

Introducing *The Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith* March Newsletter

The Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith is based on the core values of the Lord-Lieutenancy's work, namely duty and respect. It aims to enhance Londoners' sense of belonging, thereby increasing social inclusion. As such, *The Council on Faith* sets out to be inclusive and accessible to all. Dialogue is at the core of the approach and the efforts of *The Council on Faith* will be measured against its success in drawing others in, particularly those faith groups that are more isolated and marginalised.

Our Aims

The Council on Faith is made up of members who are serving and retired Deputy Lieutenants with particular interest and expertise in faith community matters. At the inaugural meeting in September, the Deputy Lieutenants set out the principles that will guide their work and support the Lord-Lieutenancy's initiative: Building Bridges for a Fairer London.

Members will

- Mediate encounter and exchange with groups and communities, mainly through regular and responsible convening of more isolated faith groups together with those who have more of a sense of belonging to London.
- Honour role models and organisations that inspire those of different faiths and beliefs.
- Advocate practical action, i.e. 'Let's Work Together', addressing the needs of more isolated faith groups, thereby advancing social inclusion.
- Establish high levels of trust with those *The Council on Faith* seeks to engage, ensuring that a sensitivity to diversity is always maintained.

Mr David Dangoor DL, Chair of the *The Council on Faith*, also shared his Strategic Objectives for the next two years.

1. Convening London Faith organisations to enlist them in joining together at Building Bridges for a Fairer London project.
2. Promoting the association of the objectives of 'Building Bridges for a Fairer London' with the Royal Family, through the GLL Lord Lieutenant.
3. Having a reasonable number of DLs, a target of 15, active on *The Council on Faith*, individually furthering the GLL Lieutenancy's objectives among disconnected groups.

The Council on Faith has commissioned [3FF](#) to conduct research into isolated and marginalised faith based communities which will inform the approach taken. The idea is to shine a light on those groups which are on the periphery and therefore not getting the recognition or support they deserve. *The Council on Faith*, through its patronage, could help support them and is keen to do so.

Spotlight Study on Faith and Social Exclusion in London

[3FF](#) conducted a study on faith communities in London to resource *The Council on Faith's* agenda for social inclusion. This study is based on three primary sources of data. First, 3FF conducted desk-based research on mapping socially isolated and excluded faith groups in Greater London. Second, 3FF held a roundtable with ten experts in faith and inter-faith relations in London on the 14th of December. Third, 3FF held meetings with Deputy Lieutenants who are members of *The Council on Faith* to explore their interests and priorities for engaging with faith groups.

What was identified

The study identified major factors which influence social exclusion for faith groups in London, including rising diversity, deprivation and social tension. The study profiled three types of boroughs with different priorities for faith groups experiencing social exclusion:

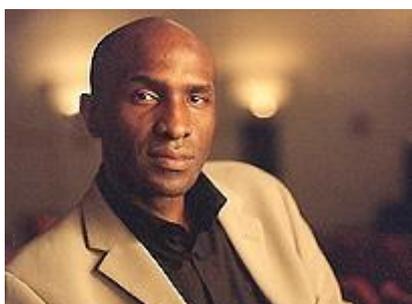
1. superdiverse outer boroughs which serve as hubs for minority faith communities,
2. superdiverse inner London boroughs adapting to gentrification, and
3. outer boroughs experience rising diversity and social tension.

What actions can be taken

Based on these findings, the study provides examples of faith groups working for social inclusion in London, and it recommends engagement with vulnerable groups which are often overlooked. The study concludes with practical suggestions for *The Council on Faith* agenda for inclusion, exploring how *The Council on faith* may advocate, encourage, honour, and convene faith groups working for social inclusion in London.

[The full study can be found here](#)

Introducing the Council: Rev Nims Obunge MBE DL



Nims is a pastor of a church in North London called Freedoms Ark and is passionate about social justice and seeing the purpose of God fulfilled in the hearts and minds of people across all communities.

We [interviewed](#) him to find out more about his work and background.

You are a key player in your local community – please tell us why your work is needed there?

The Church should be a source of hope and a catalyst for change in the local community. The Church has to tell the most vulnerable that they are supported. It is this sense of responsibility that makes me want to help in partnership with other local faith centres, voluntary groups and the council. There was a real problem of young men and women being the victims of gun and knife violence in the local

community. The families and loved ones of victims were also often not receiving the support that they needed. I knew that it was our duty to do something to change this.

There were two events at Southwark Cathedral attended by Deputy Lieutenants. Please tell us more about your discussion with the Bishop of Southwark.

The Faith and Community Assembly with the Mayor of London focused on reassuring EU workers that their human rights would be protected and that students from the EU would also have their rights ensured. A large number of young people were concerned about the fates of their school friends from other EU countries.

My colleague, Tariq Abbasi spoke about the importance of appreciating the contribution different communities are making in our country and that we all have something extremely powerful in common. At the Black History Month Thanksgiving Service, I spoke with the Bishop of Southwark about working together with *The Council on Faith* to ensure we partner on a range of issues that are of concern to all communities in London.

What are your aspirations for the The Council on Faith?

It would be great if *The Council on Faith* becomes a bridge builder between people of all faiths, especially young people. We can provide a platform across faith for everyone to have an understanding and appreciation of other's key values, instead of just tolerance. We should strive to make faith a catalyst for change for voluntary and statutory partners.

We should recognise the incredible work of young people and faith leaders who are using their faith to help their communities, promoting their example and change the representation and perception of faith in London.

[The full list of members can be found here.](#)

Events attended by members

- On the 1st of October Deputy Lieutenant Dr Tariq Abbasi MBE DL, spoke at the Faith and Community Assembly organised by the Diocese of Southwark on behalf of *The Council on Faith*. He was one of the inaugural signatures of the declaration presented at the event and wishes to share the declaration and its principles with the Lord-Lieutenancy for greater endorsement.

[The declaration can be found here.](#)



- The Lord-Lieutenant and his *Council on Faith* would like to share its endorsement of the [APPG on Faith and Society's Faith Covenant](#). The Faith Covenant is a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove some of the mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels.