

The Lord-Lieutenant's Council on Faith September Newsletter

Celebrating Faith and Social Action

The tragic events in London over the past six months have shocked and saddened us. It seems we are inundated with media coverage of rising violent attacks and hate crimes which tears the fabric of our community.

At the same time, we know that Londoners continue to work tirelessly in their local communities for harmony and inclusion. Their work needs to be recognised and elevated now more than ever. In this spirit, we want to celebrate and support the work of Londoners of all faiths and beliefs working to increase Londoners' sense of belonging.

On 27 November 2017, the interfaith charity 3FF with the support of Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith is hosting its inaugural Evening of Faith Recognition and Celebration. The event will bring together organisations and individuals who seek to build bridges and enrich Londoners' sense of belonging, as well as celebrating their work by awarding small grants to support their initiatives.

If you would like to find out more about how to support this event or attend the event, please email Jessica at councilonfaith@3ff.org.uk. If you would like to nominate an initiative from your borough, you may do so using the following [brief form](#).

Briefing Reports on Faith and Belonging

As part of its activities, the Council on Faith is supporting the interfaith charity 3FF to produce a series of briefings on the intersection between faith and belonging.



The briefing sessions and reports will be delivered by the Department of Psychosocial studies at Birkbeck University. They will cover a range of topics such as supporting religious institutions, addressing hate crimes, security and safety.

It is hoped that the series will support Deputy Lieutenants' engagement with faith and belief groups. As well as recording the experiences of Representative Deputy Lieutenants' positive engagement with faith and belief communities in their boroughs.

Surveys have been distributed by the Lieutenancy's office but if you would like to discuss this aspect of the Council on Faith's work please email councilonfaith@3ff.org.uk or call Jonathan Smith on 0790 325 9913.

A report on 'Faith and Belonging' has been commissioned by the Council on Faith. A copy of the report can be found [here](#).

More information about the Department on Psychosocial studies at Birkbeck University can be found [here](#).

Council on Faith visit London Central Mosque Trust & Islamic Cultural Centre

On Monday 4th September, the Council met at London Central Mosque. The Trustees of the Mosque were delighted to host the Council. Volunteers provided a tour for Deputy Lieutenants to explain its history and significance today. The Director General, Dr Ahmad Al Dubayan welcomed the Council and gave an insight into the community work championed by the Mosque.



Introducing the Council: Bushra Nasir CBE DL

Bushra Nasir is an experienced educationalist. She was the first female Muslim Head Teacher of a state secondary school. In 2003, Bushra was awarded a CBE for her services to education.

Bushra is co-author of a book called *Breaking Stereotypes*, which aims to provide positive role models for ethnic minority young people. In 2009, she was named in the top 10 list of Muslim women in the 'Muslim Power' list published in The Times.



We interviewed her to find out more about her work and background

I understand you were the first female Muslim head teacher – How has this achievement influenced your life and career?

When I was appointed as head teacher in 1993, I was contacted by a newspaper who told me they would like to do an article on me as I was the first female Muslim head teacher in the country. I was surprised to learn this and felt a great sense of honour but I felt it also brought great responsibility. I felt I would be under a lot more scrutiny. I also felt I had to be a positive role model for other Muslim teachers who wanted to go for

headships. I therefore wanted to develop myself and took on other opportunities such as chiring groups, working with the local authority on projects supporting schools with HR and mentoring new head teachers.

What is the importance of community work?

Because I worked in a school which was multi faith - 65% of the students were Muslim, 10% Hindu, 10% Sikh, 5% Christian and 10% of other faiths or none - I thought it was really important to work with all communities. Therefore, I looked for ways to implement this in my school. One example is that we offered different assemblies for those of different faiths as well as multi faith assemblies and allowed students to choose which assemblies they would like to attend. All the students also took a Religious Studies GCSE. The course we chose was comparative Religions and students would study Christianity alongside Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. The results for this GCSE were about 86% A*-C, which is quite an achievement. All these opportunities made students feel very at home and obviously increased their confidence and self-esteem and sense of worth in their culture, religion and community.

I think the local community really looked upon a female Muslim head teacher as a source of inspiration and made them think about the possibility of further education for their children.

You sit on the board of various educational institutions and charities, including Mosaic and Migration Museum Project. Please tell us more about these roles.

Being on the board of Mosaic is very interesting, it is a charity that sends business mentors into schools and I have very much enjoyed being part of its work and taking part in its education committee as well as on its board. I am also on the board of the Migration Museum Project which is trying to set up a new museum to share stories of migrants coming to Britain and the contribution they have made to society.

What are your aspirations for the Council on Faith?

I was really excited when the Council was set up and really wanted to explore how the Greater London Lieutenancy can make an impact. I am privileged to share my knowledge and expertise and assist in designing projects that will have a direct impact on faith and belief. The two projects we are working on, especially November's Celebration Event, will be an opportunity to bring those of different faiths and beliefs together and celebrate their contribution to London's multi-faith community. The experience of Council members and their links to organisations will help to create high profile events which show London to be a rich multi-religious community which can work together for the benefit for all. I think this is a fantastic aspiration.

Events attended by Council Members

Their Royal Highnesses, The Duke of Cambridge and Prince Henry of Wales visited the Support4Grenfell Hub at the Phoenix Brewery and Al-Manaar, the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre on Tuesday 5th September. They were greeted and received by Council Member Dr Mustafa Abu-Lisan DL who is a founder of the Chelsea Muslim Community Hub.

