

The Lord Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith

A brief report of progress for period January to December 2020

1. Summary

The Lord Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith (CoF) was established in September 2016. Over the last four years it has established relationships with religious communities and organisations that work towards community cohesion; enacting the Lord-Lieutenant's strategy of building bridges for a fairer London.

In 2020, the CoF met three times, once at St. Georges Chapel, Heathrow Airport, and twice online; produced two newsletters; supported two virtual Awards events - the inaugural Barking and Dagenham Faith & Community Awards, and the fourth London Faith & Belief Community Awards (LFBCA); supported the launch of *A Toolkit for Interfaith*; and continued contributing to planning for an interfaith Fun Run scheduled for September 2021. These achievements are in addition to the individual activities of the Representative Deputy Lieutenants and Deputy Lieutenants on the CoF who have continued to promote the work of the Council and the interests of London's diverse faith communities.

Funded and directed by the Exilarch's Foundation, the Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF) has continued to be the delivery partner of the CoF in promoting the "Building Bridges for a Fairer London" strategy of the Lord Lieutenant of Greater London.

This has been a very tough year for Londoners in light of Covid-19, lockdowns, and the myriad of challenges that have arisen as a result. The CoF has stayed in touch with and supported faith and belief groups working at the frontline of community responses to the pandemic. The recognition provided by the two virtual Awards events, which each celebrated the exceptional contributions of faith and community groups, felt more needed than ever before, given the incredible efforts and sacrifices of faith and belief community groups.

2. 2020 Activities

2.1 Supporting projects identified through the Awards

In January, to support the work of projects identified through the Awards, F&BF created *Working Together for a More Connected London: A Toolkit for Interfaith*. This toolkit provides guidance on how to bring local people together for interfaith collaboration and dialogue, where to look for help in terms of funding and capacity, information on the Greater London Lieutenancy and how to make a nomination for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services. The Toolkit was launched through a networking and discussion event; 42 faith and community leaders from across London attended and took home a copy of the Toolkit.

2.2 Honouring excellence on the margins

This year the CoF's ambition to inspire and support borough-level Awards celebration events came to fruition, through their second local Awards event, in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. The event, hosted by the Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum, spotlighted 19 exceptional projects across six categories, and brought individuals and community groups together online to network and celebrate their contributions together. The virtual ceremony was attended by more than 100 people from the local community. The event featured performances from local musicians and poets, Dhol Academy, Barking Elim Church Creative Team, and Dauda Ladejobi, as well as addresses from local leaders including Darren Rodwell, Leader of the Council at London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Peter Chand, the Mayor of Barking and Dagenham, and Ian Pittaway, Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Barking.

"The Barking & Dagenham Faith Awards were a wonderful way of seeing the wide variety of groups working tirelessly within the borough to improve the lot of its residents in so many ways. It gave an opportunity to show all of the participants how valued their contribution is. It was a truly uplifting evening which I hope other boroughs will have the opportunity to replicate themselves." Ian Pittaway DL, Representative Deputy Lieutenant for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

In November, the fourth annual LFBCA, the main activity of the CoF, took place. A wide range of projects from across London were nominated for an award for services to faith communities. Nominations were

made by Representative Deputy Lieutenants, faith organisations and community partners. At the event 40 community, faith-based projects were awarded with grants of £500 (courtesy of The Exilarch's Foundation), and a further 56 projects and inspiring individuals were recognised. Virtual performances were given by London Humanist Choir and Shree Muktajeevan Swamibapa Pipe Band London. Sir Kenneth Olisa, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, offered a keynote speech. and guest speakers included Baroness Floella Benjamin and Reverend Richard Coles. David Dangoor, Chair of the CoF gave the closing comments. For the first time the event was held online via Zoom, which enabled greater participation and reach in comparison to an in-person event. 553 individuals attended the live event, and a video of the ceremony has reached 1,150 people on Facebook and was viewed 370 times on YouTube.

For award winners, Sir Kenneth Olisa hosted two online receptions to enable networking and collaboration that would usually be possible at the Awards evening. Through these events representatives of winning groups were able to meet to discuss the challenges of Covid-19 for their work, the support they need to continue, and to explore working together.

Some feedback from guests at the event:

"I am so humbled by the generosity of time, energy and positivity. It can feel lonely during these times where we can't gather. This event shows just how many amazing people there are to help no matter faith and background"

"I am blown away by all of these awe-inspiring projects! Thank you for all your dedication in keeping London a compassionate and caring city"

"This was an amazing evening – it was so inspiring to hear all about the amazing work going on here in London. A hope filled, positive and exciting summary of incredible projects!"



Baroness Floella Benjamin announcing Inspiring Youth winners at LFBCA , 30.11.20



Performance from London Humanist choir at LFBCA, 30.11.20



Performance from Shree Muktajeevan Swamibapa Pipe Band at LFBCA, 30.11.20



Barking and Dagenham Faith Awards, 13.08.20



Reception with Sir Ken Olisa 16.11.20



Rev. Richard Coles announcing Promoting Inclusion winners at the LFBCA, 30.11.20

There were features about the LFBCA on both BBC Asian Network and BBC London Radio. Various news outlets covered the event, including [Religion Media Centre](#), [East London Advertiser](#), [Barking & Dagenham Post](#), and [Slough & Windsor Observer](#).

A video of the LFBCA can be viewed [here](#). A video of the Barking and Dagenham Faith Awards can be viewed [here](#).

In December, on invitation by the office of TRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, the CoF nominated four individuals from the Awards network, who have gone above and beyond in their support of others in 2020, to attend an exclusive performance of *Pantoland* at The Palladium.

2.3 Promoting the messages of the Council on Faith

The CoF continues to produce quarterly newsletters highlighting its plans and sharing the activities and views of its members. F&BF has been in consultation with the Lieutenancy's office to discuss ways to make the CoF webpage more informative and accessible. (<https://greaterlondonlieutenancy.com/about-us/building-bridges/faith/>).

3. Looking ahead

The CoF had been looking forward to launching London's first Interfaith Fun Run in 2020 through a partnership between F&BF and Maccabi GB. Unfortunately, that event had to be postponed. However, F&BF, Maccabi GB, and the Steering Group of faith and community groups already convened for this project, have been working together to respond to the emerging need of Londoners for accessible resources to help them look after their physical and mental health at home. This group will launch the *Fitness, Faith & Feeling Good* festival of resources in February 2021, which will meet this need and continue to build momentum and interest in the Interfaith Fun Run, which is tentatively booked for September 2021.

In 2021 the milestone fifth annual LFBCA is due to take place. The CoF will consider how to mark this occasion, building on the scale and momentum of 2020's event. A key consideration will be how to increase digital engagement this coming year, in ways that will be of benefit to the Awards network given the likely ongoing challenges related to Covid-19.