

Newsletter 1 Jan 2011

With the start of the new year, I'm very happy to be writing the first Surrey Faith Links Project Newsletter!

Wishing you all a very happy new year, with prayers for a successful and peaceful year for all.

Haallah Shams
(Surrey Faith Links Adviser)

This newsletter, as well as the Surrey Faith Links website, is dedicated to the faith communities of Surrey. In this newsletter we will be adding information that may of interest to you and we will be very happy to add information about you faith organisation / events / celebrations being held by your faith community etc.

We want to celebrate the great work being done by faith communities for the wider local community and to share with others what faith communities have to offer ☸

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OLYMPICS 2012



Do you want your faith or belief community to be a part of the activities that will be taking place around the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics?

This is a great opportunity for people of faith to work alongside other bodies to help make the Games an enjoyable and lasting memory for all. If you would like to get involved, contact Haallah: haallah.shams@cofequildford.org.uk

For more information, please visit: <http://www.surrey2012.info/how-you-can-be-part-of-it/faith-and-the-2012-games/>

CENSUS 2011

The Census Survey is due to take place in March 2011. For more information about the census please visit: www.census.gov.uk - 57 translation booklets will be available online from 4 March 2011.

If you feel that your faith or belief group will require a further explanation, the Census team is very happy to go out and meet any groups.

For more info, please contact Richard Symes: J107@census.gov.uk / 07801 331486



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Good Spirit During Times of Need

During the snowy period we asked faith communities, across Surrey County, to let us know what they had been doing to help the wider community. We received some enlightening responses, which we will share with you here. We would still love to hear from your faith community if there are activities that you have done for the wider community, not only during the snowy period, but at any time of the year. We hope that you will enjoy these accounts and that they will be an inspiration for others to also take action in the future.



The Whole Community Coming Together in Chiddingfold

The Chiddingfold Churches (St Mary's Parish Church, St Teresa's RC Church, Baptist Church) have a Good Neighbours Scheme which aims to provide a warm and friendly welcome to all new residents to the village and to be able to offer help in times of need. At our recent AGM we made an Extreme Weather Plan which has been put to use in the recent bad weather.

Chiddingfold is a large village geographically, with a well-populated centre and a sprawling outer section where houses can be a quarter of a mile apart. There are many elderly and vulnerable people living alone. Our 100 good neighbours cover the entire village which has a population of around 3,000.

The village is divided into twelve geographical areas each with a coordinator. When the snow and ice arrived and many of our roads were impassable the coordinators contacted every Good Neighbour to ask them to check that everyone in their area was managing.

The Parish Council had notified us that local people with 4-wheel drive cars were willing to deliver supplies of medicine or food to those in need. Good Neighbours delivered milk and bread to those unable to venture out. In some cases professional Carers' were unable to get in so practical help was needed. Other villagers phoned to offer help. One resident drove a neighbour to Hospital for a kidney dialysis when the hospital transport failed to arrive. In many cases a reassuring phone call was all that was needed.

The Churches bi-annual Welcome Lunch, free to all new residents to the village, was due to take place on Sunday 5th December. As the weather worsened the possibility of cancellation threatened. It was decided that the event would go ahead and with the practical support of the whole community: the three churches, Parish Council, and the Village Hall Committee a very happy and successful event was enjoyed by over 120 people. More than twenty representatives of village organisation's were present to show all that the village has to offer. The project was financed by proceeds made from our three churches coffee bar which is a wonderful way to offer friendship and hospitality to our new residents. ♻️



Good Spirit During Times of Need cont...

Rector's Modest Proposal Nets Over £4,000

Reverend John Fellows, the Rector of Compton with Shackelford and Peper Harow, wrote to a number of his congregation who received the Winter Heating Allowance. Revd Fellows said, much as the Allowance was welcome, if he were honest he didn't really need it. So, by way of a modest proposal, he invited people to join him in sending a proportion of the allowance, to Crisis at Christmas. This would be a way of comfortable England making a contribution to the needs of uncomfortable England.

The response was extremely positive and over £4,000 was sent to the charity. In addition, a number of people said that they already gave their allowance away, while almost everybody commented on the simplicity and ingenuity of this way of raising money for a good cause. ☸



- Members from the Elmbridge Multifaith group visited a local wheelchair bound resident at her home offering help and making sure she is ok. This is done on an on-going basis, as well as during the snowy period. ☸
- Epsom Baptist Church Centre in Church St Epsom opened their doors for any Homeless people on Christmas Day for hot drinks and a Christmas meal. ☸

Upcoming Events

Faiths in Action A chance for young people (aged 14+) and adults of all faiths, from across Surrey County, to come together for a day of fun activities and workshops to discuss their faith with others. There will be a variety of performances, workshops and speakers throughout the day with a full lunch and refreshments provided. **Sunday 23rd February 2011, 9.30am - 6.00pm** at St. John's School, Leatherhead. To register, or for more information, please contact: **Sophie Webb on: 01483 453 962 / sophie.webb@surreyyouthfocus.org.uk**

The Surrey Assembly Faiths in Action The Surrey Assembly is holding an event to gather the views of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) **22 March 2011 9am - 2pm** (more info to come)

South East England Faiths Forum 2011 Conference: 'Faith & The Big Society' An opportunity for you to listen to leading policy influencers and take part in interactive workshops! **11 April 2011 10.30am - 3.30pm, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey. GU2 7XH.** To register, or for more information, please contact: **Ushna Mughal on: 07854 373 965 / ushna.mughal@se-faithforum.net / contact@se-faithforum.net**

*The following events are being organised by Elmbridge Multifatih Forum (EMF) - If you would like to attend, or require further details, please contact **Rushna on: 01932 248751** or by email: rushna@master11.wanadoo.co.uk*

EMF GALA Saturday 22nd January 2011, 7.00pm for 7.30pm. Calemont Fan Court School, Esher, Joyce Grenfell Centre.

The Baha'i Religion A talk and discussion by Dr. Nabil Mustapha **Tuesday 25th January 2011, 7.00pm** EMF Centre, Mercer Close, Thames Ditton.

PASSOVER SUPPER A demonstration by Rabbi Alan Plancey, including Supper **Tuesday 5th April 2011, 7.00pm.** EMF Centre, Mercer Close, Thames Ditton

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS (A talk and slide presentation by Robert Feather) **Tuesday 12th July 2011, 7.00pm.** EMF Centre, Mercer Close, Thames Ditton.

With the help of Surrey Faith Links, Channel Surrey features Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking

We were recently contacted by Channel Surrey. This is an online channel that aims to challenge stereotypes and to show the good things that happen with the County. So far, with the help of Woking People of Faiths, we were able to get Channel Surrey in touch with Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking, on whom a special feature has been done! If you would like your faith organisation featured on Channel Surrey, please get in touch with Haallah Shams: haallah.shams@cofeguildford.org.uk ☸

A Brief Insight into

Elmbridge Multifaith Forum

Elmbridge Multifaith Forum (EMF) was formed in 2004. EMF is very active within the Borough of Elmbridge and aims to promote inter-faith / multi-faith dialogue and communication amongst many other things for people of all ages and backgrounds. EMF is keen to bring together local representatives of religious denominations in periodic meetings to discuss avenues of input into local civic activities. Its present membership includes a number of faiths and denominations, but there is always a need to enrich it with more members.

EMF also assists and collaborate with local voluntary organisations, providing manpower assistance, and, just as importantly, creating, on a multi-faith basis, a spiritual dimension to such activities within the Borough.

Importantly, EMF provides the Council of their local Borough with a readily available forum and contact point, wherever there is a need on a multi-faith basis for consultation or assistance. EMF has compiled a good data base of places of worship in and around the Borough of Elmbridge, and this database is available to the Statutory and Voluntary agencies.

EMF became a registered charity in 2008. Charity No. 1122962. Membership is open to people of all faiths and cultures living within or associated with the Borough. If you have any queries or would like to get in touch with EMF, please contact either Nabil or Geoffrey:

Nabil M. Mustapha: 07956 545811 / nabil@elmbridgemultifaith.org.uk

Geoffrey Morris : 01932 868454 / geoffreymorris@emas-bc.co.uk

We are very keen to hear from you... If you would like your faith organisation featured in this newsletter, please get in touch.

We would also love to hear about faith communities doing partnership work with the wider community. If you are interested in getting your faith community linked with the wider community, please also get in touch! I very much look forward to hearing from you in the near future!

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