

Richmond Inter Faith Forum

27th January 2021 1.30-3.00pm on Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Charanjit Ajitsingh	Hounslow Gurdwara
Mike Norris	Buddhist Representative
Mike Derry	Healthwatch Richmond (Guest)
Ravi Arora	Multicultural Richmond
Jim McLean	Roman Catholic Church of St Theodore of Canterbury Hampton
Tracey Welding	Richmond Council, LSCB Manager (Guest)
Diana Mills	Friends of Faith
James Hutchings	St Marys, Barnes
Juda Caprez	Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Richmond Upon Thames
Robert Bieber	Richmond Synagogue
Jonathan Turley	St Lukes in Kew, Deanery of Richmond and Barnes
John Kafwanka Kaoma	St Augustines of Canterbury, Whitton
Joe Moffatt	St Mary with St Alban, Teddington (Chair)
Sam Petchey	Church of Jesus Christ for Latter Day Saints
Jeremy Rodell	Chair of SW London Humanists (Vice Chair)
Alan Bott	Twickenham Green Baptist Church
Stephen Lewis	United Reformed Church – Twickenham/Hampton Hill
Siobhan Oktay	Richmond Council, Community Engagement

Apologies

Gordon Hindmarch – Whitton Baptist Church

Joy Levi – Richmond Synagogue

Christine Cannon - Quaker Representative

Emily Watson – Teddington Salvation Army

Agenda Item	Discussion
1. Welcome and introductions	A particular welcome to new members of the group, Rev. John Kafwanka Kaoma and Rev. James Hutchings
2. Review of minutes and matters arising	Minutes were accurate, except one factual error to change venue to Buddhist Vihara (rather than Gurdwara!)
3. Discussion	
We are meeting on Holocaust Memorial Day. We are also in the darkest days of a global pandemic. Both of these events cause many to ask, 'Why do innocent people suffer?' We invite the group to share their perspectives on this age-old question.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innocent people have always been present, and as we can not predict future suffering what is important is how we support them - Suffering has always been present, but a greater plan designed by God so that society grows from these experiences - With holocaust survivors, despite huge suffering, their belief in God was reinforced 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When the veneer of civilization disintegrates, innocent suffer - Need for better understanding of the differences between people and communication - The suffering of innocents leads to the overcoming of suffering elsewhere, the power of humanity to prevent further suffering, further repenting of harm - The Sikh belief of the human body being made of the 5 elements, when that balance is disrupted, suffering occurs. It is the power of religion that brings us back to understanding and the power to heal. - Dilemma of benign God versus reality of suffering - both human caused, or natural - does not arise for humanists. The most useful thing we can do is alleviate the suffering, human ingenuity to overcome natural issues - A reflection of how the poor will always be with us, keeping the status quo. How we behave towards the innocents and respond to their situation is key - Suffering is part of what we are as humans, we are meant to correct the situation and be challenged by pain/suffering - Need to be alongside those suffering, listening - Human 'kind' can be kind in extreme situations, recent pandemic shown a willingness to support others 	
Agenda Item	Discussion
<p>4. Events Plan</p>	<p>RB summarised the well-attended virtual civic Holocaust Memorial Day event coordinated by Richmond Synagogue, including a keynote talks by Prof Philip Spencer and Rahima Mamut, a Uyghur refuge from oppression in China.</p> <p>JR drew attention to the report on our “Unity in Crisis” event in November, addressed by Dr.Marissa Quie. The feedback had been strongly positive. It was agreed that the next RIFF event, in April/May, should use the same format (speaker plus small group discussion) while applying lessons learned.</p> <p>Topics/speakers suggested: Rahima Mahmut/Uyghur persecution; social impacts of Covid including loneliness and isolation; vaccine roll-out.</p> <p>Agreed that JR and the Events Team would consider and propose the way forward.</p>
<p>5. Public Sector Update</p>	<p>Tracey Welding – Safeguarding Board Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help Strategy launched Early intervention with families being everybody’s business Resilience networks have been created for three age groups, 0-5, 5-11 and 11-19 organised by Early Help Team. Initial concerns about a family can be brought to the forums to be considered by a multi-agency team. • Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief (CALFB) learning event 26th Feb 2021 A virtual learning event to support early identification of child abuse relating to faith and belief, eg FGM, witchcraft, honour-based abuse <p>Mike Derry – Richmond Healthwatch Role of Healthwatch is to review NHS and social care services from the patient’s perspective. Presently dealing with influx of information requests relating to the Corona Virus and local support services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccine webinar Tues 2nd Feb 3.30-4.30pm with

	<p>presentations by the Head of Public Health, Lead GP and Public Health England.</p> <p>Session will go through common questions around the vaccination. Questions need to be pre-submitted, as already large number of attendees signed up.</p>
<p>6. AOB and DONM</p>	<p>JR – represented group at the Interfaith Network of the UK, London region. Interesting variance in relationship of the local authorities with the Inter Faith Forums. Possibility of having two levels of the forum, one for local leaders and the other for a wider interest group such as those who attended Inter Faith Forum events in the past.</p> <p>Request from John Woodhouse, Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Forum for planting a tree in 2021 to mark South London Interfaith group's 40th anniversary possibly combined with an interfaith walk later in the year. It needs to be on public land and preferably near somebody who could keep an eye on the tree. Diana Mills noted that she and Rashid Leher are members of SLIG and are aware of the tree idea. The Chair suggested his churchyard in Teddington as a possible location for planting. Agreed that we would progress it.</p> <p>Diane Mills – Weds 4th Feb Chris Hewitt webinar on the three Abrahamic Faiths</p> <p>Date of Next Meeting: 28.4.21, 1.30-3.00pm on Zoom</p>