

# IFW NEWS

Interfaith Wolverhampton



## Post Pandemic Lockdown Issue September 2021

Welcome back after the Lockdown!



Interfaith Wolverhampton aims to work with the diverse communities living in and around Wolverhampton in order to foster and nurture mutual understanding and appreciation between the different faiths. It seeks to arrange, encourage and support dialogue between those of different faiths and no faith, communities and agencies so as to contribute to an inclusive environment of mutual respect and harmony.

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A massive vote of thanks to all contributors, Devi in the office and Paul Rayner for technical / online work associated with the Newsletter compilation. Sincere apologies from me for any inaccuracies, omissions or errors.

**Yusuf Shafi (Vice Chair/ Newsletter Editor)**

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## What we've been up to during the Lockdown.....

The Lockdown in 2021 was obviously a quiet time when the office was closed and therefore many of the usual events and activities of the organisation were suspended. Our thoughts and prayers are with all readers and their loved ones who may have suffered ill-health and bereavement during the pandemic. Although things are opening up, we are in no way out of the woods, and particular care and caution is needed during the Autumn and winter, when the disease is expected to resurge and vulnerable people will be at risk of serious ill health. Please keep safe and keep all loved ones safe - always following the basics – Hands, Face, Space.

The IFW management team and in particular our wonderful admin officer Devi Bansal also supported by Maxine Grainger, have been involved with a local authority funded Covid vaccination Promotion project during the lockdown in 2021.

We had previously delivered a short community languages Radio messages initiative, where we recorded the Key Covid safety messages in over 18 languages, and these were then broadcast on local Radio stations.

Due to the success of this work, Interfaith Wolverhampton was approached by the local authority to get involved in this project alongside 11 other citywide organisations and act as an Ambassador organisation.

IFW has a far-reaching and large network of faith organisations within Wolverhampton who are keen to work with us, and trust us to deliver the key messages for Covid vaccination around the city.

This work involved the recruitment of individuals and IFW member faith organisations to become community champions; To facilitate, support and enable them to deliver key Covid 19 safety messages alongside a programme of promoting the vaccine to their community.

The work began in March of 2021, and we had great success in approaching many thousands of individuals around the city through face-to-face contact by visiting the faith organisations and through social media, radio, phone, Internet and email.

The aim of the project was to encourage difficult-to-reach community groups and those for whom English was not their first language to understand the importance of the Covid 19 safety messages and to also ensure that vaccines were being taken up by community members and their families.

The IFW management team Jill Parker (Vice Chair) and Jas Dehar (Chair) in particular, with the support of our community champions, and the invaluable work of Devi and Maxine, made this project a great success and we were commended by the funders for the good work that was done in Wolverhampton.

Without doubt, by encouraging individuals to take up the vaccine this has saved lives in Wolverhampton and meant that the number of infected people and its transmission were reduced within our City. Faith organisations learnt more about IFW and its community remit and we were able to engage with many people throughout the city to inform them about IFW.

The project was also supported by NHS staff who completed COVID Risk assessments to ensure the venues were appropriate for the Vaccinations. Prior to the events, discussions were held with the various Faith centres around marketing, designing posters, room setup and sharing information with their members, either by word of mouth or emails.

On the day, the IFW team and volunteers were on site providing language support and information about the vaccinations. In some cases we were opening up the venue, and arranging who will cover entry and exit doors. At the end of each day, we were supporting tidying up and dismantling the vaccine pods.

The related reports and admin for the funders were also then to be completed and submitted for approval. A massive vote of thanks to everyone involved but especially Devi for her continued hard work and dedication.

Below are some photos and details of some of the various activities and events that were organised by Interfaith Wolverhampton, and this shows the participation and the dedication of our staff and Officers who delivered on this amazing project.

**Yusuf Shafi (Vice Chair/ Newsletter Editor)**  
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## **COVID VACCINATION PROMOTION WORK IN WOLVERHAMPTON 2021**

Pop-up vaccination clinics at Guru Teg Bahadur Gurdwara and Shri Krishan Mandir.



There were also Pop-up vaccination clinics at LIFESPRING CHURCH and ALL NATIONS CHURCH.

### **Other Community Outreach Work**

Jas Dehar (Chair) produced a Video demonstrating how to have the Covid-19 Vaccination, showing Jas receiving her vaccine, and this was shared on Facebook.



Meetings were held with local residents on the Farndale Estate, including low income and a wide range of BME communities. Walking around the area, residents were helped in completing the applications for vaccinations and these were then sent to the NHS.

Meetings were held with the NHS and Church schools, targeting carers, single parents, grandparents, family members, teachers, governors and volunteers, again including a wide range of BME communities, and completing applications for vaccinations which were then sent to the NHS.

Jill Parker and Hansa Patel distributed leaflets and Covid safety packs for a presentation after Sunday Service at St Peter's Church, and Devi did similarly at St Michael and All Angels' Church.

At some of the venues, we also helped individuals to complete questionnaires around their experiences, whether they had suffered COVID, and other issues they were currently facing.

IFW volunteers Hansa and Jill were also involved with making up and distributing 'Goody Bags' to people as they left after having their vaccine. Over 600 goody bags were distributed.



Radio announcements and video recorded messages (in English and Punjabi) were made by IFW management to increase the take-up of Covid vaccine. These were broadcast on Ramadan Radio, Gulshan, Kanshi and Community Radio in Wolverhampton. WhatsApp messages were also put out. It is estimated the reach of these radio shows was between 20 to 25 thousand residents.

Devi, Maxine and the Champion organisations were actively making phone calls to increase take-up of the Covid Vaccine, then following up with reminder phone calls. They were also dealing with enquiries and booking vaccine appointments for second language English speakers. Devi attended St Michael's Church to give a talk.

At The Old School, Blakenhall, IFW management made a presentation, and held a Question-and-Answer session with leaflets to a crowd of local residents. Free Covid safety packs were prepared and distributed, with hand sanitiser, tissues, information leaflets and other trinkets. The Asian ladies group were also visited separately at this same venue.



With help from Sue Reid, the 'Walking for Health' groups in West Park, Bantock Park, and Pendeford were all visited to provide information and distribute vaccine promotion leaflets and sanitiser packs.



Ek Niwas Temple was attended to deliver a presentation with a question & answer session, and to distribute vaccine leaflets & Covid safety packs.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Beckminster Church were also visited to distribute vaccine leaflets & Covid Safety Packs, with our volunteer Mike Johnson helping with the former.

**An excellent community project delivered by IFW officers and staff - thank you all for your kind efforts and great results!**

## **Words of Encouragement from Friends – by Jonathan Aitken, former Cabinet Minister, former prisoner, and now Church of England ordained priest working as a Chaplain at HMP Pentonville.**

“Have you thought of thanking God for sending you to prison?”

Sitting in the Magistrates Court having just been committed to trial at the Old Bailey I was a million miles away from thanking God, my career was ruined, my family was shattered and I was about to go bankrupt.

I was plunged into despair and didn't appreciate these words from the well-meaning priest. But as I thought about what he had said I began to wonder, might it be possible, even in a prison cell, to find ways of being positive? I was about to find out. I started an 18-month sentence in HMP Belmarsh, known as a 'tough nick'. But almost immediately found a few things to be grateful for on the Wing. The officers were fair and decent. My fellow cons, with one or two exceptions, were friendly, welcoming, kind and full of humour. Prison can and does change a number of its inmates. I learned to think differently while inside. I was grateful for the rich variety of personalities I got to know on my journey through the prison system. Sharing in their stories, failures, their fears, their hopes and their prayers opened my eyes to a rich tapestry of life I had not encountered before.

The most important development of all in my life as a prisoner was that somehow or other I learnt to pray at a far deeper and more meaningful level than ever before. Almost every day I found something in prison life to thank God for; a visit from my family or a letter from a friend or a laugh on the Wings or a conversation with an officer or a good night's sleep. Once you start being grateful to God for such small things you are entering into a relationship with him from which far greater blessings may flow.

Today 21 years after release from prison, I lead a blissfully happy and fulfilled life as an ordained priest and prison chaplain. So learning to thank God has brought me great rewards. May you too find the same path.

**Jonathan Aitken.**

(Originally written for the 'Good News Sheet' of HMP Pentonville Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, and reprinted as a Quaker leaflet).

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## **Words to ponder over .....**

*If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness, they would tell you to make it a rule to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For it is certain that whatever seeming calamity befalls you, if you can thank and praise God for it, you will turn it in to a blessing.*

*“A serious and devout call to a holy life.”*

*attributed to William Law but found in many if not all Faiths*

## **Faith representation in COP 26 – for a Sustainable planet**

On Thursday 17 June 2021, a press conference took place in the Holy See Press Office, to launch the Faith and Science: Towards COP26 initiative.

His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States, Her Excellency Sally Axworthy, British Ambassador to the Holy See, and His Excellency Pietro Sebastiani, Ambassador of Italy to the Holy See, were on the panel of speakers.

They announced that leaders of the world religions and spiritual traditions and some leading scientists will be meeting in the Vatican and Rome on 04 October 2021, to set out their vision for tackling climate change.

Faith and Science: Towards COP26 will aim to:

- Encourage governments to approach COP26 with ambition, including in regards to their National Determined Contributions to reach the Paris Agreement goals.
- Show how the faiths are leading the way by greening their own operations at central and local level, possibly with new commitments.
- Inspire individuals to take specific actions to slow global temperature rises.

Sally Axworthy, British Ambassador to the Holy See, said: “Climate change is not yet going in the right direction. Faith leaders played a key role in building momentum for COP21 in 2015 and they can make a similar contribution to COP26. All the faiths and belief systems see nature as sacred, and our duty as being to protect the environment. The leaders have drawn on their own traditions to suggest solutions; the dialogue with the scientists has been creative – facts and values coming together.”

Pietro Sebastiani, Ambassador of Italy to the Holy See, commented: “Faith and Science: towards COP26 is inspired by the desire to deepen, develop and compare the concern and care for environmental issues that unites the different religions and spiritual traditions and therefore offer an unprecedented impulse to COP26.”

“An opportunity also to promote a discussion on ecological issues related to those of social justice and reflection, in particular, on a development model that cannot continue to produce an unsustainable environmental cost and increase social and economic inequalities.

World religions are critical to the success of the global solidarity for an ethical, moral and spiritual commitment to protect the environment and God’s creation. Many organizations promote their Faith and Sustainability. It is important we approach environmental protection from a stewardship perspective.

The Earth is God’s creation, and as humans, we have been entrusted to preserve it as we found. The responsibility of humanity is to protect and ensure the unity of the God’s creation. As a Faith organisation we must work collaboratively to ensure we protect the Environment and that Inter Faith Wolverhampton be the vehicle through which such activities are articulated. The mission is to engage the next generation in Environmental Protection; This is a key responsibility of the various Faith groups and we can make positive action to address the prevailing climate emergency.

## On a lighter note.....

On their way to get married, a young couple is involved in a fatal car accident. The couple found themselves sitting outside the Pearly Gates waiting for St. Peter to process them into Heaven. While waiting, they began to wonder: Could they possibly get married in Heaven? When St. Peter showed up, they asked him. St. Peter said, "I don't know. This is the first time anyone has asked. Let me go find out," and he left.

The couple sat and waited and waited. Two months passed and the couple were still waiting. While waiting, they began to wonder what would happen if it didn't work out; could you get a divorce in heaven? After yet another month, St. Peter finally returned, looking somewhat bedraggled. "Yes," he informed the couple, "You can get married in Heaven."

"Great!" said the couple, "But we were just wondering, what if things don't work out? Could we also get a divorce in Heaven?" St. Peter, red-faced with anger, slammed his clipboard onto the ground. "What's wrong?" asked the frightened couple. "OH, COME ON!," St. Peter shouted, "It took me three months to find a priest up here! Do you have any idea how long it'll take me to find a lawyer?"

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## WordSearch – COVID

### Corona Virus Important Words

I	A	R	E	S	P	I	R	A	T	O	R	Y	O
M	T	M	O	I	E	T	A	L	U	C	R	I	C
M	O	L	N	C	T	I	M	S	N	A	R	T	R
U	M	G	N	I	C	N	A	T	S	I	D	V	T
N	D	I	S	I	N	F	E	C	T	A	N	T	I
E	I	L	R	E	C	E	T	A	L	O	S	I	I
N	N	S	U	O	I	T	C	E	F	N	I	R	N
E	T	C	T	T	M	T	L	A	I	C	O	S	P
I	E	I	N	T	E	R	A	C	T	I	O	N	T
A	N	A	D	R	D	E	C	N	A	D	I	U	G
C	S	E	N	T	N	K	M	O	T	P	M	Y	S
E	I	N	N	S	A	S	A	S	I	D	M	A	I
I	V	U	K	P	P	I	R	I	R	N	A	T	R
N	E	R	E	T	A	R	E	D	O	M	S	T	U

DISINFECTANT  
PANDEMIC  
INFECTIOUS  
CIRCULATE  
RISK  
TRANSMIT  
SYMPTOM  
RESPIRATORY  
INTENSIVE  
IMMUNE  
GUIDANCE  
DISTANCING  
ISOLATE  
INTERACTION  
MODERATE  
SOCIAL

## Faith Calendar 2021/22

Every attempt has been made to be as accurate as possible and try to incorporate the main events of each Faith. Apologies for any errors and omissions.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Celebration</u>	<u>Faith</u>
16 Sep	Yom Kippur	Jewish
21 Sep	First day of Sukkot	Jewish
7 Oct	Navaratri	Hindu
15 Oct	Dussehra	Hindu
19 Oct	Milad un Nabi (Mawlid)	Muslim
4 Nov	Diwali/Deepavali	Hindu / Sikh
28 Nov	First Sunday of Advent	Christian
29 Nov	First Day of Hanukkah	Jewish
19 Nov	Guru Nanak Birthday	Sikh
8 Dec	Bodhi Day	Buddhist
25 Dec	Christmas Day	Christian
2 Jan	Guru Gobind Singh Birthday	Sikh
6 Jan	Epiphany	Christian
13 Jan	Lohri	Sikh
16 Jan	Tu B'Shevat (Arbor Day)	Jewish
15 Feb	Nirvana Day	Buddhist
16 Feb	Magha Puja Day	Buddhist
28 Feb	Isra and Mi'raj	Muslim
1 Mar	Maha Shivaratri	Hindu
1 Mar	Carnival / Shrove Tuesday	Christian
2 Mar	Carnival / Ash Wednesday	Christian
9 Mar	Holi	Hindu / Sikh
16 Mar	Purim	Jewish
2 Apr	Ramadan Start	Muslim
10 Apr	Palm Sunday	Christian

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Celebration</u>	<u>Faith</u>
14 Apr	Maundy Thursday	Christian
15 Apr	First day of Passover	Jewish
15 Apr	Good Friday	Christian
12 Apr	Easter Sunday	Christian
14 Apr	Vaisakhi	Sikh
27 Apr	Yom HaShoah	Jewish
29 Apr	Laylatul Qadr (Night of Power)	Muslim
2 May	Eid ul Fitr	Muslim
5 May	Yom HaAtzmaut	Jewish
6 May	Vesak - Buddha Day	Buddist
26 May	Ascension Day	Christian
26 May	Shavuot	Jewish
5 Jun	Pentecost	Christian
16 Jun	Corpus Christi	Christian
9 Jul	Eid ul Adha	Muslim
13 Jul	Asala – Dharma Day	Buddhist
30 Jul	Muharram / Islamic New Year	Muslim
7 Aug	Ashura	Muslim
5 Aug	Tisha B'Av	Jewish
18 Aug	Janmashtami	Hindu
13 Aug	Obon	Buddhist

## Diary of IFW Events 2021

### September

21<sup>st</sup> (Tuesday)

**"Online Bring and Share" 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Speaker: Qasim Farid, Chaplain at HM Prison Oakwood, Custodial and Detention Services. If you do not receive an invitation by email, please request the Zoom link from [admin@ifwton.org.uk](mailto:admin@ifwton.org.uk) , or by phoning 0785 325 1929. Participation is possible on Desktop, Laptop, Tablet, SmartPhone, or even a landline telephone (audio only). You can test your Zoom connection here - <https://zoom.us/test> . If you**

want detailed technical help, try <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-How-Do-I-Join-A-Meeting-> .

21<sup>st</sup> (Tuesday) **Interfaith Wolverhampton AGM (Postponed from January 28<sup>th</sup>).**

## **October**

10<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> **Week of Prayer for World Peace** Annual inter-faith week focussing on the need for justice, peace and reconciliation. <https://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk> .

17<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> **One World Week - "Act Now for Our Children's World"** One World Week is a Development Education Charity. An opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning, and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. <https://www.oneworldweek.org> .

19<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) **"Bring and Share"** 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Speaker: Martin Gomberg, talking about the development of the Jewish faith, and its relationship with other faiths (from a Progressive Jewish perspective). Details to Follow.

## **November**

16<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) **"Bring and Share"** 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Speaker: Emma Peters, Engagement and Communication Officer at the local Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS). Details to Follow.

## **December**

21<sup>st</sup> (Tuesday) **"Bring and Share (no speaker)"** 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Details to Follow.

For up-to-date details, see the Interfaith Wolverhampton website:  
<http://ifwton.org.uk/diary.html>

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**Reminder - Members' subscriptions were due from 1<sup>st</sup> April for 2021-2022 membership. If yours is overdue, please send your renewal as soon as possible.**

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**Staff, Officers and Volunteers are all working from home at present. Post and emails are being dealt with as usual, but please be patient. Office re-opening date (when we know) will be on our website - <http://ifwton.org.uk/contact-us.html> .**

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