

The Lord-Lieutenant's Council on Faith February Newsletter

The mission of the Lieutenancy and its Council on Faith is to build bridges; connecting individuals, organisations and social networks. This will enhance Londoners' sense of belonging and thus increase social inclusion within the capital. This newsletter records the activities of the Council on Faith members and the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir Ken Olisa.

The London Faith & Belief Community Awards 2018



Londoners working to serve their communities and bring people from different backgrounds together were recognised at the London Faith & Belief Community Awards on Tuesday 27 November. 42 projects run by individuals and organisations, inspired by their faiths or beliefs to make a difference, were given awards for their work in areas ranging from inspiring youth and wellbeing to interfaith relations and inclusion.



The Awards are an initiative of the Faith & Belief Forum, supported by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith. They aim to shine a light on the great work done by ordinary people to make London a city where everyone belongs and feels welcome – work that often goes unrecognised.

A 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, 42 community, faith-based projects were awarded with grants of £500, 16 individuals were awarded for their work, and a further 65 projects were recognised.

Sir Ken Olisa attended the Awards Ceremony that took place at the prestigious Royal Society of Medicine and offered words of inspiration and encouragement during his keynote speech. He also officiated the awards alongside various sponsors and the Faith & Belief Forum.

Speeches were given by Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Communities; David Dangoor, Chair of the Council on Faith; and Bushra Nasir DL, Chair of the Judging Committee.



Reflecting on the event, Dr David Dangoor DL, shared: "The London Faith & Belief Community Awards is a wonderful demonstration of what people motivated by their faith or belief can achieve for this city. By shining a light on their work, this event promotes and connects the unsung heroes of London's faith and belief communities. This event also gives them access to further support which may enhance their work and inspire others to take action."

Council on Faith visit The Ismaili Centre.

On Wednesday 13th February 2019, the Council on Faith met at the Ismaili Centre in South Kensington to discuss their activities for the forthcoming year.

The Ismaili Centre is a religious, social and cultural meeting place for the Ismaili Muslim community in the United Kingdom. Opened in 1985, the Centre is the first religious and cultural centre to be specially designed and built for the Ismaili community in the West.

Introducing the Council: Dr Mustafa Abu-Lisan DL

Mustafa is a Consultant Clinical Chemist by profession and recipient of the International Fellowship from the American Association for Clinical Chemistry. He is an ex Member of the WHO Expert Panel on Rational Use of Antibiotics and was formerly the Director of training for the WHO AIDS Collaboration Centre for the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Mustafa currently lives in Chelsea with his two grown up sons and is a tireless champion for social inclusion, equality and unity among various communities and faith groups in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. He is the founding Chair of Chelsea Muslim Community Hub; founding Member of the Bi-Borough Prevent & Community Advisory Group; and founding Member of the Mosques Advisory Group, amongst other activities.



Mustafa, you have had a fascinating career. Please tell me a bit more about your background.

I was born in Jaffa in 1947 and grew up in Beirut-Lebanon where I attained my primary, secondary and university education. In 1973 I came to the UK where I did my clinical and postgraduate research work at Loughborough University, the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham and Derbyshire Royal Infirmary in Derby. In 1979 I left the UK to work as Consultant Chemical Pathologist & Director of Laboratory Services at St Luke's Teaching Hospital in Malta. In 1982 I moved to Kuwait where I worked at the Ministry of Public Health until 1990 when I was stranded in London on my way back to Kuwait after attending an International Conference in San Francisco, due to the Iraqi invasion of that country. I worked several years as Consultant at Jean Shanks Pathology Services in London's Harley Street and at Chandos Clinical Research and Clinical Trials Laboratory Services.

You are highly involved with various organisations in Kensington and Chelsea, please tell me a bit more about these organisations and any others you are involved in.

The Chelsea Muslim Community Hub (CMCH) was founded in 2006 and it became a registered Charity in 2011. It is a successful, vibrant and creative charity where hundreds of visitors have socialised, worshipped, congregated, celebrated and received education, guidance and help throughout the years. Combating isolation among residents and raising awareness of crucial matters including health, education, council services, job opportunities and anti-social behaviour. CMCH has been a leader in fighting extremism, racism and radicalism. As a founding member of the Bi- Borough PREVENT Team, CMCH has been at the forefront of supporting its strategy and encouraging other Muslim charities, organisations and groups to cooperate positively with the PREVENT Team and the Police to safeguard our children from preachers of hate and extremists among our communities. We also raised the alarm about the extreme far-right groups who seek to divide our society and instil hatred and prejudice against ethnic and minority groups.

What is the importance of community work?

Community work is extremely important because it brings people together regardless of their colour, ethnicity, religious affiliations and social background. It helps the community to develop and improve the quality of life to others. For almost 29 years I have been steadfast in promoting cohesion, tolerance and respect to the rule of law. Building bridges among communities and improving the lives of marginalised, isolated and ignored members of the society. I continue to engage with schools as governor to strengthen the bond between teachers and parents and help raise the standards of education in my capacity as member of the standards and premises committees and science and technology link governor. I also mediate between churches, schools and Muslim parents to establish a healthy relationship and provide the children with a happy school environment.

My community work extends to the leadership of the RBKC Council, the Safer Neighbourhood team, the Metropolitan Police, the Residents Association, the Over 50 Club, the Salvation Army and churches in the vicinity.

In 2017, you hosted Duke of Cambridge Prince William and Prince Harry's visit to The Islamic Cultural Heritage Centre, Almanaar. Please tell us more about this day.

On 5 September 2017 I had the pleasure and honour to receive Their Royal Highnesses (TRHs) the Duke of Cambridge Prince William and the Duke of Sussex Prince Harry at the Support 4 Grenfell Hub and The Islamic Cultural Heritage Centre, Almanaar, in North Kensington to meet bereaved family members of the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire disaster and members of the distressed local community.

Both visits were very successful and enjoyed by TRHs, members of the Grenfell community, the hosts and members of the community at large. TRHs were extremely engaging with bereaved families and community members in both locations and they remarked how impressed they were to see so many charities working together at the Support 4 Grenfell Hub and hoped the spirit of collaboration continues in the long term for a better future. TRHs also remarked how immensely interesting and heart-warming their visit to Almanaar was and how evidently welcoming and inclusive place it is. TRHs engaged with the Muslim community and visited the Mosque and the Grenfell Kitchen, which was recently visited by the Duchess of Sussex.

I also received TRHs the Duke and the Duchess of Kent on 14 June 2018 at the location of the burnt Grenfell Tower, where they laid a wreath and comforted bereaved members and survivors of the Grenfell community on the sad anniversary of the drastic fire.

What are your aspirations for the Council on Faith?

- 1) Responding to the needs of faith communities is a priority. This requires close cooperation with the local Government Authority to ensure their involvement to answer the needs for worship places and provide social, spiritual and economic help to improve the quality of life to deprived, marginalised and/or isolated communities.
- 2) Continue to reward and recognise charities, organisations, groups and individuals who work for their communities and link them to the Council on Faith in one way or another.
- 3) Hold Q&A events to understand the needs and worries of faith groups and none and answer their queries and doubts.
- 4) Involve more faith groups in the Council on Faith and discuss topics of interest that are vital for communities to keep the momentum and encourage members to attend meetings instead of shying away from it.
- 5) Bestow a Royal Patronage to strengthen the status of the Council.

People of Faith Recognised on the Queen's New Year's Honours List 2019

The following are all people of faith who live or work in London and were recognised for their wide ranging services to young people, the community and education.

- Pastor Adegboyega Omooba was awarded a MBE for his voluntary service.
- Helena Stella Aronson was awarded a BEM for services to Holocaust Education.
- Taube Biber was awarded a BEM for services to Holocaust Education.
- Joanna Millan was awarded a BEM for services to Holocaust Education.
- Vera Helga Schaufeld was awarded a MBE for services to Holocaust Education.
- Cirla Lewis was awarded a MBE for services to Holocaust Education in the UK.
- Tariq Mahmood Dar was awarded a MBE for his work with the community in Brent.
- Imam Mohamed Hassan Yousef Mahmoud was awarded an OBE for services to the community in London.
- Dr Vinod Kapashi was awarded a MBE for services to Jainism
- Jashu Vekaria, Deputy Headteacher of Uxendon Manor Primary School was awarded a MBE for services to Primary Education
- Lalit Mohan Nagpaul JP was awarded a BEM for services to Older People and the Asian community in North London.
- Pastor Alexander Gyasi, Founder and Senior Pastor, Highway of Holiness Church was awarded a MBE for services to the community in Haringey, London.
- The Reverend Joel Edwards was awarded a CBE for services to Tackling Poverty and Injustice.
- Archbishop Costakis Christos Evangelou was awarded a MBE for services to Young People in North London.

Events Attended on Behalf of the Lieutenancy

- On 15 November, Sir Ken Olisa attended the inaugural 'Faith' in the Community Awards, hosted by the Bexley Interfaith Forum in partnership with the London Borough of Bexley. At the ceremony, which took place at the town hall, over 100 projects were recognised for their work with faith communities in Bexley.
- On 21 December, Sir Ken Olisa attended the 2018 London Leadership & Peace Awards hosted by the Peace Alliance UK and led by Rev Nims Obunge DL. At the ceremony, which took place at City Hall, seven Awards for outstanding contributions to community coherence were handed out.
- On Wednesday 6th February, Bushra Nasir DL and David Dangoor DL attended 'the Building Bridges through Interfaith Dialogue' Seminar hosted by Afzal Khan MP at the House of Commons on behalf of Forum for International Relations Development (FIRD). David Dangoor DL gave a key note address and Bushra Nasir DL contributed to the discussion on Education and the RE in schools.

