

## 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 Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London., Sir Kenneth Olisa.

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### Celebrating London's Unsung Heroes - London Faith & Belief Community Awards 2020

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

In November, F&BF hosted the fourth annual London Faith & Belief Community Awards. Hosted online, the event brought together diverse projects and individuals from across all London boroughs. 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. The projects spanned six categories; Health and Wellbeing, Inspiring Youth, Interfaith Relations, Promoting Inclusion, Supporting Women and a new category for this year, Community Resourcefulness in Response to Covid-19.

Sir Kenneth Olisa opened the event with a powerful speech, in which he said to those who were recognised *"What you do is so important because you've shown that faith isn't selfish. There are many organisations here tonight... that are helping those not of their faith, who help those in need, those who are marginalised, and that is the power of not being selfish. Faith teaches us not to be selfish."*



The uplifting online event was attended by over 500 individuals from across London, the UK and internationally – including the United States, Iran and Taiwan. Guests were also treated two special performances, from the London Humanist Choir and the Shree Muktajeevan Swamibapa Pipe Band, which had guests clapping and dancing along from the comfort of their own homes.

The event had numerous special guest presenters, including Baroness Floella Benjamin DL and Rev Richard Coles. Baroness Floella Benjamin shared *"It's fantastic to see and hear about so many people motivated by their faiths and beliefs to serve their communities and help those around them. This vital work is not celebrated enough, and these awards shine a much-deserved light on these local heroes."*

For the full list of 2020 London Faith & Belief Community Awards winners, visit F&BF's website [here](#). To watch a video of the event click [here](#).

## Pantoland Visit

On 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020, TRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge attended a performance of Pantoland at The Palladium in London. This was a special performance for key workers and other hard-working individuals who had made positive contributions to their communities during the pandemic. Four winners from the London Faith & Belief Community Awards, and their families, were invited to attend in recognition of their service to Londoners this year.

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## Interview with Ian Pittaway DL



Mr Ian Pittaway is a solicitor and the Senior Partner of City Law firm , Sacker & Partners, which specialises in pensions law. Ian was brought up in Barking and Dagenham and still has close connections with the Borough. Ian is passionate about social mobility and very much supports the Lord- Lieutenant's policy of building bridges for a fairer London.

Ian is the chair and co-founder of the Alumni Association of his old school , Robert Clack in Dagenham. He is also a keen supporter of Leadership Through Sport and Business.

*Ian Pittaway, you have had a fascinating career. Please tell me a bit more about your professional background*

I have certainly been lucky enough to have had an interesting and fulfilling career so far. I wanted to be a lawyer from the age of 16 when I would visit the local magistrates' courts and marvel at the skilled advocacy of the lawyers – whether they were acting for the prosecution or the defence. But I assumed that after studying law I would return to a small High Street practice in Dagenham dealing with a wide variety of things like criminal law or buying and selling houses. But I did well at University and that gave me the courage to apply for a training contract in one of the top London firms. I was lucky in that they saw something in me and offered me a job. Since then I have always worked in the City of London and sadly never got back to my imaginary High Street practice.

For the last 16 years I have been the Senior Partner of a law firm in the City of London. We specialise in advising pension schemes. This has the advantage of being incredibly interesting and varied work. But as pension schemes provide better and more comfortable retirements for many millions of peoples it is socially rewarding as well. I feel that I am actually doing something good for the wider community as well as being intellectually stimulated. That is an ideal combination.

*I understand that you are passionate about social mobility and building bridges within London. Please tell us more about what this means to you and your work in this area*

I am absolutely committed to social mobility. I was the first person to go to University in my family and my parents were incredibly supportive. I was lucky in that I was able to build a successful career in the law but I know first hand that many children from deprived backgrounds struggle to benefit from the opportunities available to children from more privileged backgrounds. So just over 10 years I helped to found an alumni association at my old school , Robert Clack in Dagenham. We now have 1,500 former pupils actively involved in the life of the school. Our mantra is that a pupil's potential should determine their future not their background. Our members give generously of their time and money to make sure the current generation make the most of their potential. Nothing could be more powerful for a child to see a successful role model who actually sat at the same desk as you. Children from poor backgrounds can often have low aspirations – our role is to make them realise they are every bit as capable of succeeding as anyone else.

The current Lord-Lieutenant has exactly the same philosophy in terms of breaking down barriers in London and encouraging social mobility. So it was a very easy decision when I was offered the great honour of becoming Deputy- Lieutenant of Barking & Dagenham – the borough where I grew up.

*You were involved in the 2020 Barking and Dagenham Faith and Community Awards. What was your experience of the Awards and what did you enjoy about the event?*

It was one of the absolute highlights of the lockdown period for me. It was inspiring and humbling to see how much wonderful work in going on in every corner of the Borough. None of the organisations remotely set out to win an award – their sole motivation is in helping the community. But I think it is a very good thing to recognise those efforts and to say thank you for the myriad ways in which our lives are enriched by their activities. I can't wait for the next one! I hope it will act as an example for other Boroughs and so we can see one every year in all 32 local authorities.

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

I think the Faith Awards are a wonderful innovation . Nobody could have left this year's event without a big smile on their face. I would love to see it a regular event in every borough in London – and across the UK generally. It would be such a force for good – and I truly believe it will happen.

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### **Updates from CoF members**

We are aware that the pandemic and subsequent restrictions has impacted the physical interactions Deputy Lieutenants can have in their local areas but engagement has not ceased. We asked members of the Council of Faith to share what they have been up to.

After losing her mother to Covid in April, Bushra has wanted to support a project that was looking at dealing with grief across different faith groups. She was interviewed for the Dealing with Grief project, which looks at grief from a Christian, Jewish and Muslim perspective, with plans to extend to other faith groups in the future. <http://www.nazlegacy.org/index.php/dealing-with-grief/>

**Bushra Nasir DL**

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### **Events of interests attended by the Royal Family**

HRH The Prince of Wales urged people to remember the victims and survivors of the Holocaust on 27<sup>th</sup> January, Holocaust Memorial Day. Speaking on a post on Twitter, The Prince of Wales shared that *“As I speak, the last generation of living witnesses is tragically passing from this world, so the task of bearing witness falls to us.”* The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge also shared a similar posting online, reminiscing on an event they attended in 2017.

