



Kingston Faith and Belief Forum

Kingston Faith & Belief Forum - 18 months in review
06 December 2023 - Guildhall

Thank you Madam Mayor and Deputy Mayor for hosting us here today at Guildhall. We appreciate this time to gather together.

I'd like to reflect on a dynamic year and growth for our Faith and Belief Forum that was only re-launched in September 2022. The Forum is alive with shared purpose and activity. We have a new website, and a monthly newsletter that is distributed to all faith and belief communities in the borough.

Over the last 18 months, we've met 7 times and this has strengthened our bonds and enabled collaboration on topics that really matter to our communities such as: funerals and burials, bereavement, sustainability, hate crime, voting and inter faith relations. We have met with various representatives of Kingston Council, and also from local charities, and built bridges with many partners.

I had the privilege to represent the Forum in early November at the Methodist Church in New Malden, when His Majesty King Charles came to visit the Korean Community. I made some contacts with the Korean Church at this occasion, and hopefully we will be able to have stronger relations with an important community in our borough.

The Interfaith Week was organised under the auspices of the Forum, with an opening Remembrance service at All Saints, an inter faith walk to different places of worship organised by Rashid Laher, Noah's Pudding at All Saints with the Dialogue Society, and finally Mitzvah Day at Kingston Liberal Synagogue.

We are also ever so grateful for the amazing work that Marina Payen is doing for the Forum, and thank Kingston Borough for allocating some of her time to help us with planning, organising, and keeping track on events and topics.

Last January, the Forum hosted a heartfelt community Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration and plans are now in place for the 2024 edition. It is also really good to see so much goodwill with members opening up spaces to each other for different purposes or events and using the monthly bulletin to share information.

As we look ahead with hope and plans, Sarah, Hamad and I acknowledge the conclusion of our term as Chair and Vice-Chairs. While we're willing to continue, we invite others to take on leadership roles. Please let us know if you wish to take on a leadership role with the Forum.

Thanks to all for your dedication. Here's to a new year of collaboration, understanding, and harmony in our diverse communities.

Rabbi Rene Pfertzel - Chair of Kingston Faith & Belief Forum