

The Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith A brief report of progress for period January to December 2021

1. Summary

The Lord-Lieutenant (LL) of Greater London's Council on Faith (CoF) was established in September 2016. Over the last five 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 2021, the CoF continued to provide a high level of output through both virtual and in person events. The CoF met three times online and produced three newsletters. In addition, they supported an online fitness festival - Faith, Fitness and Feeling Good - and two large public events - London's first Interfaith Fun Run and the fifth London Faith & Belief Community Awards.

These achievements have been delivered alongside 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.

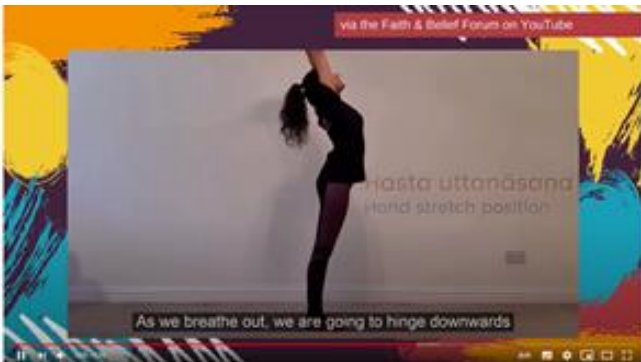
Funded and directed by the Exilarch's Foundation, the Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF) has continued to be the delivery partner of the CoF in promoting the "Building Bridges for a Fairer London" strategy of the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London.

This year has continued to be extremely tough for Londoners in light of Covid-19, lockdowns, and the myriad of challenges that have arisen as a result. As the LL Sir Ken Olisa said at the inaugural Interfaith Fun Run, *'The pain of the pandemic has been eased by the remarkable work of Londoners & charities - especially faith-based charities.'* The CoF work in the last year has ensured a spotlight was shone on these groups and that they were rightly recognised.

2. 2021 Activities

Fitness, Faith & Feeling Good

Due to the uncertainty of hosting large-scale events The Interfaith Fun Run was postponed to August 2021. However, thanks to additional support from the Exilarch's Foundation, a new initiative was created to build momentum for the Fun Run, whilst providing much-needed opportunities for isolated individuals across communities to nurture their wellbeing at home.



Yoga workshop with National Hindu Student's Forum UK



Israeli folk dance session with Israeli Dance Institute

The online Fitness, Faith & Feeling Good festival took place from Monday 1st to Friday 5th February, and platformed a range of approaches to health and wellbeing, showcased by diverse partners from across London's faith and cultural communities. Activities showcased ranged from yoga to Israeli folk dance, and from mindfulness to high-intensity gospel dance. Due to an extensive social media campaign, the festival videos were seen 10,000 times and social media posts about the festival, including the blogs, engaged over 50,000 people on social media.

On Wednesday 3rd February, a live panel event brought together experts in the field of sports and faith to share ideas on engaging diverse communities through sports and overcoming possible barriers to participation.

Overall, this festival was a resounding success, with 100% of participants reporting that they enjoyed the activities they took part in, that the festival helped them learn about new faith-based community organisations, and that the festival helped them reflect on their wellbeing.

London Interfaith Fun Run

On 30th August, the Inaugural London Interfaith Fun Run was held at StoneX Stadium to bring together individuals, communities, and charitable organisations for an energising day of family fun, unity, and raising money for good causes.

Activities on the day included: 1K, 5K and 10K runs/walks; food and live music from around the world; a charity zone representing London's diverse charities; interactive interfaith activities for families; and an inflatables zone for children. There were also online activities for those who could not attend in person, which enabled participants to join in virtually from across London and even as far away as Hyderabad, India.

The engagement on the day was exceptional considering the context of the pandemic, with 250 runners participating, and 500 people attending the event at StoneX stadium. 37 charities participated, and together their runners fundraised £10,000 for their causes. For many of the charities, this was the first in-person event since the pandemic and generated positive feedback about safety measures and community atmosphere.

Thanks to encouragement and support from The Exilarch's Foundation, we were able to reach individuals from outside the charities' networks through advertising with The Metro, The Tablet, and through a media partnership with Jewish News. Following the event, the event has been featured in The Church Times, The Jewish Chronicle, and on BBC Radio 2's Pause for Thought, furthering the message of unity and togetherness that the event projected.



LL Sir Ken Olisa with Shree Muktajeevan Swamibapa Pipe Band opening the event



Attendees starting the 5k and 10k routes together

Fifth London Faith & Belief Community Awards

In November, the fifth annual London Faith & Belief Community Awards took place at the Royal Society of Medicine. A wide range of projects from across London were nominated for an award for services to faith communities including Buddhist, Jewish, Tamil, Sikh, and Vanik groups. Nominations were made by Representative Deputy Lieutenants, faith organisations and community partners.

At the event 35 faith-based community projects were awarded with grants of £500 (courtesy of The Exilarch's Foundation and Direct Line Group), and a further 60 projects and inspiring individuals were recognised.

The pandemic necessitated a hybrid awards event this year, with 200 guests in person and 1080 joining online. The event livestream was promoted online with a reach of 8000 on Facebook and 1600 views / 14,700 impressions on Youtube. The event was also covered by the Hackney Gazette and The Nigerian Voice.



Representatives of Community Senior Letters Project with LL Sir Ken Olisa and Phil Champain, Director of F&BF



Reverend Nagase with LL Sir Ken Olisa and Phil Champain, Director of F&BF

3. Promoting the messages of the Council

The CoF continues to produce quarterly newsletters highlighting its plans and sharing the activities and views of its members. This year the newsletters included interviews with Ian Pittaway DL, Dr David Dangoor CBE DL and Sir William Atkinson DL.

The CoF webpage is updated regularly with informative and accessible updates on the work of the CoF, including links to videos of their activities. This year the Lieutenancy Office conducted some research into the use of the Lieutenancy website and found that between 22/09/2020 and 22/09/2021, the CoF webpage was viewed 771 times (with 299 unique views) and, of the 862 GLL webpages listed, ranks as the 15th most visited.

4. Relationship building and planning for the future

The CoF is now very well established within London's civic community and therefore unsurprisingly has been invited to take part in a variety of initiatives. In 2021, a significant amount of time has been spent on relationship building and planning for the future.

F&BF have formed strong connections with Barnet Multi Faith Forum, Southwark Multi Faith Forum, and Southwark Council, and are working with these groups to organise

local Faith & Belief Community Awards for their respective boroughs for 2022. F&BF have also presented the initiative to Waltham Forest Council. The Barnet Faith and Belief Community Awards will take place on 26th January 2022 and are supported by Representative Deputy Lieutenant Martin Russell.

After an introduction from the Lord-Lieutenant, the CoF ,in collaboration with F&BF, designed and submitted a project proposal for an event for the Awards network to take place at Westminster Abbey. We look forward to building a stronger relationship with the Westminster Abbey team and to realising this wonderful opportunity for the network to come together to celebrate at this iconic venue.

The CoF was approached by music producer Rick Blaskey, who has generously offered to lend his world-renowned expertise to work with F&BF and the Awards network on a London Interfaith Anthem. A project has been co-designed, which would foster genuine collaboration between musicians from London's diverse faith and belief communities and which would create a piece of music to inspire and generate interest in interfaith, and ultimately to spread the message of a connected and supportive London for all.

Finally, building on the success of the inaugural London Interfaith Fun Run, lead partners F&BF and Maccabi GB have begun planning the 2022 Fun Run, set to take place in London in August 2022.