



MAY 2023

Dear Friends

Welcome to our May Newsletter

I hope you are all looking forward to the Coronation and are planning to celebrate it in whatever way you see fit. Of course I hope you are also looking forward to our excursion on May 2nd to the synagogue in Leeds!

The two events are linked strangely in that while we were privileged to have a Queen with a deep rooted Christian faith, we are now to be blessed with a King who has always professed a strong interest in Interfaith matters and has been known to speak out about the fate of the planet, let alone the country!

Whether you profess to be strongly 'royalist' or whether your 'egalitarian' views preside, we should all wish the King well, and pray that he uses this position of privilege for the good of all.

Our May Meeting will be **Live**

But **NOT** at City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

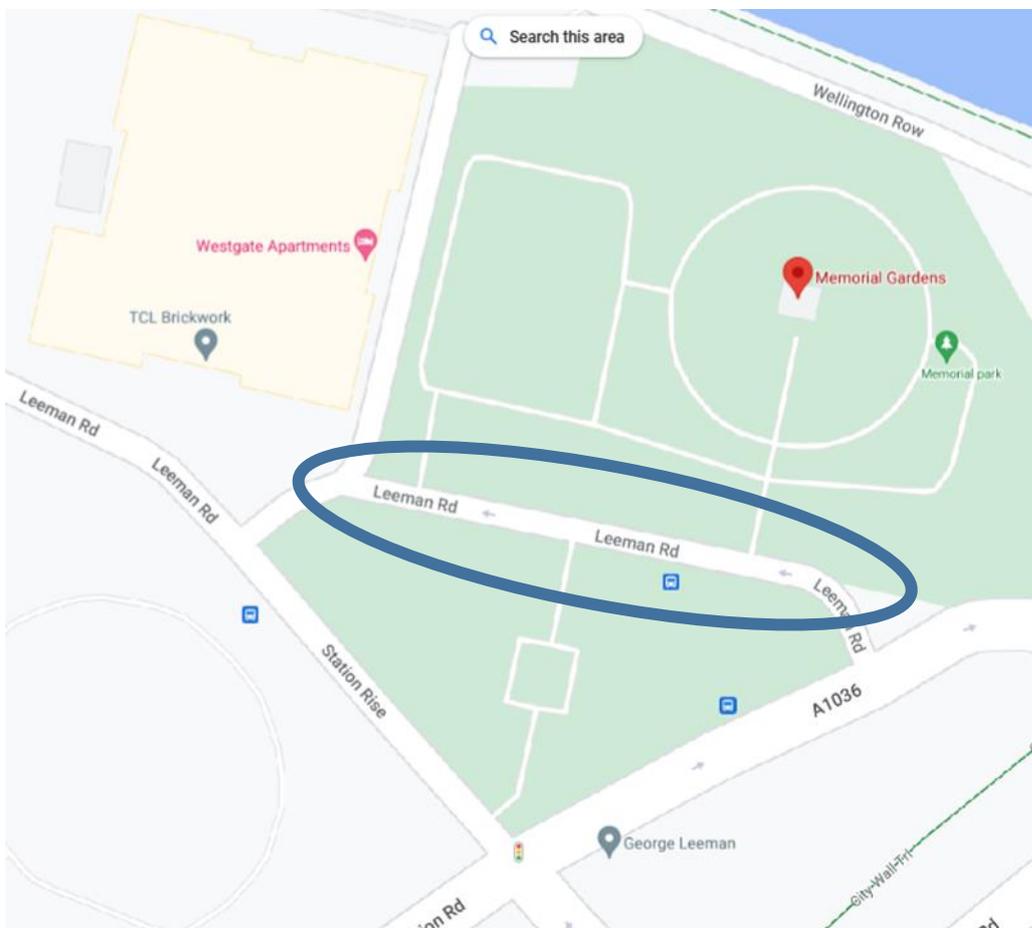
Excursion to Synagogue in Leeds

Tuesday May 2nd

The coach will pick up from

Memorial Gardens, Leeman Road, at 6.15 pm

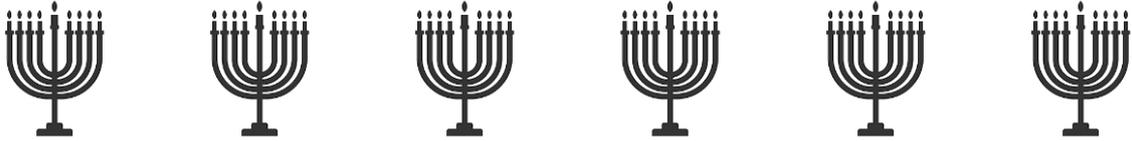
On return it will leave Leeds by 9pm at the latest



WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome Sarah Hubbard to the YIG Committee. Sarah belongs to the Liberal Jewish Community in York and has already written a short article featured below about the exciting changes occurring within the Jewish Community

Thank you for volunteering Sarah



Big changes announced for Liberal Judaism

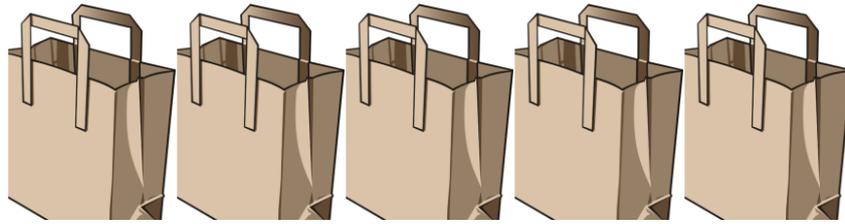
As many of you know YLJC (York Liberal Jewish Community) is affiliated to the national organisation, Liberal Judaism. Changes are afoot in Liberal Judaism. On Monday 17 April, The Board of National Officers for Liberal Judaism announced exciting plans for the creation of a new entity to include all of Britain's Progressive Jews i.e. liberal **and** reform Jews. This will bring the UK in line with most other countries, including the United States and Israel, which operate with one united Progressive Jewish movement, called The Movement for Reform Judaism.

The Movement for Reform Judaism in the UK has announced the appointment of Rabbi Josh Levy as its CEO. He will be working in close partnership with the current CEO of Liberal Judaism, Rabbi Charley Baginsky, to lead the creation of this new movement.

Progressive Jews together make up around 30% of those who are affiliated to synagogues in the UK. There are more than 80 Progressive communities reaching all parts of the country. Rabbis for both movements are trained at the Leo Baeck College. Reform and Liberal Judaism share a deep commitment to inclusivity and equality reflected in their ritual practices and liturgies. Together they welcome mixed-faith families and couples, offer weddings and lifecycle events to the LGBTQI+ community and have mechanisms to recognise the Jewish status of those with one Jewish parent irrespective of the gender of the parent.

It is early days but at YLJC we welcome closer ties with reform Judaism. We are looking forward to this exciting new chapter in reform and liberal Judaism's history.

The Bags of Welcome initiative by York City of Sanctuary



York City of Sanctuary are organising a starter pack of food and toiletries for asylum-seekers and refugees when they arrive in York.

Currently, there are around 450 families in a hotel in central York. They are made up of many nationalities and cultures, including from the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia. Most have left catered hotels in other parts of the UK. The Bags of Welcome will give them a start in their new self-catering facilities.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

York Interfaith has agreed to collect any of the items listed below to be placed in the bags (Or you may wish to involve other members of your Church or Faith Group and take a whole bag to fill)

If you coming on the trip on May 2nd and would like to bring any of these items, there will be a collection bag on the bus.

Alternatively donations/bags can be taken to the Unitarian chapel

Thursday 27th April 10-11am or 12-1pm

Sunday 30th April 10.30-11am or 12-1pm

The list below is a guide. Feel free to add additional items and if you wish a card of welcome.

SUGGESETED CONTENT LIST

*** please do not include an perishable items (Fresh fruit etc.) or products containing meat**

Cooking oil/olive oil

Dried goods (Rice flour pasta pulses lentils chickpeas kidney beans etc.)

Tinned goods (Tomatoes...beans...chickpeas...kidney beans vegetables vegetable soup)

Vegetarian stock cubes

Tea Coffee Biscuits Chocolate

Cleaning and Laundry products

Toiletries

Any questions, please contact Rebecca Russell rebecca@yorkcos.org.uk / mobile: 07591 815485 or Dee Boyle via the Interfaith email: yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE INTERFAITH NETWORK , THE NATIONAL BODY WHICH
COORDINATES REGIONAL GROUPS SUCH AS OURSELVES**

Dear members and supporters, I have copied this circular received from the Interfaith Network so as to keep you informed of the serious nature of impending funding cuts to the National organisation.

The Management Committee has already responded on behalf of the York Interfaith Group by writing to those persons suggested in support of the National network and we will keep you informed of any developments

Kind Regards

Anne Castle

“Dear IFN member body contact,

THE INTER FAITH NETWORK: VITAL – AND AT RISK

We are proud to serve as Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK – an organisation which has for nearly four decades worked, with its member bodies, to support and encourage inter faith understanding and cooperation in our diverse society. Through its linking, sharing of good practice, provision of information and its Inter Faith Week programme it makes a significant difference to cooperation, inclusion and religious literacy.

It is with concern that we write, following a special session of the Board on Monday, to let you know that the future of the Inter Faith Network and its work is at risk. We know that you will share our concern; at the end of this letter are practical steps that you can take that may assist.

The background

On Friday 31 March, IFN received a letter from an official at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) saying that further funding would not be given, from April 2023, to the Inter Faith Network. This followed an indication in late November that Ministers might be considering support to a number of currently funded bodies (although with no commitment to that) and then an extended period of non-communication.

When the letter was received, we asked our Executive Director to go ahead and submit, that same day, an application for funding towards the 2023-24 work programme that was sitting waiting for discussion with officials. It was submitted under cover of a letter to officials that made clear that, were funding not to be made available, IFN would be likely to close and noting that we would be writing to Ministers to express our concern.

We then wrote on Tuesday 4 April to Baroness Scott of Bybrook, as Faith Minister, copied to the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP. While we made it clear that IFN of course does not see itself as automatically entitled to state funding, we did underline that its work is of great importance in our multi faith society.

We also noted factors that have limited IFN’s ability to manage, within a very limited time, to reshape its income mix and draw in new donors alongside delivering the 2022-23 work plan. These factors include knock-on impacts of the pandemic (with faith groups among those financially impacted) but also broader challenges faced by infrastructure and backbone bodies whose work does not always have the immediate appeal to funders that frontline projects do. We requested in our letter that consideration be given to a final one year grant for 2023-24 along the lines applied for or, if that is not feasible, an eight month grant, at a lower level, covering the period May to December 2023 to enable IFN to continue its basic work; ensure that the 15th Inter Faith Week can take place in November; and to work with faith communities, inter faith bodies and others to restructure and to seek and solidify new funding streams. Clearly, however, the hope is to reopen the possibility of a full year’s funding.

IFN has always managed funds carefully. However, despite support from Government and some trusts and individual donors, its reserves have become depleted due to the factors mentioned above - and also, in the last few years, sometimes to significantly late confirmation, delayed release, and truncation of Government funding, with linked planning and recruitment issues.

It currently has less than three months’ remaining operating time before likely closure.

Next steps

The Board of Trustees met on 17 April, as soon as it was possible to do so after the observances of Easter, Passover and Vaisakhi (shortly before which the Government’s letter had been received). The Board is being supported by the IFN office to ensure that it meets its fiduciary duties, in line with professional advice and guidance. It is working very hard, however, to ensure that IFN’s important work can continue. A number of steps are already in process. These include approaches to senior faith leaders and faith community bodies to ask them to write to Ministers; likely tabling of questions in the Houses of Parliament; and also approaches to Trusts and individuals for funding.

The Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum will also be meeting tomorrow for discussion.

If you would like to do so, we believe that it would be valuable for you / your members to write swiftly to your local MP or to the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP or to the Minister for Faith, Baroness Scott of Bybrook, at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It would be helpful if your email or letter could explain the importance of IFN’s work from your perspective and ask that the Department reconsider its decision on funding and make funding available to IFN for 2023-24. A template letter is not being provided because it is understood that those have considerably less impact than a simple, personally written email or letter.

If you do wish to write to your MP or the relevant Ministers, details are attached.

We would be grateful if you would send IFN a copy of any submission that you send to MPs, or the Faith Minister or Secretary of State – and also any reply that you receive.

We shall update you on the position when we have further news. If you have any queries in the meantime, please don’t hesitate to be in touch with the IFN office.

Best wishes, The Revd Canon Hilary Barber and Mr Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs”

PLANNING MEETING

JUNE 6th: Ideas for 2024 monthly meetings and in Interfaith Week.

Message from Anne Castle

Our meeting in June provides a space for all members or regular attendees to make suggestions for topics or events which would be of interest for the 2024 programme. We are so grateful to Sister Patricia and her team for putting in all the hard work to facilitate the preferences you have given for the 2023 programme.

This year I am going to suggest that we all think carefully, not only about what we would like to happen, but to contribute to actually bringing it to fruition. So, if you have an idea, do you know someone who could speak or organise the evening? Do you yourself have a passion for a topic that you would like to share? Could you take responsibility for organising an event off site, perhaps at your own place of worship?

And just so you know I have given it some thought too, I would really like to involve younger people in sharing their thoughts about life, the universe and everything at an Interfaith meeting, so I am going to suggest a music evening where, in “Desert island Disc” mode, a more “mature” member invites a younger person from their faith background, to play (or even perform??) a short section of a song or piece of music which has a spiritual meaning to them and explain why. (obviously I would like to hear your choice as well) I believe that music has such a power to evoke the ‘spiritual’ in a human being and I would love to hear how music has affected you spiritually.

Do let me know if you would like to take part in such an evening.

2023 Programme continued: York Interfaith Group.

JULY 4th: Sacred Earth: how can we recover our bond with the natural world?’

Nick Morrice (Unitarian Church)

AUGUST 8th ‘August Picnic’ – an informal evening to share food and conversation in the Bar Convent garden.

SEPTEMBER 5th: Approaches to Prayer in different faiths.

OCTOBER 3rd: SACRED BOOKS II: Insights from the Jewish, Christian (the Reverend Dr. Christopher Collingwood) and Muslim faiths.

NOVEMBER 7th: Stories that help us grow in faith: examples from the sacred writings of various traditions.

DECEMBER 5th: AGM and Christmas activities.

A message from Megan Rule -

Megan Rule | Senior Communications Manager – People Directorate
t: 01904 552017 | m: 07767 318063 |24/7 news desk: 01904 555515
e: megan.rule@york.gov.uk



Voter ID

The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at some elections. This new requirement will apply for the first time in England at the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

Which forms of ID can I use to vote?

You may already have a form of photo ID that is acceptable. You can use any of the following:

- Passport
- Driving licence (including provisional license)
- Blue badge
- Certain concessionary travel cards
- Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- Biometric Immigration document
- Defence identity card
- Certain national identity cards

For more information on which forms of photo ID will be accepted, visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or call their helpline on 0800 328 0280.

If you don't have an accepted form photo ID

If you don't already have an accepted form of photo ID, or you're not sure whether your photo ID still looks like you, you can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a **Voter Authority Certificate**. You can apply for this at voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can complete a paper application form and send this to the electoral services team at your local council.

If you need any help with applying for a Voter Authority Certificate or want to request an application form, contact your local council. To find their contact details visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voter.

Find out more

If you have any questions or would like to find out more, go to electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID, or call their helpline on 0800 328 0280.

York Interfaith Group do it on the radio



Thanks to our out lovely Press and Publicity Officer Rasha, members of York Interfaith are now contributing a daily “Thought for the day” slot on Jorvik Radio.

We began with a long interview on 3rd February where Dee was invited into the studio to speak with Nick Love . She was able to talk about the history of YIG , who we are, where we meet, and to emphasize our commitment to tolerance and respect of our differences and celebration of the many more things which unite all those of faith and none

If you would like to ‘catch up’ with our contributions, just search “Jorvik Radio listen again”, and click on “Love in the Morning” A fair few past dates will appear and you can click on the one you want to hear. If, like me, you are at work, or do not have the time to listen to the whole program you can move along to the appropriate time. Dee’s interview was on 3rd February beginning at approximately 10.20 and lasting 15-20 minutes with a music break in the middle. All the one minute slots, Monday - Friday from 6th February are at about 9 50 so, as the show begins at 9.00 just scroll along to 49 mins approx.

Special thanks to Rasha and Dee for facilitating this great opportunity to introduce YIG to more people in York.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS MAY 2023



1 May (Monday) BELTAINE / MAY DAY Wiccan / Pagan

The wheel of the year continues to turn and fertile spring yields to the height of summer. Many pagans celebrate Beltaine by lighting fires and leaping over them, and/or with maypole dances, symbolizing the mystery of the Sacred Marriage of Goddess and God.



4 May (Thursday) VESAKHA PUJA / WESAK / BUDDHA DAY Buddhist

Wesak is the biggest of Buddhist festivals. Theravadins celebrate the birth, enlightenment and final passing away of Gautama Buddha. Mahayanists have separate days for each of them, and on *Bodhi* Day celebrate the enlightenment of the Buddha. Houses are decorated with lanterns and garlands, and temples are ringed with little oil lamps. People often send 'Wesak cards' to their friends, and lay people come together at monasteries at this time.



9 * May (Tuesday) LAG B'OMER Jewish

The *Omer lasts* 49 days from Pesach to Shavuot. A time of sadness, it is relieved on the 33rd day. It recalls the end of a plague in Roman times. Weddings often take place on this day, since they are not usually permitted during the rest of the *Omer period*.

* Jewish festivals commence at sunset on the evening of the day prior to the date shown.



14 (Sunday) to 20 (Saturday) May CHRISTIAN AID WEEK Christian

Initiated in 1945, this fund raising week raises money for work with the needy throughout the world; mainly done by house to house collections and sales of goods of various kinds.



18 May (Thursday) ASCENSION DAY (40th day after Easter) Christian (Western Churches)

This day commemorates the last earthly appearance of the Risen Christ, who, according to Christian belief, ascended into heaven in the presence of many witnesses.



23 May (Tuesday) ZARATOSHT NO DISO Zoroastrian (Shahenshahi / Parsi) [26 December (Tuesday) (Iranian)]

This is the death anniversary of the Prophet Zarathushtra. Tradition records he was assassinated at the age of 77. It is customary to visit the Fire Temple, and ponder upon

the *Gathas*, the Hymns of Zarathushtra, which embody his eternal message to humanity.



24 * May (Wednesday) ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECLARATION OF THE BAB Baha'i

The *Bab* heralded the arrival of Baha'ullah and was co-founder of the Baha'i faith. He first declared his mission in Persia in 1844. He inaugurated the Baha'i calendar which numbers itself from the year of this declaration.

* Baha'i festivals begin on the evening before the date given



25 May (Thursday) ASCENSION DAY (40th day after Easter) Christian (Orthodox)

This day commemorates the last earthly appearance of the Risen Christ, who, according to Christian belief, ascended into heaven in the presence of many witnesses.



26 May (Friday) BUDDHA PURNIMA / BUDDHA DAY / BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY Buddhist

The final day of Vesak (19 to 26 May, see above) is when Buddhists celebrate the Gautama Buddha's birthday or the Buddha Purnima.



26 * / 27 May (Friday / Saturday) SHAVUOT [The Feast of Weeks] Jewish

Seven weeks after Pesach, Shavuot celebrates the revelation of the Torah on Mount Sinai and the early harvest season in Israel. Summer flowers and dairy foods abound.

* Jewish festivals commence at sunset on the evening of the day prior to the date shown.



28 May (Sunday) PENTECOST / WHIT SUNDAY Christian (Western Churches)

Pentecost, named after the Jewish festival when the disciples of Jesus first proclaimed the Gospel after the gift of the Holy Spirit, is seen as the 'birthday' of the Church. Its alternative name comes from the custom of baptizing converts dressed in white.



29 * May (Monday) ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASCENSION OF BAHU'LLAH Baha'i

Commemorates the death of Baha'u'llah at Bahji, near Acre, in 1892. His shrine there has become the place towards which all Baha'is face when praying.

* Baha'i festivals begin on the evening before the date given

And finally, A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

As Chair, I continue to value your membership and my aim for 2023 is to continue to expand our network through mutual respect and shared values for a better and inclusive York.

York Interfaith Group Committee 2023	
Member	Responsibility
Avtar Matharu	Chair
Dee Boyle	Vice Chair and Interfaith Week planning
Penny Coppin-Siddall	Secretary
Daryoush Mazloum	Treasurer
Rasha Ibrahim	Press and Publicity Officer
Anne Castle	Newsletter
Varsha Gulati	Hindu Representative
Sister Patricia Harriss	Annual Meeting Planning
Sarah Hubbard	Jewish Representative

As York Interfaith Group continues to expand we are always looking for additional support. If, you would like to assist or shadow any of the above roles then please do not hesitate to contact me. Your skills and expertise would be most welcome.

Your feedback is very important us. We constantly try to improve our service so that we can best support your needs and those of your faith. You can contact and/or follow us via:

Facebook York Interfaith group

Instagram @yorkinterfaith

Twitter @Yorkinterfaith

email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

If you would like to contribute an article or advertise an event in our March Newsletter, please email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com or send direct to am.castle@btopenworld.com **by April 16th to guarantee inclusion.**

Wishing you all the very best for the month of May.

Avtar Matharu, Chair, YIG