

## The Lord-Lieutenant's Council on Faith June Newsletter

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith has had a successful first year of activity. Its members have worked hard to promote and to enact Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's strategy: Building bridges for a fairer London.

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### Exploring barriers to belonging for Londoners from different faiths and beliefs

Last year members of the Council on Faith and Representative DLs shared their experiences of engaging with faith communities in a survey, and they made suggestions for relevant topics for briefings on faith communities and belonging in London. The Faith & Belief Forum (formerly 3FF) and Birkbeck, University of London, have organised a series of roundtables to deepen understanding on these issues. The roundtables will inform a series of briefing papers.

On 17 May, the first roundtable was held on the subject of ***hate crime, faith and belonging***. The roundtable brought together local organisations, academics and policy experts 1) to understand better the issues and their impact on local communities, and 2) to share good practice for local initiatives working for social inclusion and belonging.

Two further roundtables have been organised. On 12 June, ***faith, belief and inclusion*** will be addressed to understand the intersection and tensions involved in including different aspects of identity (religion and belief, as well as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, age and ability) and to shine a light on what gets excluded when we talk about inclusion.

On 26 June, ***the role of media in faith, belief and belonging*** will be explored to highlight cases of media coverage which increase social tension and dampen a sense of belonging, and to share case studies of positive engagement between local faith communities and traditional and social media.

All roundtables will be held at Birkbeck, University of London (near Russell Square). To reserve a space please email [jessica@faithbeliefforum.org](mailto:jessica@faithbeliefforum.org).

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### Council on Faith visit Westminster Cathedral

On Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May, the Council on Faith met at the Library, Clergy House, Westminster Cathedral. The Cathedral management were delighted to host the Council. Peter McNulty welcomed the Council on Faith and explained the history of the Cathedral and its significance today.

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### Introducing the Council: Martin Russell Esq DL FCT

Martin who is self-employed, provides education in the ways of wholesale financial markets to a range of institutions and firms in London and beyond including to the Bank of England, FT and London Stock Exchange.

In employed life, he was a banker, then a corporate treasurer and a finance director. He has served with the Regular, Reserve and Cadet Forces.



A family man, his daughter serves with FANY (PRVC) and each of his sons is an officer in the Regular Army.

He was appointed Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Barnet in 2006, the borough in which he has lived for over sixty years.

**Martin, you shared that you have lived in North London all your life, except for your time with the Regular Army. Please tell me a bit more about your background.**

Proud to be a Londoner, I was born in Hampstead, educated in Finchley and have lived in North London consistently. My parents moved to Mill Hill in the 1950s – so I have a fairly lengthy association with the borough where I represent the Lord-Lieutenant. The local knowledge I have gained, in terms of the complexities of faith hereabouts, history, geography and activities, as well as personalities and organisations, has been very helpful to me in my appointment.

After school, I went straight to the army and have served in Regular, Reserve and Cadet Forces, and this military connection is very important, for example in a borough that is home to the RAF Museum, and has three Reserve Army sub-units and thirteen cadet detachments. I am also a freeman of the City and member of the Farriers' Company. I was surprised to be appointed Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Barnet in 2006; honoured and excited. It is a demanding role, challenging but rewarding; much is unscripted. But as the Representative it is particularly useful to live in and know the borough, as well as many of the 400,000 people who live here; I rely significantly on the support and tolerance of my wife and family.

**You are the patron of various organisations, such as Barnet Museum and Home Start Barnet and President of Barnet Borough Scout District. What is the importance of community work?**

I am proud to encourage directly a number of charities working locally. At a time when the public purse is necessarily tight, voluntary work can fill some of the gaps in services we have come to expect central and local government to offer. Working together, often without reward for the good of others is neighbourly. Often it rewards the giver as much as the recipient, if in different ways. One charity in particular I have grown close to is Home Start Barnet. It's a super charity which helps families with young children who are facing difficulties. Our volunteers commit to spend a few hours a week with the family to provide predictability - structure, companionship and direct assistance. The organisation has grown from 60 to over 200 volunteers over ten years, and now operates in two neighbouring boroughs as well. The joy of the charity is that many current volunteers are themselves past recipients – showing they understand the needs of others, and the value of working at community level.

I am also very involved with local scouting – our scout district currently involves over 2000 people and is the largest youth provision in the borough. One thing we are very proud of is that we supported formation of the First Barnet (Salaam) Scout Group. After a multi faith day in 2007, we identified North Finchley Mosque as being in need of leaders to provide programmes for their young boys. The group formed caters exclusively to the boys at the mosque, and has been very successful, not least in bringing their leaders into more regular contact with other sections of the community, such as some of our Jewish groups, as a result of their involvement in District activities.

Experience has shown me that a lot of the importance of my community work is in being seen and being recognised - people appreciate having a consistent and apolitical figurehead who represents the monarchy attending their events. In addition, it is important to establish a level of relationship which facilitates the asking of questions, and enables the opening of doors. For example, recently

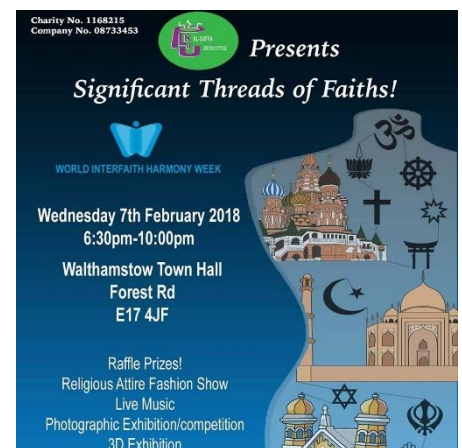
we were asked at short notice to nominate candidates to attend the royal wedding, and I immediately circulated the request around religious leaders and educational institutions in Barnet and got eight quick responses. I provided a shortlist of six and everyone was allowed to go – which was very pleasing.

### What are your aspirations for the Council on Faith?

To continue supporting the Lord-Lieutenant in one pillar of his Building Bridges strategy. Its role has been validated in numerous ways – the very fact there is a structure gives the Lord-Lieutenant purchase in his discussions with faith groups, seen for example through his recent meeting with Cardinal Nichols. I look forward to continuing my support in such encounters, and in particular, reinforcing the work of the Council at local level in a borough where faith is high on the agenda.

### Events Attended on Behalf of the Lieutenancy

- On 7 February, the Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Waltham Forest, Jeremy Fern DL, attended 'Significant Threads of Faith' an interfaith celebration hosted by the community project PL84U Al-Suffa. PL84U is a cross community interfaith initiative providing hot meals and companionship people in need. They received an award for their work tackling poverty and isolation at the 2017 Evening of Faith Recognition and Celebration, an event that is supported by the Council on Faith.



- On 24 April, Council on Faith members attended Lord-Lieutenant's Briefing Day, at the Hammersmith Reserve Centre. The programme included updates from Cdre David Elford OBE ADC RN of the Royal Navy in London; Maj Gen Ben Bathurst CBE GOC of the Army in London; and Air Cdre Dawn McAafferty CBE Commandant Air Cadets of the Royal Air Force in London. Cadet Force Briefings were given by representatives from the Sea Cadets, Army Cadets, RAFAC Cadets, CCF Cadets and YOU London. Attendees were then delightfully entertained by young cadets from the AFC-SW London Band and the RAFC -12F Sqn Continuity Drill Team.
- On 13 May, Sir Ken Olisa DL attended the installation of Sarah Mullally as 133<sup>rd</sup> Bishop of London, and the first female Bishop of London.
- On 23 May, Sir Ken Olisa DL spoke at the London Community Iftar Dinner, hosted by Jennette Arnold OBE on behalf of the Dialogue Society, at City Hall.