HOUNSLOW
FRIENDS OF FAITH

Working Together for Community Cohesion

www.hounslowfriendsoffaith.org

Annual Walk of peace and friendship 27th June

This year's walk covered the Heston and Osterley areas of the Borough. Despite the heat a large group took part in the Walk and thoroughly enjoyed the diversity of cultures and communities they experienced. We started at St Leonard's Anglican church, hosted by Rev Erica Wilde who gave us a history of the building, and told us there had been a place of worship on the site since the 7th century. She referred to the fact that Joseph Banks, the biologist was buried in the church. She described how she is trying to create a hub of activities at the Church to encourage local people to come together. We were joined by the Mayor, Ranjit Gill.







We proceeded over the road to the Cornerstone Seventh Day Adventist Church where we were warmly welcomed by Pastor Berhanu and his congregation, and heard about the practices of the 7th Day Adventists. They are Protestant Christians who believe in the Bible, but in addition, they use the writings and ministry of Ellen G White, who died in 1915. Although the Church started in North America, almost half of its 24million members are from Africa.

Our next stop was the new Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir, in Osterley, which was due to have its inaugural service the following day. We heard that the BAPS Hindu community, based at the big Neasden temple had been looking for a west London base and were delighted to have found the land next to Oaklands school for their new temple. We were shown a film about their practices, focussed on their spiritual leader, Mahant Swami Maharaj. We were kindly given refreshments before walking to our final venue.

This was to a small Buddhist vihara serving the local Burmese community. It was run by the head monk Venerable Adicca Vamsalankara and 3 other monks who provide religious rites and teach Buddhism and meditation, online. The monks rely on charity from their community. Ven Adicca gave us a very comprehensive description of Burmese Buddhism, and told us about his life as a monk, starting as a very young boy.

AGM 9th July

The AGM was held at Hounslow House, and we were once again hosted by Hounslow's Community Inclusion team, who work closely with us, and we are grateful for their support.

In her Annual Report, Charanjit gave special thanks to our Trustees, most of whom have given long service to the organisation. We have a full complement of 21 Trustees who represent 11 different Faiths. She gave special mention to Adam Nyawo from Hounslow methodist Church who is leaving Hounslow to join a congregation in north London. Also to Basil Mann, who has moved to live in Clapham. He gave many years of service to HFOF and the Holocaust memorial events, on behalf of the local Jewish community.

Our speaker was Rev Cannon Mark Poulson. He is one of our Trustees, but is also Convenor of the Southall Faiths Forum and interfaith advisor to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to the Church of England. He told us very passionately about his understanding of interfaith which he developed through his career as a teacher in West Bromwich and a vicar in Southall. Also, by being part of those communities, living as a neighbour, and getting to know people for who they are, not what they are.

Mark 's talk was very moving and pertinent to the activities of HFOF.

Mark shared that in his work with Dame Sarah Mullally, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, he is delighted that her initial approach to her job is to start at the grass roots level, and to spend time meeting local faith communities.

Consecration of BAPS Swaminarayan temple in Osterley 28th June

I was delighted to have attended the event to consecrate the new Swaminarayan Temple, on behalf of the Interfaith community. There were about 800 people in attendance, to celebrate this newly formed Temple. The event was hosted by a big group of Swamis who led a celebratory service to consecrate the temple.

Everyone was very welcoming and I was delighted to have been honoured with a garland in recognition of the important role the BAPS community gives to interfaith working.

Debbie Brenner



Centenary of the London Buddhist Vihara

On 6th June 2026 at the cordial invitation of the Sangha Nayaka (Chief Prelate for Buddhism) of Great Britain, Most Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala, Charanjit and Ajit Singh and Mr and Mrs Jitubhai Dave and their son Bansi, represented Hounslow Friends of Faith to celebrate the Centenary celebrations.

The Guest of Honour was the RT Hon. The Lord Benyon GCVO, the Lord Chamberlain. It was an event full of pageantry and splendour with Buddhist symbolism and rituals. Ambassadors from Buddhist countries, monks from different Buddhist traditions, and academics graced the occasion.

A hundred lamps were lit by the dignitaries and leaders of faiths on a specially-constructed sculpture, followed by a welcome address by Ven Seelawimala.

A souvenir publication ‘London Buddhist Vihara Centenary 1926-2026 and a book ‘Buddhism in the Contemporary World’, edited by Graham Dixon were well received.

I quote a message by the Head Monk which I find very meaningful. ‘This marks a Golden Chapter in the hundred-year history of the London Buddhist Vihara. I offer heartfelt gratitude to Anagarika Dharmapala for founding the Vihara in his vision and wisdom, and sincere appreciation of the Dayakas, supporters and the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust for their continued dedication… May the blessings of the Triple Gem be with you all!’

Charanjit Ajitsingh

Hounslow Mayor’s induction

Charanjit and Ajit attended the induction of Cllr Ranjit Gill, as this year’s Mayor of Hounslow. Ranjit has supported HFOF’s activities, particularly participating in the Annual Walks, so we were particularly happy to welcome him into his new role.



CW+ Hospital Next Door campaign

During the year, HFOF has participated in joint ventures with CW+, including a joint Iftar meal at West Mid hospital.

CW+, is the official charity of Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, which supports the ‘Hospital Next Door’ campaign. It aims to raise £1.5m to enhance the new £80m NHS-funded Diagnostic, Treatment and Education Centre (DTEC) at West Middlesex University.

This landmark development will transform cancer, kidney and diagnostic care across West London. Opening in 2027, the centre will almost double capacity for key cancer

services and renal dialysis and bring together advanced diagnostics, treatment, renal services and education under one roof.

While the NHS is funding the building, CW+ is raising the £1.5m to help with specialist equipment, including a cardiac MRI scanner.

Chloe Roberts (CW+ fundraiser)

World Congress of Faiths (WCF) 90th anniversary event 15th July 2026

The WCF is one of the oldest interfaith organisations in the world. Founded in London in 1936 by Sir Francis Younghusband, a soldier, explorer and mystic. 3 of our trustees, Charanjit and Ajit and Jitubhai Dave are trustees of the WCF, and they attended the event.

The participants were addressed by WVF's chair, Dr Alan Race who referred to Younghusband's theme of the' Unity of the Cosmos' which remains current and pertinent today; the necessity for people of different religions to explore and journey together; the principle that no-one should claim that their beliefs are better than others; God as an inherent spirit burning within each person; the need to touch the hearts and consciences of millions; and the importance of working together to soften antagonism and organise cooperation.

Imam Monawar Hussain introduced a Multi-faith Service to give thanks for WCF's 90 years of fellowship, with prayers and readings from many different faiths, and a recital by sitar player John Ruston.



The service was followed by film especially created for the 90th anniversary by former BBC Head of Asian programming, Paresh Solanki. This drew on interviews with former WCF Chair the Revd Marcus Braybrooke, current Chair Dr Alan Race; Vice-President Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick; and Executive Committee members Charanjit AjitSingh and Maqsood Ahmed OBE, who reflected on their experiences of WCF and their hopes for its future. The film can be viewed at https://youtu.be/YhonfppFv3s

Knitting group summer event 15th August

HFOF members joined the regular attendees at the Knitting Group's Summer party at St Mary's Church, Twickenham. They were able to see some of the work which is produced and distributed to families and babies in crisis, or with other health needs.

The group were very proud to have been awarded a Dangoor award for Interfaith good practice by the Faith and Belief Forum (see article below).



HALO Project, run by Multicultural Richmond

HFOF Members of HFOF have participated in all 10 sessions, looking at different aspects of Mental Health and Wellbeing from different Faith perspectives. Discussions have focussed on belonging, participation, trust, community knowledge and wellbeing in a thoughtful and engaging way. A range of important themes have been explored, including:

- The journey and development of HALO as a space for dialogue, learning and community participation.
- The role of storytelling and intergenerational learning in passing on knowledge, values and experiences.
- Young people as contributors to community life and agents of positive change.
- The opportunities and challenges created by social media and the increasing volume of information young people encounter.
- The importance of creating safe spaces where children and young people feel heard, valued and supported.
- The role of schools, families, faith communities and wider community networks in promoting wellbeing and belonging.
- The importance of reducing stigma by promoting conversations about mental wellbeing, resilience and prevention.

The next session will focus on Dialogue and Action.

Wednesday 26th August, 2:30-4.30pm at Multicultural Richmond, 111a Kneller Road, Whitton, TW2 7DT

Met police breakfast meetings

Charanjit regularly attends these very early morning meetings in Central London, on behalf of the Interfaith community. She voices the concerns raised regularly at HFOF meetings about the cuts in the Met Police and other public services. Particularly the deletion of specialist Faith Officers who played an important role in community harmony. The discussions cover the rising levels of hatred in communities and the increase in attacks on places of worship.

Refugees welcome Hounslow

Refugees Welcome Hounslow has had a busy summer.

In partnership with Open Kitchen, we hosted a lunch during Refugee Week for asylum seekers. We have also been able to offer a series of special workshops alongside our English classes on the subjects of health, education, housing and parenting.

This series of workshops will continue into the autumn with a 6-week parenting course and further workshops on education, finding a job and the British legal system.

Last week we took 90 refugees to the seaside at Littlehampton in two buses. The weather was perfect and everyone had a marvellous time.



This week we will be holding a weaving and poetry workshop in preparation for our contribution to the Brentford Creative Mile in early September. Do drop in to visit us in Brentford Library.

Report from Shelagh Allsop
(Chair of Refugees Welcome Hounslow and Trustee of HFOF)

South West Middlesex Crematorium multifaith event

Charanjit and Ajit attended the annual interfaith memorial event on behalf of HFOF. Richard Ward, the manager has worked hard to bring the local community together and make their services inclusive. At the event Richard and his staff described what they do at the Crematorium, and showed people round, to reassure and give confidence that their practices are inclusive and respectful.

Unity sports project (USP) for young people

The Unity sports project was organised by HFOF's Youth Champion, Muzzamil Ahden. It took place over the summer, at GOALS football pitch in Osterley, culminating in a Tournament on 22nd August. There were 6 sessions, with over 30 participants over the period, aged 16-25, from multifaith backgrounds. The project was run in partnership with Brentford Football Club who provided a wonderful coach who developed the football and team-working skills of the young people. At the final session, there was an award ceremony for all the young people in the presence of HFOF Trustees and Cllr Samia Chaudhary. After the final Tournament the winning team was presented with a trophy and key players were all given medals by the Deputy Mayor, Sahibaa Hussain.



It was a great example of young people coming together from different faith backgrounds to play, learn and develop new relationships. The players really want to carry on and we are planning on how to keep the project going.

Riff, the coach said 'it's so important to give the young guys skills so that they can develop their confidence and move into volunteering and into work'.





London Dangoor awards for good practice in Interfaith work. (Organised by the Faith and Belief Forum)

Last year HFOF won a Dangoor award for our Interfaith Iftar celebration.

This year HFOF submitted 2 projects, the Knitting group and the Unity sports project. We were delighted that both were recommended for awards.

Congratulations to Lynda Imri who runs the Knitting group at St Mary's in Twickenham.

Congratulations also to Muzzamil Ahmad, our Youth champion, who has pulled out all the stops to run the Unity football tournament once more, this year (see USP article above).

Richmond SACRE event (Standing Advisory Council on Religious education)

Members of HFOF participated with Richmond faith leaders, in an educational event for Year 4 school students. This took the form of faith leaders presenting the main principles of their beliefs and customs to the students, in small interactive groups.

Save the date....'Where Cultures meet' concert 14th November 2026

As part of HFOF's 25th Anniversary celebrations and to mark Interfaith Week, we are planning an exciting multifaith, multicultural concert. The concert is being organised in partnership with West Thames College. A variety of local community groups will present a varied programme including vocal, instrumental music and dance.

🎵 **Venue:** Endeavour Theatre, West Thames College.

🎶 **Date and time:** Saturday 14th November 5pm

Admission will be free, for more details, keep an eye on the HFOF website

Membership

Please renew your membership for 2026, or join as a new member. Help us to:

- **Keep you informed:** Through the newsletter and information updates
- **Keep us independent:** Ensuring our voice remains unbiased and community-focussed.
- **Deliver impactful events:** Funding the interfaith gatherings that bring us together.
- **Empower the next generation:** Supporting our vital education and youth engagement projects.

Individual membership: £10
Group membership: £20

Bank Details

Account Name: Hounslow Friends of Faith
Account Number: 20072554
Sort Code: 60-11-18
Reference: Your Name

Religious Festivals Sept-Nov

September

September 11 – Coptic Orthodox Christian: Nayrouz
Marks the start of the Coptic New Year.

September 14 – Hindu: Ganesh Chaturthi
Celebrates the birth of Lord Ganesh.

September 12-13 – Jewish: Rosh Hashanah
The Jewish New Year, a time of reflection and renewal.

September 21 – Jewish: Yom Kippur
The holiest day in Judaism, dedicated to atonement and repentance. This is one of the most important Jewish high holy days.

September 25 – Jewish: Sukkot
Celebrates the final harvest and remembers when God kept the Israelites safe during the 40 years in the desert.

October

October 11 – Hindu: Navaratri
Triumph of good over evil.

October 17-21 – Hindu: Durga Puja
Celebrates the goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasur.

November

November 1 – Christian: All Saints' Day
Honors all saints, known and unknown.

November 2 – Christian: All Souls' Day
Commemorates all the faithful departed.

November 8 – Hindu: Diwali
The festival of lights, celebrating the victory of light over darkness.

November 10 – Baha'i: Birthday of the Bab
Celebrates the birth of the Baha'i co-founder.

November 24 – Sikh: Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib
Honors the martyrdom of the ninth Sikh Guru.

November 29 – Christian: Advent
Marks the beginning of the Christian liturgical year leading up to Christmas.