



# Surrey Faith Links Newsletter

December 2017



***'God does not look at your appearance or your possessions; but He looks at your heart and your deeds' (Prophet Muhammad)***

Happy Mawlid, Merry Christmas and/or season greetings!  
I'd like to thank all the interfaith forums for all the hard work they have put in over the years to bring people together to develop greater understanding of each others beliefs and developing friendships over the years. I am hopeful this will continue in the New Year as you can see the many events already planned by the interfaith forums on page 9 onwards.

New Year, New beginnings for us at the Diocese of Guildford!  
We are moving to Church House Guildford, please make a note of this for any future correspondence. The address for the new place is on the back of this newsletter.

In Peace,  
Kausar Akhtar  
Faith Links Adviser  
E: [Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk)

### Inside this issue:

Religious & Cultural Awareness Training	2
Standing Together	3
Role of Institutions	3
Visit to Winchester Cathedral	4
16 Days of Action	5
Who are you sharing Christmas with?	5
Yule	6
Surrey Information Point	6
What can faith bring to health?	7
Heathrow expansion proposal	7
Funding Opportunities	8
Upcoming Events	9

### Main Faith Festivals in December 2017

- 1st—Mawlid un Nabi (Muslim)
- 8th—Bodhi Day (Budhist)
- 13-20—Hanukah (Jewish)
- 22nd—Yule (Pagan)
- 24th—Christmas Eve (Christian)
- 25th—Christmas Day (Christian)
- 26th—Zaratosht No Diso (Zoroastrian)



**Inter Faith Week**  
12-19 November



Inter Faith Week drew to a close on Sunday 19 November. Many key public figures showed their support, including Prime Minister Theresa May;

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith at the Department for Communities and Local Government; other MPs; Mayor of London Sadiq Khan; and mayors and councillors across the country.

The Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, which leads on the Week, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi say: "Inter Faith Week 2017 has seen an incredible array of activities taking place, involving many

*The purpose of this newsletter is to share news/information and raise awareness about a wide rang of faiths and beliefs.*

thousands of people of different backgrounds. These have contributed to developing even stronger inter faith relations in local communities and in our shared society.”

Prime Minister Theresa May, says: “Inter Faith Week 2017 was an inspiring effort across all neighbourhoods and faiths across the United Kingdom, in building understanding, tolerance and a sense of community. These sentiments are so important as we build a country where everyone has the chance to succeed and where no one suffers discrimination because of their background, ethnicity, religion or belief.”

Strong support has been offered from within national faith community bodies with messages from leading figures such as Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and from many faith and denominational bodies. Faith communities have contributed in ever-increasing numbers. They have opened their doors and welcomed others in, discussed commonalities as well as challenging and difficult issues, celebrated with their neighbours, taken part in joint social action projects, and been active in civil society in existing and new ways. Inter faith organisations have also played a vital role in the Week, highlighting and providing a focus for the important work that they do year-round.

More activities have taken place than in any previous year since Inter Faith Week began in 2009. The hundreds of organisations that have taken part have included: faith communities and inter faith bodies; non-religious belief bodies; local authorities; schools, universities and FE colleges; businesses; youth organisations; sports organisations; police and other emergency services; the Armed Services; hospitals and hospices; Government departments, and many more .

The Week is timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday, remembering the service of soldiers and civilians of many faiths and beliefs. That was reflected in participation in civic commemorations and a number of moving events. Across the Week there have been: sporting events; school activities; social action projects such as meals for the homeless and tree plantings; dialogues; cultural events; open door days held by faith groups around the country; faith trails; talks; women’s events; events for young people; events bringing religious and non-religious people together; and many more .



The impact of the Week has also spread further than ever before on social media, with many organisers, participants and supporters tweeting about the Week. Tweets about the Week have so far had a potential reach of 12.6 million Twitter users with over 40 million impressions.

### Religious and Cultural training for Staff & Volunteers

Do you have staff that would benefit from some training or awareness of religious and Cultural practices and beliefs? Or perhaps you would like to know more about the Faith communities in Surrey?

If you are a group who meet informally and would like to hear from different faith perspectives, Surrey Faith Links is a one stop shop for all.

Please get in touch:

Kausar Akhtar, Faith Links Adviser

T: 01483 790334, E: [Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk),



## Standing Together

Guildford & Godalming InterFaith Forum hosted a very interesting event to commemorate Interfaith Week U.K., at St. Nicolas Community Centre on Sunday 19th November.



The Mayor & Mayoress of Guildford took part, with Councillor Nigel Manning welcoming everyone and speaking about the chosen theme "STANDING TOGETHER", reminding us of the words of the late Jo Cox and reading an interfaith prayer. Members of the local Jewish, Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Sikh and Bahá'í communities followed with presentations from their faith Scriptures and community activities, demonstrating the common thread of 'loving thy neighbour' which runs through all the revealed religions, each ending with a selection of devotional music from their respective religions. A recorded message and beautifully chanted prayer was received from Imam Hashmi at Woking Mosque as part of his wife's presentation.

The formal programme was followed by refreshments and much animated conversation. This year donations were invited for the Charity War Child, raising £100 on top of the £140 donated at GGIFF's Vigil on the International Day of Peace.

Interfaith Week takes place during the third week of November each year, and this was one of hundreds of activities around the country.

Guildford & Godalming InterFaith Forum is an informal group of people of many beliefs interested in working together and sharing common values, meeting every second month and with occasional public meetings or forums. More information from Secretary Bernard Jones on 01483 424257 or Carolyn Neogi on 01483 415773



## Role of the Institutions – Diversity and Inclusion

An audience of 28 people saw and heard two excellent speakers, explaining the views and the roles of the institutions of the army and the police in Diversity and Inclusion. The event was organised by Woking People of Faith on Sunday 19th November to mark interfaith week.

Lt-Col Graeme Macpherson spoke about the ways that the army have been working to develop and include individuals from a wider range of communities. They have changed and improved access to joining the army to try to keep aligned with the changes in attitudes in society. Not only does the army work to encourage people of different ethnic and religious communities but also members of the LGBT communities. He acknowledged that the army has had to change and listen to the concerns of society.

However, he made the point that in the case of drugs, he would not be in favour of allowing - or encouraging the recruitment of – drug-takers in the military, not least because the individuals may have the responsibility of dangerous equipment or weapons or for large numbers of personnel.

From the Police, Patrick Samuels, the Head of Chaplaincy and Interfaith, who works in the Diversity Directorate section, explained how the police have also had to ‘move with the times’ and this has not always been easy. However, the institution – like the army - continues to try to hit its quotas on ethnic, religious and LGBT communities. The police are very aware of the potential ‘police culture’ problems that there can be inside the institution.

Patrick went on to speak about the consequences of not including groups and how exclusion can lead to violence. He used the example of a trip he and another member of the Diversity Directorate took to Bosnia. He explained how the communities had deep differences for centuries which had been suppressed by the creation of Yugoslavia. The problems had never been addressed and – after the fall of Communism in the early 1990s in Eastern Europe, the country fell apart and the hatred resurfaced resulting in war and many war crimes that are only being addressed today.

The two speakers then answered a number of questions on the topic enabling them to give greater depth to their talks. However, one questioner was asked by Patrick Samuels to speak to him later as the question related to operational policing matters as he was not involved in those issues.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks from His Worship, the Mayor of Woking, Councillor Graham Cundy to the speakers and Woking People of Faith.

For more information about Woking People of Faith (WPOF) please visit: [www.wpof.org.uk](http://www.wpof.org.uk)

WPOF upcoming events are listed on page 9 of this newsletter.



Woking People of Faith

### Elmbridge Multi faith Forum visit Winchester Cathedral

On Wednesday 29th November, the Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum organised a visit to the Winchester Cathedral where they were given a tour around the Cathedral.

Everyone then enjoyed visiting the Christmas Market and joined together for lunch.

It is a wonderful time of year and a wonderful way of bringing people of different faiths together.

For planned EMF events, please see page 10 of this newsletter. Updates on the EMF Facebook page.



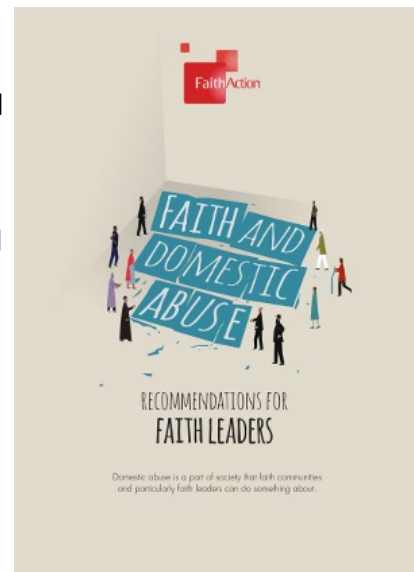
## 16 Days of Action

One in four women and one in six men experience domestic violence or abuse at some point in their life. And many of them will have some contact with a faith community.

The period we are currently in – 25 November to 10 December – forms 16 days of activism to eliminate violence against women and girls. There's also a 16 Days of Action campaign to encourage workplaces do more to help their employees who endure domestic violence, train those who witness it, and to protect staff as a whole.

If you belong to a faith community, whatever the faith, we have resources that can help you. From films of faith leaders talking about domestic violence to a booklet full of useful advice and links to organisations offering practical help, we have tools to support faith groups.

Find out more here: [www.faithaction.net/media/2017/11/30/would-you-know-what-to-do/](http://www.faithaction.net/media/2017/11/30/would-you-know-what-to-do/)



## Who are you sharing Christmas with?



The Diocese of Guildford have compiled this directory of support available over the Christmas period in Surrey and North East Hampshire. Thank you to all those groups who have shared information about how they are helping to support people at this time of year. Christmas is a busy time of year, celebrating and spending time with family and friends. However, we know that this time of year can be difficult for some people. They may be lonely – separated from family and friends, or vulnerable for other reasons.

Note for Organisers: We have been advised by one lunch organiser that your local Waitrose may be able to provide support generally for groups who are providing lunch for those who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day.

Other sources of information is <http://communitychristmas.org.uk/> | tel: 0800 0639285 and [www.premier.org.uk/christmasalone](http://www.premier.org.uk/christmasalone) which both have a good listing of community events across the UK

For the list of events: [www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/communities-engagement/resources](http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/communities-engagement/resources)

Please share the information provided with those who may be on their own at Christmas and with those who may be looking for volunteering opportunities. If you know of another event, or are needing volunteers please do get in touch with the: Communities Engagement Team, Diocese of Guildford, The Church of England

T: 01483 790 324 E: [cet@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:cet@cofeguildford.org.uk)



Are you passionate about Ashford & St Peter's Hospital? If so get involved and have your say and be part of the Patient Panel. See [here](#) for more information on who to contact.



## YULE

Yule is the Pagan celebration of the winter solstice, the shortest day and longest night, after which the days lengthen and the march of the sun towards spring is begun. The word, Yule, comes from an ancient Norse word meaning wheel. At Yule, we celebrate the turning of the year towards the light and warmth of summer. This is the night on which the hope of life and the promise of spring is given, to give us courage in the coming cold.

Though the winter solstice is a time when darkness reigns supreme and the earth lies wrapped in sleep, no-one need fear the winter's dark and cold. When the new light of solstice day dawns, it will be stronger. The wheel turns again awakening the earth and our potential for life, love and joy.

## Have you tried Surrey Information Point recently?

We are constantly developing the directory, adding new content and improved functionality. Here are some of the new changes.

New changes coming to SIP:

New look to the home page – We have brought the SIP website more in line with the Surrey County Council website including updating the colours to be the same and the Surrey County Council logo being more prominent.

Shortlist improvements – We have made the shortlist option easier to use and to define how much information you require which is great for Contact Centre staff and for social prescribing.

Search Improvements – When multiple keywords are entered to search on the site for example “Springfield Residential” the search will identify the least popular word as the most important. So in this case residential appears a lot on the website where as Springfield doesn't so this is the word that the system will search for first.

Things to do – This has now been split down into sub-categories to make it easier to search on. These are: Sports and Leisure, Arts and Games, Accessible Places and Social Clubs.

Life Events – This is a new section under Health Matters that covers the following topics:

Relationships, Bereavement, Employment Issues, Pregnancy, Birth and New parents, Addiction and substance misuse, Eating disorders, Domestic abuse and Victim of crime.

Please if you collate your own local community information, ensure you share it with us so we can add the information to the website. If you require further assistance regarding Surrey Information Point please email

[Info@surreyinformationpoint.org.uk](mailto:Info@surreyinformationpoint.org.uk)



## What can faith bring to health?

What is it that faith communities and faith-based organisations provide that helps to support health and wellbeing? This is a question we often grapple with at FaithAction. It's something our work with the [Health and Wellbeing Alliance](#) helps us to explore, and it's something we looked at in detail in our review, [The Impact of Faith-Based Organisations on Public Health and Social Capital](#).

From this review, we concluded that the really valuable things that faith provides are those things that you can't pay professionals to 'deliver'. Friendship, community, belonging, hope: these things don't replace the statutory or professional services we still need at times, but they are vital components of life. Like expanding foam, they fill the spaces between statutory services and help prevent people from falling through the gaps. Our latest report, *What is Community?* (coming soon!), has lots of examples of how this works in practice.

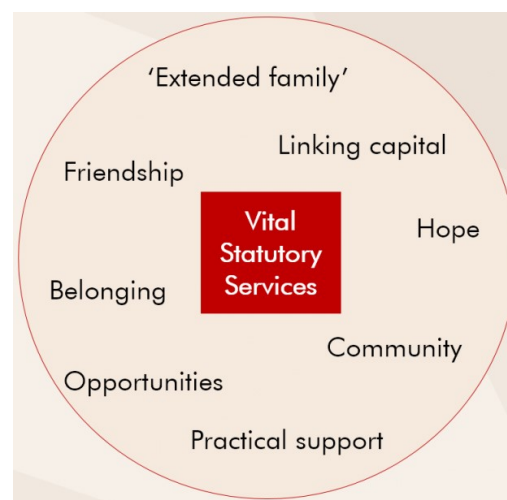
While the characteristics shown in the diagram above are not unique to faith organisations, these are the things that faith organisations tend to have in common when they are working well. And when they work well with those professional services, it's easy to see how the results for health can be magnified.

We are hearing of some great examples – just this week, [Greater Manchester Health and Social Care](#) met with faith groups to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that will help them work better together. Have a look at the conversation on Twitter using #GMfaithandhealth.

Then there's the [Guide to Healthy Living: Mosques](#) that was produced by Public Health England, Birmingham City Council and local social enterprise KIKIT, and contains health information alongside examples of how mosques are putting health advice into practice, relevant verses from the Qur'an and an audit tool to help mosques support the health of their communities.

We know that up and down the country, faith-based organisations are succeeding in being commissioned to deliver health and wellbeing services, in recognition of the value they are able to provide.

We are always keen to find more examples, so that we can help further develop connections between faith groups and health and government bodies, and so help to make things better for communities across the UK. [Get in touch](#) if you can tell us more. [www.faithaction.net/media/2017/11/09/can-faith-bring-health/](http://www.faithaction.net/media/2017/11/09/can-faith-bring-health/)



## Heathrow Expansion Proposal

A consultation is underway to give people the opportunity to share their views following the publication of updated information. This will close on Tuesday 19th December 2017. For more information phone 0300123 4797 or visit:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/heathrow-airport-expansion](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/heathrow-airport-expansion)

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### **Vulnerable Faith Institutions Scheme**

The scheme will provide funding for security measures to places of worship and associated community centres that are vulnerable to attack on racial, religious or ideological grounds. We will consider bids from places of worship in England and Wales. Below are some examples of places of worship eligible to apply for the funding (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

Mosques, Gurdwaras, Temples, Churches, associated faith community centres (for example a community centre run by a place of worship or near a place of worship that is faith based).

For more information about the Scheme and how to bid, please visit:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/vulnerable-faith-institutions-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/vulnerable-faith-institutions-scheme)

### **Masonic Charitable Foundation Community Support Grants**

Registered charities in England and Wales can apply for funding to the Masonic Charitable Foundation's Community Support Grants Scheme. Charities can apply for grants of £5,000 and above.

Funding is available for projects to tackle financial hardship; improve the lives of those affected by poor physical and/or mental health and wellbeing; provide educational and employment opportunities for disadvantaged children and young people; and tackle social exclusion and disadvantage.

Deadline for applications: 2 February 2018 but applicants must first submit a Grant Enquiry Form at least two weeks prior to the deadline.

For further information, visit [www.mcf.org.uk/charities](http://www.mcf.org.uk/charities)

### **The Aziz Foundation**

The Aziz Foundation is an independent grant-making body seeking to support the most disadvantaged communities in Britain. It aims to do this through supporting community empowerment, leadership development and greater public engagement by them in wider society. The Foundation seeks to support individuals and projects, strengthen organisations and networks, and help incubate innovative ideas that will ultimately improve the conditions in and for these sections of our society.

The lowest amount that a grant will normally be made for is £500. This applies to small grants. Applicants should be mindful that we can only fund up to 25% of a project and that amount is capped at £15,000. Grants are awarded to those charitable activities which meet their three core aims:

1. Community Empowerment
2. Leadership Development
3. Public Engagement Deadline: Monday 8 January 2018 11pm

For more information: <http://azizfoundation.org.uk/funding/>



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Woking People of Faith Events 2018

#### Members Tea

Are you interested in helping Woking People of Faith with events? If so, come along for a tea party and get involved!

Saturday 3rd February, 3.00 pm at St Dunstan's Church, Shaftesbury Rd, Woking, GU22 7DT

#### Interfaith Pilgrimage

Saturday 3rd March—Time and venues to be confirmed, more information in the next newsletter.

#### Ypres to Brookwood

Sunday 6th May, Last post ceremony and a guided walk around the cemetery. More information to come.

#### Football tournament

Saturday 30th June at Winston Churchill School.

For more information please contact Marian Nash: [secretary@wpof.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wpof.org.uk)  
[www.wpof.org.uk](http://www.wpof.org.uk),



Woking People of Faith

### Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum Events 2018

#### Peace Vigil to Mark UN Interfaith Harmony Week

Thursday 1st February, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start  
St Joseph's Church, 12 Eastgate Gardens, Guildford GU1 4AZ

#### Interfaith Pilgrimage

Thursday 19th July 2018  
The pilgrimage will take place in Godalming between different places of worship.  
Details to be finalised, more information in the next newsletter.

#### Interfaith Service

The Annual GGIFF Interfaith Service to mark Interfaith Week  
Sunday 25th November, St Nicholas Church, Guildford.

For further information please contact: Carolyn Neogi - 01483 415773 or  
Bernard Jones - 01483 424257

## Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum – 2018

### Visit to the North West Surrey Synagogue, Weybridge

Saturday 20th January. Arrive at 10.15 am for a brief orientation before the service begins at 10.45 am

### Inter faith lunch and AGM

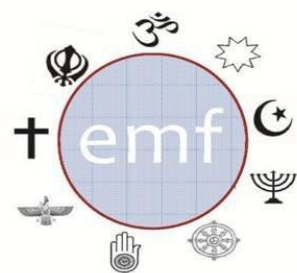
Wednesday 7th February at All Saints Church, West Ewell, 12.30-2.00

For more information or to confirm attendance please email Lynne Schofield:

[lynnescholefield@gmail.com](mailto:lynnescholefield@gmail.com)

## Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum 2018 Events

- ⇒ Faith Issues in the Courts: A judge will deliver a talk  
Tuesday 30th January 2018, 7 for 7.30pm  
At Sacred Heart Church hall, 25 Between Streets, Cobham KT11 1AA
- ⇒ Visit to West London Synagogue, Wednesday 7th March 2018
- ⇒ “Do women have a role in leading religion?”,  
1st May 2018, 7 for 7.30pm,  
St. Mary’s Hall, Stoke d’Abernon, KT11 3PX  
Speakers: Bishop Jo Wells (Christian), Rabbi Kath Vardi (Jewish) and Julie Siddqui (Muslim)
- ⇒ AGM – theme “Spirituality & Wellbeing” 26th June 2018, 7 for 7.30pm, Venue TBA



For more information please contact Jackie Foster: [jackie@fosterja.co.uk](mailto:jackie@fosterja.co.uk)

Follow ElmbridgeMultiFaithForum on Facebook for regular updates.

## Woking Debates 2018

Woking Action for Peace, LA21, Friends of the Earth, Quakers, Churches Together, Woking People of Faith and Surrey Faith Links work in partnership to bring you some thought provoking and topical debates.

1. Is privacy a luxury or necessity? Saturday 20th January 2018
2. Is our democracy breaking down? Saturday 17th February 2018
3. Why are people living in poverty in 21st century Britain? Saturday 17th March 2018
4. What is the future of work? Saturday 14th April 2018

The debates are held at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG  
11.00 am till 12.30 pm

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



**Surrey Faith Links c/o CET, Diocese of Guildford**

Church House Guildford, 20 Alan Turing Road, Guildford, GU2 7YF

T: 01483 790334, E: [Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk), W: [www.surreyfaithlinks.org.uk](http://www.surreyfaithlinks.org.uk)