

## HM Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith A brief report of progress for period January to December 2022

### 1. Summary

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith was established in September 2016. Over the last six 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.

This year has been marked by both moments of hope and challenge. In June we collectively witnessed the joy of togetherness through the celebrations marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. At the same time, we have witnessed drastic increases in the cost of living and felt the long-term impact of the pandemic on our communities.

The sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has also had a huge impact on the nation who collectively observed a period of national mourning. The state funeral gave an opportunity to reflect on the life and legacy of Queen Elizabeth II and her faith which influenced so much of her public life. It is important that this aspect of her life is honoured through the activities of the Council of Faith and the sixth London Faith & Belief Community Awards was an opportunity to do this.

The Council on Faith has continued to deliver a variety of impactful initiatives across London and, alongside the individual activities of its members, has promoted the work of the Lieutenancy and the interests of London's diverse faith communities. This year 1250 people have been engaged through four public events.

Funded and directed by The Exilarch's Foundation, the Faith & Belief Forum 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.

### 2. 2022 Activities

#### London Interfaith Fun Run

On 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022, [the second London Interfaith Fun Run](#) was held at StoneX Stadium to bring together individuals, communities, and charitable organisations for a day of family fun, unity, and raising money for good causes.

Building on the success of last year's inaugural event, we were delighted at last to bring a together a wider range of charitable organisations for an energising day. New partners, which added to an increase in diversity, included: Brahma Kumaris, Go Dharmic, Family Federation of World Peace and Unification and Kagyu Samye Dzung London.

Partners were consulted on their experience of the day and feedback included:

*We discussed several potential projects to coordinate on, received invitations to visit places of worship, and had general friendship and communication with other faiths.*

*We get stuck in our day to day lives and outreach services and without events like these, we wouldn't be able to have Interfaith dialogue and see how we can work together to make the world a better place.*

*We made an indescribable number of connections speaking to partners about the work we do as an organisation. We helped introduce those attending to how we can benefit service users.*

Activities on the day included: 1K, 5K and 10K runs/walks; food and live music from around the world, including the world-famous Jive Aces; a charity zone representing London's diverse charities; interactive interfaith activities for families; and an inflatables zone for children.

We were very pleased with engagement, with 350 runners/walkers participating in the races, and a total of 750 people attending the event. 52 charities partnered with us on the event, with 30 taking a stall on the day.

Thanks to encouragement and support from The Exilarch's Foundation, we were able to reach individuals from outside the charities' networks through securing the following media partners: Jewish News, Church Times, Sikh Channel, Voice of Islam, Eastern Eye, and Asian Media Group. The Interfaith Fun Run has also been featured on BBC Radio London and Premier Christian Radio furthering the message of unity and togetherness that the event represented.



## Celebrating Faith and Belief Communities Across London

This year three Faith & Belief Community Awards events have taken place. In partnership with local faith forums, borough-level awards have been held in Barnet and Southwark and a pan-London celebration event has been held at the iconic Westminster Abbey engaging 500 participants in total.

At the sixth London Faith & Belief Community Awards that took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> November at Westminster Abbey, 38 faith-based community projects were awarded with grants of £500 (courtesy of The Exilarch's Foundation, Direct Line Group, Morgan Charitable Foundation and Community Union), and a further 60 projects and inspiring individuals were recognised.

A key focus of this year's event has been to project the voices of young people, and this was achieved through performances from Haringey Young Musicians and Write Back. The work of young people was also profiled through the Inspiring Youth and Environmental Sustainability categories.

There has also been a marked increase in media outreach around the awards. Both the Barnet and Southwark Faith & Belief Awards received coverage in local press outlets such as the Barnet Post and Southwark News. F&BF worked with a media consultant to pitch the London-wide Awards event to BBC London, Saturday Morning Live, Songs of Praise and Blue Peter. The event was covered by faith-based news outlets such as the Jewish News, The Tablet, Sanskar TV, and Premier Christian Media, and BBC London News.



### **3. Promoting the messages of the Council**

The Council on Faith continues to produce newsletters highlighting its plans and sharing the activities and views of its members. This year the newsletters included interviews with Avril McIntyre MBE DL and Randeep Lall DL.

To mark the passing for HM the Queen, a special newsletter was produced to commemorate her outstanding leadership, deep legacy and spotlight her strong relationship with faith communities across the UK.

This year the Council on Faith produced its first podcast interview with Randeep Lall DL, this has been well received by the Lieutenancy network and will continue to be a feature of the Council of Faith's communication output.

### **4. Relationship building and planning for the future**

The Council on Faith 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 2022, a significant amount of time has been spent on relationship building and planning for the future.

F&BF have formed strong connections with local faith forums and local authorities and will continue to build on the success of borough-level celebration events. Representatives from Brent, Ealing and Waltham Forest have expressed interest in working with F&BF and the Council on Faith to celebrate local faith communities through borough-level events.

Building on the success of the second London Interfaith Fun Run, lead partners F&BF and Maccabi GB have begun planning the 2023 Fun Run, set to take place in London in September 2023. Relationships have been established with Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London Sport, Sports England and the London Marathon Charitable Trust, all leading organisations in the Sporting sector and important partners that can support the growth of the event.

Looking towards 2023, the Council on Faith are delighted to be welcoming two new members, Randeep Lall DL and Bibi Khan DL and will be engaging other Deputy Lieutenants to strength its work.