



HOUNSLOW FRIENDS OF FAITH

Newsletter ~ December 2020 / January 2021

Keeping you up to date with Interfaith and Community News

Hounslow Friends of Faith Celebrates 20 Years

On Thursday 12th November an anniversary celebration zoom meeting was held in the evening attended by fifty people. Those attending included past and present members and supporters of HFOF. The following were invited VIPs who brought messages of congratulations and encouragement: Deputy Lieutenant of LBH Paul Kennerley, Hounslow Mayor Councillor Tony Louki, MP for Brentford and Isleworth Ruth Cadbury and Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Executive Director of Inter Faith Network UK. Paul Kennerley joined the zoom from New Zealand.

Founder members of HFOF Alfred Agius and Carol Liphthorpe shared memories of the early days of the group and a past treasurer Cathy Potter neé Thornewill spoke about having been inspired and enriched by her experiences of interfaith friendships.

Eighteen members of the committee introduced themselves and the faith they represented and shared the reason they volunteer their time and energy to promote the aims of HFOF. Appreciation of the wise leadership of HFOF Chair, Charanjit AjitSingh, over the last eight years was expressed by Vice Chair, Divya Din, on behalf of the committee. Her husband, Ajit Singh MBE, who has been involved with HFOF from the very beginning remains a loyal committee member.

Hounslow Friends of Faith is a small Charity which seeks to:

- Increase knowledge and understanding about faiths
- Support equality and diversity
- Promote contact and good relations between people of different religions

Hounslow is a borough with a rich diversity of religious and cultural traditions. In the world today communities are often divided and fearful of each other. Friendship breaks down barriers and it is more important than ever to have opportunities to meet together and become friends and find that everyone belongs to one humanity.

A history booklet has been compiled as part of the celebrations which is dedicated to the memory of the late Jagjivan Singh, first Chair and first Patron of HFOF. The booklet is made up of a record of the past activities and events of HFOF written by Bessie White, a former secretary of many years. Also included are memories from some of the founding members. (If you would like to receive a copy of this booklet please contact the secretary on info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org)

The HFOF Interfaith Knitting Group has made a knitted banner (see picture below) showing symbols of faiths and beliefs in the borough to mark the anniversary.



Below is part of an item in the November issue of EVOLVE - the voluntary and community news from Hounslow Community Partnership Unit:

Hounslow Friends of Faith, one of the Borough's most influential and dynamic community organisations, was established to bring people of different faiths together and to promote the positive contribution that faith groups can make to the communities in Hounslow. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the essential work that faith groups carry out in their communities. The religious landscape in Hounslow is extremely diverse with over 100 places of worship, and much of the Council's interfaith work is carried out in partnership with Hounslow Friends of Faith. Harriet Crabtree from the Interfaith Network UK described HFOF as an example of excellence to other boroughs across the UK and praised its unique role promoting interfaith dialogue, harmony and tolerance across Hounslow.

Government Review into Engagement with Faith Groups in England

On 13 November the Government announced a review into how best it should engage with faith groups in England.

Colin Bloom, appointed as the Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in October 2019, will lead the review and make recommendations to the Communities Secretary.

As part of the review “a call for evidence will pose a series of questions around how those of all faiths, or none, perceive the government's engagement with faith organisations. Because the review is specifically about faith and religion, priority will

be given to responses that fit within those parameters. However, space is given for respondents to share their views in a way that they feel is appropriate.”
The closing date for responses is **11 December**.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-faith-engagement-review-call-for-evidence/independent-faith-engagement-review-call-for-evidence>

Message from Citizens Advice Hounslow

The deadline for EU/EEA and Swiss Nationals, their partners and dependants to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, is June 30th 2021. The Home Office has recommended that all applications should be made sooner rather than later to avoid potential delays.



Citizens Advice Hounslow is offering a **free service to all Hounslow residents** to support them with their applications and we are working with the London Borough of Hounslow to specifically help **vulnerable** people.

Applying to the EU Settlement Scheme and obtaining settled status or pre-settled status will allow EU/EEA/ Swiss nationals, their partners and dependants to carry on living, working, studying in the UK and accessing vital public services (e.g the NHS, education and if eligible welfare benefits) after Brexit.

Please note that EU/EEA national means anyone with a valid European ID, regardless of their country of origin or ethnicity.

If any place of worship or community would like a poster or a referral form please contact info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org or for further information about the EU Settlement Scheme or to discuss potential referrals, then please contact Sofia Shakir Service Manager Citizens Advice Hounslow.

Mobile: 07514647382

E-mail: hounslowcabs.org.uk

Ready, Steady, Census

The census is a **unique survey** that takes place every 10 years in **England and Wales**.

By taking part, you'll help inform decisions that shape your community.

census 2021



Households across Hounslow will soon be asked to take part in the nationwide survey of housing and the population. Information from the digital-first census will help decide how services are planned and funded in your local area.

This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, housing or new bus routes. Households will receive a letter with a unique access code in the post, allowing them to complete their questionnaire online. Paper questionnaires will be available on request. **Census day is March 21 2021**. For more information, visit census.gov.uk.

Free online Security Training for Places of Worship

SAFE security awareness programme is a series of free one-hour security webinars delivered by the Community Security Trust (CST) an organisation which provides security for the Jewish Community. All SAFE events are free.

The programme will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to violent extremism and hate crime. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible.

Please see our schedule for the rest of the year below with links to the Zoom registration page

- 7th December at 7pm: **Organising security for your place of worship**

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/y592we4m>

- 10th December at 2pm: **Basic security for your place of worship**

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/y6dnttv1>

- 14th December at 7pm: **Security – why? A brief history of terrorism**

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/yxoxguf3>

- 17th December at 2pm: **Hate crime and your community**

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/y28t4mj4>

For more details please contact us on enquiries@safe.cst.org.uk.

Police Terrorism Awareness Training

PC Robin Parsons, who is the Met Police Counter Terrorism Protect Officer for Hounslow, liaises with local communities to offer terrorism awareness training, consisting of a 90-minute presentation called '**Action Counters Terrorism**' (ACT) or more in-depth training lasting 2-3 hours aimed at identifying suspicious behaviour called 'See, Check and Notify' (SCaN). These are primarily delivered to security teams or staff at locations where people gather in large numbers for events, but they equally apply to places of worship and are offered free of charge. If you are interested in receiving either of these courses, please do contact PC Parsons and he will be more than happy to either discuss them in more detail or arrange a suitable date to come and deliver either course.

They can be delivered to as many or just a few people at a time and are constantly being updated with the latest information to help keep people safe and protect crowded locations from attacks. Robin.Parsons@met.police.uk

The Ultra Low Emission Zone is expanding from **25th October 2021**.

Have you checked your vehicle?

Air pollution is not just a central London problem, with many areas still exceeding the legal limits for pollution across the city. That is why from 25th October 2021, the central London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) is expanding to create a single, larger zone up to the North Circular Road (A406) and South Circular Road (A205). The North and South Circular Roads themselves are not in the zone. This is part of the commitment by the Mayor and TfL to help every Londoner breathe cleaner air.

The ULEZ will continue to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including weekends (except Christmas day), with a £12.50 daily charge for vehicles that do not meet the required emissions standards.

Cars, motorcycles, vans and other specialist vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes) and minibuses (up to and including 5 tonnes) will need to meet the required ULEZ emissions standards when driving within and into the expanded zone, or pay a daily charge.

Four out of five cars already meet the ULEZ emissions standards, but we need owners of the remaining older cars, motorcycles, lighter van and minibuses to take action.

Call to Action: Check your vehicle meets the ULEZ emissions standards and the interactive map of the zone. Visit tfl.gov.uk/ulez-2021

Andrew Galligan Project Communications Specialist | Local Communities and Partnerships Mobile: 07597 677662 | Email: andrewgalligan1@tfl.gov.uk

A Quote for Heart and Soul - United Religions Initiative

Once I travelled far above the earth. This beloved planet we call home was covered with an elastic web of light. I watched in awe as it shimmered, stretched, dimmed, and shined, shaped by the collective effort of all life within it. Dissonance attracted more dissonance. Harmony attracted harmony. I saw revolutions, droughts, famines, and the births of new nations. The most humble kindnesses made the brightest lights. Nothing was wasted.

Joy Harjo

Best wishes to all who will be observing days of special significance:

December

- 8th** **Buddhist:** BODHI DAY remembering Gautama's attainment of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.
- 10th** National HUMAN RIGHTS DAY In 1948 The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.'
- 11th – 18th** **Jewish:** HANUKA Celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it was recaptured from the Syrian Greeks by the Maccabee brothers in 165 BCE. For the eight evenings of the festival, candles are lit from right to left in a nine-branched *menorah* – one candle for each evening. Foods cooked with oil - such as doughnuts and *latkes* (potato cakes) – are traditional to remember the miracle with oil that happened at this time.
- 24th** **Christian:** CHRISTMAS EVE is marked with carol, and Midnight Holy Communion services to inaugurate the festival of Christmas.
- 25th** **Christian:** CHRISTMAS DAY (see also 6th – 7th January) celebrates the birth of Jesus, whom Christians believe to be the son of God. Nativity sets are displayed in many churches and homes.
- 26th** **Zoroastrian: (Iranian)** ZARATOSHT NO DISO is the anniversary of the death of Prophet Zarathushtra and is a sorrowful occasion. Tradition records that he was assassinated at the age of 77. It is customary to visit the Fire Temple, participate in special remembrance prayers and ponder upon the *Gathas* or Hymns of Zarathushtra, which embody his eternal message to humanity.
- 31st** **Japanese:** OMISOKA a Japanese festival which prepares for the new year by cleansing Shinto home shrines and Buddhist altars. The bells of Buddhist temples are struck 108 times to warn against the 108 evils to be overcome.

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- 5th** **Sikh:** BIRTHDAY of the tenth GURU GOBIND SINGH in 1666 who instituted the practice of the five K's and established the Order of the Khalsa.
- 6th** **Christian:** EPIPHANY celebrates the visit of the magi/wise men to the infant Jesus, bearing symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. This is the twelfth day of Christmas.
- 6th/7th** **Christian:** CHRISTMAS EVE and DAY celebrated by Rastafarian Ethiopian Christians and many Eastern Orthodox Christians.
- 12th** **Hindu:** BIRTHDAY of SWAMI VIVEKANADA Vivekananda, an Indian Hindu monk and a disciple of Ramakrishna.

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- 13th** **Hindu/Sikh:** LOHRI a cultural festival celebrating the family.
- 14th** **Hindu:** MAKAR SANKRANTI – a winter festival to worship the Sun God Surya in Northern India PONGAL - the festival in South India and Sri Lanka to worship Surya, the Sun God
- Sikh:** MAGHI remembering the sacrifice of 40 Sikhs who fought for Guru Gobind Singh.
- 16th** **Buddhist:** SHINRAN MEMORIAL DAY Shinran was the founder of Jodo Shin-shu, one of the schools of Pure Land Buddhism.
- 17th** **Baha'i:** WORLD RELIGION DAY This day promotes interfaith understanding by emphasizing factors common to all faiths. It was first introduced among Baha'i communities in the 1950s, and is now celebrated by a wider spread of communities, including the Baha'i, usually on the third Sunday of January.
- 25th** **Buddhist:** HONEN MEMORIAL DAY Honen (1133-1212 CE) is one of the outstanding figures in the history of Japanese Buddhism, and was the founder of Jodo Shinshu, one of the schools of Pure Land Buddhism.
- 25th- 27th** **Buddhist:** LOSAR Tibetan New Year festival, often celebrated in Nepal as well. Although largely a secular celebration, it also includes the rededication of the country to Buddhism. It especially celebrates the miracles performed by the historical Buddha at Sravasti, the capital city of the kingdom of Kosala.
- 27th** **NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY** A day for remembrance of people who suffered, chiefly at the hands of the Nazis during the second World War but also in other persecutions. It aims to keep memory fresh and ensure that no such atrocity happens again.
- 28th** **Jewish:** Tu B'Shevat is the Jewish 'New Year for Trees'.
- 29th – 30th** **Hindu:** SARASVATI PUJA/VASANT PANCHAMI Widely celebrated in North India, this festival marks the beginning of spring. For Hindus it is usually linked with Saraswati, the goddess of learning and the arts. Yellow is her associated colour.
- 30th** **Zoroastrian: [Iranian]** JASHN-E SADEH A mid-winter bonfire festival to signify that days are getting longer. The litany to fire, the *Atash Niyayeesh*, is recited, and Iranian legends are told of King Hoshang (who discovered the art of making fire). There is piping hot stew, dancing and merry-making.

Please send details of any religious festivals, special events or items of interest which you wish to be included in the next newsletter to HFOF secretary Rev Barbara McIntivey info@hounslowfriendsoffaiith.org by 25th January.

Please note: If you are receiving this newsletter as the named person from an organisation please circulate it within your group and do let me know if there is someone else to whom it should be sent as well as/or instead of you.