



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

2021-22 _____	3
Network Meetings _____	3
Women’s Interfaith Group _____	4
Mental Wellbeing Workshop - Resilience & Recovery _____	5
Annual Walk of Faith - September _____	5
Public Meeting Celebrating Redbridge _____	6
RFF Trustees _____	7
RFF Staff & Office Volunteer _____	7
Funding _____	8

2021-22

continued to be a challenging year with the pandemic impacting everyday life and staff working remotely. Trustees and staff have delivered the majority of Redbridge Faith Forum events virtually but were delighted that the 2021 Annual Walk of Peace was held in person. Networking has continued throughout this year with new links between RFF and both voluntary and statutory organisations. Full accounts of our 2021-22 events and activities are on our website www.redbridgefaithforum.org but a snapshot of our year follows.

Network Meetings

Our quarterly network meetings were held virtually and proved to be very well attended and informative.

April - “*We Say No to Domestic Violence and Abuse*”

This was a well-attended network with input from Miranda Black, LBR Domestic Abuse Service Manager, Jane Hogg, Senior Social Worker and Patee Banu Community Safety Officer plus faith perspective input from our Jewish, Hindu and Christian trustees. Signposting information was shared as well as very helpful guidance as to what to look out for when suspecting abuse, the different types of abuse, and how to get help- see link to full report on website click [here](#)

July - “*Journeying through Grief - Bereavement Support*”

This again was a well-attended and very well received meeting at a time when so many have been bereaved. The meeting started with a comprehensive presentation by a psychotherapist/hospital chaplain on “Grief and How Faith Communities Can Support”. It was so helpful to learn about the impact of grief on the bereaved and that the range of symptoms experienced are normal and not as some bereaved people fear signs of madness. This led on to practical suggestions on how faith communities can support - what to do and what not to do, what to say and what not to say etc. and guidance on when it is appropriate to refer to a mental health therapeutic specialist. Representatives of local bereavement support organisations then spoke about the services they offer - these included Orangeline (St Francis Hospice), Ahada (Jewish Bereavement Support), Alabaster (City Gates Church), Muslim Bereavement Support Service and the Hindu VHP Temple. A comprehensive fact sheet was made available giving details of national and local resources for bereavement support. See link - click [here](#)

October - “*Redbridge and the Climate Emergency*”

This topic was a follow up from the September Walk of Peace acknowledging COP 26, the United Nations Climate Change Conference commencing in Glasgow on 31 October. Cllr Joanne Blackman presented an overview of the Redbridge Climate Action Plan and was followed by speakers from the Muslim Gardens of Peace Cemetery and St Gabriel’s Church Aldersbrook who shared the practical measures their venues had taken to conserve energy and protect the planet. An officer from the Our Streets Team explained waste reduction and recycling schemes operated by the council and attendees were directed towards helpful resources to answer the question “what can I do?”. See link to full report on website click [here](#)

January - *“Update on Homelessness and Rough Sleepers”*

Our topic was “Rough Sleeping and Homelessness in Redbridge” as an update to our January 2019 Network when this topic was last discussed. It proved to be an encouraging meeting as we heard that one good outcome of the pandemic was that central government funds enabled the council and local organisations to work together to get rough sleepers off the streets and into accommodation. Karen Shaw, Head of LBR Housing Needs gave a very informative presentation including a powerpoint, illustrating the tremendous achievement of supporting a total of 389 rough sleepers in Redbridge between March 2020 and December 2021. It was so good to hear that 16 of the 389 have been reconciled with family and that 8 have been assisted into supported housing options with 26 reconnected to other boroughs or internationally. Speakers followed from Malachi Place and The Welcome Centre and it was inspirational to hear of their achievements during the pandemic as they responded adapting services - the three key words being critical, productive and hope. Our final speaker was interviewed about his career in social housing and answered questions about the role of housing associations providing affordable housing. See link to full report on website click [here](#)

Women’s Interfaith Group

Our women’s group met virtually during 2021-22 to focus on the following topics:

May - *“Ageing Well”*

Redbridge Faith Forum was delighted to partner with Care City for this event - Care City is working with the NHS to get answers to the questions listed below and research people’s attitudes to Frailty. This was an opportunity to discuss opinions about the word Frailty, and think about the following issues:

How do you feel about getting older?

1. What support do you think you may need?
2. What health services might you access?
3. And what do you think about how we label our older generation?
4. When would you describe someone as “frail”?

The full report is available on the website by clicking [here](#)

September - *“Gratitude”*

It is acknowledged that throughout our lives an attitude of thankfulness and gratitude is an integral part of maintaining good mental and spiritual health. It helps us keep a positive outlook on life and often puts things into perspective. Each woman was invited to share their personal answer to this question “What/who we are grateful, or thankful for in our lives? “ It was so encouraging to hear each individual contribution and observe common threads running through them. It led to an appreciation of the range of circumstances that had led to the women highlighting different aspects of their lives to be thankful for. Many felt that the pandemic had given them the opportunity to re-evaluate their priorities, given them a greater appreciation of community and expressed deep gratitude for a democracy with good health provision and technology enabling virtual connection. A report is available by clicking [here](#)

March - “*Celebrating Our Grandmothers*”

This event marked International Women’s Day and proved to be a joyful occasion with all women sharing memories of their grandmothers. Some had fascinating tales to tell of brave, independent women who had conquered many challenges in their lives. Many acknowledged and appreciated the wisdom and encouragement passed down the generations. See link to full report on website click [here](#)

Mental Wellbeing Workshop – Resilience & Recovery

A workshop was held in July in partnership with NHS Talking Therapies. The workshop was led by a Chartered Counselling Psychologist and a Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapist from NELFT on the topic of Resilience and Recovery.

The workshop covered both what resilience is, and also explored its 5 domains:

1. **Purpose** - create a sense of purpose and develop your passion for living
2. **Self** - appreciate your strengths and build positive self-esteem
3. **Connections** - create relationships and make connections in the community
4. **Body** - prioritise your physical well-being and develop a healthy lifestyle
5. **Mind** - cultivate a positive mind and learn how to enjoy life.

Annual Walk of Faith - September

This popular event took place in person commencing in Valentines Park by the site of the Cran Brook with a performance from Redbridge Music Lounge focusing on songs featuring water and then visited the following venues:-

Holocaust Memorial Garden
 Buddhist Vihara
 Hindu VHP Temple
 Ilford Islamic Centre
 St Mary the Virgin Church
 Karamsar Centre (where a vegetarian meal was served)

The Mayor of Redbridge welcomed everyone at the start of the walk, Cllr Jo Blackman spoke at the Vihara and Cllr Khaled Noor spoke at the Islamic Centre as well as speakers from each host faith community.

At each stop walkers heard more about the effects of climate change both in the UK and globally. A full report including photographs is available on our website - click [here](#)

Some of the comments received in feedback:

- Excellent walk, my parents and I have learnt so much today about the importance of looking after our environment as well as how important caring for our environment is encouraged in all faiths. Thank you!
- 'Felt at Home' we are one family trying to learn & understand the importance of creation.
- Thank you it has been very interesting
- A wonderful day- thank you so much so well organised & such a joy to be with people from different faiths
- A very good walk, where all faiths were in agreement over climate change if only everyone in our rich society would take it on board. Thank you.
- My first year of walking with you. A very pleasant experience. It was also a very good turn out and very well organised.
- Our first time on the interfaith walk and we had a very interesting time
- Great! Loved it lovely loved the way Mohamed Omer linked it together. I am aware that people kept 'saying people of faith' but lot of people have no faith.
- It was very well led, thank you very much
- Thank you so much for a very informative and enlightening day in very good company.
- Was successfully friendly, nice walk, for all to see you next year

Our trustees have now recorded video messages with their faith perspective on this topic which are available on our website by clicking <https://redbridgefaithforum.org/walk-of-peace-21/>

Public Meeting Celebrating Redbridge

In December 2021 RFF partnered with the council to host a meeting to share views on:-

1. One thing you like about living in Redbridge
2. One thing you would like to change or improve
3. your experience with Redbridge council
4. What you would like the council to do more or less of in the community
5. What the council can do to improve its relationship with residents.

Attendees appreciated the opportunity to "have their say" and some useful feedback was given. See link to full report on website click [here](#)

Visit to Ben Kinsella Trust Knife Crime Exhibition

Redbridge Faith Forum were invited to take a group of Redbridge faith leaders to visit this exhibition in February. This exhibition currently housed in the Barking Foyer is funded by Barking & Dagenham council and is free for all youth and school groups in that borough to attend. It can be offered to out of borough youngsters providing funding is obtained which could be from multiple sources including the Home Office.

The exhibition space is used to deliver anti-knife crime workshops aimed at young people aged between 10 and 16. The idea came about of having a permanent exhibition from seeing the understanding and impact young people had experienced after visiting Anne Frank's house. The group found this a very moving and hard-hitting tour. Several people expressed an interest in bringing their own young people from their faith group to visit and others said they would cascade the information within their communities.

RFF Trustees

- Mohamed Omer - Chair
- Vinaya Sharma - Vice Chair
- Mohammed Dedat - Treasurer
- Appathurai Ramkumar - Secretary
- Angela Banner
- Phillip Butcher
- Dr Pratibha Datta
- Reverend Pethigamuwe Hemaratana
- Mitzi Kalinsky (co-opted February 2022)
- Carol Khorsandyon
- Reverend Bernardino Mandlate
- Imam Khurram Rafiq
- Oren Rosenman (resigned January 2022)
- Harbans Singh Seehra
- Harmander Singh
- Dr Suhasini

RFF Staff & Office Volunteer

Saira Yakub & Karen Kent

Natia Kutashvili

Funding

Redbridge Faith Forum is grateful to the London Borough of Redbridge for grant funding and to many individuals and faith communities for “in-kind” support. Please refer to the annual accounts for full details on the RFF website.



- £16685 Grants (previous year £18447)
- £902 Donation, Gift Aid & Membership (previous year £1588)



- £19100- Payroll (previous year £16920)
- £350 Governance (previous year £350)
- £790 Other Overheads (previous year £1177)