uk/galleries/highlights-of-mitzvah-month-2020/>



<https://www.facebook.com/RUCST/posts/2117985308335162>



<https://twitter.com/WinchesterDC/status/1327938154956021761>



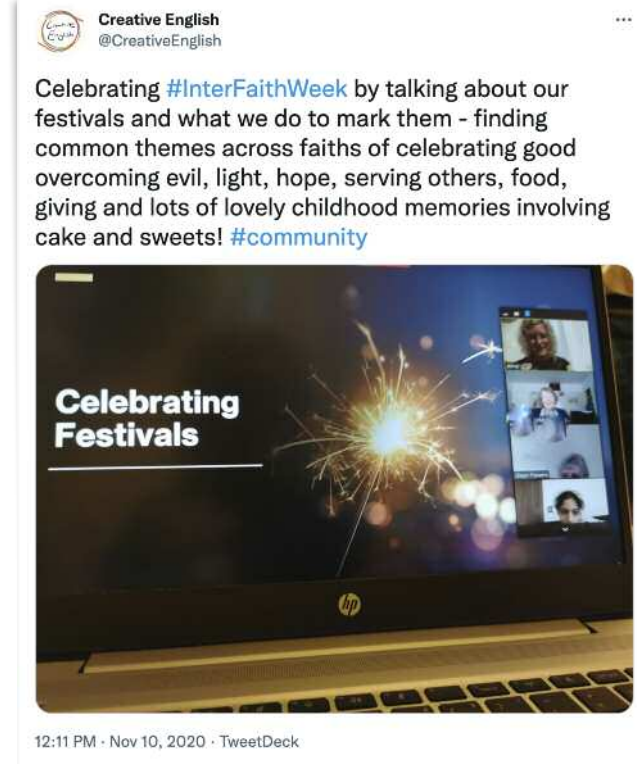


Headstone Manor & Museum shared an online exhibition documenting the celebration of Diwali in Harrow, a recipe book comprised of recipes donated from the local community, cooking videos on YouTube, a Rangoli demonstration video and other resources.

Virtual cafes and lunches featured this year. For example, Cardiff and Vale College Students' Union held a virtual Inter Faith Week lunch, where participants baked and virtually brought along a traditional meal from their own faith or joined to chat and eat lunch together.

In a number of areas, groups' activities involved donating food to those in need. For example in Bradford, Inspired Futures started the Week by delivering essential food packs to diverse faith and community groups across Bradford. Ten families were given boxes containing essential items for them to enjoy during this period. Also in this area, including Keighley, The Volunteering Interfaith Programme (VIP) VIP team with AgeUK Bradford distributed food to people in Bradford to mark Inter Faith Week and to promote good community relations amidst the COVID-19 lockdown.

Dewsbury's 'Tea, Samosas and Yorkshire Puddings!' activity, held by South Dewsbury Covid-19 group, encouraged people, in a COVID secure way, to drop off their favourite food with a neighbour from another community and let them know at a meeting during the Week how they got on.





## 20. Building on this year's successful Week and looking to the future

### Activities inspire ongoing work.

One of the most important ways that people build on the Week is by developing longer term projects and programmes as result of taking part.

*"We plan to engage more with the general public and will be running an interfaith programme in the new year focusing on the role of faith communities during the Covid-19 pandemic and examining how they are uniquely positioned to support people and foster resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and help people create meaning in times of great uncertainty or anxiety. We would like to explore the role of faith communities during the Covid-19 pandemic further through a series of talks and facilitated discussion."*

– LOCAL AUTHORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

*"We have committed to holding a series on ongoing discussion meetings"*

– LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUP

*"We were part of a WhatsApp group to help plan events. This group will now continue and expand."*

– LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUP

**77%** of survey respondents said their organisation was planning follow-up activity in the coming months.

*"We will be rolling out a new teacher training programme with a grant we have received and using what we have learnt during inter faith week to help to plan this".*

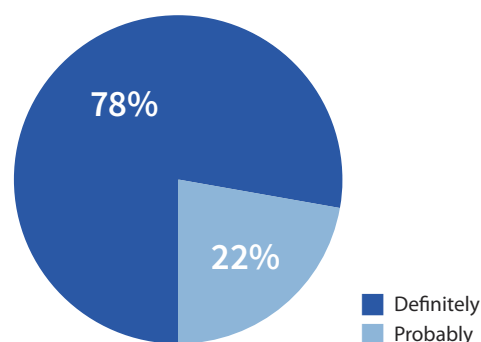
– AN INTER FAITH CHARITY

Others build on the Week through the relationships and partnerships strengthened through participation in the Week.

### Learning from 2020, planning for 2021!

The Inter Faith Network will be working towards a 2021 Inter Faith Week which draws on learning from the 2020 Week to enable even more people to get involved and, through this, to learn about the contribution of faith groups to society and to strengthen and deepen inter faith understanding and good relations, including with those of non-religious beliefs.

**100%** of the of respondents to the survey said that they would either 'definitely' or 'probably' be organising an Inter Faith Week activity again in 2021



# Inter Faith Week 2021

14–21 November

## An opportunity to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of 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



## #Interfaithweek

COOPERATE/LEARN/  
RESPECT/REFLECT/  
APPRECIATE/TALK/  
VOLUNTEER/MAKE  
FRIENDS/CELEBRATE

[www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter:

[facebook.com/IFWeek](https://www.facebook.com/IFWeek) [@IFWeek](https://twitter.com/IFWeek)

## Inter Faith Week 14–21 November 2021

Join the thousands of people and organisations who will be taking part in Inter Faith Week this year: faith, belief and inter faith bodies; voluntary organisations; local authorities; museums and libraries; schools; colleges; universities; youth organisations; chaplaincies; emergency services; hospitals; sports organisations; businesses; workplaces; and many others.

The Week is ever more important, helping people continue to come together; make new links and friendships; educate against prejudice and hatred; and volunteer together to help others. Lots of great ideas for activities – virtual and in person – at: [www.interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas](http://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas)

Inter Faith Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday, encouraging remembering together of the service of people of different backgrounds.



Visit [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org) for resources and to register and publicise your activity. And don't forget to share your activities on social media! #InterFaithWeek

Note: Scottish Interfaith Week, led by Interfaith Scotland, will this year be running at a different time from usual. Its dates are 31 October to 7 November, linked to the UK's hosting of COP26 in Glasgow. [scottishinterfaithweek.org](http://scottishinterfaithweek.org)



Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK  
IFN, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH

[ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk) [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)  
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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Images: Blue Coat School Coventry celebrating Diwali and Bandi Choir Divas; Faiths United video sketch; Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK) with Planting for Peace at One Jain; Ahimsa Peace Garden, Harrow; IFN Trustees; IFN youth roundtable event; Guilford & Godalming Interfaith Forum Zoom event (Photo: UK Bahai' OPA); St Mary the Virgin Church/Merchand Sealarians Association/Muslim friends on Remembrance Sunday, Bute town, Cardiff. Event photos: 2020.

To find out about plans for the 2021 week visit [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org) and follow Inter Faith Week at [www.facebook.com/ifweek](https://www.facebook.com/ifweek), [www.twitter.com/ifweek](https://www.twitter.com/ifweek) and [www.instagram.com/ifweek](https://www.instagram.com/ifweek).

If you take part, please do tell us! You can list your activity at [www.interfaithweek.org/submit](http://www.interfaithweek.org/submit) to be eligible for a free pack with Inter Faith Week stickers, a poster, flyers, and a blank message card on which to share an Inter Faith Week message.

# 21. Executive Summary

Inter Faith Week 2020 took place against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, and at a time when all nations of the UK were under strict social distancing and lockdown measures. Ahead of the Week organisers had wondered whether there would be less keenness to engage or less ability to do so because of social distancing and other pandemic impacts. However, the Week turned out to be a remarkable one. The following is a summary of key facts and figures from this report.

- 717 activities are known to have taken place to mark the Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.
- Activities were organised by 720 organisations, with many activities organised in partnership.
- The number of schools taking part in the Week increased by over 90%.
- Through these organisations and activities, many thousands of people participated directly in the Week.
- The Week had an extensive social media reach. For example, tweets about the Week appeared on the feeds of 11million twitter users a total of 34.7million times. This helped raise awareness of the Week and its participants, and to act as a counterpoint to negative or hateful narratives shared online.
- 95% of survey respondents believed that their activity had helped participants to learn more about different faiths and beliefs.
- 98% of survey respondents said that Inter Faith Week adds value to their work.
- In-person activities took place in settings where this was possible, including in schools, hospices and hospitals. However, 74% of activities were either held entirely online or had a strong virtual component, and 75% of survey respondents said the online element of the Week was beneficial.

A number of survey respondents also said that they were keen to incorporate technology into future activities, including through live-streaming or recording activities, enabling even more people to engage in some way.

- 93% of survey respondents said that had Inter Faith Week provided a focal point for making or celebrating positive connections between people of different backgrounds in the context of COVID-19.
- Many activities took COVID-19 as part of their theme, often focusing on the ways that faith communities and others had been serving their communities during the pandemic.
- 46% of activity organisers who responded to the post-Week survey said that they worked with another organisation they'd never worked with before to hold their activity.
- 88% of respondents said that their activity helped them to reach new people or groups.
- Some organisations chose to mark the Week internally, including many workplaces, universities and colleges. Of those that responded to the post-Week survey, 76% thought that their activities are likely to have helped contribute to developing stronger/more positive relations within your workplace or institution
- The Week also has a longer-term impact: For example, 77% of survey respondents said they were planning a follow-up activity in the months following the Week, and 100% said they were likely to mark the Week again in 2021.

The post-Week survey also asked activity organisers whether they used the Week to do something they had not done before, such as trying a new kind of activity, reaching out to a different audience, or launching a new resource/ initiative. 88% of respondents said 'yes'. Examples included 2 books launched during the Week, a number of groups getting the taste for film-making and using digital communications, and the pilot of a virtual 'faith visitors' project for schools in Cumbria.

- The Inter Faith Network for the UK leads Inter Faith Week, having established it in 2009. It was inspired by Scottish Interfaith Week, which was established in 2004.
- The Inter Faith Network's Faith Communities Forum invited national faith community bodies and/or



their leaders to share reflections and messages linked to the Week on social media. 20 did so, and their messages can be read at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-faith-communities>

- The Inter Faith Network provided the framework for the Week as well as developing a special 'inter faith week buddies' scheme for the Week, encouraging individuals of different backgrounds to engage in 1:1 dialogue and holding a special round-table during the Week for youth initiatives – including national faith-based student bodies – to make connections, share about their work, and discuss the importance of inter faith activity involving young people. Feedback on this was positive.

The 2020 survey was the longest and most detailed survey carried out since the Week first began. 40 fully completed surveys were received from a wide spectrum of types of body. Desk research into individual report events and correspondence with activity holders, as well as information shared at subsequent IFN meetings, enable the themes to be explored more widely.

**ALTRINCHAM APPERLEY BRIDGE ARUNDEL ASHBURTON BATH BATLEY  
BEBINGTON BEDFORD BELFAST BIRKENHEAD BIRMINGHAM BLACKBURN  
BOLTON BOREHAMWOOD BOURNEMOUTH BRADFORD BRENTWOOD  
BRIERLY HILL, LEEDS BRIGHTON BRISTOL BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH  
BURNLEY BURY BURY ST EDMUNDS CAMBRIDGE CANTERBURY CARDIFF  
CARLISLE CHATHAM CHELMSFORD CHELTENHAM CHESTER CHORLEY  
COLCHESTER COLESHILL COVENTRY COWBRIDGE CRAWLEY CREDITON  
CROYDON CUMBRIA DACORUM DARWEN DERBY DEWSBURY DOUGLAS  
(ISLE OF MAN) DROITWICH DURHAM EAST BOLDON ELMBRIDGE ESHER  
ESSEX EXETER FRODSHAM GATESHEAD GILLINGHAM GRAVESEND  
GUILDFORD GWENT HALE HALIFAX HATFIELD HAVERFORDWEST  
HEREFORD HOLMFIRTH HUDDERSFIELD HULL HYDE KEIGHLEY KENDAL  
KETTERING KIRKLEES LANCASTER LEEDS LEICESTER LEICESTERSHIRE  
LINCOLN LIVERPOOL LONDON LONDON (BARKING AND DAGENHAM)  
LONDON (BARNET) LONDON (BRENT) LONDON (BROMLEY) LONDON  
(CAMDEN) LONDON (CITY OF LONDON) LONDON (CITY OF WESTMINSTER)  
LONDON (ENFIELD) LONDON (GREENWICH) LONDON (HACKNEY) LONDON  
(HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM) LONDON (HARINGEY) LONDON (HARROW)  
LONDON (HAVERING) LONDON (HILLINGDON) LONDON (HOUNSLOW)  
LONDON (ISLINGTON) LONDON (KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA) LONDON  
(LAMBETH) LONDON (LEWISHAM) LONDON (MERTON) LONDON (NEWHAM)  
LONDON (REDBRIDGE) LONDON (RICHMOND) LONDON (SOUTHWARK)  
LONDON (SUTTON) LONDON (TOWER HAMLETS) LONDON (WALTHAM  
FOREST) LONDON (WANDSWORTH) LONDON (WESTMINSTER) LONGRIDGE  
LUTON MACCLESFIELD MAIDENHEAD MAIDSTONE MANCHESTER MARKET  
DRAYTON MEDWAY MIDDLESBROUGH MILNTHORPE MORPETH NANTWICH  
NEWCASTLE NEWPORT NORTHWICH NORWICH NOTTINGHAM NUNEATON  
OADBURY OLDBURY OLDHAM OMAGH OSWESTRY OUNDLE OXFORD PENDLE  
POOLE PORT TALBOT POYNTON PRESTON READING ROCHESTER  
ROMFORD ROMNEY MARSH ROMSEY ROTHERHAM RUGBY RUNCORN SALE  
SALFORD SELSDON SHEFFIELD SHEFFORD SHROPSHIRE SIPSON  
SLOUGH SOLIHULL SOUTH TYNESIDE SOUTHAM SOUTHAMPTON  
ST ALBANS ST HELENS ST HELIER STAFFORD STEVENAGE STOKE GOLDING  
STOKE-ON-TRENT SUNDERLAND SUTTON COLDFIELD SWANSEA SWINDON  
TELFORD THETFORD TORQUAY TOTNES TROWBRIDGE TRURO  
WAKEFIELD WALLASEY WALSALL WARRINGTON WARWICK WASHINGTON  
WATFORD WEDNESBURY WELWYN GARDEN CITY WEST ALVINGTON  
WESTON-SUPER-MARE WIDNES WILMSLOW WINCHESTER WINDSOR  
WOKING WOLVERHAMPTON WORCESTER WORTHING WREXHAM YORK**

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