

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith

A brief report of progress for period January to December 2024

Summary

After enacting the Lord Lieutenant's strategy for building bridges for a fairer London over the past eight years, most of the work which follows in this report reflects the strong partnership between the Council on Faith and the Faith & Belief Forum. The Lord Lieutenant's Council on Faith provides important support for the London Dangoor Awards, the Local Borough Awards and the emerging Interfaith Wellbeing Festival, all of which are important components of F&BF's annual programming. The success of these activities would not be as rich without the important role played by the Council on Faith and the broader networks of the Greater London Lieutenancy.

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith was established in September 2016. Over the last eight 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 the first full year in the reign of King Charles III, who has made significant commitment to promoting interfaith relations across the country, including London. He has been personally handed a copy of the London Dangoor Awards brochure by the Lord Lieutenant of Greater London and has also been personally received by Bushra Nasir, who has expanded on interfaith work in Waltham Forest, notably the 2023 Waltham Forest Faith & Belief Community Awards.

The Council on Faith has seen changes in 2024 with Revd Dr Flora Winfield as Chair to begin the year, but upon receipt of a new job as Bishop of Selby, was no longer able to be a member of the Lieutenancy. Bushra Nasir CBE DL is the new Chair of the Council on Faith. There are two new members who are part of the Council on Faith: Himanshu Jain and Geraldine Norris.

The Council on Faith has continued its mission with a range of activities, both familiar and new. The London Faith & Belief Community Awards were rebranded to the *London Dangoor Awards*, with the London-wide initiative entering its eighth successful year. An inaugural Camden local borough awards was held, as was the second Southwark Borough Awards. The London Interfaith Fun Run underwent a rebranding and restructuring process and will return in May 2025 as the *Interfaith Wellbeing Festival*.

2024 Activities

The London Dangoor Awards

The London Dangoor Awards (formerly the *London Faith & Belief Community Awards*), saw its eighth edition when it was hosted at the Royal Society of Medicine on 26th November. Gathering nominations from across London, there were nominated projects from 31 out of 32 London boroughs and all major faith groups as well as Humanist, Jain, Rastafarian, Interfaith, LGBTQ+, BAME, nation-specific, and secular backgrounds. A total of approximately 240 people joined with the Faith & Belief Forum to celebrate the work of unsung heroes from across the capital.

Keynote speeches came from the Faith Minister Lord Wajid Khan of Burnley, as well as His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir Kenneth Olisa. The evening was opened by an uplifting performance from the Barnet SACRE Interfaith Choir.

39 awards of £500 were given across eight categories, while a further seven outstanding individuals were awarded and 51 projects were recognised. We added a new sponsor to the work with Culham St Gabriel's holding the *Schools & Educational Establishments* Category. Community Union, a longer-standing event sponsor, had the opportunity to run a pre-event meet & greet and workshop with the nominated projects in mid-November. This expanded the reach of their work and gave F&BF the chance to further connection between nominated projects in the London Awards network.



Following the London Dangoor Awards, an event brochure was personally given by the Lord Lieutenant to King Charles III. The Dangoor Awards Network has also continued to come together by participating in online focus groups relating to the Interfaith Wellbeing Festival giving them the chance to feed into our work and to continue to meet and connect with those from other faiths in in-depth ways.

Local Borough Awards

Two borough level awards were held in 2024. The Camden Awards were held in May 2024. There were 49 nominations in total. The structure of the awards followed Borough of Camden priority areas, so awards were given to one project in each of four categories: *Building connected communities and neighbourhoods; tackling poverty; welcoming and supporting refugees, and inspiring children and young people*. There were also three outstanding individuals awarded. All seven gained automatic entry to London Dangoor Awards judging. 131 people attended on the night including the Mayor of Camden, several councillors and Geraldine Norris DL.



The Southwark borough awards were hosted in September 2024. 27 nominations came in across many faith groups. Five winners and runners up were chosen, with winners receiving a certificate, automatic entry to the Dangoor Awards, and lunch with the Mayor of Southwark. 117 people attended on the night including the Mayor, Simon Duckworth OBE DL and several councillors.



Promoting the Messages of the Council

Following the London Dangoor Awards, HM Lord Lieutenant of Greater London gave a copy of the London Dangoor Awards brochure to HRH King Charles III and they discussed the work of the Awards initiatives of the Council on Faith in helping to build bridges across London, in line with Sir Kenneth's vision for the three councils: Faith, Occupation and Heritage.

Bushra Nasir hosted The King in Waltham Forest for a royal visit, explaining the important role of interfaith bridge-building in the capital in preventing the racially motivated rioting from having success in Walthamstow and the Borough of Waltham Forest. She reflected on the work that the Council on Faith is conducting along with the Faith & Belief Forum to ensure strong relationships between people of different faiths, to ensure forces of hate are dampened and that strong relationships are forged and prevail in the capital.



There was one Council on Faith meeting held online in December 2024, chaired by Bushra Nasir. Discussion was had about meeting four times a year, with two meetings to be online and two to be at a place of worship in London.

Himanshu Jain DL offered to become the new Chair of the judging panel for the London Dangoor Awards, while Bushra will continue to help oversee the process to ensure smooth event delivery.

Randeep Lall DL will be a link between the Council on Faith to the planning process of the Interfaith Wellbeing Festival. His charity, NishkamSWAT, is one of the partnership groups active in the event planning and delivery process.

Relationship Building and Planning for the Future

The London Interfaith Fun Run will return on 25 May 2025 as the *Interfaith Wellbeing Festival (IWF)*. Significant planning and development work entered into making this the most inclusive and effective programme of events possible to unite Londoners in a large-scale but impactful day on the London interfaith calendar.



Following the first half of the year spent doing consultation internally at F&BF and latterly with Maccabi GB, the Faith & Belief Forum created an interfaith partnership group, with a joint responsibility for creating a programme of content on the day of the IWF. Held at Paddington Recreation Ground and with Maccabi GB still as logistics partners as in previous years, the interfaith collaboration aspect of this event is dramatically expanded. There is an interfaith consultation process, which has drawn on interviews and a survey to create some insights about what links faith to wellbeing and interfaith gatherings for Londoners. This information will be used in a ‘coproduction’ process, led by F&BF, with a group of charities and communities of various faiths to plan a programme of events. The coproduction days are ongoing in mid-January. There are monthly online meetings too, which have run since October and will continue until May.

Following talks with the British Library, their Community Engagement Team have offered to host a pre-event series of community programmes, designed to promote the Wellbeing Festival and bring people together before the IWF.