

The Lord-Lieutenant's Council on Faith June Newsletter

Note from the Chair

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all victims of the recent horrific attacks on civilians in Manchester and London over the past few months. Our hearts go out to the families and friends that have suffered the loss of loved ones. All remain in our thoughts as we continue to reflect on the recent violence.

This month in London, we have been deeply shocked and saddened by the horrific fire at Grenfell Tower and the terror attacks at London Bridge and Finsbury Park Mosque. We celebrate the fact that faith communities were at the forefront of the immediate response in North Kensington and through our networks we endeavour to support the continuous effort to provide care to the victims.

In response to these terrible tragedies, we have witnessed amazing scenes of solidarity and defiance. We have seen the tireless efforts of faith communities to stand up against violent extremism. Communities have continued to show compassion and care towards one another and work together to improve community relations.

We are reminded that building bridges between communities and enhancing Londoners' sense of belonging within the Capital is clearly something that needs continuous work and focus. This remains a key motivation of The Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith as we continue to champion the good work of faith communities and support the positive role faith can play in our society.

David Dangoor, Chair

Second Council on Faith Meeting

On Thursday 9th February, members convened to share with one another activities performed on behalf of the Council. They also received presentations from national organisations that would help guide their work and support the Lieutenancy's initiative: *Building bridges for a fairer London*.

Highlights from the meeting included presentations from Phil Champain, Director of [3FE](#), Imam Monawar Hussain DL, founder of [The Oxford Foundation](#) and the founders for [Nisa-Nashim](#), Laura Marks and Julie Siddiqi.

The Oxford Foundation works with young people to combat extremism by training RE teachers to help address students' questions and discuss their views. Imam Monawar, who is a Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, also talked about the 'United for Peace' event, held in partnership with the Lord Lieutenants of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.



Nisa-Nashim means 'Women' in Arabic and Hebrew. It is a new project which brings Jewish and Muslim communities closer together. This is done by setting up groups of women who build personal friendships, grow as leaders and through their collective activities, benefit wider society. To date they have established 20 groups in the UK.

Council on Faith visit to BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir

On Tuesday 23rd May, the Council met at BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir. The Trustees of the Temple were delighted to host the Council and volunteers provided a tour for Deputy Lieutenants to explain its history and significance today. Dr Mayank Shah welcomed the Council on behalf of the Chairman and Trustees and gave an insight into the community work the Mandir champions.



Introducing the Council: Tariq Abbasi DL

Tariq was born in Pakistan in the 1960's and made Britain his home in 1983.

He is an investment banker, and a real estate developer with over 25 years' experience in related industries. In addition to running his own business he serves on the board of trustees of several national and international charities. Tariq is especially passionate about supporting charities who deal with the educational needs of children from under-privileged backgrounds.



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

Tariq, you have served your local community for over 25 years. Notably through your role as the Director and Trustee of Greenwich Islamic Centre. Please tell us more about this role.

During my tenure, I led a brilliant team of 16 Trustees in conveying a message to the local community of respect and togetherness. The most pleasing and rewarding element of serving a diverse community is that one gets to meet so many different types of individuals and organisations. I still visit the Centre, and each time get to meet so many amazing people who share so much love and affection, which is priceless.

You are a key player in your community. Why you feel community work is important?

I believe it is very important to gather people of all faiths and no faith on a single platform; the platform of love, respect, tolerance. My appointment as Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London is yet another great honour for a person like me, who was born in a tiny village of Pakistan, went to local school and sat on the ground whilst doing my homework using a Kerosene oil lamp. Upon my appointment, I wrote to various local community organisations I had been working with in the Boroughs of Bexley and Greenwich over the past several years and shared with them my new responsibilities as a Deputy Lieutenant. I very much look forward to supporting their work within my new role.

What are your aspirations for the Council on Faith?

I am ever so grateful to the Lord-Lieutenant for bringing diversity into the Greater London Lieutenancy to make sure people from all walks of life are given the honour of being appointed Deputy Lieutenant. Under the chairmanship of David Dangoor DL, the Council on Faith is an excellent initiative started by the Lord-Lieutenant and I. Having spent over two decades in the Faith arena I am thoroughly enjoying being part of it. I most sincerely hope that through the Council on Faith, we can spread the message of peace, tolerance, and understanding of each other, remove the barriers of hate and make the Council a leading arm of the Lieutenancy.

Events attended by Council Members

- On Wednesday 5th April, the Lord-Lieutenant and Representative Deputy Lieutenants attended a Service of Hope and Reconciliation following the terror attack in Westminster at Westminster Abbey.
- On Wednesday 10th May, HRH The Duke of Gloucester visited [Hope Corner](#) in Barnet at the invitation of Deputy Lieutenant, Mr Martin Russell DL, who is a Patron of Barnet Churches Action. The Centre runs various community groups including a children's theatre, Fixation Theatre and 'Tea & Tech', an activity that empowers more senior and less technically-able members of the community to learn basic computer skills.

- On Saturday 14th May, Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Barnet, Mr Martin Russell DL, attended the ['Celebration Barnet'](#) Festival on behalf of the Lieutenancy. At the event Martin stood with the Mayor, MPs and Parliamentary candidates, and Faith Leaders to recite the Pledge of Barnet Multi Faith Forum in unison. They pledged to provide the Community of Barnet with a public opportunity to stand together in harmony against all those wishing to divide us. A short video of the event can be found [here](#).



Mr Martin Russell DL with staff from JVN

- On Thursday 22nd June, the Council met with Cannon Rosemary Mallet to discuss the work of community groups in the Southwark Diocese and explore how the Council can enhance future community engagement.
- On Saturday 24th June, the Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Hackney, Lt Col Roderick Morris TD DL, attended the Festival Eucharist at St Mary of Eaton, Hackney Wick and joined in the celebrations of their 125th anniversary.