



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

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2022-23

Redbridge Faith Forum has taken a hybrid approach to activities offering both in person and virtual events during 2022/23 to enable full participation and personal choice for members. RFF brings people of different faiths and cultures together to build bridges across their differences and explore topics of mutual interest. Our four in person events were well attended - May 2022 AGM & Public Forum; July 2022 Network Meeting; October 2022 Annual Walk of Peace, and March 2023 Women's Workshop to celebrate International Women's Day. Network meetings held April and November 2022, and January 2023 were virtual. Networking has continued throughout this year with new links forged between RFF and both voluntary and statutory organisations. Full reports of our 2022-23 events and activities are on our website www.redbridgefaithforum.org but a snapshot of our year follows.

Network Meetings

Our quarterly network meetings were very well attended and informative.

April - "Living with Covid"

RFF was delighted that Ian Diley, Public Health Consultant accepted our invitation to speak on the topic of "Living With Covid". Ian last met with us in July 2020 and we knew that he would give us a comprehensive overview and answer our questions which indeed he did. The meeting was chaired by Mohamed Omer.

Ian confirmed that although legal restrictions and free testing has ended we were still in the midst of a major Covid pandemic with many hospital in-patients with Covid. Ian explained that restrictions were eased because the pandemic had been mitigated by the vaccination programme. The outcome being that Covid is being treated as a respiratory disease, similar to flu and although flu is responsible for many deaths prevention measures are similar. Full report available on website click [here](#)



July - "The Cost of Living Crisis" an in person event at Vine United Reform Church, Riches Road; Ilford IG1 1JH

RFF was delighted that Jane Smith (LBR Welfare Manager) and Sharon Bashford, (LBR Interventions and Support Officer) agreed to speak at the meeting along with Anglina Bhabra and Ruth Musgrave from Transition Ilford (TTI) on the topic of "Cost of Living Crisis". The meeting was chaired by Mohamed Omer.

Due to technical difficulties Jane and Sharon were not able to share their PowerPoint presentation ([Welfare Benefits presentation](#)) so the time was used for questions from the floor. Jane and Sharon explained the help available from their team and highlighted changes being gradually implemented to legacy benefits such as working tax credit - further information available from both Department for Work and Pensions and LBR websites. They were happy

to be contacted if attendees had any benefit related questions. See link to the full report including photographs on website click [here](#)

November - “Breaking the Stigma around Mental Health” (hosted on Zoom)

RFF was delighted to welcome Eve Tobe, Educational Psychologist from the Redbridge Mental Health Support Team (MHS Team). The meeting was chaired by Mohamed Omer. The MHS Team are part of the Redbridge Children’s Service and Educational Psychology Service and deliver a much needed service within Redbridge schools providing support in a safe familiar venue rather than within a NHS setting and allows access to often “hard to reach” pupils who may not have access to Mental Health support if they didn’t receive it in the school environment.

The MHS Team go into both primary and secondary Redbridge schools to deliver low intensity guided self-help to parents and pupils in Primary schools and direct help to secondary school pupils teaching them strategies to deal with low mood, anxiety and behavioural problems. They also work with pupils who have been identified as having defined Mental Health issues.

Eve speaks in school assemblies and works with teachers and parents to raise awareness of signs of Mental Health issues in children and young people, explains how to help prevent them and also signposts on how to deal with them when they do occur. Emotional Literacy Support Assistants have been introduced in ALL Redbridge Schools., specially trained to support pupils who have Mental Health issues.

Full report available on website click [here](#)

January - “A Cleaner, Healthier, Greener Redbridge?” (hosted on Zoom)

RFF was delighted to welcome Laki Begum, Neighbourhood Education and Engagement Officer, Hitesh Tailor, Strategy & Partnership Officer, Housing Needs Service and Yusuf Patel, Community Engagement Officer. The meeting was chaired by Phil Butcher.

Laki, gave a presentation on some of the projects and activities the Neighbourhood Streets Team run and explained that they are part of Redbridge Council, divided into four teams. (Street Cleansing, Green Services, Education & Engagement, Environmental Crime Enforcement). The Education and Engagement team work with residents, schools, businesses and faith groups to engage and run community projects with the aim to build A Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Healthier Redbridge.

Phil welcomed Hitesh and Yusuf. Hitesh gave a brief background to his role and explained that Redbridge Council was currently undertaking a Listening Exercise to support the 2023-2028 development of the LBR Housing Strategy which expired in 2022. There were two online surveys, one for organisations and one for individuals. Yusuf encouraged everyone to complete the surveys as feedback is sought from all Redbridge council wards.

Full report available on website click [here](#)

Women's Interfaith Group



Staff have continued to make wellbeing calls to those members who do not have internet access, as well as supporting some who were very wary of using technology to become confident users thus enabling them to join virtual meetings. We have tried a new way of connecting with women from the BAME group, RFF Women's group joined Neelam & Ramesh's Sangham group for an afternoon of Walking, Talking and Laughter on **3rd October 2022**. The women enjoyed a leisurely walk around Valentines Park connecting with each other. It evoked conversations surrounding what people do in their spare time, their families, and their passions. See link to the full report including photographs on website click [here](#).

Some of the women from the Sangham group attended the RFF Annual Walk of Peace and are now considering RFF membership. A second "Walk and Talk" session on 31st October 2022, was arranged with the Sangham group. PC Reshma Sher, one of the Sergeants on the Safer Neighbourhood Wards in Redbridge, and colleagues from Ilford Town Centre and Wanstead, gave a safety awareness talk including distributing personal safety alarms. This was a welcome opportunity for the three police officers to have dialogue with local women, to reassure them in the wake of the murder of a local woman Zara Aleena, and listen to their safety concerns.

March "Exploring Faith and Mental Health - WOMEN'S INTERFAITH WORKSHOP"



The group of women met at the VHP Hindu Centre to celebrate International Women's Day 2023 by discussing this important topic at a time of economic challenges for many and the aftermath of the pandemic. The following questions were discussed:-

1. What (if any) are the issues around faith and mental health from a woman's perspective?
2. How does having a spiritual belief and viewpoint help us cope mentally with life and all of its' ups and downs?

This was a humbling and friendly workshop with women happy and confident to share their thoughts in small group discussions in mixed faith groups with generous hospitality provided.

Full report and Photos available on website click [here](#)

Annual Walk of Peace

Our theme for 2022 was "Caring for our Elderly and Vulnerable" with over 70 people gathered for this thirteenth annual walk of peace.



Mayor, Councillor Thavathuray Jeyaranjan, welcomed the gathered walkers in the Holocaust Memorial Gardens. After a short input from Sheila Chiat giving us the Jewish perspective on our topic the group in turn walked off to visit the Buddhist Vihara, the VHP Hindu Temple, Islamic Centre in Albert Road, SS Peter and Paul's Catholic Church and the Sikh Gurdwara.

At each of the faith venues we were welcomed and heard from their representatives regarding the importance of Caring for the Elderly and Vulnerable. It was unsurprising that at each venue the common theme was heard of how, within the precepts of each faith, we are all called to both nurture and care for those in need. There was a special presentation during the walk from St Francis Hospice, whose staff care for people of all faiths and none living in Redbridge, full report and Photos available on website click [here](#)



A few of the many comments received in feedback:

- The walk was something of a dream come true to me. I've longed to see this expression of respect and unity between faith groups so am overjoyed to be a part of this group and offer my ongoing support whenever needed.
- Thanks for the invite to the walk of Peace. It was fun and enlightening. I tweeted about it on the Redbridge Citizens
- I appreciate the hospitality, I enjoy hearing about hosts' faiths and buildings' histories, and decor and artefacts.
- Thank you for organising another great walk. Lovely weather and lovely people. Many thanks again for your excellent arrangements. Always enjoyable.

Additionally, faith leaders have recorded individual video messages giving their unique response on the vital topic of faith, climate and the global emergency which are available on our Website click [here](#) .

Public Forum "Youth Violence and Knife Crime"

In response to the concern felt by many Redbridge residents this topic was chosen for an open forum following the RFF AGM held at the Muslim Gardens of Peace Cemetery on 25th May 2022. The Forum was very well attended by 48 local residents including the Mayor of Redbridge, Councillor Roy Emmett and several ward councillors. Guest Speakers were Patrick Green, Chief Executive of the Ben Kinsella Trust and Superintendent Gordon Henderson, CID Lead for East Area.

The Mayor shared that he was proud of the diversity of Redbridge today and acknowledged that RFF by bringing together a group of faith and civic leaders gives hope for the future and

introduced Councillor Shah Ali, Hainault ward councillor. Patrick Green spoke about the work of the Ben Kinsella Trust educating young people about knife crime and in particular the impactful exhibition in Barking. Supt Henderson explained in detail the process followed by investigating officers following homicide. A heartfelt discussion followed, full report and Photos available on website click [here](#)



Growing Inter Faith Understanding and Co-operation

Interfaith week 2022 took place from Sunday 13 - Sunday 20 November.

This is a special Week which highlights the contribution of faith groups to society; encourages greater inter faith understanding and cooperation and also dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. It is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday to encourage remembering together the service given by those of different faiths and beliefs from the UK and the Commonwealth.

Inter Faith Week's aims are to:

- Strengthen good interfaith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

We asked RFF Trustees and local faith leaders to share a reflection from a faith perspective on the topic of "How faith communities can support with the cost of living crisis". We do hope you will enjoy listening to these by clicking [here](#)

An introduction to Faith Festivals

Some of our trustees have shared Festivals they are celebrating and what it means to them.

These can be accessed by clicking link [here](#)

We hope you find them useful and informative!

Community Living Rooms

Find a warm and welcoming Place Faith and Community Halls

RFF collaborated with LBR Officers regarding providing Warm Spaces to explore how the council and faith communities can work together to provide warm spaces during the colder months (October 2022 to March 2023) RFF sent a survey to Redbridge places of worship which was collated by LBR and as a result of this 8 faith communities provided warm spaces as part of LBR community Living rooms scheme. These are warm and welcoming places for residents to use. Residents are invited to come to any of the places listed during their opening times. Each is different and their offer is different - some have activities, some offer hot drinks, some are warm quiet spaces.

Click link below to view the list of venues

<https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/community-living-rooms/>.

RFF Trustees

Mohamed Omer - Chair
 Vinaya Sharma - Vice Chair
 Mohammed Dedat - Treasurer
 Appathurai Ramkumar - Secretary
 Angela Banner
 Phillip Butcher
 Dr Pratibha Datta
 Imam Khurram Rafiq

Reverend Pethigamuwe Hemaratana
 Mitzi Kalinsky
 Carol Khorsandyon
 Reverend Bernardino Mandlate
 Harbans Singh Seehra (resigned Oct 2022)
 Harpreet Shergill (co-opted November 2022)
 Harmander Singh
 Dr Suhasini

RFF Staff & Office Volunteer

Saira Yakub & Karen Kent (retired June 22) RFF would like to thank Karen for her commitment to RFF and wish her a wonderful retirement.

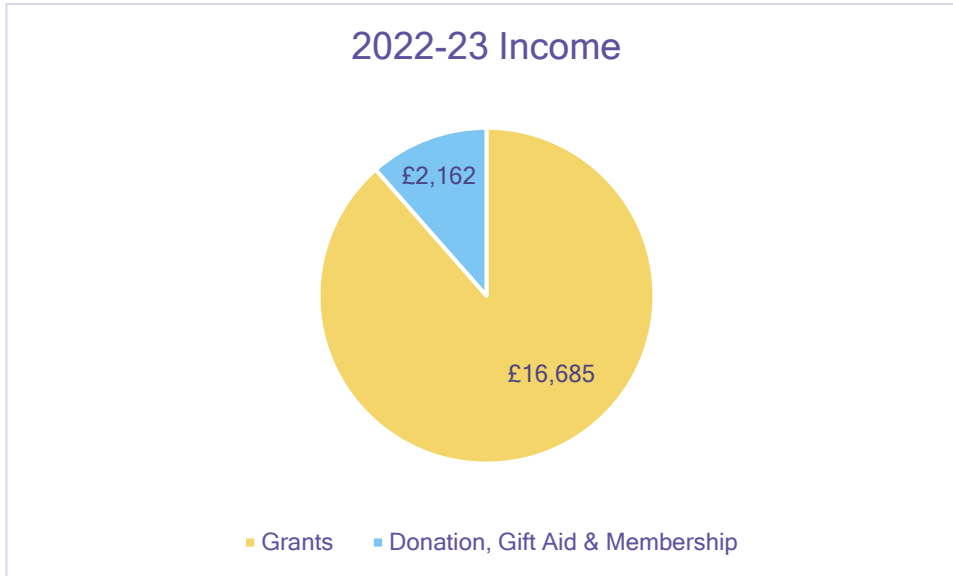


RFF would like to thank our Office and Event Volunteer Natia for another year of outstanding service and support.

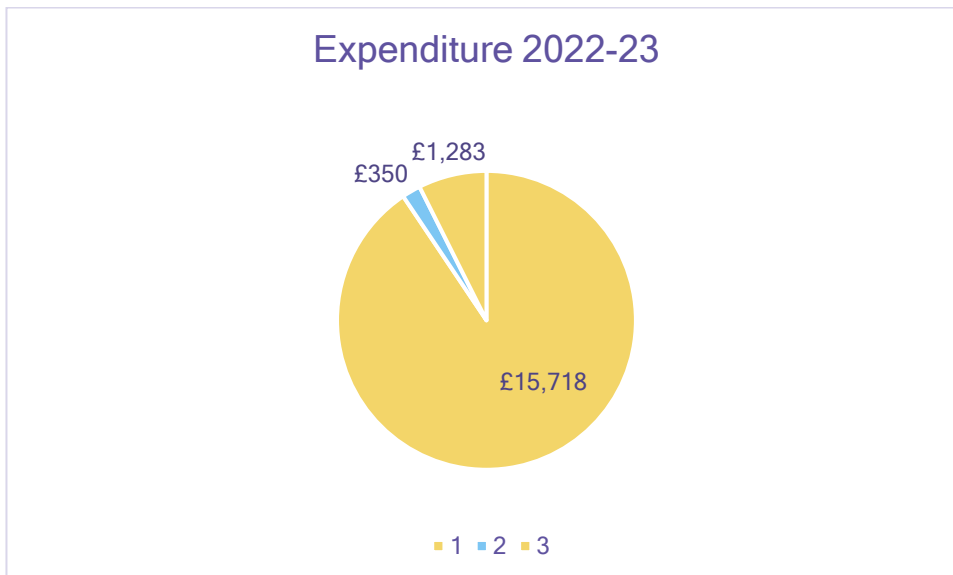


Funding

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 £16685)
- £2163 Donation, Gift Aid & Membership (previous year £902)



- £15718- Payroll (previous year £19100)
- £350 Governance (previous year £350)
- £1108 Other Overheads (previous year £790)