

# COUNCIL ON FAITH NEWSLETTER

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

## London Dangoor Awards 2025 Celebrates Faith Communities



The London Dangoor Awards were hosted at the Royal Society of Medicine on 25th November 2025, the ninth instalment of the London-wide awards programme.

There were nominated projects from 26 out of 32 London boroughs and all major faith groups, as well as Humanist, Interfaith, LGBTQ+, BAME, nation-specific, and secular backgrounds. A total of approximately 300 people joined with the Faith & Belief Forum to celebrate the work of unsung heroes from across the capital.

Keynote speeches came from the Deputy Mayor of London for Communities & Social Justice, Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard, as well as Bushra Nasir, Chair of His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith. Carrie Alderton, CEO of the Faith & Belief Forum, closed the ceremony with her reflections too. There was a performance from the London Collective Choir, under the direction of Kane Taylor.

42 awards of £500 were given across eight categories, while a further six outstanding individuals were awarded and 36 projects were recognised.

The awards continued with the second year of their new name, recognising headline sponsor David Dangoor CBE DL. The branding recognises the work at the Award's inception to create a vision and attain buy-in for a new faith-based awards in London done by David Dangoor, working with the Lord Lieutenant, Council on Faith & the Faith & Belief Forum.



Dr Weekes-Bernard said “*“All of you in this room give people hope for the future – especially those who feel excluded or uncertain. We’re here not just to celebrate you, but to remember the hope you offer, continuously, to communities across London”*. She also reflected on the fact she had come back to the Awards for the first time since she participated in the first ever year of them.

Notable winners include Gurseva’s new Greener Spaces for All, which has created green therapy areas across West London, working to promote shared environmental responsibility by planting 120 trees and bringing communities together. Another, Railway Mission, is a long-standing charity offering impartial mental health and pastoral care across the rail network, won for the first time honouring its chaplains who support around 10,000 people each year with issues ranging from trauma to bereavement.



The success story video highlighted the Youth Interfaith Kitchen, a project of former award winner Project ImpACT, who brought themselves, Salaam Peace and Znaniye Foundation to make food together to donate to food banks.

Bushra Nasir, Chair of the Council on Faith, said “it is humbling and really moving to hear the stories of the different groups that are doing such selfless work”.

Sir Stephen Timms, Minister of State for Social Security and Disability, has been supporting interfaith work in the city for over a decade and remarked at the end of the awards, “Often people think about communities like London – a very multifaith community – and people think it’s divided because it’s so diverse. Perhaps that is the case in other parts of the world, but as we have witnessed today that most certainly is not the case in London. What we’re seeing is faith diversity promoting belonging and inclusion.”



# Interfaith Wellbeing Festival 2025 Celebrates Faith, Wellbeing and Community in London

On Bank Holiday Monday, 25th August 2025, Londoners came together at Paddington Recreation Ground for the city's first ever Interfaith Wellbeing Festival, a landmark celebration of community, resilience, and shared values. The event showcased the power of connection across faiths and beliefs, 12 months after the 2024 riots, offering a striking reminder that communities are stronger when they move forward together.

Families, young and old, came together across faiths and beliefs to reflect, connect, and celebrate what makes London special, while exploring wellbeing-focused activities with a fun, family-friendly theme in the summer sun.

The event was jointly organised by Maccabi GB and The Faith and Belief Forum, who were supported with a core co-production group consisting of NishkamSWAT, Mitzvah Day, The Feast, The Delicate Mind and Stuart Diamond Consulting, with dozens more charities and local organisations coming to take part on the event day itself, delivering activities and offering tasters of what they offer at a dedicated charity zone.

The event is only possible thanks to the generous support from Dangoor Education and backing from the Greater London Lieutenancy's Council of Faith.

A focal point of the day was the 1km Interfaith Community Walk, bringing together families, faith leaders, and local residents in a symbolic act of solidarity. Walking side by side through Paddington Recreation Ground, participants demonstrated their commitment to building bridges across divides and reaffirmed that London's communities are stronger when they move forward together.

The festival offered Londoners the chance to experience wellbeing in all its forms. Activities included a football masterclass with QPR FC professionals, family sports sessions led by Salaam Peace volunteers, and a fun zone with henna, face painting, cap designing, and glitter art.

For those seeking calm, expert-led reflective spaces offered guided meditation and other wellbeing workshops, alongside a prayer tent for multi-faith reflection.

What stood out most for many attendees was the opportunity to connect with people from different backgrounds — through conversations, shared experiences, and live performances. The air was alive with music and dance, from South American rhythms to South Asian melodies.

Community partners ranged from large charities to local volunteer-led groups. The Greater London Authority encouraged civic participation and promoted voting, particularly among young people following the recent lowering of the voting age.



A range of faith communities were also present, including London's Zoroastrians, MTO Zendeh Delan, Jhive — creators of the London-wide Multifaith Needs Charter — and The Feast, which specialises in bringing young people together across divides, among many more.

**David Dangoor CBE**, a tireless supporter of interfaith in London and the headline sponsor of the Interfaith Wellbeing Festival itself, said, "At this event we saw the richness of London's diversity and how we can all enjoy a harmonious relationship that builds on our core values.

**Bushra Nasir CBE DL**, reflected on London's unique role as a global leader in demonstrating how we can coexist and collaborate for our collective wellbeing as individuals, communities and wider society. "This afternoon has been a great opportunity to put our wellbeing at the centre of our lives. It was a wonderful, joyous celebration of our wonderful city of London. I had the privilege of chatting with so many people with different ages, different experiences, different faiths, different backgrounds – and there is more that brings us together than separates. It has been an afternoon of bonding and holding hands across faith on the shared theme and value of wellbeing."

Performances throughout the day brought energy and delight, from classic songs to original works, including Alex Etchart's No Human is Illegal. Families enjoyed the thunderous beats of Shumei Taiko Japanese drummers, soaring gospel voices, and the harmonies of the London Jewish Male Choir, taking attendees on a cultural journey spanning the globe.

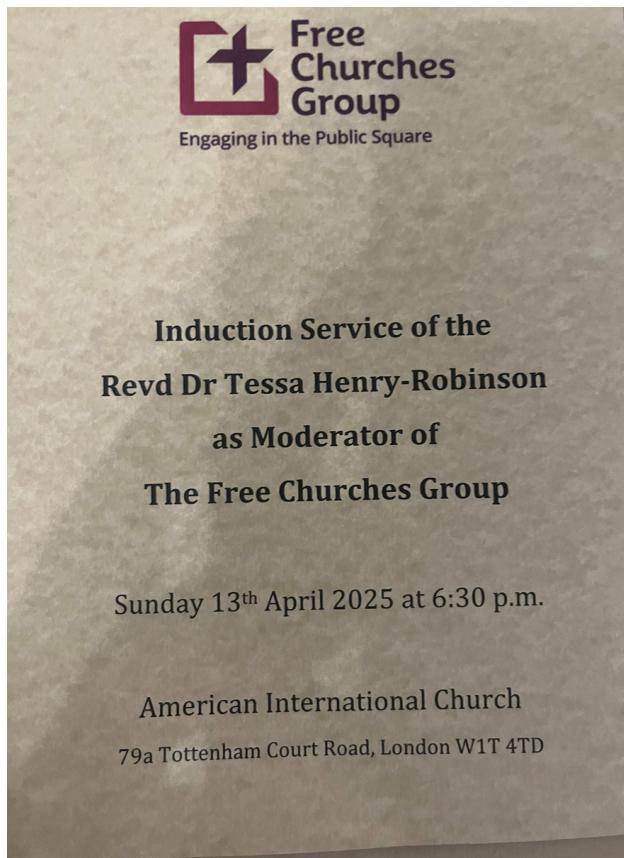
The festival took place against a backdrop of deep social polarisation. Just 12 months after the 2024 riots — some of the worst public disorder in recent memory — communities coming together in this way was not only brave and powerful but also a striking contrast to the division still seen today.

The co-produced festival stands as a testament to what is possible when people of all faiths, races, and beliefs unite. It highlights shared human values and the collective will of the vast majority to foster connection in the face of division.

At a time when protests and debates around immigration continue to create tension, the Interfaith Wellbeing Festival reaffirmed the importance of resilience and inclusivity. By creating safe, courageous, and empowering spaces, it demonstrated how communities can and do support one another across every aspect of life — from mental health and employability to creativity, education, and sport.



## Promoting the Messages of the Council on Faith



Bushra Nasir DL was inspired to attend Lambeth Palace for the annual reception for the Lord Mayor, Alastair King on 16 October. It was a great ceremonial occasion where Bushra had the opportunity to meet the new Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, and many other Faith leaders.

Bushra Nasir DL was pleased to represent the Lord Lieutenant at the Induction service of Rev Dr. Tessa Henry-Robinson as Moderator of the Free Churches Group on 13 April.



## Promoting the Messages of the Council on Faith



Bushra Nasir DL was pleased to attend the 18th anniversary celebration event of the charity London Asian Women's Club on 7 December, who were winners of this year's London Dangoor Awards. It was a joyous event of fun, singing, celebration and support for Asian ladies from across London.

Bushra Nasir DL was honoured to represent the Council on Faith at the Interfaith Hanukkah candle lighting ceremony on 18 December, organised by Rabbi Charley Baginsky and Rabbi Josh Levy, Co-Leads of Progressive Judaism. It was a moving ceremony where different faith leaders spoke about solidarity and hope after the recent Bondi beach killings of innocent people, as well as the need for all people of faith to unite in the face of adversity.



## Interview with Muhammad Abdul Barim DL

### **Please tell us a bit more about your personal and professional background.**

I am a Bangladeshi-born British physicist, educator, parenting consultant, and civic activist with over four decades of service to interfaith understanding and community cohesion in the UK.

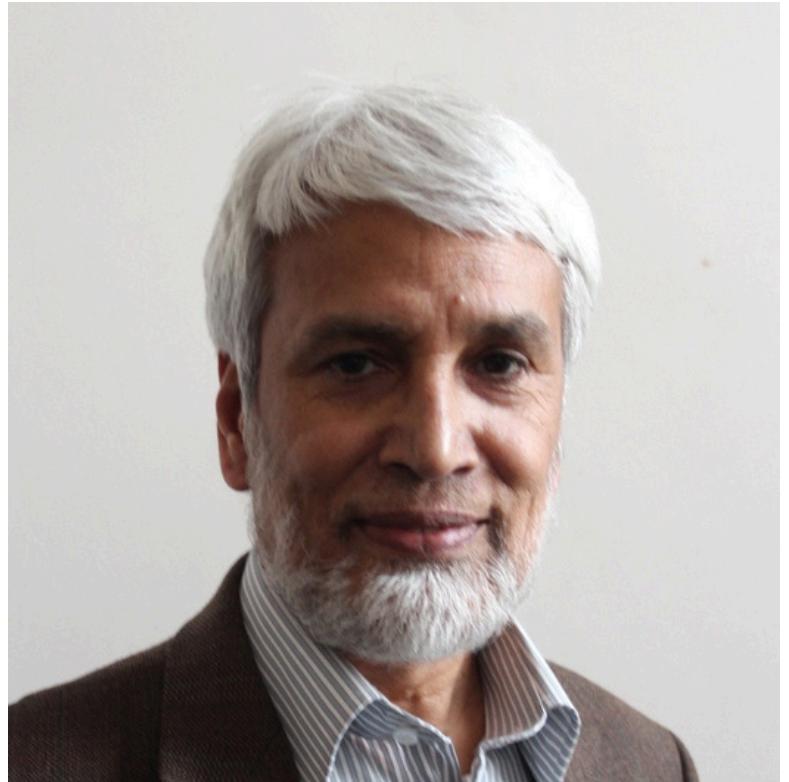
A former Bangladesh Air Force officer, trained in Royal Air Force College Cranwell, with a PhD in Physics from King's College London, I have worked extensively in state education and special needs support in Haringey and Tower Hamlets.

I am a founding member of the Muslim Council of Britain and Citizens UK, a former Secretary of global Charity Muslim Aid, and served as Chair of East London Mosque and on the Board of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. An Honorary Fellow of Queen Mary University of London, I also hold an Honorary Doctorate in Education from the University of East London. I authored several books, including my memoir, on parenting, youth, identity and social issues. I mentor young people and promote ethical leadership, interfaith collaboration, and socially responsible Muslim engagement in public life.

### **Why did you decide to join the Council on Faith? What do you hope to contribute to it?**

I am aware the Council on Faith was established to foster dialogue, understanding, and cooperation between diverse faith communities, local councils, and the wider public. This is exactly what my ethos in public life is. It is about strengthening community cohesion, addressing social issues such as mental health, and advancing shared civic goals irrespective of theological or political differences.

As the Council promotes bridge-building and inclusion, while leading initiatives such as community awards, charitable collaborations, and faith-inspired responses to major challenges, including climate change — all in pursuit of a fairer London — I thought I can learn from it and contribute.



## Interview with Muhammad Abdul Barim DL

### **Can you share a highlight from your interfaith community work that has particularly inspired you and motivated you to continue in this field?**

Alongside my local work with interfaith groups and multi-faith civic organisations such as the Citizens UK, I have worked with faith communities since the early 1990s. I served on the UK Government's Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC), which brought together leaders from five major faiths—Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, and Sikh—to tackle urban deprivation, social exclusion, unemployment, and religious discrimination. The Council offered a vital platform for faith communities to contribute expertise and influence policy for disadvantaged areas, effectively bridging faith and state for the common good.

I also worked closely with the Inter Faith Network (IFN), founded in 1987 to deepen public understanding of Britain's diverse faith traditions and recognise the distinctiveness and shared values to foster good relations between people of different faiths. In addition, I maintained strong links with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). I have been involved as a patron of Your Place (formerly Caritas Anchor House), an East London charity providing homeless people with a safe home, personalized support, and life skills to help them rebuild their lives and achieve independence, focusing on education, training, employment, mental health, and financial stability through key workers and holistic programs.

After the 7/7 London bombings, when Muslim communities faced intense scrutiny, the solidarity and support of many interfaith bodies proved invaluable.

### **How can the Council on Faith, and wider Greater London Lieutenancy, continue supporting faith communities in London?**

The Council on Faith and the Greater London Lieutenancy can continue to play a vital role in strengthening London's diverse faith communities by deepening dialogue, improving inclusion, and enhancing civic collaboration. Regular inter-faith forums, community-led events, and partnerships with schools can help nurture mutual understanding and reduce prejudice. At the same time, serving as an advisory body to public institutions ensures that policies, services, and emergency responses remain sensitive to the needs of all faith groups.

Supporting community resilience is equally important. By maintaining rapid-response networks during crises, offering safeguarding guidance, and helping faith institutions build leadership and governance capacity, both bodies can empower communities to thrive. Strengthening ties with local authorities, the NHS, the police, and civic organisations further builds trust and encourages shared action—from social cohesion projects to environmental initiatives. Through research, recognition, and active engagement, they can continue to affirm the essential contributions of faith communities to London's civic life.

Supporting civic ceremonies that recognise contributions of faith communities to London's cultural, social and economic life as well as organising awards or spotlight programmes highlighting community-led initiatives that foster community harmony are no less important.



GREATER LONDON  
LIEUTENANCY

**The  
Faith  
& Belief  
Forum**



This newsletter was compiled for HM Lord Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith by the Faith & Belief Forum's (F&BF's) Communities Team.

To be in touch with the Communities team for any interfaith matters, please email [matthew.gold@faithbeliefforum](mailto:matthew.gold@faithbeliefforum), who is the London Communities Programmes Coordinator.

