LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

England & Wales · Charity number 1089850

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2001-12-19
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	High Town Methodist Church Premises 47 High Town Road LUTON
Phone	01582 416946
Email	info@lutonfaiths.org
Website	www.lutonfaiths.org

Activities

Objects: (A) TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION OF ALL DENOMINATIONS AND CREEDS; (B) TO WORK TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND TO PROMOTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, AND GOOD RELATIONS, BETWEEN PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS.

Activities: Who We Are?We are a voluntary body of the Luton constituents from different faiths and cultures. What Do We Do?Together we endeavour reaching out to communities to promote understanding and harmony. How Do We Do?We do this through activities, projects, conferences, social & cultural events. Why We Do it?To promote integration & cohesion by celebrating our differences.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training, Religious Activities, Arts/culture/heritage/science, Environment/conservation/heritage, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1089850

Geography

- Central Bedfordshire
- Luton

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£58,616	£59,063	-	-
2024-03-31	£52,209	£57,898	-	-
2023-03-31	£80,460	£75,327	-	-
2022-03-31	£56,388	£57,942	-	-
2021-03-31	£58,267	£54,407	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
ZAFAR KHAN	Chair	
GULIE BUTCHER		
Thakor Morarji		2024-09-17
Ulrike Hunt		2024-07-15
Yogesh Kumar Mistry		2021-07-13

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

England & Wales - Charity number 1089850

Accounts

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

Annual Report 2024-2025



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Charity no: 1089850

Table of Contents

Overview of Marketing Automation 3

Lead Generation & Nurturing 4

Email Marketing Automation 5

Customer Segmentation & Personalization 6

Customer Segmentation & Personalization 7

Customer Segmentation & Personalization 8

Social Media Automation 9

Analytics and Reporting 10

Integration with CRM

Challenges & Opportunities

Chair Message

I am proud to present this year's Annual Report—a reflection on a year marked by deep global turbulence, national uncertainty, and local resilience. Our community has once again demonstrated its remarkable capacity to stand together in times of crisis, and to choose peace when division threatened to take hold.

This year, we have been witness to horrific scenes in the Middle East, as the conflict between Israel and Palestine intensified. The suffering endured by civilians, the devastating loss of life, and the ripple effects on diaspora communities around the world have deeply impacted many in Luton. As a town with close ties to both the region and its people, these events have not felt distant—they have been personal, painful, and profoundly emotional.

Equally troubling were the events in Southport earlier this year, where, in the wake of unspeakable tragedy, unrest spread across towns and cities in the UK. We saw how the sorrow of a grieving community was hijacked by those with agendas of hatred—far-right extremists who stirred racial tensions, targeted minority groups, and unleashed violence under the guise of protest. The images from Southport shook the nation. They were a sobering reminder of how quickly fear can be manipulated, how fast misinformation can spread, and how fragile peace can be when it is taken for granted.

But in Luton, something different happened!

Despite facing the same national tensions, the same social media misinformation, and the same risks of community unrest, our town responded with extraordinary unity, compassion, and calm. Faith leaders from every tradition, community activists, civic authorities, Bedfordshire Police, and ordinary residents stepped forward—not with anger, but with solidarity. We gathered in prayer vigils, stood shoulder to shoulder at places of worship, opened our doors, shared our grief, and reaffirmed a message that could not be clearer: Luton will not be divided. Luton is a town of peace.

This response didn't come from nowhere. It is the result of years of deliberate investment in trust, dialogue and cooperation. It is the fruit of the tireless work of groups like GRASSROOTS, the Luton Council of Faiths, Near Neighbours, local councillors, and our many schools and community organisations. Their continuous efforts to strengthen cohesion, facilitate honest conversations, and prepare for moments of tension meant that when pressure came, we were not caught off guard—we were ready to meet it, together.

Throughout this year, events such as the Annual Peace Walk, our faith leaders school engagements, faiths and cultural festivals and international partnerships have deepened our sense of shared identity. Our diversity is not a source of weakness—it is one of our greatest strengths.

Let me be clear: we are not immune to the world's conflicts. But we have shown that, with resolve, cooperation and courage, we can respond to them in a way that heals rather than harms. We can hold space for grief on all sides, we can denounce hate unequivocally, and we can still choose the path of peace and justice—without fear or favour.

To all those who have played their part this year—whether in schools, places of worship, local services, youth projects, food banks or forums—thank you. You are the reason Luton did not fall into division when so many others did.

Let this report be a record not just of what we did, but of who we are: a resilient, compassionate and united town, working together for a better tomorrow

Prof Zafar Khan
Chair, Luton Council of Faiths

Numbers talk

Impact shots



A year with unique challenges

With 2 part-time staff and increasing financial strains, along with the demand of each year's unique and unpredictable challenges, it makes it incredibly hard to keep with demand. The data below gives insight into the volume of work and response through our ongoing activities, extensive networking, and engagement.

100+

Faith and cultural Community activities directly and indirectly supported activities

50+

Over 50 Community and confidential meetings and mediation

200

volunteers engaging on various projects with 75 ongoing active volunteers

150+

promotional events of various faith communities and partners

4000+

School Children engaged on our programme

52

Weekly published News articles in Luton News and 200+ social media posts

Our Year Activities and community engagements

Category	Activity / Event	Frequency / Count	Purpose / Outcome
Stakeholder Engagement	Faith & community leaders' meetings with public sector stakeholders	32 meetings	Addressed local concerns, misinformation, and responses to national
Conflict Mitigation	Meetings regarding Israel-Palestine conflict impact	Ongoing	Mitigated interfaith tensions, promoted dialogue.
Crisis Response	Incident response to mosque banner defacement, Southport riots	2 key events	Brought together police, faith leaders, and council to calm tensions and show
Interfaith Events	Ramadan Iftars (Unity Iftar, Iftar Under the Stars, Women's Iftar, Big Iftar)	4 major events	Promoted interfaith understanding, hospitality, and cultural sharing
	Religious celebrations: eg. Eid Festivals, Easter Christmas, Navrati, Diwali, Chanukkah, Nawruz, Gurpurb)	10+ festivals	Strengthened community celebration and inclusion. Fostered interfaith respect and public celebration
	Sinhalese New Year & Lord Buddha Day celebrations	2 inaugural events	First-time celebrations showcasing inclusion of newer ethnic communities
	Visits to places of worship by Christian leaders	2 visits	Strengthened interfaith and intercultural dialogue
	Annual Peace Walk (28th year)	One Annual event	150+ attendees; promoted peace, hospitality, and unity across faiths
	Inter Faith Week Commemoration	1 event	Explored winter religious festivals and traditions

Our Year Activities and community engagements

Major Civic/Community Events	HM Lord Lieutenant Thanksgiving Service, Royal Foundation Carol Service, Justice Service	3 services	Strengthened civic and faith partnerships
	Black History Month & Windrush Events	2 major events	Celebrated heritage and contributions of African-Caribbean communities
	Anniversary Events (Churches, Community Gardens)	4 events	Celebrated local institutional milestones
	Community Cultural Festivals: Turk Fest, Desi Fest, Diverse Fest, East Fest	4+ festivals	Promoted multiculturalism and social cohesion
	Peace Light Service, Remembrance Service, World Religion Day	3 observances	Promoted shared values, remembrance, and religious literacy
Educational Engagement	School workshops – "How to Make Our Town More Respectful", Character and Virtues	30 sessions	Engaged youth in dialogue about respect, tolerance, and community spirit
Food Aid & Charitable Giving	Foodbank donation drives via faith and community events	Ongoing	Support Luton Foodbank
Special Commemorations	Luton COVID Memorial – 5th Anniversary	1 event	Honoured local loss, resilience and recovery
Inclusive Language & Culture	International Mother Language Day, Edible High Town 5th Anniversary	2 events	Promoted linguistic diversity, environmental action, and neighbourhood pride
Fairtrade Awareness	Cake Baking Competition	1 event	Raised awareness of ethical consumption and Fairtrade

Impact Report

Faith Leaders School Assemblies Pannel



— Case Study 1

Overview:

In alignment with the Luton 2040 vision to become a child-friendly town, our faith and community engagement team developed and delivered a series of interactive workshops titled “How to make our town more respectful?” These workshops brought together representatives from different faiths to engage with young people in local schools, encouraging understanding, empathy, and civic responsibility.

Activities Undertaken:

- Delivered interactive panel workshops in multiple schools, featuring faith and community leaders from diverse backgrounds.
- Focused discussions on shared values such as respect, empathy, fairness, and love, highlighting how these are embedded in various faith traditions and cultures.
- Promoted open dialogue through a “Q Time” format, allowing pupils to ask honest questions about faith, values, and living together in a diverse society.
- Used storytelling and lived experiences to inspire young people to be agents of positive change in their communities.

Impact:

These sessions were a powerful example of values-based education, giving over 4000 children the opportunity to explore diversity in a safe, respectful environment. The presence of multiple faith voices showed unity in action and inspired many young people to reflect on their own role in promoting harmony in their schools and neighbourhoods. Pupils gained confidence, knowledge, and curiosity—key ingredients for developing a generation that embraces inclusion. Teachers and school staff also praised the workshops for their real-world relevance and emotional resonance.

Young People’s Voices:

“I liked seeing all the different people from different religions. It was very interesting.”

“It was great that even though they didn't all agree and had different opinions, they still showed each other respect.”

“I found out about some new religions that I had never heard of before.”

“You encouraged us all to become better human beings, and make our town and our world a better place for all.”

Staff Feedback:

“It was a super example of harmony and peace in Luton.”

“It was great, the pupils and staff got a lot from it. It is so good that these opportunities are available to our pupils.”

Impact Report

School Interfaith Workshop

— Case Study 2



Overview:

For the third consecutive year, Foxdell Primary School successfully hosted its annual Interfaith Workshop, bringing together pupils, parents, teachers, and faith leaders under one roof to creatively explore and celebrate the beliefs and practices of Luton's diverse faith communities.

Held across both the Infant and Junior sites, the workshop reflected the school's ongoing commitment to inclusive learning, interfaith dialogue, and cultural literacy. The event was once again warmly embraced by the school community and wider faith partners, reinforcing Foxdell's leadership in fostering respect and understanding across generations.

Activities Undertaken:

- Islamic calligraphy workshops led by community artists
- Easter egg painting and Christian symbolism explained by clergy
- Presentation of Jewish artefacts and traditions by faith leader Mr Brian Green
- Sharing Sikh beliefs and values with pupils and families
- Creation of colourful Rangoli floor designs and discussion of Hindu festivals

The theme "Get Creative with Religion" enabled families to interact with faith in accessible and imaginative ways, fostering both curiosity and deeper understanding. All workshops were designed to be child-friendly, culturally sensitive, and interactive, ensuring inclusivity across age groups and religious backgrounds.

Impact:

Participation: Over 200 children and 100+ parents engaged across both school sites
Intergenerational Learning: Parents and children learned together, deepening mutual respect and cultural understanding
Faith Literacy: Pupils gained first-hand insight into five world religions through hands-on activities and storytelling while engaging with local faith leaders
Community Building: Strengthened relationships between the school and local faith communities
Model for Others: Inspired other schools in Luton to adopt similar interfaith engagement models

Voices from the Workshop:

"I am learning alongside my child." – Parent
"With the current issues around the world, isn't it lovely that we can sit together and learn about each other's faith?" – Parent

Key: We are extremely proud that Foxdell was given a good rating in their last OFSTED inspection with this activity highlighted.

Impact Report

Community & School Arts

— Case Study 3



Overview:

In alignment with the Luton 2040 vision to become a child-friendly town, our faith and community engagement team developed and delivered a series of interactive workshops titled “How to make our town more respectful?” These workshops brought together representatives from different faiths to engage with young people in local schools, encouraging understanding, empathy, and civic responsibility.

Activities Undertaken:

- Delivered interactive panel workshops in multiple schools, featuring faith and community leaders from diverse backgrounds.
- Focused discussions on shared values such as respect, empathy, fairness, and love, highlighting how these are embedded in various faith traditions and cultures.
- Promoted open dialogue through a “Q Time” format, allowing pupils to ask honest questions about faith, values, and living together in a diverse society.
- Used storytelling and lived experiences to inspire young people to be agents of positive change in their communities.

Impact:

These sessions were a powerful example of values-based education, giving over 4000 children the opportunity to explore diversity in a safe, respectful environment. The presence of multiple faith voices showed unity in action and inspired many young people to reflect on their own role in promoting harmony in their schools and neighbourhoods. Pupils gained confidence, knowledge, and curiosity—key ingredients for developing a generation that embraces inclusion. Teachers and school staff also praised the workshops for their real-world relevance and emotional resonance.

Young People’s Voices:

“I liked seeing all the different people from different religions. It was very interesting.”

“It was great that even though they didn't all agree and had different opinions, they still showed each other respect.”

“I found out about some new religions that I had never heard of before.”

“You encouraged us all to become better human beings, and make our town and our world a better place for all.”

Staff Feedback:

“It was a super example of harmony and peace in Luton.”

“It was great, the pupils and staff got a lot from it. It is so good that these opportunities are available to our pupils.”

Impact Report

Peace Walk

Case study 4



Overview:

Now in its 28th year, Luton's Annual Peace Walk continues to be the town's most popular and unifying multi-faith event. Held on 21st September 2024, the walk brought together more than 150 residents of all ages and backgrounds, demonstrating the town's deep commitment to peace, unity, and interfaith understanding.

Coinciding with the UN International Day of Peace, the walk offered a powerful reminder of the values that underpin community harmony, particularly against the backdrop of recent national unrest and riots witnessed across parts of the UK. In contrast, Luton remained peaceful, an achievement credited to the solidarity, mutual respect, and active cooperation among its diverse communities.

Activities Undertaken:

The Peace Walk took participants on a guided journey to three major places of worship in Lewsey:
Great welcoming and hospitality from the following hosts:

- Zakariya Mosque, Beadlow Road
- St Martin de Porres Catholic Church
- St Hugh's Church of England
- Peace Artwork for Keech Trail- Hare and Tortise

The event was also graced by several prominent dignitaries, including: HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Susan Lousada; The Mayor of Luton, Cllr Tahmina Saleem; The Church of England Bishop of Bedford, Rt. Revd. Richard Atkinson; and The Chair of UNA Luton & Deputy Lieutenant, Dr Nazia Khanum. Messages of support were also received from Luton MPs Sarah Owen and Rachel Hopkins, recognising the walk as a model of community strength and pride.

Impact:

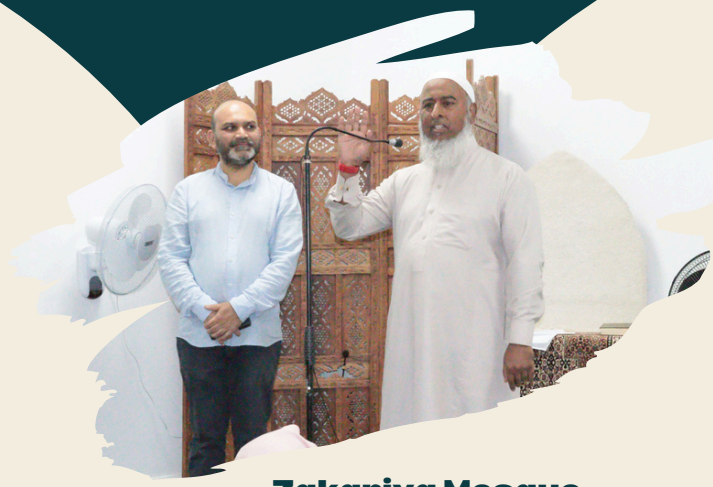
Diversity: 150+ participants of all ages and backgrounds attended reflecting Luton's diversity.
Legacy: 4 different primary schools across Town joined the event leaving a positive memory for our young generation in how they perceive their town and people of different background.
Faith Integration: Three different faith venues actively participated, enhancing interfaith understanding.
Public Leadership: Strong endorsement from local civic and faith leaders boosted public confidence.
Civic Resilience: Showcased Luton's peaceful response amidst national unrest and riots.
Social Cohesion: Reinforced relationships between communities, faiths, and public institutions.
Positive Messaging: Positive display of a spectacle of unity while walking the high streets of Luton. Quotes from leaders and MPs amplified a narrative of unity, respect, and shared humanity.

Peace Walk

Highlights



Peace Banana



Zakariya Mosque



St Martin De Poress Church



St Hughes CoFE







Our Young School Peace Ambassdors

Impact Report

Responding to Southport National Tragedy

Case Study 5



Overview:

In the wake of the harrowing tragedy in Southport, where the lives of innocent children were lost, towns and cities across the UK experienced a ripple effect of fear, unrest, and trauma fuelled by racism and fake information. The summer that followed was marked by some of the ugliest riots seen in recent times. Luton, like many others, was not immune to the tensions and misinformation that spread in the aftermath. Recognising the urgent need for calm, connection, and coordinated community leadership, we mobilised faith leaders, community voices, and public sector partners to protect the social fabric of our town and provide emotional support to those impacted while dealing with some hate mails.

Activities Undertaken:

- Convened faith and stakeholder meetings, many specifically to address the fallout of the riots and heightened public anxiety following the Southport tragedy.
- Used these meetings to fact-check and counter misinformation, and to develop shared messaging around peace, solidarity, and mutual responsibility.
- Created a series of inspiring videos with local people as neighbours living side by side.
- Acted as the first point of contact for many faith leaders needing guidance or support in their own communities during a volatile and emotionally-charged period.
- Facilitated confidential listening and mediation sessions to de-escalate tensions and strengthen inter-community trust.
- Mentored and empowered faith leaders to be visible and vocal champions of unity even when national headlines risked inflaming division.

Impact:

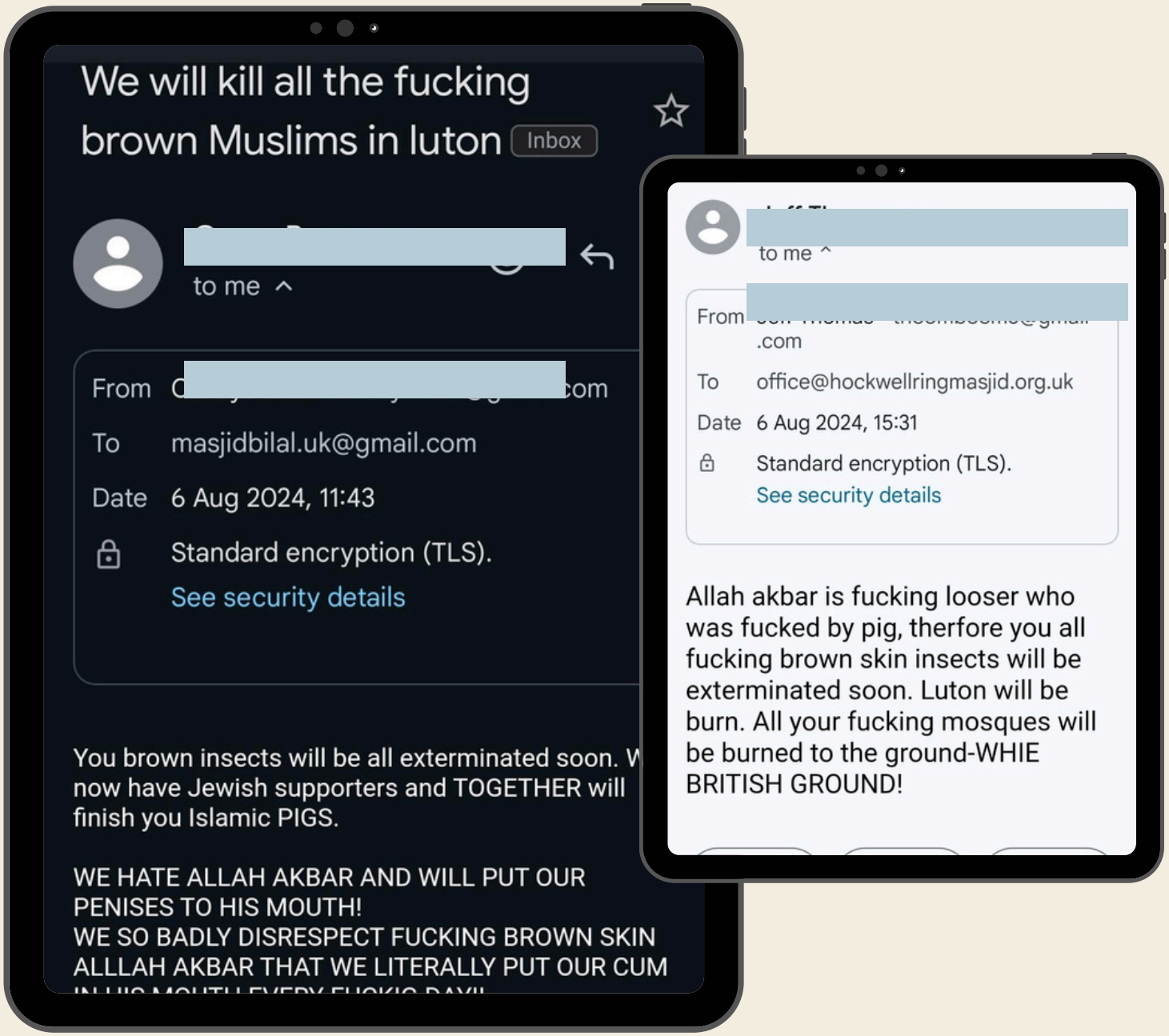
In a time of deep national mourning and growing social unrest, these efforts provided a lifeline of stability, calm, and reassurance for local communities in Luton. Our work was instrumental in:

- Reducing fear and community anxiety,
- Preventing the spread of hate narratives,
- Fostering resilience and mutual trust in our town's diverse population,
- Preserving the social cohesion so vital to Luton's long-term vision 2040
- No harm happened in Luton

By collaborating closely with Luton Borough Council's Social Justice Unit and working directly with the Leader of the Council, Bedfordshire Police and key civic officers, we ensured that both faith and public sector leaders were aligned and mutually informed in their efforts to protect and support Luton's communities during one of the most sensitive and volatile periods in recent memory.

Making Peace Viral

Hate Mails admist SouthPort tension



Making Peace Viral

Videos of how locals live in harmony despite differences



Christian & Muslim



Mosque & Church leaders



Muslim, Hindu and Christian



Muslim and Hindu



Sikh and Christian

Keech Trail

Hare and Tortoise



Peace Artwork

The Keech Hospice Care Short Tail Trail—commonly described as the "Keech Trail"—is Luton's largest free public arts initiative. Coordinated in partnership with Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF), Keech Hospice Care and Wild in Art, it took place from July 6 to September 12, 2024, featuring 90 colourful hare and tortoise sculptures across the town

LCoF sponsored four sculptures (at a cost of £5,000) raised from different faiths communities and places of worship. This was also used as community art projects in schools

This initiative followed earlier LCoF-supported art trails, including the Peace Walk's supporting artwork competition

Impact

The Keech/Hare & Tortoise Trail exemplifies Luton Council of Faiths' continued leadership in social cohesion, and interfaith engagement in arts. Through creativity and collective action, the project not only raised vital funds for hospice care but also reinforced community bonds, cultural pride, and active civic participation. Over 100 people engaged on this project including schools.





Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted income funds 2025	Endowment Funds 2025	Total funds 2025	Total funds 2024
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		4,145	-	-	**4,145**	**4,786**
- Investments		-	-	-	-	-
- Charitable activities	6	5,277	45,714		**50,991**	**47,423**
- Other Income		-	3,480		**3,480**	-
Total incoming resources		**9,422**	**49,194**	-	**58,616**	**52,209**
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	-	-
Other Charitable activities		7.890	-	-	**7,890**	**6,470**
Charitable activities including Governance and support costs		-	51,148	-	**51,148**	**51,230**
Other expenditure		25	-	-	**25**	**198**
Total expenditure		**7,915**	**51,148**	-	**59,063**	**57,898**
Net Movement in Funds		**1,507**	**(1,954)**	-	**(447)**	**(5,689)**
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**39,003**	**(13,389)**	-	**25,614**	**31,103**
Total funds carried forward		**40,510**	**(15,343)**	-	**25,167**	**25,614**

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted income funds 2025	Endowment Funds 2025	Total this year 2025	Total this year 2024
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		26,987		-	26,987	27,521
Total current assets		26,987		-	26,987	27,521
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(1,819)	-	-	(1,819)	(1,907)
Net current assets		25,167	-	-	**25,167**	**25,614**
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		40,510			40,510	39,003
Restricted Income funds			(15,343)		(15,343)	(13,389)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		40,510	(15,343)		**25,167**	**25,614**

We couldn't have done it without your generous support.

Thank you to all our donors especially Luton Rising, partners and volunteers!



Contact:

info@lutonfaiths.org

01582 416946

WWW.lutonfaiths.org

Registered charity number: 1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

Luton Council of Faiths
Period Ended 31st March 2025
Contents

1. Charity Information
2-7 Trustees' Report
8. Statement of Financial Activities
9. Balance Sheet
10-13. Notes to the Financial Statements
14. Independent Examiner's Report

Luton Council of Faiths
Charity Information as at 31st March 2025

Charity name
Luton Council of Faiths

Charity number
1089850

Principal address
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 OBW

Trustees
Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson
Mrs Gulie Butcher – Vice Chair
Mr Kishore Kaler – Outgoing Treasurer (Resigned on 15th Jul'24)
Mr Thakor Morarji– Incoming Treasurer (Appointed on 17th Sep'24)
Mr Dhansukh Panchal (Resigned on 15th Jul'24)
Mrs Ulrike Hunt (Appointed on 15th Jul'24)
Mr Yogesh Mistry

Bankers
The Co-operative Bank
PO Box 250, Delf House
Southway
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

Lloyds TBS Bank Plc
60 George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BB

Independent examiner
I. Hussain & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Luton Council of Faiths
Trustees Annual Report

History, objectives and activities of the Charity

On constitution it was believed the multicultural cohesion of the religious and cultural communities in Luton required addressing. The charity began with an initial grant. Both the initial grant and subsequent grants since have been under the terms which allow the trustees to either retain the amounts as capital or to spend them.

The objectives of the charity include;

a) To bring together members of the different faith communities in Luton for deeper dialogue and co-operation
b) To increase understanding and trust between different faiths, building on common ground between them yet respecting the unique contribution which each brings
c) To work towards greater social cohesion and community integration in Luton
d) To see inter faith co-operation as linking into global co-operation between faiths and cultures for the creation of a better world

Management and Governance arrangements

The constitution provides for a minimum of five trustees. Where there is a requirement for new trustees, these would be identified and appointed by the remaining trustees, subject to the approval by AGM. The chair of the trustees is responsible for the induction of any new trustee which involves awareness of a trustee's responsibility, the governing document, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the charity. The trustees have taken steps to identify major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Achievements and Performance of the Charity

Annual Report Summary April 2024 – March 2025

This year's Annual Report is a reflection on a year marked by deep global turbulence, national uncertainty, and local resilience. Our community has once again demonstrated its remarkable capacity to stand together in times of crisis, and to choose peace when division threatened to take hold.

This year, we have been witness to horrific scenes in the Middle East, as the conflict between Israel and Palestine intensified. The suffering endured by civilians, the devastating loss of life, and the ripple effects on diaspora communities around the world have deeply impacted many in Luton. As a town with close ties to both the region and its people, these events have not felt distant—they have been personal, painful, and profoundly emotional.

Equally troubling were the events in Southport earlier this year, where, in the wake of unspeakable tragedy, unrest spread across towns and cities in the UK. We saw how the sorrow of a grieving community was hijacked by those with agendas of hatred—far-right extremists who stirred racial tensions, targeted minority groups, and unleashed violence under the guise of protest. The images from Southport shook the nation. They were a sobering reminder of how quickly fear can be manipulated, how fast misinformation can spread, and how fragile peace can be when it is taken for granted.

But in Luton, something different happened!

Despite facing the same national tensions, the same social media misinformation, and the same risks of community unrest, our town responded with extraordinary unity, compassion, and calm. Faith leaders from every tradition, community activists, civic authorities, Bedfordshire Police, and ordinary residents stepped forward—not with anger, but with solidarity. We gathered in prayer vigils, stood shoulder to shoulder at places of worship, opened our doors, shared our grief, and reaffirmed a message that could not be clearer: Luton will not be divided. Luton is a town of peace.

This response didn't come from nowhere. It is the result of years of deliberate investment in trust, dialogue and cooperation. It is the fruit of the tireless work of groups like GRASSROOTS, the Luton Council of Faiths, Near Neighbours, local councillors, and our many schools and community organisations. Their continuous efforts to strengthen cohesion, facilitate honest conversations, and prepare for moments of tension meant that when pressure came, we were not caught off guard—we were ready to meet it, together.

Throughout this year, events such as the Annual Peace Walk, our faith leaders school engagements, faiths and cultural festivals and international partnerships have deepened our sense of shared identity. Our diversity is not a source of weakness—it is one of our greatest strengths.

Let us be clear: we are not immune to the world's conflicts. But we have demonstrated that, with resolve, cooperation and courage, we can respond to them in a way that heals rather than harms. We can hold space for grief on all sides, we can denounce hate unequivocally, and we can still choose the path of peace and justice.

To all those who have played their part this year—whether in schools, places of worship, local services, youth projects, food banks or forums—thank you. You are the reason Luton did not fall into division when so many others did.
Let this report be a record not just of what we did, but of who we are: a resilient, compassionate and united town, working together for a better tomorrow.

A Year with Unique Challenges
With 2 part-time staff and increasing financial strains, it makes it incredibly hard to keep with demands of each year's unique and unpredictable challenges. The data below gives insight into the volume of work and response through our ongoing activities, extensive networking, and engagement.

- Over 50 confidential meetings of community mediation were held
- Over 100 faith and cultural community activities include directly & indirectly supported activities
- Over 150 events of various faith communities and partners were promoted and supported
- Over 4000 School Children engaged in our various programmes and activities
- 52 weekly published news articles in Luton News & over 200 social media posts

Our Activities and community engagements during the year have included

- 32 Stakeholder Engagement meetings with faith & community leaders addressing local concerns, misinformation, and responding to national & local issues
- Conflict Mitigation meetings regarding Israel-Palestine & other international conflicts, mitigating ongoing interfaith tensions, and promoting dialogue

- Crisis Response included
  - responding to an incident of mosque banner defacement, and
  - responding to the summer riots after Southport killings of innocent children by bringing together police, faith leaders, and council to calm tensions and show resilience

- Interfaith Events included
  - Ramadan Iftars (Unity Iftar, Iftar Under the Stars, Women's Iftar, Big Iftar) 4 major events promoted interfaith understanding, hospitality, and cultural sharing
  - Religious Festive Celebrations e.g. Eid, Easter, Christmas, Navratri, Diwali, Chanukkah, Nawruz, Gurpurb etc. strengthened community inclusion and fostered interfaith respect and public celebration
  - Sinhalese New Year & Lord Buddha Day celebrations were 2 first-time celebrations & inaugural events showcasing inclusion of newer ethnic groups and communities
  - Two visits to places of worship by overseas Christian leaders facilitated by GRASSROOTS helped in strengthening interfaith and intercultural dialogue in our town
  - Annual Peace Walk (28th year) attracted over 150 attendees and the event promoted peace, hospitality, and unity across faiths
  - Inter Faith Week Commemoration event explored winter religious festivals
- Major Civic/Community Events
  - HM Lord Lieutenant Thanksgiving Service, The Royal Foundation Carol Service, and The High Sheriff Justice Service – all 3 services strengthened civic and faith partnerships
  - Black History Month & Windrush events celebrated heritage and contributions of African-Caribbean communities
  - 4 Anniversary Events (Churches, Community Gardens) celebrated local community projects and institutional milestones
  - Community Cultural Festivals: Turk Fest, Desi Fest, Diverse Fest, East Fest – all promoted multiculturalism and social cohesion
  - Peace Light Service, Remembrance Service, World Religion Day observance promoted shared values, remembrance, and religious literacy

- Educational Engagement
  - Over 30 School workshops on "Making Our Town Respectful", and Character and Virtues sessions engaged youth in dialogue about respect, tolerance, and community spirit
  - A Special Commemoration event Luton COVID Memorial Service marked 5th Anniversary of the pandemic and acknowledged local loss, resilience and recovery

- International Mother Language Day, Edible High Town 5th Anniversary events promoted linguistic & cultural diversity, environmental action, and neighbourhood pride

Impact Report – Case Study 1 – School Assemblies led by a panel of Faith & Community Leaders

In alignment with the Luton 2040 vision to become a child-friendly town, our faith and community engagement team developed and delivered a series of interactive workshops titled "How to make our town more respectful?" These workshops brought together representatives from different faiths to engage with young people in local schools, encouraging understanding, empathy, and civic responsibility.

Activities undertaken included the delivery of interactive panel workshops in multiple schools, featuring faith and community leaders from diverse backgrounds, focussing discussions on shared values such as respect, empathy, fairness, and love, and highlighting how these are embedded in various faith traditions and cultures. It promoted open dialogue through a "Q Time" format, allowing pupils to ask honest questions about faith, values, and living together in a diverse society. We used storytelling and lived experiences to inspire young people to be agents of positive change in their communities. Some of the positive comments we received from the young people from different schools are mentioned below;

- *"I liked seeing all the different people from different religions. It was very interesting."*
- *"It was great that even though they didn't all agree and had different opinions, they still showed each other respect."*
- *"I found out about some new religions that I had never heard of before."*
- *"You encouraged us all to become better human beings, and make our town and our world a better place for all."*

Staff Feedback:

- *"It was a super example of harmony and peace in Luton. It was great. The pupils and staff got a lot from it. It is so good that these opportunities are available to our pupils."*

Impact Report – Case Study 2 – School Interfaith Workshop

For the third consecutive year, Foxdell Primary School successfully hosted Interfaith Workshop, bringing together pupils, parents, teachers, and faith leaders under one roof to creatively explore and celebrate the beliefs and practices of Luton's diverse faith communities.

Activities undertaken included Islamic calligraphy workshops led by community artists, Easter Egg painting and Christian symbolism explained by the clergy, presentation of Jewish artefacts and traditions by faith leader Mr Brian Green. It fostered intergenerational learning as parents and children learnt together, deepened mutual respect and enhanced their cultural understanding and faith literacy by gaining first-hand insights into five world major religions through hands-on activities and storytelling while also engaging with local faith leaders. It was a wonderful example of community building and strengthening relationships between the school and local faith communities. It is now being used as a model of interfaith engagement for other schools in Luton. Some of the positive comments we received from the parents are mentioned below;

- "I am learning alongside my child."
- "With the current issues around the world, isn't it lovely that we can sit together and learn about each other's faith"

We are extremely proud that Foxdell School was given a good rating in their last OFSTED inspection with this activity highlighted.

Impact Report – Case Study 3 – Peace Walk & Peace Art Work

Luton's 28th Annual Peace Walk was held on 21st September 2024. It continues to be the town's most popular and unifying multi-faith event. It brought together more than 150 residents of all ages and backgrounds, demonstrating the town's deep commitment to peace, unity, and interfaith understanding. Coinciding with the UN International Day of Peace, the walk offered a powerful reminder of the values that underpin community harmony, particularly against the backdrop of recent national unrest and riots witnessed across parts of the UK. In contrast, Luton remained peaceful, an achievement credited to the solidarity, mutual respect, and active cooperation among its diverse communities.

Activities undertaken included the participants going on a guided journey to three different places of worship in Lewsey, experiencing great welcome and hospitality from the Zakariya Mosque, St Martin de Porres Catholic Church, and St Hugh's Church of England. It promoted faith integration as three different faith venues actively participated and hosted people from diverse backgrounds.

LCoF also sponsored four sculptures (at a cost of £5,000) raised from different faiths communities and places of worship to support the Keech Hospice Hare and Tortoise Short Tail Trail. These sculptures were then used as community art projects in schools. In fact, it brought together 4 different primary schools from across the town to join the Peace Walk event leaving a lasting positive memory for our young generation in how they perceive their town and people of different backgrounds.

Conclusion:

All these activities exemplify Luton Council of Faiths' continued leadership in strengthening social cohesion, and interfaith engagement. Through creativity and collective action, several of our projects have not only raised vital funds for charities like Luton Food Bank and Keech Hospice but also reinforced community bonds, cultural pride, and active civic participation. With a strong endorsement from our local civic and faith leaders boosting public confidence and civic resilience, our events and activities have contributed significantly in enhancing interfaith understanding and leadership. It reinforced relationships between communities, faiths, and public institutions, and created opportunity for a positive display of a spectacle of unity.

Financial review and reserves

The net incoming resources for the year was a deficit of £447 (2024 – deficit of £5,689). At the end of the financial year the reserves were £40,510 (2024 - £39,003) of unrestricted funds and a deficit of £15,343 (2024 – deficit of £13,389) of restricted funds. The adequacy of the reserves policy is reviewed annually. The trustees are satisfied that reserves are presently more than adequate to meet future expenditure. The Trustees have a policy of aiming to retain reserves equivalent to six months' average expenditure. This is due to the uncertain nature of funding received. The total reserve funds at the year-end were £25,167.

Future plans

The trustees intend to continue provide relief in a similar manner as before.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and its financial activities for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

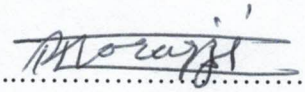
Independent examiner

The trustees intend to ask the existing accountants to undertake the independent examination of the trust in the following year.

Signed on behalf of the trustees



..... Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson



..... Mr Thakor Morarji– Treasurer

Date: 18/6/25

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted income funds 2025	Endowment Funds 2025	Total funds 2025	Total funds 2024
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		4,145	-	-	**4,145**	**4,786**
- Investments		-	-	-	-	-
- Charitable activities	6	5,277	45,714		**50,991**	**47,423**
- Other Income		-	3,480		**3,480**	-
Total incoming resources		**9,422**	**49,194**	-	**58,616**	**52,209**
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	-	-
Other Charitable activities		7.890	-	-	**7,890**	**6,470**
Charitable activities including Governance and support costs		-	51,148	-	**51,148**	**51,230**
Other expenditure		25	-	-	**25**	**198**
Total expenditure		**7,915**	**51,148**	-	**59,063**	**57,898**
Net Movement in Funds		**1,507**	**(1,954)**	-	**(447)**	**(5,689)**
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**39,003**	**(13,389)**	-	**25,614**	**31,103**
Total funds carried forward		**40,510**	**(15,343)**	-	**25,167**	**25,614**

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these accounts.

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted income funds 2025	Endowment Funds 2025	Total this year 2025	Total this year 2024
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		26,987		-	26,987	27,521
Total current assets		26,987		-	26,987	27,521
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(1,819)	-	-	(1,819)	(1,907)
Net current assets		25,167	-	-	**25,167**	**25,614**
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		40,510			40,510	39,003
Restricted Income funds			(15,343)		(15,343)	(13,389)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		40,510	(15,343)		**25,167**	**25,614**

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

..... Mr Zafar Khan - Chairperson Date: 18/06/2025

..... Mr Thakor Morarji– Treasurer Date: 18/06/2025

Luton Council of Faiths
Year Ended 31st March 2025

1. Accounting policies

a) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

b) Recognition of Income – there are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources and monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

c) Investment income is recorded when receivable

d) All expenditure is included in the accounts on an accrual basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the SOFA as incurred.

e) The restricted funds of the charity are expendable funds which is regularly increased or retained as capital at the trustees' discretion.

f) All capital related expenditure costing more than £750 is capitalised. Depreciation on fixtures and fittings is charged on a straight line basis over 5 years.

2. Taxation

Luton Council of Faiths is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they apply to charitable purposes.

3. Restricted

The restricted donations in the current year and the previous year represent income mainly from Grants but also from donations to the Luton Council of Faiths restricted funds only.

4. Analysis of employees costs

		2025	2024
		£	£
Salaries and PAYE		30,000	30,000
Employers NIC		-	-
Total		30,000	30,000

The number of full-time employees during the year was one and there were no average part time members of staff.

5. Related Party transactions

None of the trustees were paid any remuneration or expenses by the charity during the year (2024 £nil)

6. Analysis of Income from Charitable activities

	2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation and the Luton Rising-Community Investment Fund	-	45,714	45,714	47,423
Luton Borough council contributions	5,277	-	5,277	-
Other donations	4,145	-	4,145	4,786
Total	9,422	45,714	55,136	52,209

7. Analysis of Other income

	2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours	-	3,480	3,480	-
Total	-	3,480	3,480	-

8. Analysis of Charitable expenditure

The charity has undertaken direct activity to meet its charitable purposes. The following is the analysis of the charity's direct expenditure:

	2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
Books Resources	-	-	-	-
Other Events, Programmes and items	7,890	-	7,890	6,470
Total	7,890	-	7,890	6,470

9. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2025		2025
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

10. Other resources expended by the charity include:

	2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
Near Neighbours	-	-	-	-
Charitable giving and donations	25	-	25	198
Total	25	-	25	198

11. Governance and Support costs

Support costs, consisting of the rent and rates and staff salaries are split between charitable activity and governance on an actual or equal estimated basis. This is because it is difficult to estimate the expense attributable to each activity. Support costs apportioned to the different aims of the charity are shown in the note below.

	Basis of Apportionment	2025 £ Unrestricted	2025 £ Restricted	2025 £ Total	2024 £ Total
Office costs	Actual	-	3,662	3,662	2,001
Subscriptions	Actual	-	33	33	80
Travelling and general expenditure	Actual	-	688	688	655
Equipment	Actual	-	42	42	1,684
Salaries and staff costs	Actual	-	30,001	30,001	30,087
Pensions	Actual	-	2,100	2,100	2,100
Grass roots	Actual	-	12,000	12,000	12,000
Insurance	Actual	-	730	730	724
Telephone	Actual	-	900	900	660
Professional	Actual	-	772	772	772
Advertising and publicity	Actual	-	220	220	216
Volunteering	Actual	-	-	-	338
Total		-	51,148	51,148	51,230

Tangible Fixed Assets

There were no movements or any tangible fixed assets currently held by the Charity during the year.

12. Analysis of Debtors.

	2025		2024
Restricted funds	-		-
Total	-		-

13. Analysis of Creditors

	2025		2024
Independent examiner's fee	600		600
PAYE	1,219		1,307
Total	1,819		1,907

Independent examiner's Report to the Trustees of Luton Council of Faiths

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2025 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit in not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true or fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

I Hussain and Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Registered charity number: 1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

Luton Council of Faiths
Period Ended 31st March 2025
Contents

1. Charity Information
2-7 Trustees' Report
8. Statement of Financial Activities
9. Balance Sheet
10-13. Notes to the Financial Statements
14. Independent Examiner's Report

Luton Council of Faiths
Charity Information as at 31st March 2025

Charity name
Luton Council of Faiths

Charity number
1089850

Principal address
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 OBW

Trustees
Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson
Mrs Gulie Butcher – Vice Chair
Mr Kishore Kaler – Outgoing Treasurer (Resigned on 15th Jul'24)
Mr Thakor Morarji– Incoming Treasurer (Appointed on 17th Sep'24)
Mr Dhansukh Panchal (Resigned on 15th Jul'24)
Mrs Ulrike Hunt (Appointed on 15th Jul'24)
Mr Yogesh Mistry

Bankers
The Co-operative Bank
PO Box 250, Delf House
Southway
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

Lloyds TBS Bank Plc
60 George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BB

Independent examiner
I. Hussain & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Luton Council of Faiths
Trustees Annual Report

History, objectives and activities of the Charity

On constitution it was believed the multicultural cohesion of the religious and cultural communities in Luton required addressing. The charity began with an initial grant. Both the initial grant and subsequent grants since have been under the terms which allow the trustees to either retain the amounts as capital or to spend them.

The objectives of the charity include;

a) To bring together members of the different faith communities in Luton for deeper dialogue and co-operation
b) To increase understanding and trust between different faiths, building on common ground between them yet respecting the unique contribution which each brings
c) To work towards greater social cohesion and community integration in Luton
d) To see inter faith co-operation as linking into global co-operation between faiths and cultures for the creation of a better world

Management and Governance arrangements

The constitution provides for a minimum of five trustees. Where there is a requirement for new trustees, these would be identified and appointed by the remaining trustees, subject to the approval by AGM. The chair of the trustees is responsible for the induction of any new trustee which involves awareness of a trustee's responsibility, the governing document, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the charity. The trustees have taken steps to identify major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Achievements and Performance of the Charity

Annual Report Summary April 2024 – March 2025

This year's Annual Report is a reflection on a year marked by deep global turbulence, national uncertainty, and local resilience. Our community has once again demonstrated its remarkable capacity to stand together in times of crisis, and to choose peace when division threatened to take hold.

This year, we have been witness to horrific scenes in the Middle East, as the conflict between Israel and Palestine intensified. The suffering endured by civilians, the devastating loss of life, and the ripple effects on diaspora communities around the world have deeply impacted many in Luton. As a town with close ties to both the region and its people, these events have not felt distant—they have been personal, painful, and profoundly emotional.

Equally troubling were the events in Southport earlier this year, where, in the wake of unspeakable tragedy, unrest spread across towns and cities in the UK. We saw how the sorrow of a grieving community was hijacked by those with agendas of hatred—far-right extremists who stirred racial tensions, targeted minority groups, and unleashed violence under the guise of protest. The images from Southport shook the nation. They were a sobering reminder of how quickly fear can be manipulated, how fast misinformation can spread, and how fragile peace can be when it is taken for granted.

But in Luton, something different happened!

Despite facing the same national tensions, the same social media misinformation, and the same risks of community unrest, our town responded with extraordinary unity, compassion, and calm. Faith leaders from every tradition, community activists, civic authorities, Bedfordshire Police, and ordinary residents stepped forward—not with anger, but with solidarity. We gathered in prayer vigils, stood shoulder to shoulder at places of worship, opened our doors, shared our grief, and reaffirmed a message that could not be clearer: Luton will not be divided. Luton is a town of peace.

This response didn't come from nowhere. It is the result of years of deliberate investment in trust, dialogue and cooperation. It is the fruit of the tireless work of groups like GRASSROOTS, the Luton Council of Faiths, Near Neighbours, local councillors, and our many schools and community organisations. Their continuous efforts to strengthen cohesion, facilitate honest conversations, and prepare for moments of tension meant that when pressure came, we were not caught off guard—we were ready to meet it, together.

Throughout this year, events such as the Annual Peace Walk, our faith leaders school engagements, faiths and cultural festivals and international partnerships have deepened our sense of shared identity. Our diversity is not a source of weakness—it is one of our greatest strengths.

Let us be clear: we are not immune to the world's conflicts. But we have demonstrated that, with resolve, cooperation and courage, we can respond to them in a way that heals rather than harms. We can hold space for grief on all sides, we can denounce hate unequivocally, and we can still choose the path of peace and justice.

To all those who have played their part this year—whether in schools, places of worship, local services, youth projects, food banks or forums—thank you. You are the reason Luton did not fall into division when so many others did.
Let this report be a record not just of what we did, but of who we are: a resilient, compassionate and united town, working together for a better tomorrow.

A Year with Unique Challenges
With 2 part-time staff and increasing financial strains, it makes it incredibly hard to keep with demands of each year's unique and unpredictable challenges. The data below gives insight into the volume of work and response through our ongoing activities, extensive networking, and engagement.

- Over 50 confidential meetings of community mediation were held
- Over 100 faith and cultural community activities include directly & indirectly supported activities
- Over 150 events of various faith communities and partners were promoted and supported
- Over 4000 School Children engaged in our various programmes and activities
- 52 weekly published news articles in Luton News & over 200 social media posts

Our Activities and community engagements during the year have included

- 32 Stakeholder Engagement meetings with faith & community leaders addressing local concerns, misinformation, and responding to national & local issues
- Conflict Mitigation meetings regarding Israel-Palestine & other international conflicts, mitigating ongoing interfaith tensions, and promoting dialogue

- Crisis Response included
  - responding to an incident of mosque banner defacement, and
  - responding to the summer riots after Southport killings of innocent children by bringing together police, faith leaders, and council to calm tensions and show resilience

- Interfaith Events included
  - Ramadan Iftars (Unity Iftar, Iftar Under the Stars, Women's Iftar, Big Iftar) 4 major events promoted interfaith understanding, hospitality, and cultural sharing
  - Religious Festive Celebrations e.g. Eid, Easter, Christmas, Navratri, Diwali, Chanukkah, Nawruz, Gurpurb etc. strengthened community inclusion and fostered interfaith respect and public celebration
  - Sinhalese New Year & Lord Buddha Day celebrations were 2 first-time celebrations & inaugural events showcasing inclusion of newer ethnic groups and communities
  - Two visits to places of worship by overseas Christian leaders facilitated by GRASSROOTS helped in strengthening interfaith and intercultural dialogue in our town
  - Annual Peace Walk (28th year) attracted over 150 attendees and the event promoted peace, hospitality, and unity across faiths
  - Inter Faith Week Commemoration event explored winter religious festivals
- Major Civic/Community Events
  - HM Lord Lieutenant Thanksgiving Service, The Royal Foundation Carol Service, and The High Sheriff Justice Service – all 3 services strengthened civic and faith partnerships
  - Black History Month & Windrush events celebrated heritage and contributions of African-Caribbean communities
  - 4 Anniversary Events (Churches, Community Gardens) celebrated local community projects and institutional milestones
  - Community Cultural Festivals: Turk Fest, Desi Fest, Diverse Fest, East Fest – all promoted multiculturalism and social cohesion
  - Peace Light Service, Remembrance Service, World Religion Day observance promoted shared values, remembrance, and religious literacy

- Educational Engagement
  - Over 30 School workshops on "Making Our Town Respectful", and Character and Virtues sessions engaged youth in dialogue about respect, tolerance, and community spirit
  - A Special Commemoration event Luton COVID Memorial Service marked 5th Anniversary of the pandemic and acknowledged local loss, resilience and recovery

- International Mother Language Day, Edible High Town 5th Anniversary events promoted linguistic & cultural diversity, environmental action, and neighbourhood pride

Impact Report – Case Study 1 – School Assemblies led by a panel of Faith & Community Leaders

In alignment with the Luton 2040 vision to become a child-friendly town, our faith and community engagement team developed and delivered a series of interactive workshops titled "How to make our town more respectful?" These workshops brought together representatives from different faiths to engage with young people in local schools, encouraging understanding, empathy, and civic responsibility.

Activities undertaken included the delivery of interactive panel workshops in multiple schools, featuring faith and community leaders from diverse backgrounds, focussing discussions on shared values such as respect, empathy, fairness, and love, and highlighting how these are embedded in various faith traditions and cultures. It promoted open dialogue through a "Q Time" format, allowing pupils to ask honest questions about faith, values, and living together in a diverse society. We used storytelling and lived experiences to inspire young people to be agents of positive change in their communities. Some of the positive comments we received from the young people from different schools are mentioned below;

- *"I liked seeing all the different people from different religions. It was very interesting."*
- *"It was great that even though they didn't all agree and had different opinions, they still showed each other respect."*
- *"I found out about some new religions that I had never heard of before."*
- *"You encouraged us all to become better human beings, and make our town and our world a better place for all."*

Staff Feedback:

- *"It was a super example of harmony and peace in Luton. It was great. The pupils and staff got a lot from it. It is so good that these opportunities are available to our pupils."*

Impact Report – Case Study 2 – School Interfaith Workshop

For the third consecutive year, Foxdell Primary School successfully hosted Interfaith Workshop, bringing together pupils, parents, teachers, and faith leaders under one roof to creatively explore and celebrate the beliefs and practices of Luton's diverse faith communities.

Activities undertaken included Islamic calligraphy workshops led by community artists, Easter Egg painting and Christian symbolism explained by the clergy, presentation of Jewish artefacts and traditions by faith leader Mr Brian Green. It fostered intergenerational learning as parents and children learnt together, deepened mutual respect and enhanced their cultural understanding and faith literacy by gaining first-hand insights into five world major religions through hands-on activities and storytelling while also engaging with local faith leaders. It was a wonderful example of community building and strengthening relationships between the school and local faith communities. It is now being used as a model of interfaith engagement for other schools in Luton. Some of the positive comments we received from the parents are mentioned below;

- "I am learning alongside my child."
- "With the current issues around the world, isn't it lovely that we can sit together and learn about each other's faith"

We are extremely proud that Foxdell School was given a good rating in their last OFSTED inspection with this activity highlighted.

Impact Report – Case Study 3 – Peace Walk & Peace Art Work

Luton's 28th Annual Peace Walk was held on 21st September 2024. It continues to be the town's most popular and unifying multi-faith event. It brought together more than 150 residents of all ages and backgrounds, demonstrating the town's deep commitment to peace, unity, and interfaith understanding. Coinciding with the UN International Day of Peace, the walk offered a powerful reminder of the values that underpin community harmony, particularly against the backdrop of recent national unrest and riots witnessed across parts of the UK. In contrast, Luton remained peaceful, an achievement credited to the solidarity, mutual respect, and active cooperation among its diverse communities.

Activities undertaken included the participants going on a guided journey to three different places of worship in Lewsey, experiencing great welcome and hospitality from the Zakariya Mosque, St Martin de Porres Catholic Church, and St Hugh's Church of England. It promoted faith integration as three different faith venues actively participated and hosted people from diverse backgrounds.

LCoF also sponsored four sculptures (at a cost of £5,000) raised from different faiths communities and places of worship to support the Keech Hospice Hare and Tortoise Short Tail Trail. These sculptures were then used as community art projects in schools. In fact, it brought together 4 different primary schools from across the town to join the Peace Walk event leaving a lasting positive memory for our young generation in how they perceive their town and people of different backgrounds.

Conclusion:

All these activities exemplify Luton Council of Faiths' continued leadership in strengthening social cohesion, and interfaith engagement. Through creativity and collective action, several of our projects have not only raised vital funds for charities like Luton Food Bank and Keech Hospice but also reinforced community bonds, cultural pride, and active civic participation. With a strong endorsement from our local civic and faith leaders boosting public confidence and civic resilience, our events and activities have contributed significantly in enhancing interfaith understanding and leadership. It reinforced relationships between communities, faiths, and public institutions, and created opportunity for a positive display of a spectacle of unity.

Financial review and reserves

The net incoming resources for the year was a deficit of £447 (2024 – deficit of £5,689). At the end of the financial year the reserves were £40,510 (2024 - £39,003) of unrestricted funds and a deficit of £15,343 (2024 – deficit of £13,389) of restricted funds. The adequacy of the reserves policy is reviewed annually. The trustees are satisfied that reserves are presently more than adequate to meet future expenditure. The Trustees have a policy of aiming to retain reserves equivalent to six months' average expenditure. This is due to the uncertain nature of funding received. The total reserve funds at the year-end were £25,167.

Future plans

The trustees intend to continue provide relief in a similar manner as before.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and its financial activities for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

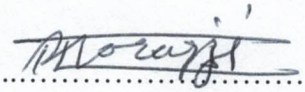
Independent examiner

The trustees intend to ask the existing accountants to undertake the independent examination of the trust in the following year.

Signed on behalf of the trustees



..... Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson



..... Mr Thakor Morarji– Treasurer

Date: 18/6/25

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted income funds 2025	Endowment Funds 2025	Total funds 2025	Total funds 2024
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		4,145	-	-	**4,145**	**4,786**
- Investments		-	-	-	-	-
- Charitable activities	6	5,277	45,714		**50,991**	**47,423**
- Other Income		-	3,480		**3,480**	-
Total incoming resources		**9,422**	**49,194**	-	**58,616**	**52,209**
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	-	-
Other Charitable activities		7.890	-	-	**7,890**	**6,470**
Charitable activities including Governance and support costs		-	51,148	-	**51,148**	**51,230**
Other expenditure		25	-	-	**25**	**198**
Total expenditure		**7,915**	**51,148**	-	**59,063**	**57,898**
Net Movement in Funds		**1,507**	**(1,954)**	-	**(447)**	**(5,689)**
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**39,003**	**(13,389)**	-	**25,614**	**31,103**
Total funds carried forward		**40,510**	**(15,343)**	-	**25,167**	**25,614**

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these accounts.

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted income funds 2025	Endowment Funds 2025	Total this year 2025	Total this year 2024
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		26,987		-	26,987	27,521
Total current assets		26,987		-	26,987	27,521
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(1,819)	-	-	(1,819)	(1,907)
Net current assets		25,167	-	-	**25,167**	**25,614**
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		40,510			40,510	39,003
Restricted Income funds			(15,343)		(15,343)	(13,389)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		40,510	(15,343)		**25,167**	**25,614**

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

..... Mr Zafar Khan - Chairperson Date: 18/06/2025

..... Mr Thakor Morarji– Treasurer Date: 18/06/2025

Luton Council of Faiths
Year Ended 31st March 2025

1. Accounting policies

a) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

b) Recognition of Income – there are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources and monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

c) Investment income is recorded when receivable

d) All expenditure is included in the accounts on an accrual basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the SOFA as incurred.

e) The restricted funds of the charity are expendable funds which is regularly increased or retained as capital at the trustees' discretion.

f) All capital related expenditure costing more than £750 is capitalised. Depreciation on fixtures and fittings is charged on a straight line basis over 5 years.

2. Taxation

Luton Council of Faiths is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they apply to charitable purposes.

3. Restricted

The restricted donations in the current year and the previous year represent income mainly from Grants but also from donations to the Luton Council of Faiths restricted funds only.

4. Analysis of employees costs

		2025	2024
		£	£
Salaries and PAYE		30,000	30,000
Employers NIC		-	-
Total		30,000	30,000

The number of full-time employees during the year was one and there were no average part time members of staff.

5. Related Party transactions

None of the trustees were paid any remuneration or expenses by the charity during the year (2024 £nil)

6. Analysis of Income from Charitable activities

	2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation and the Luton Rising-Community Investment Fund	-	45,714	45,714	47,423
Luton Borough council contributions	5,277	-	5,277	-
Other donations	4,145	-	4,145	4,786
Total	9,422	45,714	55,136	52,209

7. Analysis of Other income

	2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours	-	3,480	3,480	-
Total	-	3,480	3,480	-

8. Analysis of Charitable expenditure

The charity has undertaken direct activity to meet its charitable purposes. The following is the analysis of the charity's direct expenditure:

	2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
Books Resources	-	-	-	-
Other Events, Programmes and items	7,890	-	7,890	6,470
Total	7,890	-	7,890	6,470

9. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2025		2025
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

10. Other resources expended by the charity include:

	2025 Unrestricted	2025 Restricted	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
Near Neighbours	-	-	-	-
Charitable giving and donations	25	-	25	198
Total	25	-	25	198

11. Governance and Support costs

Support costs, consisting of the rent and rates and staff salaries are split between charitable activity and governance on an actual or equal estimated basis. This is because it is difficult to estimate the expense attributable to each activity. Support costs apportioned to the different aims of the charity are shown in the note below.

	Basis of Apportionment	2025 £ Unrestricted	2025 £ Restricted	2025 £ Total	2024 £ Total
Office costs	Actual	-	3,662	3,662	2,001
Subscriptions	Actual	-	33	33	80
Travelling and general expenditure	Actual	-	688	688	655
Equipment	Actual	-	42	42	1,684
Salaries and staff costs	Actual	-	30,001	30,001	30,087
Pensions	Actual	-	2,100	2,100	2,100
Grass roots	Actual	-	12,000	12,000	12,000
Insurance	Actual	-	730	730	724
Telephone	Actual	-	900	900	660
Professional	Actual	-	772	772	772
Advertising and publicity	Actual	-	220	220	216
Volunteering	Actual	-	-	-	338
Total		-	51,148	51,148	51,230

Tangible Fixed Assets

There were no movements or any tangible fixed assets currently held by the Charity during the year.

12. Analysis of Debtors.

	2025		2024
Restricted funds	-		-
Total	-		-

13. Analysis of Creditors

	2025		2024
Independent examiner's fee	600		600
PAYE	1,219		1,307
Total	1,819		1,907

Independent examiner's Report to the Trustees of Luton Council of Faiths

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2025 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit in not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true or fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

I Hussain and Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

England & Wales - Charity number 1089850

Accounts

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

Annual Report

2023-2024



Luton Council of Faiths

Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) began with a group of people from different faiths during 1994-1995, as part of the Grassroots Programme.

On 10th July 1997, the Luton Interfaith Forum was launched and then in 2000 the name 'Luton Council of Faiths' was adopted.

LCoF then achieved independent charitable status in 2001.

Since then LCoF has continued to work as a partner with the Grassroots Programme and Luton Borough Council, whilst also networking with many other organisations within and beyond Luton's borders.

Visit Our Website:
www.lutonfaiths.org

Email Us:
info@lutonfaiths.org

Call Us:
01582 416946

Write To Us:
Luton Council of Faiths
C/O Grassroots Programme
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 0BW

Like/ Follow us on

www.facebook.com/groups/LutonFaith

www.twitter.com/LutonFaiths

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Charity no: 1089850

Front Cover Image:

LCOF Members at the Peace Garden Cheering for the Luton Town Football Club

Funders, Partners and Volunteers

Core Funder

- Bedfordshire & Luton Community Fund (BLCF) as part of Luton Rising – Community Investment Fund

Projects Funder

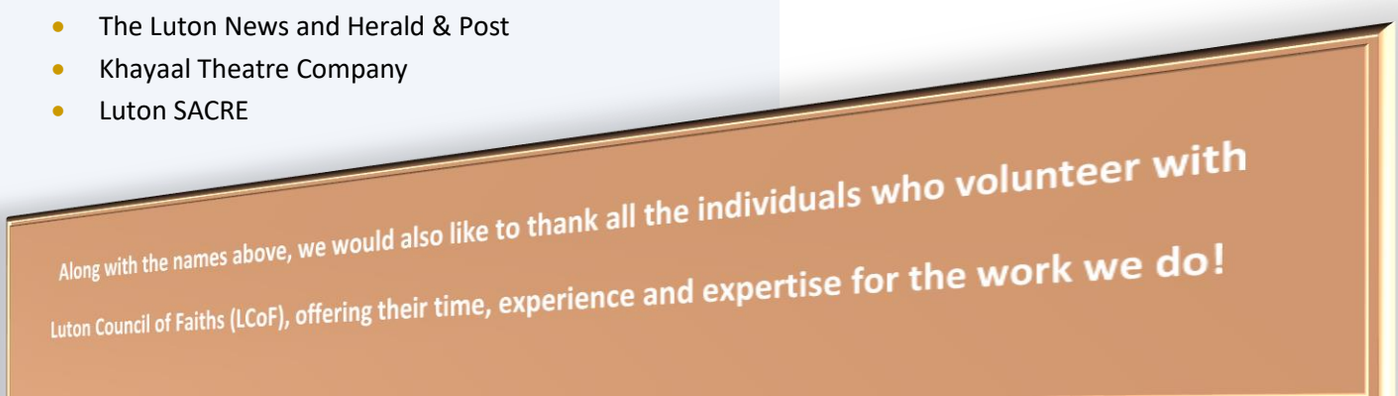
- Near Neighbours Fund
- Hysacc's Foundation

Key Partners

- Grassroots Programme
- Luton Council
- Bedfordshire Police
- Near Neighbours Programme

Key Supporters – Faith & Voluntary Organisations

- Churches Together in Luton
- Sunni Council of Mosques
- Luton Council of Mosques
- Guru Nanak Gurdwara
- Shri Guru Ravi Dass Sangat
- Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj Hindu Temple
- BAPS Swami Narayan Hindu Temple
- Bedfordshire Progressive Synagogue
- Luton United Synagogue
- Luton Bahai Community
- Luton Quakers
- Luton Sathya Sai Service Organisation
- LanTern Luton
- OM Group
- Our Minds Matter (OMM)
- Centre for Youth and Community Development (CYCD)
- St Mary's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation
- Faiths Against Child Sexual Exploitation (FACES)
- Luton Polish School
- Luton Polonia
- Luton Irish Forum
- University of Bedfordshire & Treehouse Chaplaincy
- Ghar se Ghar
- The Luton News and Herald & Post
- Khayaal Theatre Company
- Luton SACRE



CONTENTS

Message from the Chair – Professor Zafar Khan ..... Page 2

Overall Year in numbers ..... Page 3

#COYH ..... Page 4

Environment and Ecology .....Page 12

Fairtrade .....Page 14

Health and Wellness .....Page 15

Community Tensions and Mediation .....Page 18

Youth Mental Health Programme .....Page 20

Schools for Peace Building .....Page 22

Faiths, Cultural and Civic events .....Page 24

Peace Walk .....Page 28

Inter-faith week .....Page 31

Luton Heroes and Service to the community .....Page 36

Awards & Recognition .....Page 37

Accounts .....Page 38

Message from the Chair



On 27th May 2023 Luton Town made History! Wembley was lit in orange! What an incredible experience it was to compete against the big boys in the Premier League on a modest budget!

Hats off to Gary Sweet, Mick Harford, Rob Edwards and the directors who have been working hard behind the historic success! Above all, we witnessed a unified town! People from all walks of life united in their cheering for a town that, with all of its hardworking citizens and charitable donors, deserves the best. This will live on in the town's collective memory for many generations. We can only hope the speedy development of the football stadium as the club does so much for the town especially in supporting Luton's young talent.

However, in our multicultural town, there are many social, health, and economic challenges. Our work therefore in collaboration with local faith groups—including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, and Baha'is—continues to make a significant voluntary contribution to the general well-being of the town. Our volunteers are on the frontline of many projects.

We saw the 10th anniversary of the Foodbank. Being the 6th richest country in the word we should not be proud of commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Foodbank. It is a sad reflection of years of government policies that have driven the working people into poverty, but we must acknowledge and recognise the generosity of our Town and its people. All places of worship collect food donations. Many faiths serve hot meals in the Town centre such as Discover Islam Centre's Curry Kitchen, Soup Kitchens by the Sikh community and Hindu Community's Go Dharmic organisation, and Noah and the Salvation Army helping the most destitute. It is fitting therefore that Luton is recognised as the third most generous town in the country despite its high deprivation. This acclaimed generous status of the town epitomises the giving spirit of our 235,000 plus people.

On the other hand, community relations have unavoidably been impacted by both the conflict in the Holy Land and the divisive politics at home. Regardless of the difference of opinions, Luton communities remain gravely concerned about the loss of life, misery and destitution that have befallen the people of Gaza, and Israel. We long for a peaceful solution which does justice to all.

Earlier this year, we also witnessed the unfortunate closure of the National Interfaith Network, a key national forum that made immense contribution across interfaith arena in the country. It was an important conduit between the government and the local faith bodies for cohesive communities and harmonious community relations in contemporary British society.

To end conflict and discord that results from social disconnect, deprivation, poverty, climate change, and racial inequalities, we must strive to work together for peace and harmony.

We are therefore proud to partner with others in supporting initiatives like the Peace Garden Initiative, in which we mobilsed communities to plant over 800 trees, remembering those who passed away during the Covid-19. We also saw the Luton in Bloom project developing and getting more people into gardening in our town. Our Annual Peace Walk and Inter Faith Week events brought together people of all ages, and from all sections of our communities. Our support has encouraged multi faith representation and participation at many civic and commemorative events.

In recognising the depth and breadth of LCOF's work, reflected in this annual report, we would also like to acknowledge a variety of positive work happening across Luton's different faith communities. Let's continue working together for the common good and strive to fulfil the aspirations of all in our town for a better life, as it is also aspired in Luton Council's 2040 plans. We remain grateful to the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation for its support, which continues to enable us to build the much needed peace and reconciliation in our town.

Professor Zafar

Overall Year in numbers!

Over 55 activities

with 30 as a key and direct partner

Over 50 Community meetings and mediation

Over 200 promotional events of various faith communities and partners

Over 4000 young people engaged at school and local community projects

300 volunteers engaging on various projects with 75 ongoing active volunteers

Over 48 published news articles in Luton News and Herald and Post and over 300 social media posts

#COYH


#COYH
COME ON YOU HATTERS
Bring it Home!


#COYH
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
ACHIEVEMENT


#COYH
COME ON YOU HATTERS
Bring it Home!


#COYH
COME ON YOU HATTERS
Bring it Home!


#COYH
COME ON YOU HATTERS
Bring it Home!


#COYH
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
ACHIEVEMENT


#COYH
COME ON YOU HATTERS
Bring it Home!


#COYH
COME ON YOU HATTERS
Bring it Home!


#COYH
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
ACHIEVEMENT


#COYH
COME ON YOU HATTERS
Bring it Home!


#COYH
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
ACHIEVEMENT


#COYH
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
ACHIEVEMENT

Peace Garden Initiative (Year 3)

A Tree for Every Life



BBC Politics did a piece on the Town highlighting the impact of the pandemic and the 3 years of lockdown, but it also featured Peace Gardens and Luton's Peace Garden Initiative visiting Wigmore Park Orchard, where the project was launched in December 2021.

With over 800 lives lost during the pandemic, the Peace Garden Initiative captured people's imagination and won hearts. Over the last 3 years around 819 trees have been planted with 229 trees planted during April 2023 – March 2024. The project engaged over 300 people volunteering, with regular volunteers coming for all the 15 days of tree planting, excluding maintenance days.

We also launched the Peace Garden Guardians at Downside Primary School with an assembly of about 300 children. We followed it up with an afternoon of action mulching the trees. This was supported by the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire with the aim to nurture the next generation of tree planters and carers. It was befitting that the project was awarded the Tree of Trees for the Queen's Green Canopy.

We are really proud of this collective initiative. It is founded and led by a local Muslim volunteer, Sujel Miah and supported all along by the LCoF's Head of Communities and Relations Development Officer Ryad Khodabocus. LCoF volunteers from across all faith communities (as seen in the pictures in the following pages) made tremendous contributions to this project. We acknowledge the financial contribution from many places of worship including our Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Sikh and Hindu communities and several individuals without whom this project would not have been a success.

.

Environment, Ecology and Human Connectedness

The faith sector partnership with the Luton Council, Luton Rising, schools, parks, volunteers and community hubs of all faiths and none, has proved yet again that we can work together for the common good.

We would like to pay tribute to late Scott Stalham from Friends of Wigmore who supported the project from day one with his colleagues, planting the first set of trees at Wigmore Park, which is the biggest tree orchard in area.

Below is the fiinal update on the total number of trees planted:

2021	Wigmore Park	71 Orchard trees, 170 whips	241
2022	Wardown Park	23 x semi mature beech and field maple	13
2022	Pope's Meadow	10 x Scot's pine, 10 x beech whips	20
2022	People's Park	7 additional orchard trees	7
2022	Mayne Avenue	90 beech whips	90
2022	Stopsley Common	50 x semi mature	26
2023	Wardown Park	1 x field maple (tree of trees)	1
2023	Chaul End	25 x orchard, 25 x semi mature, 100 whips	100
2023	Riddy Lane	50 x semi mature	50
2023	Lewsey Park	50 x semi mature	40
2023	Stockwood Park	5 Native oak, 5 holm oak, 5 lime, 5 hornbeam, 32 hazel, 40 hawthorn, 12 sweet chestnut	104
2023	Leagrave Park	17 Ornamental hawthorn, 3 Malus 'Golden Hornet', 20 birch	40
2024	Kingsway Park	23 Ornamental hawthorn, 3 Malus 'Golden Hornet', 8 local variety apple trees	35
2024	Stopsley Common	10 Elm 'Wanoux', 5 hornbeam, 10 rowan , 10 guelder rose, 15 birch	50

Total planted: 817

However, the project lost the 90 beech trees at Mayne Avenue and a few at the Lewsey Park, which still need replacing while the trees lost to vandalism in the Stopsley area have already been replaced.



A bench was stalled with friends and families for Scott Stalham at the Wigmore Peace Garden..'Too soon he left but in this window of life he is remembered with such love and his legacy for generations to come'.

Environment, Ecology and Human Connectedness

Stockwood Park











Environmental Ecology and Human Connectedness

Our Young People Environmentally Concious







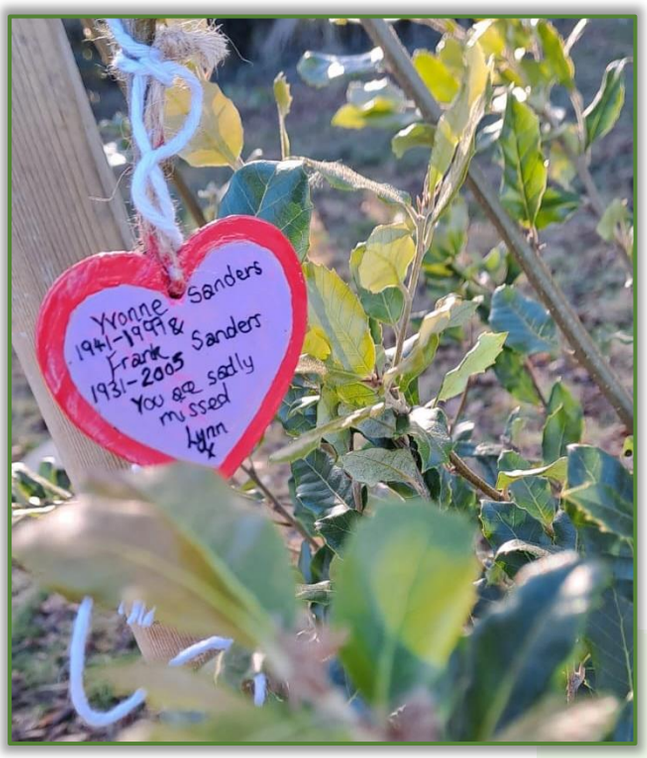






'The Soul never dies'







Environmental Ecology and Human Connectedness



Leagrave Park









The Peace Garden Guardians

PEDOWNSIDE
@pedownside

The eco team were busy today checking on the Peace Garden trees, adding new canes and tidying up the area.
@PeaceGardenIni1



22:34 · 18 May 23 · **492** Views

Environmental Ecology and Human Connectedness



Kingsway Park







Stopsley Common- Last planting event







End of an Era

Fairtrade Ramadan and Eid with Discover Islam Centre

During the month of Ramadan, we engaged with Luton's Discover Islam Centre, calling it a Fairtrade Ramadan and Fairtrade Eid, and supported and promoted the use of Fairtrade ethical products.

An amount of over £10,000 was spent by the local community to support this initiative.

Over 20 volunteers worked hard to support this initiative and helped in preparing Fairtrade Gift Hampers using the compostable packaging to further add the environmental consciousness. The project was done in partnership with Grassroots Programme.











Health and Wellness

Wellness Guided Walk

Our Wellness campaign continues to work in partnership with the Community Interest Luton, Luton Lions, Inspire FM and Total Well-Being Luton.

We held 8 guided walks in total and the areas we covered, included: Inspire Sports Village, Dunstable Downs, Warden Hill, Sharpenhoe Clappers, Putteridge New Year's Walk, 2xRamadan Wellness Walks called Iftar Under the Stars, and a Wellness Walk to the Someries Castle.

Despite the rain, mud or heat, over 500 people participated in these walks from across all sections of Luton's diverse communities, including the young and the elderly with various health challenges, making it a huge success.









Luton in Bloom

'Luton in Bloom' is a community-driven initiative aimed at uplifting Luton's spirits through the power and shared interest of gardening. Ever since its launch in May, the project has been encouraging communities to grow items, learn life skills and meet new people.

The project also aims to improve the overall look and feel of the town. It is also about tackling isolation bringing the community together in a useful and meaningful way.

The project founder is Sujel Miah representing Luton Council of Mosques in the Luton Council of Faiths. His vision is about transforming communities through connecting people and plants, especially those from most deprived parts of our town. The project is also about supporting people's physical and mental wellbeing and creating a sense of pride in communities, neighbourhoods and the town. It is about residents contributing to the way their street and neighbourhood looks and feel, through fun and healthy competition.

Over 50 entries for a gardening competition were submitted in 4 different categories. Loana Frigura won the Best Residential Front Display, Lullington Neighbours won the Best Community Garden, Tahmina Ajmal won the Best Fruit and Veg patch and Woodlands Secondary School Best School Garden. Cash prizes were awarded to winners and runners-up, at the community farmers market held in the town centre where many community members could showcase what they had grown.

The project has been very much supported by Luton Rising, Community Interest Luton, Inspire FM, The Peace Garden Project, Luton Council of Faiths, and Luton Council. The Garden competition, farmers market and gardening workshops will also support Luton Council's objectives around community development, cohesion, economic skills, public health outcomes and Luton Rising's commitment to improve the local environment.



Health & Wellness













Palestine and Israel

The world appears to have changed once again, as we all have been horrified by the sudden escalation of violence across Israel and Palestine causing unimaginable destruction and suffering.

The Holy Land for Jews, Christians & Muslims is witnessing the deadliest and bloodiest days in recent history.

All places of worship and people of faith worldwide are praying for the thousands of people who have been killed, injured, displaced, and those whose lives have been devastated.

In the midst of heightened anxieties, grief, bereavement, anger, and frustration on all sides, it is commendable that Luton's faith communities have demonstrated their concern for justice and peaceful co-existence, locally as well as globally.

Luton Community Action was set up by several volunteers to engage politicians into the matters of justice and fairness. Luton Councils of Mosques & Luton Palestine Solidarity Campaign, joined by hundreds of Muslims, Christians, and those of different or secular beliefs, stood outside Luton Town Hall to express their grief and pain followed by a peace vigil. They shared prayers for the loss of life in Israel and Palestine.

One life taken whether Jewish, Muslim, Christian or anyone in humanity is too much, speakers from different faiths & beliefs voiced out unanimously.

Leaders condemned both Islamophobia and Antisemitism and called upon shared human values and heritage among the children of Abraham.

Condemning terrorism and the disproportionate killing of innocent families, the defenseless, and the vulnerable, and the bombing of hospitals with mostly children dead, mourners demanded of local and national leaders across all political spectrums to call for an immediate ceasefire, release of the hostages and safe passage for the humanitarian aid for the victims.

As demonstrations are happening across the towns and cities, organisers asked everyone to stay within the framework of the law.

In a statement, the Luton Council of Faiths offered condolences and prayers for those who have faced death, injury and are suffering in other ways, and called everyone to unite in humanity and pray that reconciliation, peace, and justice prevail for everyone.

.





OPEN LETTER

To:
Rachel Hopkins MP
Sarah Owen MP

LCA
LUTON COMMUNITY ACTION

We write to you as a collective of community organisations, representing the interests of your constituents in Luton.

On the 17th of October 2023, Richard Burgon MP tabled the Early Day Motion (no. 1685): "Protecting Civilians in Gaza and Israel". This was signed by 95 members of parliament, including Imran Hussain (formerly Shadow Minister for the New Deal for Working People). Having fallen due to the prorogation of parliament, the EDM was re-tabled by Mr Burgon on the 7th of November. We call on you to add your signatures to this motion.

Our community has watched with deep horror at the recent events in Gaza and Israel. There must now be an urgent intervention in order to prevent further civilian casualties, end the siege on Gaza, and ensure that international humanitarian law is upheld. This is a view that is supported by the United Nations, alongside numerous charities and aid agencies, including Save the Children, Oxfam, Christian Aid and Islamic Relief.

You are no doubt aware of the strength of feeling in our communities about this ongoing crisis; and as our elected representative, you hold a critical role in addressing the concerns of your constituents. Support for this motion is a necessary step in ensuring that the voices of your constituents are represented in parliament.

Signed:

Aamar Mahmood, Luton Community Action
Tareq Khamis, Luton Palestine Solidarity Campaigner
Tony Thompson, Hope Church and Churches Together in Luton
The Rev'd Luke Larner, St Andrew's Church Luton
The Rev'd Anne Crosby, St Anne with St Christopher, Luton
Zafar Khan, Luton Council of Faiths
Muhammad Rayhan, Luton Council of Mosques
Faisal Hussain, Luton Sunni Council of Mosques
Sufian Sadiq, Discover Islam Luton
Amna Khan, Lantern - Muslim Womens' Voices
Dave Barnes, TSSA Union
Vanessa O'Driscoll, Enough is Enough (Luton)
Louise Brown, Luton Tribune Club
Taj Ali, Tribune Magazine
Glenn Jenkins, Marsh Farm Outreach
Jeff Hodges, Unite Regional Officer
Vincent Charles, Unison Beds Health Branch

Community Tensions & Mediation

A spate of Quran burning in Sweden, Denmark and the rise of Finland's far-right party True Finns in the summer 2023 highlighted how globally, there appears to be a growing intolerance of both immigrants and Islam, particularly in the right-wing political discourses.

Majoritarianism backed by nationalism is becoming a threat to minorities everywhere globally.

It is therefore worth reviewing how and why the sacredness of freedom of speech of few, has come to take precedence over the sanctity of human dignity and the sacredness of religious texts. How and why the freedom of speech is allowed to propagate hate and desecrate what is held sacred and revered by millions & billions around the world?

At a meeting held recently at Central Mosque, Luton Council, Councillors and different faith leaders discussed the initiative to 'Protect All Spiritual Scriptures' (PASS).

At a meeting held at Central Mosque, Luton Council, Councillors and different faith leaders discussed the initiative to 'Protect All Spiritual Scriptures' (PASS).

The meeting requested Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) to write to the UK's Prime Minister and to the Deputy Secretary General of the UN, to appeal for immediate action in response to the burning of the Holy Scriptures, an act that strikes at the core of religious tolerance, respect, and compassion.

Those present felt that there is a need for robust international laws and treaties to prevent acts of religious desecration and to safeguard the rights and beliefs of religious communities worldwide.









Youth Mental Health Programme

Often people are disillusioned with Mental First Aid Training as its main focus is listening to someone in crisis and making a referral. This often feels theoretical. We wanted enhance the current MHFA training programme by adding value to what could be done practically, in addition to making a referral. A pilot training was done just after the lockdown, which the BBC Look East also took interest in and covered it. It was great to roll out this training once again for Luton's young people.

The topic of mental health has been discussed far and wide, especially in relation to the lasting effects of the coronavirus pandemic on young people.

Often people are disillusioned with Mental First Aid Training as its main focus is listening to someone in crisis and making a referral often more theoretical. We wanted to address that by enhancing the current MHFA training programme by adding value to what could be done. A pilot was done just after the lockdown with the BBC took an interest in.

Our enhanced MHFA training course covered key topics such as suicide, self-harm, PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder), phobias, anxiety and depression. It also discussed how to spot signs of these issues and how best to support individuals suffering from any of these.

We added Heart Math Solutions as the second day of training with some simple and effective hands-on breathwork and emotional regulation techniques using Heartfulness approach which can be used on-demand. The focus was on the most common mental health issues like Anxiety, Depression, Panic Attacks and Stress management. The day also was about to:

1) Create a safeguard for the mental first aider about how they manage their own stress and state when supporting someone.
2) Develop their listening skills better with Heart's presence.
3) Manage and transform emotions and energies to be in a better space to make informed decisions
4) Develop confidence with gut intuition supported by science.
5) Help someone to calm down within seconds in the moment of distress

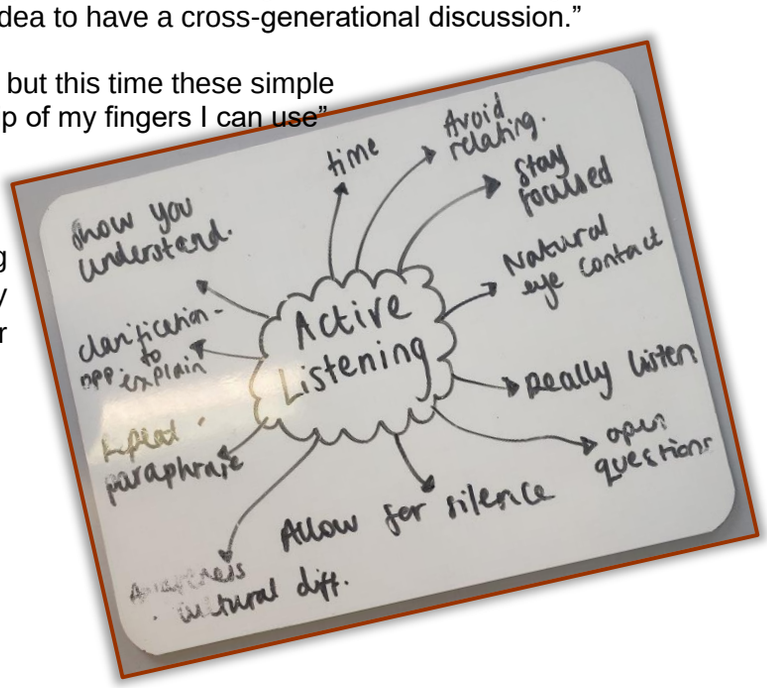
Some of the feedback:

"It was a specialist training to improve our understanding of mental health issues and how to identify, understand and help someone who may be affected by it. Additionally, we now know how to use HeartMath to promote personal resilience, boost positive wellbeing, and tackle stigma related to mental health."

A community worker at The Feast youth engagement programme said, "Being on the same learning level as young people has been quite enlightening. It was a good idea to have a cross-generational discussion."

"I normally struggle when flying and have massive anxiety but this time these simple Techniques kept me calm. Now, I have something at the tip of my fingers I can use"

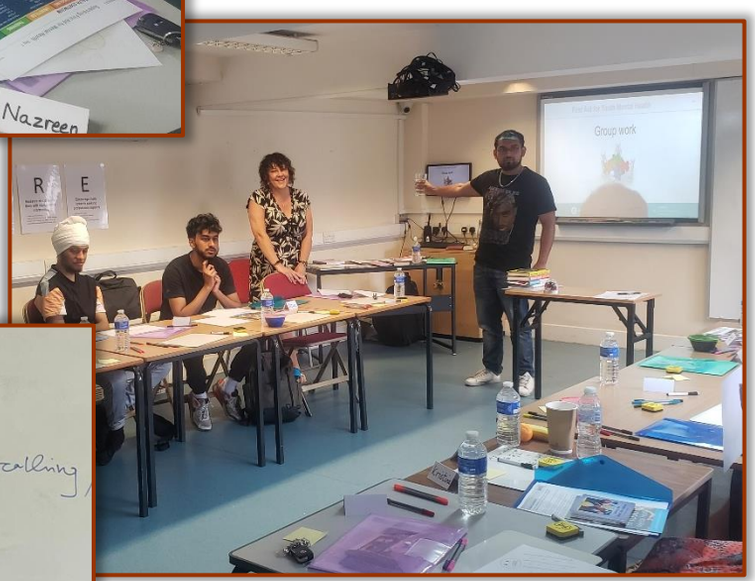
Thanks to Near Neighbours, the key sponsor of the training program and to the Centre for Youth & Community Development (CYCD) Luton for hosting this training at their premises on Leagrave Road.

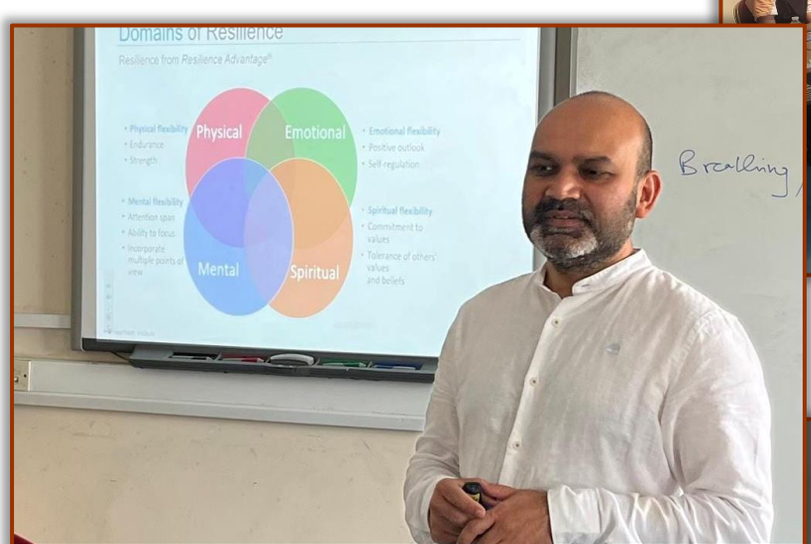


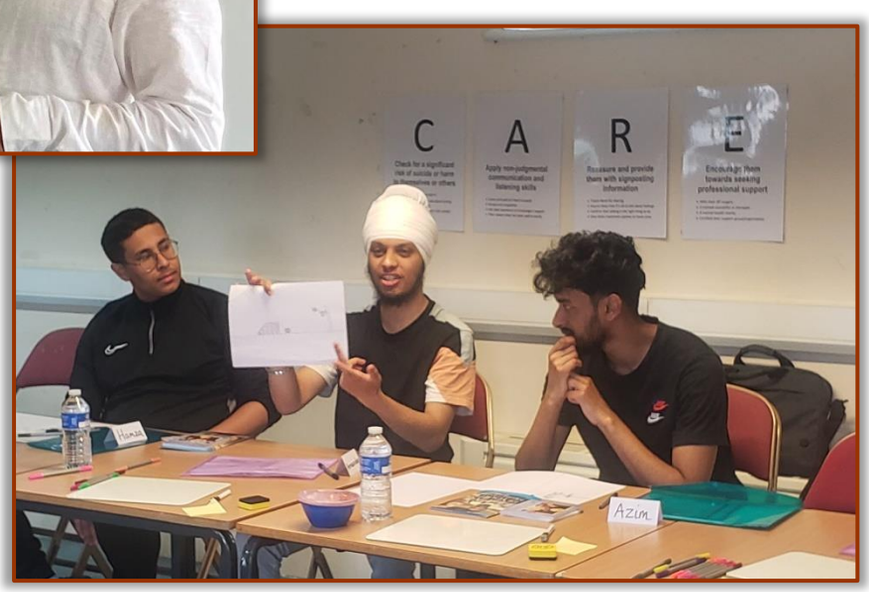
Mental Health with Young People Highlights











What will make our Town more Respectful with KS2 pupils

Seeing a local group of religiously and culturally diverse faith & community leaders coming together, creates a positive and lasting visual impact on young impressionable minds. Despite our religious differences, we demonstrated how we work together for the common good. This project is an annual on-demand 45 minutes school assembly highly appreciated in schools. It is more interesting to hear leaders talk about peace and harmony from a local perspective so that children can connect it to their town. Over 4000 children have had the opportunity to listen to what our leaders have to say according to their traditions and ask questions.





Character and Value based Education- Stories and Values and Virtues across Faiths





Faiths, Cultural & Civic events

With our rich faith and cultural diversity, we have annual iconic events like the Holocaust Memorial, Big Iftar, Eid in the Park, Colours of Eid, Diwali, Nawruz. Vaisakhi, Easter, Christmas, and Chanukah to name a few. These events form part of the public cultural landscape of Luton celebrating the diversity of the town and bringing communities across all walks of life together.





Holocaust Memorial





Big Iftar- Ramadan





Diwali – Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj & OM Group

Faiths, Cultural & Civic events



Colours of Eid



Lantern Ladies Iftar





Good Friday





Baha'i Nawruz





Carols by the Candle Light Event led by the University Chaplaincy called Tree House





Sikh Community Offering Iftar in Bury Park gracefully accpeted by local Muslims





Peace Light Service All Saints Church

Peace Walk

In its 27th year, Luton's Annual Peace Walk continued to be one of the most popular multi-faith events in the town. While also commemorating the UN's International Day of Peace (IDP), it attracted people of all ages from Luton's diverse communities.

The hosts this year were Our Lady Help of Christians Church, Luton Christian Fellowship, Turkish Mosque & Community Centre, and Guru Ravidass Sangat Luton. Several dignitaries included the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Susan Lousada, Mayor of Luton Cllr Yaqub Hanif, Luton MPs Sarah Owen & Rachel Hopkins, Bishop of Bedford Rt. Revd. Richard Atkinson and Cllrs. Javeria Hussain and Maria Lovell.

It was indeed a public demonstration of community solidarity and yet another step towards building a stronger Luton, when in view of the Churches burnt in Pakistan and Quran burning incidents in Scandinavian countries, Luton's different faith leaders called for stronger legislation to prevent such acts provoking communal discord. Calling upon the UK Prime Minister, the Deputy Secretary General of the UN, and also the UK High Commission of Pakistan, faith leaders demanded robust international laws and treaties to safeguard the rights and beliefs of the religious communities worldwide.

In a statement, they also reaffirmed their commitment to living in peace and harmony with one another and creating an inclusive society for all. Later, students and teachers from Ramridge, Chantry, Southfield, and Whitefield Primary Schools gave presentations about their work on climate change and environmental issues. They shared their commitment to being an Eco-School, litter picking and planting trees.

Young individuals who had completed the CATALYST Youth Leadership & Mental Health Training Programs, sponsored by Near Neighbors, were awarded certificates. They shared their aspirations for a better world and their resolve to combat poverty, deprivation, and other current problems in our town.

May all these hopes, aspirations, and commitments for a better world bear fruits!



Highlights of the Peace Walk Journey





Our Lady Help of Christians Church









Luton Christian Fellowship





Luton Christian Fellowship





Turkish Mosque & Community Centre





Guru Ravidass Sangat Luton

Moments



At Our Lady Help of Christians Church



At the Luton Christian Fellowship





At the Turkish Mosque & Community Centre





Langar at Guru Ravidass Sangat Luton

Interfaith Week

Inter Faith Week is a time when the spotlight is on all the organisations like ours who work tirelessly for inter-faith understanding and cooperation in Luton and across the UK. Our work to build connections between people of different faiths and beliefs is enormously important.

In commemorating Inter Faith Week 2023 we held a multifaith storytelling event with stories of values and virtues across for the wider public at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Stopsley. Stories are powerful and have a lasting impact on people. Using the 'lost art' of story-telling with the local Award-winning Khayaal Theatre. The storytelling aims to spell inter-faith and intercultural understanding and peacebuilding in the most creative way, especially to young audiences.

After the storytelling performance was over, the mixed audience of young and old, identified that values of kindness, generosity, patience, faith, courage, perseverance, and resilience were common in all the stories told from the Hindu, Jewish, Christian & Muslim backgrounds.

.







Swedish Guests

Despite the unfair negative portrayal and perception of Luton, we had the pleasure to host a multi-faith group of over thirty guests and visitors from Sweden, who chose to visit Luton.

Their visit was coordinated by The Church of Sweden Diocese of Linkopping. They wanted to learn from Luton's experiences of inter-faith work, tackling far-right and how communities, government & Police, both locally and nationally, strive to work for strengthening community cohesion while also promoting unity in diversity. They were all ecstatic and thought visiting Luton had been worthwhile as it offered them a rich and inspirational experience.

They observed a meeting of Luton's faith leaders and were astounded to see religious leaders having an honest and open conversation on both local and global issues that affect life in Luton. They learnt a great deal during their field visits to Discover Islam Centre, Luton Council's Social Justice Unit, Bedfordshire Police Community Cohesion, The Feast, Grassroots & Near Neighbours Programmes.





Visiting Town Hall







Interfaith week





At All Saints Church





At Discover Islam Centre





At Guru Nanak Gurudwara

Interfaith week





At St Mary's Church





At Luton Central Mosque





Interfaith week

Interfaith weeks moments at Central Mosque













Local Heroes and Service to the Community



'Loving Leagrave' initiative, St Luke's Church runs a weekly Community Café at Hockwell Ring Community Centre.



Volunteer Sandra Miller, Vicar & Luton Area Dean Revd Canon David Kesterton, and the Asst. Curate Revd Peter Farquhar at All Saints Refugees & Asylum Seekers Drop-in support



Luton Foodbank commemorating its 10th year with Takhoor Bhai as the Luton Council of Faith representative on the foodbank

Centenary Celebrations, the past and present Vicars of C of E All Saints Church Luton.





Luton's oldest Windrush Generation member, 103 years old Rose Allen joined by Mayor of Luton, Beds Police Crime Commissioner, Bishop of Bedford, and Pas Vincent Cox, at a special Windrush Civic Service

Awards & Recognition- Our Volunteers



Peter Adams awarded the Hubert Walter award for Reconciliation and Interfaith Cooperation by the Archbishop of Canterbury



Jasbir Singh awarded the 'Make an Impact Award' at the 10th annual Big Iftar



Sujel Miah winner of the Luton's Best Award in the 'Most Outstanding Citizen' category



Maqsood Anwar, was presented with a Post Office 30 Years' Long Service Award

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024	Restricted income funds 2024	Endowment Funds 2024	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		4,786	-	-	**4,786**	5,000
- Investments		-	-	-	**-**	-
- Charitable activities	6	47,423	-		**47,423**	72,100
- Other Income		-	-		**-**	3,360
Total incoming resources		**52,209**	**-**	**-**	**52,209**	80,460
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		6,470	-	-	**6,470**	4,499
Governance and support costs		51,317	-	-	**51,317**	67,238
Other expenditure		198	-	-	**198**	3,590
Total expenditure		**57,985**	**-**	**-**	**57,985**	75,327
Net Movement in Funds		**(5,776)**	**-**	-	**(5,766)**	5,133
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**44,692**	**(13,389)**	-	**31,103**	26,170
Total funds carried forward		**38,916**	**(13,389)**	-	**25,527**	31,303

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024	Restricted income funds 2024	Endowment Funds 2024	Total this year 2024	Total this year 2023
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		27,521		-	27,521	33,297
Total current assets		27,521		-	27,521	33,297
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(1,994)	-	-	(1,994)	(1,994)
Net current assets		25,527	-	-	**25,527**	**31,303**
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		38,916			38,916	44,692
Restricted Income funds			(13,389)		(13,389)	(13,389)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		38,916	(13,389)		**25,527**	**31,303**

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS



And when we win everyone wins!

Peace Walk 2023

Registered charity number: 1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

Luton Council of Faiths
Period Ended 31st March 2024
Contents

1. Charity Information
2-7 Trustees' Report
8. Statement of Financial Activities
9. Balance Sheet
10-13. Notes to the Financial Statements
14. Independent Examiner's Report

Luton Council of Faiths
Charity Information as at 31st March 2024

Charity name
Luton Council of Faiths

Charity number
1089850

Principal address
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 OBW

Trustees
Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson
Mrs Gulie Butcher – Vice Chair
Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer
Mr Dhansukh Panchal
Mr Yogesh Mistry

Bankers
The Co-operative Bank
Alma Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2PL

Lloyds TBS Bank Plc
60 George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BB

Independent examiner
I. Hussain & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Luton Council of Faiths
Trustees Annual Report

History, objectives and activities of the Charity

On constitution it was believed the multicultural cohesion of the religious and cultural communities in Luton required addressing. The charity began with an initial grant. Both the initial grant and subsequent grants since have been under the terms which allow the trustees to either retain the amounts as capital or to spend them.

The objectives of the charity include;

a) To bring together members of the different faith communities in Luton for deeper dialogue and co-operation
b) To increase understanding and trust between different faiths, building on common ground between them yet respecting the unique contribution which each brings
c) To work towards greater social cohesion and community integration in Luton
d) To see inter faith co-operation as linking into global co-operation between faiths and cultures for the creation of a better world

Management and Governance arrangements

The constitution provides for a minimum of five trustees. Where there is a requirement for new trustees, these would be identified and appointed by the remaining trustees, subject to the approval by AGM. The chair of the trustees is responsible for the induction of any new trustee which involves awareness of a trustee's responsibility, the governing document, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the charity. The trustees have taken steps to identify major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Achievements and Performance of the Charity

Annual Report Summary April 2023 – March 2024

On 27th May 2023 Luton Town made History! Wembley was lit in orange! What an incredible experience it was to compete against the big boys in the Premier League on a modest budget!

Hats off to Gary Sweet, Mick Harford, Rob Edwards and the directors who have been working hard behind the historic success! Above all, we witnessed a unified town! People from all walks of life united in their cheering for a town that, with all of its hardworking citizens and charitable donors, deserves the best. This will live on in the town's collective memory for many generations. We can only hope the speedy development of the football stadium as the club does so much for the town especially in supporting Luton's young talent.

However, in our multicultural town, there are many social, health, and economic challenges. Our work therefore in collaboration with local faith groups—including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, and Baha'is—continues to make a significant voluntary contribution to the general well-being of the town. Our volunteers are on the frontline of many projects.

We saw the 10th anniversary of the Foodbank. Being the 6th richest country in the word we should not be proud of commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Foodbank. It is a sad reflection of years of government policies that have driven the working people into poverty, but we must acknowledge and recognise the generosity of our Town and its people. All places of worship collect food donations. Many faiths serve hot meals in the Town centre such as Discover Islam Centre's Curry Kitchen, Soup Kitchens by the Sikh community and Hindu Community's Go Dharmic organisation, and Noah and the Salvation Army helping the most destitute. It is fitting therefore that Luton is recognised as the third most generous town in the country despite its high deprivation. This acclaimed generous status of the town epitomises the giving spirit of our 235,000 plus people.

On the other hand, community relations have unavoidably been impacted by both the conflict in the Holy Land and the divisive politics at home. Regardless of the difference of opinions, Luton communities remain gravely concerned about the loss of life, misery and destitution that have befallen the people of Gaza, and Israel. We long for a peaceful solution which does justice to all.

Earlier this year, we also witnessed the unfortunate closure of the National Interfaith Network, a key national forum that made immense contribution across interfaith arena in the country. It was an important conduit between the government and the local faith bodies for cohesive communities and harmonious community relations in contemporary British society.

To end conflict and discord that results from social disconnect, deprivation, poverty, climate change, and racial inequalities, we must strive to work together for peace and harmony.

We are therefore proud to partner with others in supporting initiatives like the Peace Garden Initiative, in which we mobilsed communities to plant over 800 trees, remembering those who passed away during the Covid-19. We also saw the Luton in Bloom project developing and getting more people into gardening in our town. Our Annual Peace Walk and Inter Faith Week events brought together people of all ages, and from all sections of our communities. Our support has encouraged multi faith representation and participation at many civic and commemorative events.

In recognising the depth and breadth of LCOF's work, reflected in our annual report, we would also like to acknowledge a variety of positive work happening across Luton's different faith communities. Let's continue working together for the common good and strive to fulfil the aspirations of all in our town for a better life, as it is also aspired in Luton Council's 2040 plans. We remain grateful to the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation for its support, which continues to enable us to build the much-needed peace and reconciliation in our town.

Key Highlights

Over 55 activities have been held, 30 of these events and activities have been delivered by us as the key and direct partner

Over 50 community meetings and mediation sessions have been held during the year

Over 200 promotional events of various faith communities have been supported by us

Over 4000 young people engaged at school and local community projects

300 volunteers engaged on various projects with 75 ongoing active volunteers

Over 48 news articles have been published in Luton News and over 300 social media posts have also been published

Peace Garden Initiative (Year 3) – A Tree for Every Life

BBC did a news piece on the Town with the impact of the pandemic following 3 years after the lockdown featuring Peace Gardens and the Peace Garden Initiative visiting Wigmore Park Orchard. With about 800 lives lost during the lockdown, the Peace Garden Initiative captured people's imagination and winning hearts. Over the last 3 years around 819 trees have been planted with 229 trees planted only last April – March 2024. The project engaged over 300 people volunteering with regular volunteers coming for all the 15 days of tree planting excluding maintenance days. We also launched the Peace Garden Guardians at Downside Primary School with an assembly of about 300 children following up with an afternoon of action mulching the trees supported by the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire with the aim to nurture the next generation of tree planters and carers as the project was rightly awarded the Tree of Trees for the Queen's Green Canopy. (More details are recorded in the full Annual Report).

Fairtrade Ramadan and Eid at Discover Islam Centre

We supported Discover Islam Centre during the month of Ramadan to support Fairtrade Products. Over £10,000 was spent by the local community to support this initiative. Over 20 volunteers joined the initiative to support the project making Fairtrade Hampers using compostable packaging to further add the environmental consciousness. The project was done in partnership with Grassroots Programme.

Wellness Guided Walk

In partnership with Community Interest Luton, Luton Lions, Inspire FM & Total Well-Being, we had 8 guided walks in different parts of the town, in which over 500 people participated from across all walks of life, young and elderly with various health challenges.

Luton in Bloom

'Luton in Bloom' is a community-driven initiative aimed at uplifting Luton's spirits through the power and shared interest of gardening. Ever since its launch in May, the project has been encouraging communities to grow items, learn life skills and meet new people. The project founder is Sujel Miah says it is about transforming communities through connecting people and plants, especially those from most deprived parts of our town. The project is also about supporting people's physical and mental wellbeing and creating a sense of pride in communities, neighbourhoods and the town. It is about residents contributing to the way their street and neighbourhood looks and feel, through fun and healthy competition. Over 50 entries for a gardening competition were submitted in 4 different categories. Cash prizes were awarded to winners and runners-up, at a community farmers market. The project has been supported by Luton Rising, Community Interest Luton, Inspire FM, The Peace Garden Project, Luton Council of Faiths, Luton Council.

Community Mediation

All have been horrified by the sudden escalation of violence across Israel and Palestine with unimaginable destruction and suffering. The Holy Land for Jews, Christians & Muslims is witnessing the deadliest and bloodiest days in recent history. All places of worship and people of faith worldwide are praying for the thousands of people who have been killed, injured, displaced, and those whose lives have been devastated. In the midst of heightened anxieties, grief, bereavement, anger, and frustration on all sides, it is commendable that Luton's faith communities have demonstrated their concern for justice and peaceful co-existence, locally as well as globally. Prayer and Peace Vigils have been held sharing concern for the loss of life in Israel and Palestine. In a statement, the Luton Council of Faiths called everyone to unite in praying that reconciliation, peace, and justice may prevail for everyone. We carry on offering a space to listen to all parties and offering the mediation in confidence, where necessary.

Community Tensions & Mediation

A spate of Quran burning in Sweden, Denmark and the rise of Finland's far-right party True Finns highlighted how globally, there appears to be a growing intolerance of both immigrants and Islam, particularly in the right-wing political discourses. Majoritarianism backed by nationalism is becoming a threat to minorities everywhere globally. At a meeting held at Central Mosque, Luton Council, Councillors and different faith leaders discussed the initiative to 'Protect All Spiritual Scriptures' (PASS). The meeting acknowledged that the deliberate burning of any sacred Scripture is an egregious violation of human rights, freedom of religion, and fundamental principles for the diversity of faiths. We live in an interconnected world. It is essential that we work collectively to foster an environment of understanding and mutual respect for all religious and non-religious, beliefs and values. The meeting requested Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) to write to the UK's Prime Minister and to the Deputy Secretary General of the UN, to appeal for immediate action in response to the burning of the Holy Scriptures, an act that strikes at the core of religious tolerance, respect, and compassion.

Youth Mental Health Programme

After completing 5 days of Youth Leadership Training in Luton, 12 young people from Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, and no faith backgrounds followed it up with a 2-day Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training programme as they felt this was an important area for themselves and supporting those around them. The MHFA training course covered key topics such as suicide, self-harm, PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder), phobias, anxiety and depression. It also discussed how to spot signs of these issues and how best to support individuals suffering from any of these. We added Heart Math Solutions as the second day of training with some simple and effective hands-on breath work and emotional regulation techniques using Heartfulness approach which can be used on-demand. Some of the feedback stated:

"It was a specialist training to improve our understanding of mental health issues and how to identify, understand and help someone who may be affected by it. Additionally, we now know how to use HeartMath to promote personal resilience, boost positive wellbeing, and tackle stigma related to mental health."

A community worker at The Feast youth engagement programme said, "Being on the same learning level as young people has been quite enlightening. It was a good idea to have a cross-generational discussion."

"I normally struggle when flying and have massive anxiety but this time these simple Techniques kept me calm. Now, I have something at the tip of my fingers I can use"

Thanks to the Centre for Youth & Community Development (CYCD) Luton for hosting this training at their premises on Leagrave Road. Thanks to Luton Council of Faiths, Grassroots, The Feast Programme and Att10tive Luton for their support. Together we all share the vision of mentoring youngsters, helping them grow into responsible citizens and leaders for a better world.

Schools for Peace Building – What will make our Town more Respectful with KS2 Pupils

Seeing a local group of religiously and culturally diverse faith & community leaders coming together, creates a positive and lasting visual impact on young impressionable minds. Despite our religious differences, we demonstrated how we work together for the common good. This project is an annual on-demand 45 minutes school assembly highly appreciated in schools. It is more interesting to hear leaders talk about peace and harmony from a local perspective so that children can connect it to their town. Over 4000 children have had the opportunity to listen to what our leaders have to say according to their religious traditions and ask questions.

School For Peace Building – Multi Faith Educational Stories of Values & Virtues

Stories are powerful and have a lasting impact on people, especially on young people. Using the 'lost art' of story-telling with the local Award-winning Khayaal Theatre, the multi faith storytelling aims to spell inter-faith and intercultural understanding and peacebuilding in the most creative way, to young audiences.

Faiths, Cultural & Civic events

With Luton's rich faith and cultural diversity, we have supported annual iconic events like the Holocaust Memorial, Big Iftar, Eid in the Park, Colours of Eid, Diwali, Nawruz. Vaisakhi, Easter and Christmas to name a few. These events form part of the public cultural landscape of Luton celebrating the diversity of the town and bringing communities across all walks of life together.

Peace Walk

In its 27th year, Luton's Annual Peace Walk continued to be one of the most popular multi-faith events in the town. While also commemorating the UN's International Day of Peace (IDP), it attracted people of all ages from Luton's diverse communities. The hosts were Our Lady Help of Christians Church, Luton Christian Fellowship, Turkish Mosque & Community Centre, and Guru Ravidass Sangat Luton. Several dignitaries included the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Susan Lousada, Mayor of Luton Cllr Yaqub Hanif, Luton MPs Sarah Owen & Rachel Hopkins, Bishop of Bedford Rt. Revd. Richard Atkinson and Cllrs. Javeria Hussain and Maria Lovell. It was indeed a public demonstration of community solidarity and yet another step towards building a stronger Luton. Students and teachers from Ramridge, Chantry, Southfield, and Whitefield Primary Schools gave presentations about their work on climate change and environmental issues. Young individuals who had completed the CATALYST Youth Leadership & Mental Health Training Programs, sponsored by Near Neighbours, were awarded certificates.

Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week is a time when the spotlight is on all the organisations like ours who work tirelessly for inter-faith understanding and cooperation in Luton and across the UK. Our work to build connections between people of different faiths and beliefs is enormously important. In commemorating Inter Faith Week 2023, we held a multifaith storytelling event with stories of values and virtues across for the wider public at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Stopsley. After the storytelling performance, the mixed audience of young and old, identified that values of kindness, generosity, patience, faith, courage, perseverance, and resilience were common in all the stories told from the Hindu, Jewish, Christian & Muslim backgrounds.

Swedish Guests

We had the pleasure to host a multi-faith group of over thirty guests and visitors from Sweden who chose to visit Luton. They wanted to learn from Luton's experiences of inter-faith work, tackling far-right and how communities, government & Police, both locally and nationally, strive to work for strengthening community cohesion while also promoting unity in diversity. They were all ecstatic and thought visiting Luton had been worthwhile as it offered them a rich and inspirational experience. They observed a meeting of Luton's faith leaders and were astounded to see religious leaders having an honest and open conversation on both local and global issues that affect life in Luton. They learnt a great deal during their field visits to Discover Islam Centre, Luton Council's Social Justice Unit, Bedfordshire Police Community Cohesion, The Feast, Grassroots & Near Neighbours Programmes.

Financial review and reserves

The net incoming resources for the year was a deficit of £5,689 (2023 – surplas of 5,133). At the end of the financial year the reserves were £39,003 (2023 - £44,692) of unrestricted funds and a deficit of £13,389 (2023 – deficit of £13,389) of restricted funds. The adequacy of the reserves policy is reviewed annually. The trustees are satisfied that reserves are presently more than adequate to meet future expenditure. The Trustees have a policy of aiming to retain reserves equivalent to six months' average expenditure. This is due to the uncertain nature of funding received. The total reserve funds at the year-end were £25,614.

Future plans

The trustees intend to continue provide relief in a similar manner as before.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and its financial activities for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent examiner

The trustees intend to ask the existing accountants to undertake the independent examination of the trust in the following year.

Signed on behalf of the trustees

..... Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson 15/07/2024

..... Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer

Date: 15.07.2024

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024	Restricted income funds 2024	Endowment Funds 2024	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		4,786	-	-	**4,786**	5,000
- Investments		-	-	-	-	-
- Charitable activities	6	47,423	-		**47,423**	72,100
- Other Income		-	-		-	3,360
Total incoming resources		**52,209**	-	-	**52,209**	80,460
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		6,470	-	-	**6,470**	4,499
Governance and support costs		51,230	-	-	**51,230**	67,238
Other expenditure		198	-	-	**198**	3,590
Total expenditure		**57,898**	-	-	**57,898**	75,327
Net Movement in Funds		**(5,689)**	-	-	**(5,689)**	5,133
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**44,692**	**(13,389)**	-	**31,103**	26,170
Total funds carried forward		**39,003**	**(13,389)**	-	**25,614**	31,303

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these accounts.

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024	Restricted income funds 2024	Endowment Funds 2024	Total this year 2024	Total this year 2023
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11	-		-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		27,521		-	27,521	33,297
Total current assets		27,521		-	27,521	33,297
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(1,907)	-	-	(1,907)	(1,994)
Net current assets		25,614	-	-	**25,614**	**31,303**
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		39,003			39,003	44,692
Restricted Income funds			(13,389)		(13,389)	(13,389)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		39,003	(13,389)		**25,614**	**31,303**

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

..... Mr Zafar Khan - Chairperson Date: 15/07/2024

..... Mr Kishore Kaler - Treasurer Date: 15.07.2024

Luton Council of Faiths
Year Ended 31st March 2024

1. Accounting policies

a) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

b) Recognition of Income – there are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources and monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

c) Investment income is recorded when receivable

d) All expenditure is included in the accounts on an accrual basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the SOFA as incurred.

e) The restricted funds of the charity are expendable funds which is regularly increased or retained as capital at the trustees' discretion.

f) All capital related expenditure costing more than £750 is capitalised. Depreciation on fixtures and fittings is charged on a straight line basis over 5 years.

2. Taxation

Luton Council of Faiths is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they apply to charitable purposes.

3. Restricted

The restricted donations in the current year and the previous year represent income mainly from Grants but also from donations to the Luton Council of Faiths restricted funds only.

4. Analysis of employees costs

		2024	2023
		£	£
Salaries and PAYE		30,000	29,761
Employers Pension		-	2,340
Total		30,000	32,101

The number of full-time employees during the year was one and there were no average part time members of staff.

5. Related Party transactions

None of the trustees were paid any remuneration or expenses by the charity during the year (2023 £nil)

6. Analysis of Income from Charitable activities

	2024 Unrestricted	2024 Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation and the Luton Rising-Community Investment Fund	47,423	-	47,423	49,700
Other donations	4,786	-	4,786	5,000
Haysac Foundation	-	-	-	4,900
National Lottery fund	-	-	-	10,000
The Steel Charitable Trust	-	-	-	7,500
Total	52,209	-	52,209	77,100

7. Analysis of Other income

	2024 Unrestricted	2024 Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours	-	-	-	3,360
Total	-	-	-	3,360

8. Analysis of Charitable expenditure

The charity has undertaken direct activity to meet its charitable purposes. The following is the analysis of the charity's direct expenditure:

	2024 Unrestricted	2024 Restricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Books Resources	-	-	-	117
Other Events, Programmes and items	6,470	-	6,470	4,382
Total	6,470	-	6,470	4,499

9. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2024		2023
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

10. Other resources expended by the charity include:

	2024 Unrestricted	2024 Restricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Near Neighbours	-	-	-	3,360
Charitable giving and donations	198	-	198	230
Total	198	-	198	3,590

11. Governance and Support costs

Support costs, consisting of the rent and rates and staff salaries are split between charitable activity and governance on an actual or equal estimated basis. This is because it is difficult to estimate the expense attributable to each activity. Support costs apportioned to the different aims of the charity are shown in the note below.

	Basis of Apportionment	2024 £ Unrestricted	2024 £ Restricted	2024 £ Total	2023 £ Unrestricted
Office costs	Actual	2,001	-	2,001	1,125
Subscriptions	Actual	80	-	80	50
Travelling and general expenditure	Actual	655	-	655	374
Equipment	Actual	1,684	-	1,684	599
Salaries and staff costs	Actual	30,000	-	30,087	30,103
Pensions	Actual	2,100		2,100	2,340
Grass roots	Actual	12,000	-	12,000	12,000
Insurance	Actual	724	-	724	646
Telephone	Actual	660	-	660	980
Professional	Actual	772	-	772	772
Advertising and publicity	Actual	216	-	216	216
Volunteering	Actual	338	-	338	533
Grassroots (Oaks Consultancy)	Actual	-	-	-	17,500 -
Total		51,230	-	51,230	67,238

Tangible Fixed Assets

There were no movements or any tangible fixed assets currently held by the Charity during the year.

12. Analysis of Debtors.

	2024		2023
Restricted funds	-		-
Total	-		-

13. Analysis of Creditors

	2024		2023
Independent examiner's fee	600		600
PAYE	1,307		1,394
Total	1,907		1,994

Independent examiner's Report to the Trustees of Luton Council of Faiths

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2024 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit in not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true or fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

I Hussain and Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

England & Wales - Charity number 1089850

Accounts

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

Annual Report

2022-2023



Luton Council of Faiths

Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) began with a group of people from different faiths during 1994-1995, as part of the Grassroots Programme.

On 10th July 1997, the Luton Interfaith Forum was launched and then in 2000 the name 'Luton Council of Faiths' was adopted.

LCoF then achieved independent charitable status in 2001.

Since then LCoF has continued to work as a partner with the Grassroots Programme and Luton Borough Council, whilst also networking with many other organisations within and beyond Luton's borders.

Visit Our Website:
www.lutonfaiths.org

Email Us:
info@lutonfaiths.org

Call Us:
01582 416946

Write To Us:
Luton Council of Faiths
C/O Grassroots Programme
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 0BW

Like / Follow Us Online:

www.facebook.com/groups/LutonFaith

www.twitter.com/LutonFaiths

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Charity no: 1089850

Front Cover Image:

LCOF meeting with the Queen's Tree of Trees Award Pot

Funders, Partners and Volunteers

Core Funder

- Bedfordshire & Luton Community Fund (BLCF) as part of Luton Rising – Community Investment Fund

Projects Funder

- Near Neighbours Fund

Key Partners

- Grassroots Programme
- Luton Council
- Bedfordshire Police
- Near Neighbours Programme

Key Supporters – Faith & Voluntary Organisations

- Churches Together in Luton
- Sunni Council of Mosques
- Luton Council of Mosques
- Guru Nanak Gurdwara
- Shri Guru Ravi Dass Sangat
- Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj Hindu Temple
- BAPS Swami Narayan Hindu Temple
- Bedfordshire Progressive Synagogue
- Luton United Synagogue
- Luton Bahai Community
- Luton Quakers
- Luton Sathya Sai Service Organisation
- LanTern Luton
- OM Group
- Our Minds Matter (OMM)
- Centre for Youth and Community Development (CYCD)
- St Mary's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation
- Faiths Against Child Sexual Exploitation (FACES)
- Luton Polish School
- Luton Polonia
- Luton Irish Forum
- University of Bedfordshire & Treehouse Chaplaincy
- Ghar se Ghar
- The Luton News and Herald & Post
- Khayaal Theatre Company
- Luton SACRE

Along with the names above, we would also like to thank all the individuals who volunteer with Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF), offering their time, experience and expertise for the work we do!

CONTENTS

Message from the Chair – Professor Zafar Khan ..... Page 2

Tribute to Her Majesty The Queen ..... Page 3

Environment, Ecology and Human Connectedness ..... Page 4

Fairtrade Fortnight ..... Page 12

Health and Wellness ..... Page 13

Standing Against Racism ..... Page 14

Catalyst Youth Leadership Programme ..... Page 15

Mental Health ..... Page 16

Faith Leaders School Assemblies ..... Page 17

Faiths, Cultural and Civic events ..... Page 18

Peace Walk ..... Page 20

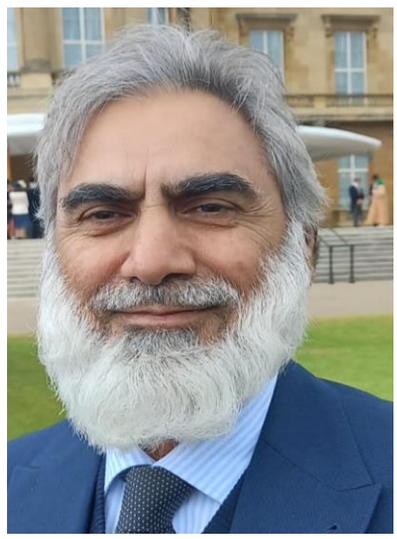
Inter-faith week ..... Page 23

Community Harmony and Service ..... Page 25

Awards & Recognition ..... Page 28

Accounts ..... Page 29

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



2022 saw the end of an era with the death of the longest-reigning Monarch in the UK. We would like to honour Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth in this annual report while welcoming King Charles III whom many Luton residents have had the privilege to meet during his visit to Luton on 6th December 2022.

With all the challenges we face as a small organisation with a big network, our work continues to thrive and is still much needed as racism rises with the national social and political climate.

The Peace Garden initiative continues to develop with connecting hearts and inspiring minds. We continue to support this important community-led project which has also been Awarded the Queen's Green Canopy Tree of Trees.

The depth and breadth of LCOF's work is reflected in this annual report, while we would also like to acknowledge a variety of work happening across faith communities in Luton.

The latest census data shows that Luton is still highly religious with 78% of the Lutonians adhering to a faith. What is even more important is to see how Faith communities are playing their central role in addressing poverty, and destitution.

What is even more important is to see how Faith communities are playing their central role in addressing poverty and meeting the needs of the most destitute. In the early days, we had Noah Soup Kitchen and then came a multifaith Foodbank, then, the Discover Islam Curry Kitchen, and we saw GoDharmic with the latest addition of the Sikh Soup Kitchen. We have also seen the emergence of new organisations like Raise Up and Courtney Foundation tackling not just food poverty but also digital poverty and meeting other basic needs and aspirations of young people.

Luton Faith communities have been the safety net in our society. Despite all its deprivation, Luton is remarkably in the top 3 most generous towns in the UK. This says a lot about our communities' values and virtues. Having said that, we also need to hold policymakers to account as it feels faith communities and volunteers have become fair game for them rather than them doing their part which we expect as taxpayers.

We also continue the ever-demanding work with young people from leadership to mental health, while equally engaging with our now on-demand Faith Leaders' Assembly in primary schools that involves answering challenging questions from the young minds who are the future of our town and the country.

Once again, we feel humbled to have received another award this time from the Bedfordshire Police. We attribute LCOF's success to all our dedicated volunteers and support network.

As I always say, Luton is a community of 230, 000 plus people, which in many ways is reflected in our work. Despite funding limitations, and being a small voluntary organisation, we have been able to do so much during the lockdown.

Locally, let's continue working together for the common good and strive to fulfil the aspirations of all in our town for a better life. Globally, we condemn wherever there is ongoing oppression and there is a lack of political will to resolve it. We pray for peace in many conflicts and war-torn parts of the world. We hope for the sanctity of human life and that of our beautiful creation to be always preserved.

Professor Zafar Khan

Tribute to Her Majesty

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



People across Luton expressed their deep sadness at the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with services held especially at Luton Town Hall and St Mary's Church.

At her 21st birthday the future queen made a solemn vow:

I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great Imperial family to which we all belong, but I shall not have the strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in with me, as I now invite you to do. I know that your support will be unfailingly given. God help me to make good my vow and God bless all of you who are willing to share in it.

The Queen was no stranger to Luton. She and the prince stayed at the house of their friends the Wernhers at Luton Hoo during their honeymoon in 1947, and returned to the Hoo many times around the time of their wedding anniversary. When they did they would regularly worship at St Mary's Church in the town centre. A plaque in the church (right) marks the seat where the queen sat on her visit soon after her accession to the throne in 1952.



The queen and prince took the opportunity of time in Luton to visit more widely, and for example in 1952 the Duke paid a surprise visit to Electrolux. We know that so many in the town were proud of the Queens association with Luton.

Everyone in the nation grieved the loss of a leader who we knew cared deeply for all people and who held her own faith very dear to her. Her support of charity and the whole voluntary sector was important to us all and Luton Council of Faiths was one of the last few charities to recieve the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021.



Service at St Mary's Church joined by LCOF with many dignitaries including the Mayor

Peace Garden Initiative (Year 2)

A Tree for Every Life

With about 800 lives lost during the lockdown, the Peace Garden Initiative continued from strength to strength capturing people's imagination and winning hearts.

We also know that during COVID-19, areas that are less densely populated areas in the country like Luton and have more greenery had fewer COVID-19 cases as compared to densely populated areas like Luton in the country. Comorbidities like metabolic disorders were related to the high incidence of COVID-19 and death. Data shows that the prominence of Type 2 diabetes is higher in South-Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities though diabetes cuts across ethnicities due to various lifestyle issues and environmental pollution. A 2022 multi-ethnic study shows that there is a strong correlation between the reduction of Type 2 diabetes and green spaces.

Over the last 16 months around 629 trees have been planted with 252 trees planted only in this last quarter between January and March. The tree planting season will start again next autumn while crucial maintenance work will happen during spring and summer time like last year. Many trees did withstand the extreme cold weather and scorching summer last year thanks to the effort of our volunteers and the mechanism put in place like renting tanks for watering and mulching.

Maintenance has been a key part of this project and many volunteers joined forces. Sadly, we had a tragic incidence at Stopsley Common where the trees were vandalised.

Below is an update about the total number of trees planted so far as:

Area	No	Varieties
Wigmore Park Orchard	71	Apples, Pears and Plums
Wigmore Park Woodland	150	Hawthorn, Oak, Beech, Rowan, Holly
Wardown Park	13	Field Maple and Beech
Pope's Meadow	20	Beech and Scots Pine
People's Park Orchard extension	7	Apples
Mayne Avenue	90	Beech
Stopsley Common	26	Limes and Elm
Chaul End Community Centre	151	27 in the orchard, Elm, lime, Birch and Oak
Lewsey Park	50	Beech
Riddy Lane	51	Walnut, Pear, Quince, Medlar, Mulberry, Wild service tree, Rowan, Crab Apple, Hazel, Fig

Total planted: 629

However, the project lost the 90 beech at Mayne Avenue and 26 trees at Stopsley bringing the total down to 513.

Over the last 3 months, we have had nearly 200 people volunteering in the project where we planted in Challney, Lewsey and Barnfield areas. For many people, it was the first time they planted a tree. We also launched the Peace Garden Guardians at Downside Primary School with an assembly of about 300 children following up with an afternoon of action mulching the trees supported by the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire with the aim to nurture the next generation of tree planters and carers as the project was rightly awarded the Tree of Trees for the Queen's Green Canopy.

Maintenance over the summer







Maintenance over the summer









Environmental Ecology and Human Connectedness















Environmental Ecology and Human Connectedness













The Peace Garden Guardians Launch:







Those little legs got half a ton of mulching done in 25 minutes. The hardest part was to get them organised 😊

Environmental Ecology and Human Connectedness













Queen's Green Canopy Tree of Trees









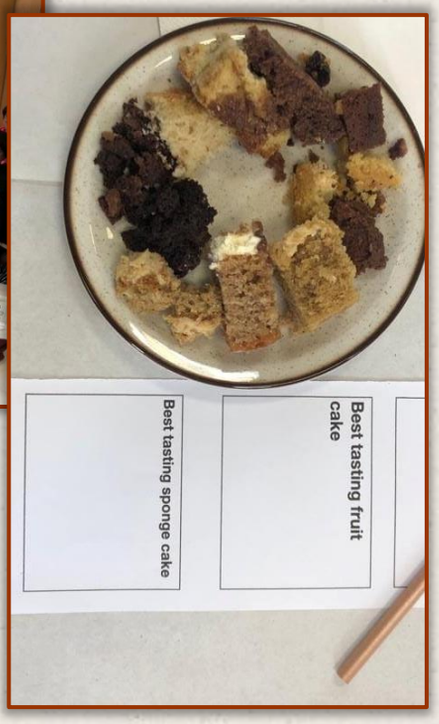
Fairtrade Baking Competition at St Anne's Church

The 4th Annual Fairtrade Cake Baking Competition held at St Anne's Church is another way of engaging with and involving people from different faiths and cultures in strengthening the Luton Fairtrade campaign which has been strong for the last 18 years.

The bakers were invited to present their cakes with recipes and the packaging as evidence of the three fair-trade ingredients. Nearly 50 guests, friends, and neighbours were then asked to taste the cakes and choose the three best cakes – the best-looking cake, the best-tasting fruit cake, and the best-tasting sponge cake.

The top three winners were given Fairtrade prizes.











Wellness Guided Walk

Our Wellness walks started in January working in partnership with and organised by Community Interest Luton & Luton Lions alongside Inspire FM and Total Well-being Luton

To date 125, people whose paths may never have crossed shared an epic experience. We laughed, we shared stories, and we had a fabulous 3 hours, 6 miles and 20K steps in the slippery, muddy Warden Hills taking in the most beautiful scenery and epic views over Barton Hills. The second one started at Foxdell going all the way towards Dunstable.









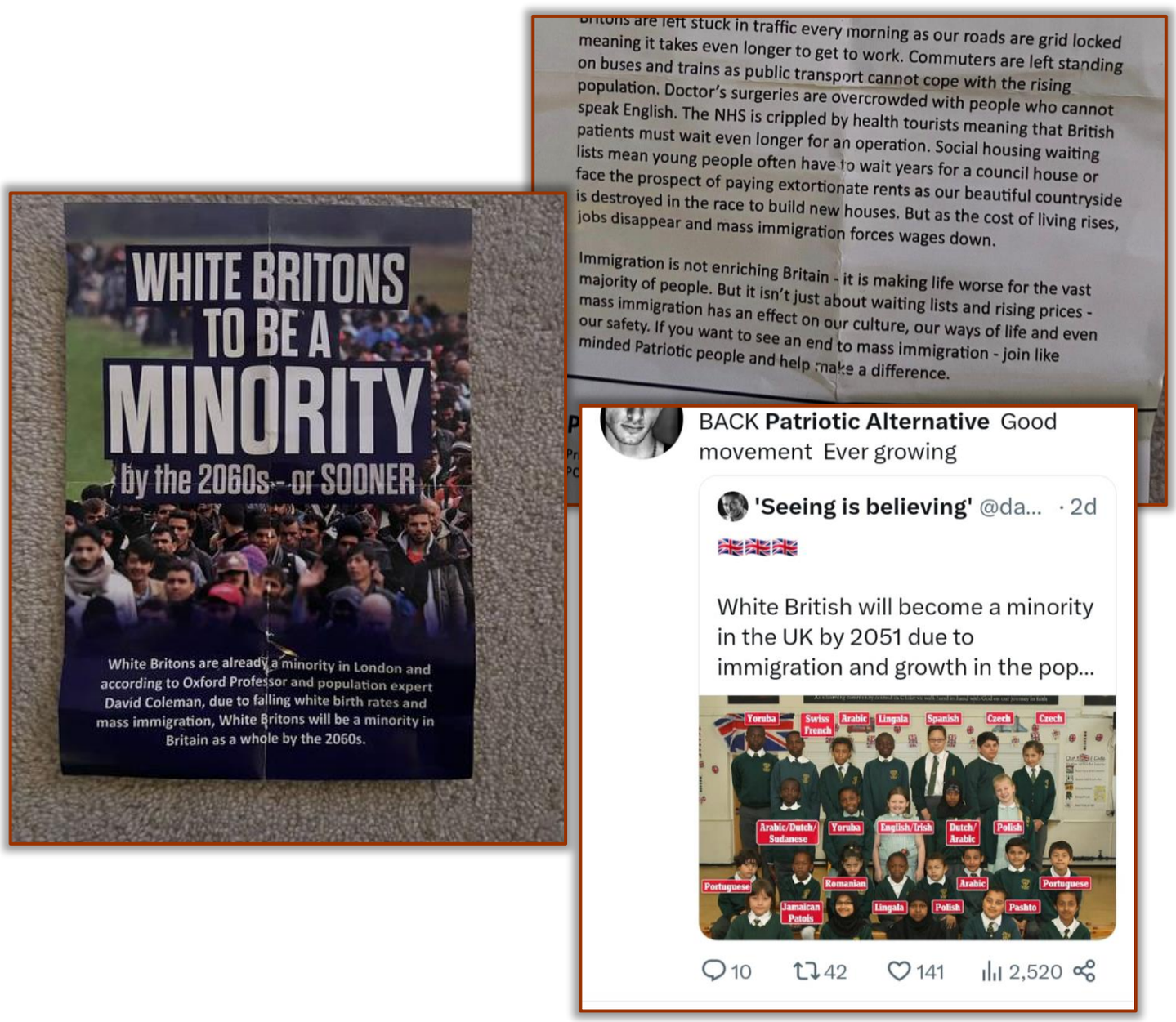
Patriotic Alternative

In the current political climate, it is important we challenge the same old same old far-right rhetoric, which seeks to build again a dangerous narrative that we have experienced in the past. What's even more concerning is that people involved in this group are very young and their stance is against all people of colour.

We've heard it all now...blaming traffic on minority ethnic people! This is despite the last census showing a different picture that most people in the UK speak English. Only 161,000 out of 67.33 million people – 0.002% of the UK's population – cannot speak English, but the data shows they have someone English-speaking to help them.

It has been great to see many key leaders taking a stance on social media to raise concerns regarding far right dangerous and unfounded views. We cannot be complacent. However, more work is needed, especially in schools and working with families.

In an incident a local key community leader was threatened by members of the PA group during their door to door leafleting. After this, an urgent meeting was called at Luton's Discover Islam Centre, involving Police and Council representation, to assess and review the risks and minimising its impact.



Working with young people

Catalyst Youth Leadership returned to Luton again this year.
Over 50 young leaders have been trained in Luton so far. 12 more young people from Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist and no faith backgrounds completed this amazing 4-day training. The course included topics of Faith, Identity & Belonging, Leadership Styles, Qualities & Challenges, Media & Effective Communication, Social Action and Positive Change.

The course illustrated how our identities are complex because we are shaped by many different factors such as our upbringing in life, where we live, our racial, ethnic, religious backgrounds etc. And all these factors influence our understanding of issues such as immigration, integration, gender & racial justice, violence & extremism, citizenship, equal economic opportunity and freedom of speech. Young people therefore learnt about how prejudice and stereotypes are formed and how to identify and tackle the challenges of discrimination. They learnt how we all can take away something positive that another race, religion or belief, other than our own, brings to British society.



Mental Health

Transforming Exams Stress for Teens

Over the years, we have been running HeartMath especially in Luton Schools to help young people to manage their emotions.

We were invited to hold a mini workshop at Al Hikmah School on dealing with exams stress as they have started their GCSE exams.

We explored stress and our inner weather looking at emotions and our automatic negative thoughts (ANTs), then moved into the HeartMath technique.

When asked them how they felt about the Heart-focused breathing technique, they said, Peace, Calm, really nice...

Then we got a wow in the room after the Quick Coherence breathing technique 'this is amazing' one of the girls said!.

We know how deceptively simple HeartMath is but has over 30 years of science behind it.

Although I love and I am passionate about the science and mechanism behind HeartMath... just immersing in the technique is something one needs to experience.

As it's a Faith-based school we explored how HeartMath can be adapted to their faith.





Faith Leaders School Assemblies

What will make our Town more Respectful with KS2 pupils

Seeing a local group of religiously and culturally diverse faith & community leaders coming together, creates a positive and lasting visual impact on young impressionable minds. Despite our religious differences, we demonstrated how we work together for the common good. This project is an annual on-demand 45 minutes school assembly highly appreciated in schools. It is more interesting to hear leaders talk about peace and harmony from a local perspective so that children can connect it to their town. Nearly 1000 children have had the opportunity to listen to what our leaders have to say according to their traditions and ask questions.



Faiths, Cultural & Civic events

With our rich faith and cultural diversity, we have annual iconic events like the Holocaust Memorial, Big Iftar, Eid in the Park, Diwali, Nawruz. Vaisakhi, and Christmas to name a few. These events form part of the public cultural landscape of Luton celebrating the diversity of the town and bringing communities across all walks of life together.



Holocaust Memorial (National)



Baha'i Nawruz



Big Iftar- Ramadan



Colours of Eid



Diwali – Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj



Annakut- BAPS Sawmi Narayan

Faiths, Cultural & Civic events





Vaisakhi- Guru Nanak Gurdwara





Shree Guru Ravidass Sangat 40th Anniversary



Christmas at Luton Mall



Peace Light Service All Saints Church

Peace Walk 2022

In Sep last year, communal tensions started in Leicester and were fuelled across many areas in the country via the social media. It is a matter of pride that Luton stayed calm and mature. Luton's faith communities remained focused on working together for peace and human flourishing, locally as well as globally.
The evidence of this was seen at Luton's 26th Annual Peace Walk. People from different faiths and those with no particular faith affiliation came together in one of the most popular events led by Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF). It was an opportunity to be together in solidarity and walk and talk with one another, while visiting different places of worship too.

It was inspiring to hear the amazing refugees & asylum seekers support work carried out by Madinah Mosque and All Saints Church, together in partnership, in the Bury Park Beech Hill area of Luton.
A few teachers and pupils from Chantry, Southfield and Whitefield Primary Schools gave some of their weekend to join in this initiative. Children recited poetry on the theme of Peace. A teacher said events like these help nurture young minds positively. We must leave a legacy for our young people to latch on to this belief that peace and harmony are not abstract theories; instead, they are practical and life fulfilling possibilities, provided we work to turn these possibilities into living realities.

Peace Walk started at High Town Methodist Church, where people's donations for Luton Food Bank were collected. People were then led to visit areas where trees have been planted in memory of those who passed away due to Covid. At the Ukrainian Chapel, people expressed solidarity with Ukrainians and all those who are suffering because of wars and conflicts in different parts of the world. Peace Walk concluded at the newly built Guru Nanak Gurdwara on Dallow Road, where the Sikh hospitality known as 'Langar Seva' (serving free communal meal) was, as always, outstanding, and admirable.

Faith and community leaders in our town have worked very hard over the years to create a culture of dialogue and cooperation resulting in respect, tolerance, and harmony across Luton's diverse Faith and community leaders in our town have worked very hard over the years to create a culture of dialogue and cooperation resulting in respect, tolerance, and harmony across Luton's diverse communities. We felt so proud that one of our young volunteers Nitin Verma, a Hindu, studying in Cambridge, came with a Muslim friend to join the Peace Walk, to give out a clear message that as young people we want to create an environment where people from all diverse backgrounds can flourish, so that together we can make our world a better place for everyone. He strongly condemned Hindu-Muslim hostility being shown at that time in the media across the country.





Peace Walk 2022

Highlights of the Peace Walk Journey





High Town Methodist Church









People of all ages and from different walks of life joined the Annual Peace Walk.

Peace Walk 2022





At the Ukrainian Chapel





At the Guru Nanak Gurdwara





Langar at the Gurdwara

Interfaith Week

Inter Faith Week is a time when the spotlight is on all the organisations like ours who work tirelessly for inter-faith understanding and cooperation in Luton and across the UK. Our work to build connections between people of different faiths and beliefs is enormously important, and in the aftermath of COVID-19, finding new ways to make connections and renewing our friendships is vital.

In commemorating Inter Faith Week 2022, over 50 faith and community leaders, from diverse religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, attended a special meeting with Luton North MP Sarah Owen.

Luton North MP Sarah Owen is also the Shadow Minister for Faith and she is spearheading, with Stephen Timms MP, the Labour Party's new work on Faith Champions.

At this special meeting, MP Sarah Owen said, “Other parts of the UK do not have an active inter faith engagement as in Luton, so one of my tasks is to shout about good things happening in Luton.”

She stated, “Tackling deprivation levels in one of the richest nations is unimaginable as faith communities are expected to give and do more and more.”

In the aftermath of Covid-19, it is often heard we are finally going back to normal, but she said, “Going back to normal isn’t good enough because normal wasn’t good for many people.”

.



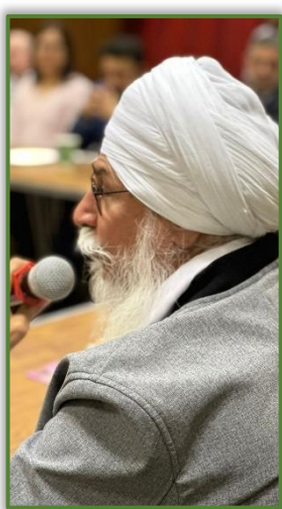












Interfaith week





Bishop Richard Interfaith Week visits



Luton Central Mosque



Luton United Synagogue



Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj Hindu Temple

Community Harmony and Service



Big Iftar –breaking the Fast



Big Iftar Award Ceremony





Imams and the Muslim Community greeting the Sikh community in Bury Park during their procession





Baha'i World Religion Day

Community Harmony and Service



Inspire FM 25 years of Service



Diwali Fund Raise for Pakistan Flood appeal





Sikh Soup Kitchen





Flamstead Church visit by Medina Mosque

Community Harmony and Service



Medina Mosque Open Day



Shree Guru Ravidass Sangat Cookery Classes with Europeans in Luton

L& D Hospital Chaplaincy training day



Guru Nanak Gurdwara



Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj Hindu Temple



Madina Mosque

Awards & Recognition



Bedfordshire Police Cohesion Award



Saida Chakkor received the Phiatus Award from The Worshipful Company of Actuaries for her volunteering with LCoF



Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace



UNA Luton gave an Award of Recognition to Johny for his service.

The King's Visit

Highlights with Faith Leaders





What was your secret conversation with the king?









Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2023

	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted income funds 2023	Endowment Funds 2023	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
Incoming resources					
Income and endowments from:					
- Donations and legacies	5,000	-	-	**5,000**	2,000
- Investments	-	-	-	**-**	-
- Charitable activities	49,700	22,400		**72,100**	51,838
- Other Income	-	3,360		**3,360**	2,550
Total incoming resources	**54,700**	**25,760**	**-**	**80,460**	56,388
Resources expended					
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	-	-	-	-	-
Costs of generating voluntary income	-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs	-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs	-	-	-	**-**	-
Charitable activities	4,499	0	-	**4,499**	3,604
Governance and support costs	49,738	17,500	-	**67,238**	51,633
Other expenditure	230	3,360	-	**3,590**	2,675
Total expenditure	**54,467**	**20,860**	-	**75,327**	57,942
Net Movement in Funds	**233**	**4,900**	-	**5,133**	(1,554)
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total funds brought forward	**44,459**	**(18,289)**	-	**26,170**	27,724
Total funds carried forward	**44,692**	**(13,389)**	-	**31,303**	26,170

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2023

	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted income funds 2023	Endowment Funds 2023	Total this year 2023	Total this year 2022
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets					
Debtors		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	33,297		-	33,297	26,770
Total current assets	33,297		-	33,297	26,770
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(1,994)	-	-	(1,994)	(600)
Net current assets	31,303	-	-	**31,303**	**26,170**
Funds of the Charity					
Unrestricted funds	44,692			44,692	44,459
Restricted Income funds		(13,389)		(13,389)	(18,289)
Endowment funds			-	-	-
Total funds	44,692	(13,389)		**31,303**	**26,170**


LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

Registered charity number: 1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

Luton Council of Faiths
Period Ended 31st March 2023
Contents

1. Charity Information
2-7 Trustees' Report
8. Statement of Financial Activities
9. Balance Sheet
10-13. Notes to the Financial Statements
14. Independent Examiner's Report

Luton Council of Faiths
Charity Information as at 31st March 2023

Charity name
Luton Council of Faiths

Charity number
1089850

Principal address
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 OBW

Trustees
Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson
Mrs Gulie Butcher – Vice Chair
Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer
Mr Dhansukh Panchal
Mr Yogesh Mistry

Bankers
The Co-operative Bank
Alma Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2PL

Lloyds TBS Bank Plc
60 George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BB

Independent examiner
I. Hussain & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Luton Council of Faiths
Trustees Annual Report

History, objectives and activities of the Charity

On constitution it was believed the multicultural cohesion of the religious and cultural communities in Luton required addressing. The charity began with an initial grant. Both the initial grant and subsequent grants since have been under the terms which allow the trustees to either retain the amounts as capital or to spend them.

The objectives of the charity include;

a) To bring together members of the different faith communities in Luton for deeper dialogue and co-operation
b) To increase understanding and trust between different faiths, building on common ground between them yet respecting the unique contribution which each brings
c) To work towards greater social cohesion and community integration in Luton
d) To see inter faith co-operation as linking into global co-operation between faiths and cultures for the creation of a better world

Management and Governance arrangements

The constitution provides for a minimum of five trustees. Where there is a requirement for new trustees, these would be identified and appointed by the remaining trustees, subject to the approval by AGM. The chair of the trustees is responsible for the induction of any new trustee which involves awareness of a trustee's responsibility, the governing document, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the charity. The trustees have taken steps to identify major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Achievements and Performance of the Charity

Annual Report April 2022 – March 2023 for LCoF Accounts

During the last year in our country, we sadly saw the end of an era with the death of the longest reigning Monarch in the UK. We would like to honour Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth in this annual report while welcoming King Charles III whom many Luton residents have had the privilege to meet during his Luton visit on 6th December 2023.

Last year, another sad BBC news headline reported *"Three PMs in two months, is political chaos the UK's new normal?"*

In addition, we have had the unavoidable and unstoppable cost of living crisis and the country still feeling the effects of the pandemic. Moreover, the disproportionately high numbers of refugees and asylum seekers placed in our town and in unsuitable accommodation further strained local communities' compassion and generosities.

On the other hand, right-wing extremists are using refugees, asylum seekers (and immigrants too) as scapegoats. Their ideas are now increasingly becoming mainstream fuelling political fundamentalism, majoritarianism, xenophobia, and general intolerance and contributing significantly to the rise in identity politics. Amidst such political and economic challenges and uncertainties, as a small organisation, with limited resources, we have tried our best to do what we can. Some of the key highlights are summarised below;

Key Highlights

UK's Chief Rabbi hosted Iftar
During the month of Ramadan 2022, friends from Luton Council of Faiths felt honoured to be invited by the UK's Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis for an Iftar gathering at his London office.

High Sheriff of Bedfordshire 2022-23 visit to Luton
We facilitated the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire 2022-23 first ever visit to Luton's different faith communities. She was humbled and moved by the warmth and hospitality she had received. She said, "My visit has proven to be an excellent chance for networking and building relationships. The number of groups and individuals making a difference in Luton is inspiring. Religious leaders, faith-based organisations, and faith groups provide vital support, comfort, and guidance to the communities they serve."

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Thanksgiving Service
We helped HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis in hosting a very special and historic event and Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's Church, Luton, to commemorate HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the services of voluntary organisations across Bedfordshire. People from different faith communities attended in good numbers and our LCoF Director played a part in the service.

Royal Garden Party
In May'23, the Chair, Vice Chair and a staff of the Luton Council of Faiths were invited to attend the Royal Garden Party. The Chair said, "As we face many challenges, may the life of the Queen inspire us all to continue striving to make Britain even greater, where equality, peace, justice & equity helps all to live their lives in all its abundance."

Peace Walk for Ukraine
We supported and joined Luton's Ukrainians Peace Walk in Wardown Park as a sign of solidarity for the safety, well-being and prosperity of Ukraine. LCoF Chair said, "Let's imagine a world where healing replaces harm, and a desire to care for those in need, is kindled as part of our shared humanity."

European Christians visit Luton
With GRASSROOTS, we hosted an immersion visit of several Church leaders from across Europe, to learn from Luton's multi faith context. A participant said, "Watching different faith communities working together in Luton have provided us hope – hope in action."

BBC Songs of Praise covered Hospital Chaplains Inter Faith Training
We facilitated a group of Luton & Dunstable Hospital Chaplains from different ethnic and national backgrounds, to visit Luton's different places of worship. LCoF continues to create opportunities to bring people together so that we can understand why people are the way they are; and discover them as our 'allies', and not our enemies because they share the same aspirations as we do. It Out became even more special as the BBC Songs of Praise Team followed and covered it all. It was broadcasted on the first Sunday in September 2022.

Roman Catholic Bishop's first visit to Luton
We hosted The Right Reverend David James Oakley, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton, when he made his first visit to Luton. After visiting the Central Mosque, Discover Islam Center, and Guru Nanak Gurudwara, Bishop David remarked, "This has been one of the best and the happiest days since I took over as the Bishop." He extended Eid Greetings to all the Muslim friends and communities in Luton, to which the President of Luton's Central Mosque Mohammad Shafait reciprocated saying, "We Muslims and Christians are called to open ourselves to others, so we can tear down walls raised out of fear and ignorance and seek together to build bridges of friendship that are fundamental for the good of all humanity."

Luton's Annual Peace Walk

In Sep'22 there were communal (Hindu-Muslim) tensions across the country, mainly in Leicester and Birmingham. In Luton, however, faith communities stayed mature and held the calm. At the 26th Annual Peace Walk, we visited different places of worship, including High Town Methodist Church, Ukrainian Chapel & Guru Nanak Gurudwara. School children from Chantry, Southfield, and Whitefield Primary Schools recited poetry on Peace. We felt so proud of our volunteer Nitin Verma, a Hindu, who brought a Muslim friend to give out a clear message at the Peace Walk that as young people we want to create an environment where people from all diverse backgrounds can flourish so that together we can make our world a better place for everyone. He strongly condemned the Hindu-Muslim hostility shown in the media across the country.

We collected donations for Luton Food Bank. People also visited High Town Peace Garden and People's Park & Pope's Meadow where trees have been planted in memory of those who passed away due to Covid. Concluding the event, Vice Chair Gulie Butcher said "May there be peace in the world and let it begin with me."

Black History Month

During Black History Month in Luton several events were held but we helped to promote the Black Culture Market offering a range of creative and interesting African-Caribbean products and materials. Secondly, we helped & promoted the launch of an interesting exhibition, commemorating the African experience of the Second World War. It was a photographic illustration of the contributions and sacrifices made by the African soldiers in World War II. Lastly, we supported a special event celebrating the Windrush generation that was held at All Saints Church Luton, during Black History Month.

Diwali in Luton 2022

Diwali in Luton 2022 was special this year because it helped to diffuse communal tensions that were being fuelled by social media across many areas in the country in Sep'22. Hindu-Muslim- Sikh and friends from other religious and ethnic backgrounds came together to co-organise this event, which was attended by thousands and all joined in proclaiming the message – we are one human race. This was significant in defying the Hindu-Muslim communal tensions incited by a few miscreants in a few parts of the UK. Luton's Hindus raised £1,100 for the Pakistan flood appeal. Luton's amazing community cohesion continues to transcend borders and barriers, globally and locally, and long may it continue.

Hindu New Year

At Hindu New Year (Annakut festival) celebrations members from different faith communities joined. Mr Yogesh Mistry of Lewsey Farm Hindu Temple said, "The most rewarding part is the sharing food together with one another regardless of religion, colour, age, gender or social status. May the New Year bring health, wealth and happiness to all. May the dignity of every human being and that of the creation be preserved in the coming year."

At Sikh Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 553rd Birth Anniversary Celebrations in Luton we helped bring together a Scouts group and Sikh youth group from different religious/cultural backgrounds, to share the spirit and messages of universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

Inter Faith Week

In commemorating this year's Inter Faith Week (IFW) Nov'22, three activities were held;

Firstly, C of E St Albans Diocesan Inter Faith Week Event was very well attended by people from all faiths and none. People were struck by the connections in the language used by the different faith representatives on the topical themes e.g. Climate Change, Racial Justice, Refugees & Asylum Seekers, Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation. It was particularly good to see lots of women too. A Jewish Rabbi said, "There was an excitement and spiritual uplift in the room before, during and after the event. It was a privilege to participate and to meet so many new faces and reconnect with friends. May the good work of all our communities, be blessed and bring blessings to those around us."

Secondly, faith and community leaders attended a special meeting with Luton North MP Sarah Owen (Shadow Faith Minister). She said, "Other parts of the UK do not have as active interfaith engagement as in Luton, so I'd shout about such good things happening in Luton."

Thirdly, we facilitated Bishop & Lord Lieutenant's visits to different places of worship in Luton, which helped with forging connections and establishing bonds. Sharing one another's concerns and aspirations during such visits helps to maintain strong community ties in Luton.

HM King Charles visited Luton

On 6th Dec'22, HM King Charles visited Luton Town Hall, Luton DART and he officially opened the newly built Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Luton, We helped with the inter-faith representation on the day. At the Gurudwara, HM King Charles spent considerable time meeting and conversing, listening to the Kirtan (Sikh religious devotional singing) and encouraging Luton Sikh Soup Kitchen volunteers who serve free meals in the Town.

World Religion Day

At an event by Luton Bahai's commemorating the World Religion Day in Luton, we propagated the ideas of oneness of religion and humanity, and that no one should be treated differently because of their race, age, gender, color, sexuality, or whether they believe in religion or not. We invited people from Luton's different faith communities to bring and share prayers, readings, meditations and thoughts on the themes of unity and peace.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)

To commemorate HM) 2023 we invited people from Luton's diverse communities, to watch the UK online Ceremony and to light candles in windows in remembrance of those murdered, as a sign of our commitment to stand against prejudice and hatred.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2023

During the annual Fairtrade Fortnight 27th Feb – 12th Mar 2023, we held the Fairtrade Cake Baking Competition. Nearly 50 guests, friends, and neighbours were asked to taste the cakes and choose the three best cakes. Later we also issued a statement encouraging people to celebrate Mothering Sunday with Fairtrade Flowers.

Luton Peace Garden Initiative

The Luton Peace Garden Initiative has been honoured with a special Royal tree that was planted at the Wardown Park Arboretum on 10th Jan'23. The Royal Tree was part of the late Queen Elizabeth II's Green Canopy UK-wide tree planting initiative. It was one of the 350 ceremonial trees from outside Buckingham Palace during the Queen's Jubilee. Those 350 trees were gifted to selected community groups and organisations across the country to recognise their work and inspire the next generation of tree planters. To date, over 600 trees have been planted in memory of those lost to Covid-19 in Luton. This has helped and supported families across Luton in the bereavement process and the project continues to bring communities together.

CATALYST Youth Leadership

In partnership with Near Neighbours Programme, we delivered CATALYST Youth Leadership Training programme, to help young people aged 16-26 from different backgrounds develop into positive role models. It was considered by the young people as an amazing opportunity to discuss and critically think about some of the most pressing issues of our time.

International Women's Day (IWD)
Marked annually on March 8th, IWD is one of the most important days of the year to celebrate women's achievements, to educate and raise awareness for women's equality, and to call for positive change advancing women. Several IWD events were held across the town, but we helped organise a celebratory event in partnership with a local women's group called 'Ghar se Ghar' Friends (Hindi/Urdu words meaning Home to Home). We also supported an online event by United Nations Association (UNA) Luton branch on this year's UN theme "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality".

Luton's Annual Peace Walk won the Bedfordshire Police Community Cohesion Award
It is great that LCoF won this award in the category of Promoting Diversity. The award citation read – Peace Walk includes visits to religious locations across the town, and provides the opportunity for residents from all backgrounds to come together, learn from one another and discover shared bonds. The Peace Walk is always well-attended with a great mix of young and old taking part. Each year a number of schools also get involved, ensuring that the young people of Luton understand one another and barriers are broken down.

Other LCoF Supported Work, Events & Activities

Clouds of Blessings
At St George's Square Eid festive celebrations, we invited people from different faiths for an inclusive Eid Parade. They were asked to hold the cloud props, made up of white balloons named as "The Clouds of Blessings". Thanking LCoF, the project lead said, "The work you do is so significant. I strongly feel Luton won't be the same without your presence and contributions."

Outdoor Storytelling Event
We helped Edible High Town co-deliver an outdoor storytelling event at High Town's Peace Garden, which was originally launched as the Peace Garden by Luton Council Faiths.

UNA-Luton presented a prestigious Outstanding Peace Champion Award
At a special event, UNA-Luton presented a prestigious Outstanding Peace Champion Award to David Jonathan Director of Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots Programme.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
In marking the annual observance of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christians from diverse backgrounds reflected together on the theme – What is Interfaith and why should Christians be involved with this? Guest Speaker Revd Dr Richard Sudworth, Secretary for Inter Religious Affairs to the Archbishop of Canterbury and National Inter Religious Affairs Adviser for the Church of England shared a wealth of reflections from his experiences of inter faith work.

International Mother Language Day
In partnership with United Nations Association (UNA) Luton Branch and Purbachal-the eastern sky, a Bangladeshi voluntary cultural organisation, we invited people and communities to celebrate International Mother Language Day. It encouraged respect for diverse heritages, histories, cultures, identities and highlighted how it can contribute to community cohesion.

Turkey and Syria Earthquake
We mobilised Luton's faith communities to stand in solidarity with Turkey and Syria following a record-breaking earthquake in early Feb'23.

Guru Ravidass Sangat Luton in celebrate 40th Anniversary
We supported Shri Guru Ravidass Sangat Luton in celebrating its 40th anniversary and invited people from Luton's diverse communities to join in applauding Sangat's work across communities and supporting interfaith work.

Nawruz (New Year) Celebrations
We supported Luton Baha'i Community' Nawruz (New Year) celebrations. A member of the Baha'i community, closed the programme singing these inspirational words - "One People, One Planet; there is no reason why we cannot live together peacefully."

Networking with the Public Sector Stakeholders
During the year, various issues and matters of practical concern were brought forward by Luton's different faith communities and also by several public sector organisations. To the best of our abilities, we helped in signposting and connecting public & faith sector representatives.

Conclusion
At the 6th Bedfordshire Police Community Cohesion Awards Ceremony held on 17th March 2023, not only Luton Peace Walk won the Cohesion Award in the category of Promoting Diversity (as reported above), but Luton Council of Faiths was also nominated in the Interfaith Champion category. The nomination read;

Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) is committed to encouraging and promoting tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding among people of all faiths and cultures, both in Luton and beyond. Over the years, LCoF has gained significant trust, confidence, and credibility in Luton, and works alongside a diverse array of agencies, organisations, and community groups in matters relating to community cohesion. LCoF delivers a number of community events and initiatives, including, but not exclusive to, the Annual Luton Peace Walk, musical concerts, public discussions, recreational sports projects, conservation work, and public vigils.

This summarises the LCoF work very well. Long may continue such positive work of LCoF.

Financial review and reserves

The net incoming resources for the year was a surplus of £5,133 (2022 – deficit of £1,554). At the end of the financial year the reserves were £44,692 (2022 - £44,459) of unrestricted funds and a deficit of £13,389 (2022 – deficit of £18,289) of restricted funds. The adequacy of the reserves policy is reviewed annually. The trustees are satisfied that reserves are presently more than adequate to meet future expenditure. The reserves policy is to have reserves available in order to ensure the day to day operation continue into the foreseeable future.

Future plans

The trustees intend to continue provide relief in a similar manner as before.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and its financial activities for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent examiner

The trustees intend to ask the existing accountants to undertake the independent examination of the trust in the following year.

Signed on behalf of the trustees

…….. Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson

..…… Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer

Date:

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted income funds 2023	Endowment Funds 2023	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		5,000	-	-	**5,000**	2,000
- Investments		-	-	-	**-**	-
- Charitable activities	6	49,700	22,400		**72,100**	51,838
- Other Income		-	3,360		**3,360**	2,550
Total incoming resources		**54,700**	**25,760**	**-**	**80,460**	56,388
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	**-**	-
Charitable activities		4,499	0	-	**4,499**	3,604
Governance and support costs		49,738	17,500	-	**67,238**	51,633
Other expenditure		230	3,360	-	**3,590**	2,675
Total expenditure		**54,467**	**20,860**	**-**	**75,327**	57,942
Net Movement in Funds		**233**	**4,900**	**-**	**5,133**	(1,554)
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**44,459**	**(18,289)**	**-**	**26,170**	27,724
Total funds carried forward		**44,692**	**(13,389)**	**-**	**31,303**	26,170

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these accounts.

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted income funds 2023	Endowment Funds 2023	Total this year 2023	Total this year 2022
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		33,297		-	33,297	26,770
Total current assets		33,297		-	33,297	26,770
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(1,994)	-	-	(1,994)	(600)
Net current assets		31,303	-	-	**31,303**	**26,170**
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		44,692			44,692	44,459
Restricted Income funds			(13,389)		(13,389)	(18,289)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		44,692	(13,389)		**31,303**	**26,170**

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

……. Mr Zafar Khan - Chairperson Date:

……. Mr Kishore Kaler - Treasurer Date:

Luton Council of Faiths
Year Ended 31st March 2023

1. Accounting policies

a) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.
b) Recognition of Income – there are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources and monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.
c) Investment income is recorded when receivable
d) All expenditure is included in the accounts on an accrual basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the SOFA as incurred.
e) The restricted funds of the charity are expendable funds which is regularly increased or retained as capital at the trustees' discretion.
f) All capital related expenditure costing more than £750 is capitalised. Depreciation on fixtures and fittings is charged on a straight line basis over 5 years.

2. Taxation

Luton Council of Faiths is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they apply to charitable purposes.

3. Restricted

The restricted donations in the current year and the previous year represent income mainly from Grants but also from donations to the Luton Council of Faiths restricted funds only.

4. Analysis of employees costs

		2023	2022
		£	£
Salaries and PAYE		29,761	29,762
Employers Pension		2,340	2,340
Total		32,101	32,102

The number of full-time employees during the year was one and there were no average part time members of staff.

5. Related Party transactions

None of the trustees were paid any remuneration or expenses by the charity during the year (2022 £nil)

6. Analysis of Income from Charitable activities

	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation and the Luton Rising-Community Investment Fund	49,700	-	49,700	51,838
Other donations	5,000	-	5,000	2,000
Haysac Foundation	-	4,900	4,900	-
National Lottery fund	-	10,000	10,000	-
The Steel Charitable Trust	-	7,500	7,500	-
Total	54,700	22,400	77,100	53,838

7. Analysis of Other income

	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours	-	3,360	3,360	2,550
Total	-	3,360	3,360	2,550

8. Analysis of Charitable expenditure

The charity has undertaken direct activity to meet its charitable purposes. The following is the analysis of the charity's direct expenditure:

	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Fair Trade Project	-	-	-	541
Queens' Award for Voluntary services	-	-	-	1,360
Books Resources	117	-	117	64
Other Events, Programmes and items	4,382	-	4,382	1,639
Total	4,499	-	4,499	3,604

9. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2023		2022
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

10. Other resources expended by the charity include:

	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Near Neighbours	-	3,360	3,360	2,384
Charitable giving and donations	230	-	230	291
Total	230	3,360	3,590	2,675

11. Governance and Support costs

Support costs, consisting of the rent and rates and staff salaries are split between charitable activity and governance on an actual or equal estimated basis. This is because it is difficult to estimate the expense attributable to each activity. Support costs apportioned to the different aims of the charity are shown in the note below.

	Basis of Apportionment	2023 £ Unrestricted	2023 £ Restricted	2023 £ Total	2022 £ Total
	.				
Office costs	Actual	1,125	-	1,125	2,519
Subscriptions	Actual	50	-	50	115
Travelling and general expenditure	Actual	374	-	374	937
Equipment	Actual	599	-	599	989
Salaries and staff costs	Actual	30,103	-	30,103	29,762
Pensions	Actual	2,340		2,340	2,340
Grass roots	Actual	12,000	-	12,000	12,000
Insurance	Actual	646	-	646	870
Telephone	Actual	980	-	980	408
Professional	Actual	772	-	772	772
Advertising and publicity	Actual	216	-	216	298
Volunteering	Actual	533	-	533	653
Grassroots (Oaks Consultancy)	Actual	-	17,500	17,500	
Total		49,738	17,500	67,238	51,663

Tangible Fixed Assets

There were no movements or any tangible fixed assets currently held by the Charity during the year.

12. Analysis of Debtors.

	2023		2022
Restricted funds	-		-
Total	-		-

13. Analysis of Creditors

	2023		2022
Independent examiner's fee	600		600
PAYE	1,394		-
Total	1,994		600

Independent examiner's Report to the Trustees of Luton Council of Faiths

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2023 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit in not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true or fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

I Hussain and Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Registered charity number: 1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

Luton Council of Faiths
Period Ended 31st March 2023
Contents

1. Charity Information
2-7 Trustees' Report
8. Statement of Financial Activities
9. Balance Sheet
10-13. Notes to the Financial Statements
14. Independent Examiner's Report

Luton Council of Faiths
Charity Information as at 31st March 2023

Charity name
Luton Council of Faiths

Charity number
1089850

Principal address
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 OBW

Trustees
Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson
Mrs Gulie Butcher – Vice Chair
Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer
Mr Dhansukh Panchal
Mr Yogesh Mistry

Bankers
The Co-operative Bank
Alma Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2PL

Lloyds TBS Bank Plc
60 George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BB

Independent examiner
I. Hussain & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Luton Council of Faiths
Trustees Annual Report

History, objectives and activities of the Charity

On constitution it was believed the multicultural cohesion of the religious and cultural communities in Luton required addressing. The charity began with an initial grant. Both the initial grant and subsequent grants since have been under the terms which allow the trustees to either retain the amounts as capital or to spend them.

The objectives of the charity include;

a) To bring together members of the different faith communities in Luton for deeper dialogue and co-operation
b) To increase understanding and trust between different faiths, building on common ground between them yet respecting the unique contribution which each brings
c) To work towards greater social cohesion and community integration in Luton
d) To see inter faith co-operation as linking into global co-operation between faiths and cultures for the creation of a better world

Management and Governance arrangements

The constitution provides for a minimum of five trustees. Where there is a requirement for new trustees, these would be identified and appointed by the remaining trustees, subject to the approval by AGM. The chair of the trustees is responsible for the induction of any new trustee which involves awareness of a trustee's responsibility, the governing document, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the charity. The trustees have taken steps to identify major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Achievements and Performance of the Charity

Annual Report April 2022 – March 2023 for LCoF Accounts

During the last year in our country, we sadly saw the end of an era with the death of the longest reigning Monarch in the UK. We would like to honour Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth in this annual report while welcoming King Charles III whom many Luton residents have had the privilege to meet during his Luton visit on 6th December 2023.

Last year, another sad BBC news headline reported *"Three PMs in two months, is political chaos the UK's new normal?"*

In addition, we have had the unavoidable and unstoppable cost of living crisis and the country still feeling the effects of the pandemic. Moreover, the disproportionately high numbers of refugees and asylum seekers placed in our town and in unsuitable accommodation further strained local communities' compassion and generosities.

On the other hand, right-wing extremists are using refugees, asylum seekers (and immigrants too) as scapegoats. Their ideas are now increasingly becoming mainstream fuelling political fundamentalism, majoritarianism, xenophobia, and general intolerance and contributing significantly to the rise in identity politics. Amidst such political and economic challenges and uncertainties, as a small organisation, with limited resources, we have tried our best to do what we can. Some of the key highlights are summarised below;

Key Highlights

UK's Chief Rabbi hosted Iftar
During the month of Ramadan 2022, friends from Luton Council of Faiths felt honoured to be invited by the UK's Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis for an Iftar gathering at his London office.

High Sheriff of Bedfordshire 2022-23 visit to Luton
We facilitated the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire 2022-23 first ever visit to Luton's different faith communities. She was humbled and moved by the warmth and hospitality she had received. She said, "My visit has proven to be an excellent chance for networking and building relationships. The number of groups and individuals making a difference in Luton is inspiring. Religious leaders, faith-based organisations, and faith groups provide vital support, comfort, and guidance to the communities they serve."

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Thanksgiving Service
We helped HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis in hosting a very special and historic event and Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's Church, Luton, to commemorate HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the services of voluntary organisations across Bedfordshire. People from different faith communities attended in good numbers and our LCoF Director played a part in the service.

Royal Garden Party
In May'23, the Chair, Vice Chair and a staff of the Luton Council of Faiths were invited to attend the Royal Garden Party. The Chair said, "As we face many challenges, may the life of the Queen inspire us all to continue striving to make Britain even greater, where equality, peace, justice & equity helps all to live their lives in all its abundance."

Peace Walk for Ukraine
We supported and joined Luton's Ukrainians Peace Walk in Wardown Park as a sign of solidarity for the safety, well-being and prosperity of Ukraine. LCoF Chair said, "Let's imagine a world where healing replaces harm, and a desire to care for those in need, is kindled as part of our shared humanity."

European Christians visit Luton
With GRASSROOTS, we hosted an immersion visit of several Church leaders from across Europe, to learn from Luton's multi faith context. A participant said, "Watching different faith communities working together in Luton have provided us hope – hope in action."

BBC Songs of Praise covered Hospital Chaplains Inter Faith Training
We facilitated a group of Luton & Dunstable Hospital Chaplains from different ethnic and national backgrounds, to visit Luton's different places of worship. LCoF continues to create opportunities to bring people together so that we can understand why people are the way they are; and discover them as our 'allies', and not our enemies because they share the same aspirations as we do. It Out became even more special as the BBC Songs of Praise Team followed and covered it all. It was broadcasted on the first Sunday in September 2022.

Roman Catholic Bishop's first visit to Luton
We hosted The Right Reverend David James Oakley, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton, when he made his first visit to Luton. After visiting the Central Mosque, Discover Islam Center, and Guru Nanak Gurudwara, Bishop David remarked, "This has been one of the best and the happiest days since I took over as the Bishop." He extended Eid Greetings to all the Muslim friends and communities in Luton, to which the President of Luton's Central Mosque Mohammad Shafait reciprocated saying, "We Muslims and Christians are called to open ourselves to others, so we can tear down walls raised out of fear and ignorance and seek together to build bridges of friendship that are fundamental for the good of all humanity."

Luton's Annual Peace Walk

In Sep'22 there were communal (Hindu-Muslim) tensions across the country, mainly in Leicester and Birmingham. In Luton, however, faith communities stayed mature and held the calm. At the 26th Annual Peace Walk, we visited different places of worship, including High Town Methodist Church, Ukrainian Chapel & Guru Nanak Gurudwara. School children from Chantry, Southfield, and Whitefield Primary Schools recited poetry on Peace. We felt so proud of our volunteer Nitin Verma, a Hindu, who brought a Muslim friend to give out a clear message at the Peace Walk that as young people we want to create an environment where people from all diverse backgrounds can flourish so that together we can make our world a better place for everyone. He strongly condemned the Hindu-Muslim hostility shown in the media across the country.

We collected donations for Luton Food Bank. People also visited High Town Peace Garden and People's Park & Pope's Meadow where trees have been planted in memory of those who passed away due to Covid. Concluding the event, Vice Chair Gulie Butcher said "May there be peace in the world and let it begin with me."

Black History Month

During Black History Month in Luton several events were held but we helped to promote the Black Culture Market offering a range of creative and interesting African-Caribbean products and materials. Secondly, we helped & promoted the launch of an interesting exhibition, commemorating the African experience of the Second World War. It was a photographic illustration of the contributions and sacrifices made by the African soldiers in World War II. Lastly, we supported a special event celebrating the Windrush generation that was held at All Saints Church Luton, during Black History Month.

Diwali in Luton 2022

Diwali in Luton 2022 was special this year because it helped to diffuse communal tensions that were being fuelled by social media across many areas in the country in Sep'22. Hindu-Muslim- Sikh and friends from other religious and ethnic backgrounds came together to co-organise this event, which was attended by thousands and all joined in proclaiming the message – we are one human race. This was significant in defying the Hindu-Muslim communal tensions incited by a few miscreants in a few parts of the UK. Luton's Hindus raised £1,100 for the Pakistan flood appeal. Luton's amazing community cohesion continues to transcend borders and barriers, globally and locally, and long may it continue.

Hindu New Year

At Hindu New Year (Annakut festival) celebrations members from different faith communities joined. Mr Yogesh Mistry of Lewsey Farm Hindu Temple said, "The most rewarding part is the sharing food together with one another regardless of religion, colour, age, gender or social status. May the New Year bring health, wealth and happiness to all. May the dignity of every human being and that of the creation be preserved in the coming year."

At Sikh Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 553rd Birth Anniversary Celebrations in Luton we helped bring together a Scouts group and Sikh youth group from different religious/cultural backgrounds, to share the spirit and messages of universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

Inter Faith Week

In commemorating this year's Inter Faith Week (IFW) Nov'22, three activities were held;

Firstly, C of E St Albans Diocesan Inter Faith Week Event was very well attended by people from all faiths and none. People were struck by the connections in the language used by the different faith representatives on the topical themes e.g. Climate Change, Racial Justice, Refugees & Asylum Seekers, Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation. It was particularly good to see lots of women too. A Jewish Rabbi said, "There was an excitement and spiritual uplift in the room before, during and after the event. It was a privilege to participate and to meet so many new faces and reconnect with friends. May the good work of all our communities, be blessed and bring blessings to those around us."

Secondly, faith and community leaders attended a special meeting with Luton North MP Sarah Owen (Shadow Faith Minister). She said, "Other parts of the UK do not have as active interfaith engagement as in Luton, so I'd shout about such good things happening in Luton."

Thirdly, we facilitated Bishop & Lord Lieutenant's visits to different places of worship in Luton, which helped with forging connections and establishing bonds. Sharing one another's concerns and aspirations during such visits helps to maintain strong community ties in Luton.

HM King Charles visited Luton

On 6th Dec'22, HM King Charles visited Luton Town Hall, Luton DART and he officially opened the newly built Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Luton, We helped with the inter-faith representation on the day. At the Gurudwara, HM King Charles spent considerable time meeting and conversing, listening to the Kirtan (Sikh religious devotional singing) and encouraging Luton Sikh Soup Kitchen volunteers who serve free meals in the Town.

World Religion Day

At an event by Luton Bahai's commemorating the World Religion Day in Luton, we propagated the ideas of oneness of religion and humanity, and that no one should be treated differently because of their race, age, gender, color, sexuality, or whether they believe in religion or not. We invited people from Luton's different faith communities to bring and share prayers, readings, meditations and thoughts on the themes of unity and peace.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)

To commemorate HM) 2023 we invited people from Luton's diverse communities, to watch the UK online Ceremony and to light candles in windows in remembrance of those murdered, as a sign of our commitment to stand against prejudice and hatred.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2023

During the annual Fairtrade Fortnight 27th Feb – 12th Mar 2023, we held the Fairtrade Cake Baking Competition. Nearly 50 guests, friends, and neighbours were asked to taste the cakes and choose the three best cakes. Later we also issued a statement encouraging people to celebrate Mothering Sunday with Fairtrade Flowers.

Luton Peace Garden Initiative

The Luton Peace Garden Initiative has been honoured with a special Royal tree that was planted at the Wardown Park Arboretum on 10th Jan'23. The Royal Tree was part of the late Queen Elizabeth II's Green Canopy UK-wide tree planting initiative. It was one of the 350 ceremonial trees from outside Buckingham Palace during the Queen's Jubilee. Those 350 trees were gifted to selected community groups and organisations across the country to recognise their work and inspire the next generation of tree planters. To date, over 600 trees have been planted in memory of those lost to Covid-19 in Luton. This has helped and supported families across Luton in the bereavement process and the project continues to bring communities together.

CATALYST Youth Leadership

In partnership with Near Neighbours Programme, we delivered CATALYST Youth Leadership Training programme, to help young people aged 16-26 from different backgrounds develop into positive role models. It was considered by the young people as an amazing opportunity to discuss and critically think about some of the most pressing issues of our time.

International Women's Day (IWD)
Marked annually on March 8th, IWD is one of the most important days of the year to celebrate women's achievements, to educate and raise awareness for women's equality, and to call for positive change advancing women. Several IWD events were held across the town, but we helped organise a celebratory event in partnership with a local women's group called 'Ghar se Ghar' Friends (Hindi/Urdu words meaning Home to Home). We also supported an online event by United Nations Association (UNA) Luton branch on this year's UN theme "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality".

Luton's Annual Peace Walk won the Bedfordshire Police Community Cohesion Award
It is great that LCoF won this award in the category of Promoting Diversity. The award citation read – Peace Walk includes visits to religious locations across the town, and provides the opportunity for residents from all backgrounds to come together, learn from one another and discover shared bonds. The Peace Walk is always well-attended with a great mix of young and old taking part. Each year a number of schools also get involved, ensuring that the young people of Luton understand one another and barriers are broken down.

Other LCoF Supported Work, Events & Activities

Clouds of Blessings
At St George's Square Eid festive celebrations, we invited people from different faiths for an inclusive Eid Parade. They were asked to hold the cloud props, made up of white balloons named as "The Clouds of Blessings". Thanking LCoF, the project lead said, "The work you do is so significant. I strongly feel Luton won't be the same without your presence and contributions."

Outdoor Storytelling Event
We helped Edible High Town co-deliver an outdoor storytelling event at High Town's Peace Garden, which was originally launched as the Peace Garden by Luton Council Faiths.

UNA-Luton presented a prestigious Outstanding Peace Champion Award
At a special event, UNA-Luton presented a prestigious Outstanding Peace Champion Award to David Jonathan Director of Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots Programme.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
In marking the annual observance of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christians from diverse backgrounds reflected together on the theme – What is Interfaith and why should Christians be involved with this? Guest Speaker Revd Dr Richard Sudworth, Secretary for Inter Religious Affairs to the Archbishop of Canterbury and National Inter Religious Affairs Adviser for the Church of England shared a wealth of reflections from his experiences of inter faith work.

International Mother Language Day
In partnership with United Nations Association (UNA) Luton Branch and Purbachal-the eastern sky, a Bangladeshi voluntary cultural organisation, we invited people and communities to celebrate International Mother Language Day. It encouraged respect for diverse heritages, histories, cultures, identities and highlighted how it can contribute to community cohesion.

Turkey and Syria Earthquake
We mobilised Luton's faith communities to stand in solidarity with Turkey and Syria following a record-breaking earthquake in early Feb'23.

Guru Ravidass Sangat Luton in celebrate 40th Anniversary
We supported Shri Guru Ravidass Sangat Luton in celebrating its 40th anniversary and invited people from Luton's diverse communities to join in applauding Sangat's work across communities and supporting interfaith work.

Nawruz (New Year) Celebrations
We supported Luton Baha'i Community' Nawruz (New Year) celebrations. A member of the Baha'i community, closed the programme singing these inspirational words - "One People, One Planet; there is no reason why we cannot live together peacefully."

Networking with the Public Sector Stakeholders
During the year, various issues and matters of practical concern were brought forward by Luton's different faith communities and also by several public sector organisations. To the best of our abilities, we helped in signposting and connecting public & faith sector representatives.

Conclusion
At the 6th Bedfordshire Police Community Cohesion Awards Ceremony held on 17th March 2023, not only Luton Peace Walk won the Cohesion Award in the category of Promoting Diversity (as reported above), but Luton Council of Faiths was also nominated in the Interfaith Champion category. The nomination read;

Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) is committed to encouraging and promoting tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding among people of all faiths and cultures, both in Luton and beyond. Over the years, LCoF has gained significant trust, confidence, and credibility in Luton, and works alongside a diverse array of agencies, organisations, and community groups in matters relating to community cohesion. LCoF delivers a number of community events and initiatives, including, but not exclusive to, the Annual Luton Peace Walk, musical concerts, public discussions, recreational sports projects, conservation work, and public vigils.

This summarises the LCoF work very well. Long may continue such positive work of LCoF.

Financial review and reserves

The net incoming resources for the year was a surplus of £5,133 (2022 – deficit of £1,554). At the end of the financial year the reserves were £44,692 (2022 - £44,459) of unrestricted funds and a deficit of £13,389 (2022 – deficit of £18,289) of restricted funds. The adequacy of the reserves policy is reviewed annually. The trustees are satisfied that reserves are presently more than adequate to meet future expenditure. The reserves policy is to have reserves available in order to ensure the day to day operation continue into the foreseeable future.

Future plans

The trustees intend to continue provide relief in a similar manner as before.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and its financial activities for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent examiner

The trustees intend to ask the existing accountants to undertake the independent examination of the trust in the following year.

Signed on behalf of the trustees

…….. Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson

..…… Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer

Date:

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted income funds 2023	Endowment Funds 2023	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		5,000	-	-	**5,000**	2,000
- Investments		-	-	-	**-**	-
- Charitable activities	6	49,700	22,400		**72,100**	51,838
- Other Income		-	3,360		**3,360**	2,550
Total incoming resources		**54,700**	**25,760**	**-**	**80,460**	56,388
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	**-**	-
Charitable activities		4,499	0	-	**4,499**	3,604
Governance and support costs		49,738	17,500	-	**67,238**	51,633
Other expenditure		230	3,360	-	**3,590**	2,675
Total expenditure		**54,467**	**20,860**	**-**	**75,327**	57,942
Net Movement in Funds		**233**	**4,900**	**-**	**5,133**	(1,554)
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**44,459**	**(18,289)**	**-**	**26,170**	27,724
Total funds carried forward		**44,692**	**(13,389)**	**-**	**31,303**	26,170

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these accounts.

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted income funds 2023	Endowment Funds 2023	Total this year 2023	Total this year 2022
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		33,297		-	33,297	26,770
Total current assets		33,297		-	33,297	26,770
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(1,994)	-	-	(1,994)	(600)
Net current assets		31,303	-	-	**31,303**	**26,170**
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		44,692			44,692	44,459
Restricted Income funds			(13,389)		(13,389)	(18,289)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		44,692	(13,389)		**31,303**	**26,170**

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

……. Mr Zafar Khan - Chairperson Date:

……. Mr Kishore Kaler - Treasurer Date:

Luton Council of Faiths
Year Ended 31st March 2023

1. Accounting policies

a) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.
b) Recognition of Income – there are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources and monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.
c) Investment income is recorded when receivable
d) All expenditure is included in the accounts on an accrual basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the SOFA as incurred.
e) The restricted funds of the charity are expendable funds which is regularly increased or retained as capital at the trustees' discretion.
f) All capital related expenditure costing more than £750 is capitalised. Depreciation on fixtures and fittings is charged on a straight line basis over 5 years.

2. Taxation

Luton Council of Faiths is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they apply to charitable purposes.

3. Restricted

The restricted donations in the current year and the previous year represent income mainly from Grants but also from donations to the Luton Council of Faiths restricted funds only.

4. Analysis of employees costs

		2023	2022
		£	£
Salaries and PAYE		29,761	29,762
Employers Pension		2,340	2,340
Total		32,101	32,102

The number of full-time employees during the year was one and there were no average part time members of staff.

5. Related Party transactions

None of the trustees were paid any remuneration or expenses by the charity during the year (2022 £nil)

6. Analysis of Income from Charitable activities

	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation and the Luton Rising-Community Investment Fund	49,700	-	49,700	51,838
Other donations	5,000	-	5,000	2,000
Haysac Foundation	-	4,900	4,900	-
National Lottery fund	-	10,000	10,000	-
The Steel Charitable Trust	-	7,500	7,500	-
Total	54,700	22,400	77,100	53,838

7. Analysis of Other income

	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours	-	3,360	3,360	2,550
Total	-	3,360	3,360	2,550

8. Analysis of Charitable expenditure

The charity has undertaken direct activity to meet its charitable purposes. The following is the analysis of the charity's direct expenditure:

	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Fair Trade Project	-	-	-	541
Queens' Award for Voluntary services	-	-	-	1,360
Books Resources	117	-	117	64
Other Events, Programmes and items	4,382	-	4,382	1,639
Total	4,499	-	4,499	3,604

9. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2023		2022
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

10. Other resources expended by the charity include:

	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Near Neighbours	-	3,360	3,360	2,384
Charitable giving and donations	230	-	230	291
Total	230	3,360	3,590	2,675

11. Governance and Support costs

Support costs, consisting of the rent and rates and staff salaries are split between charitable activity and governance on an actual or equal estimated basis. This is because it is difficult to estimate the expense attributable to each activity. Support costs apportioned to the different aims of the charity are shown in the note below.

	Basis of Apportionment	2023 £ Unrestricted	2023 £ Restricted	2023 £ Total	2022 £ Total
	.				
Office costs	Actual	1,125	-	1,125	2,519
Subscriptions	Actual	50	-	50	115
Travelling and general expenditure	Actual	374	-	374	937
Equipment	Actual	599	-	599	989
Salaries and staff costs	Actual	30,103	-	30,103	29,762
Pensions	Actual	2,340		2,340	2,340
Grass roots	Actual	12,000	-	12,000	12,000
Insurance	Actual	646	-	646	870
Telephone	Actual	980	-	980	408
Professional	Actual	772	-	772	772
Advertising and publicity	Actual	216	-	216	298
Volunteering	Actual	533	-	533	653
Grassroots (Oaks Consultancy)	Actual	-	17,500	17,500	
Total		49,738	17,500	67,238	51,663

Tangible Fixed Assets

There were no movements or any tangible fixed assets currently held by the Charity during the year.

12. Analysis of Debtors.

	2023		2022
Restricted funds	-		-
Total	-		-

13. Analysis of Creditors

	2023		2022
Independent examiner's fee	600		600
PAYE	1,394		-
Total	1,994		600

Independent examiner's Report to the Trustees of Luton Council of Faiths

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2023 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit in not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true or fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

I Hussain and Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

England & Wales - Charity number 1089850

Accounts

Registered charity number: 1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022

Luton Council of Faiths
Period Ended 31st March 2022
Contents

1. Charity Information
2-7 Trustees' Report
9. Statement of Financial Activities
10 Balance Sheet
11-14 Notes to the Financial Statements
15. Independent Examiner's Report

Luton Council of Faiths
Charity Information as at 31st March 2022

Charity name
Luton Council of Faiths

Charity number
1089850

Principal address
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 OBW

Trustees
Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson
Mrs Gulie Butcher – Vice Chair
Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer
Mr Dhansukh Panchal
Mr Ramnik Gohil (Resigned on 13.07.2021)
Mr Yogesh Mistry (Joined on 13.07.2021)

Bankers
The Co-operative Bank
Alma Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2PL

Lloyds TBS Bank Plc
60 George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BB

Independent examiner
I. Hussain & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Luton Council of Faiths
Trustees Annual Report

History, objectives and activities of the Charity

On constitution it was believed the multicultural cohesion of the religious and cultural communities in Luton required addressing. The charity began with an initial grant. Both the initial grant and subsequent grants since have been under the terms which allow the trustees to either retain the amounts as capital or to spend them.

The objectives of the charity include;

a) To bring together members of the different faith communities in Luton for deeper dialogue and co-operation
b) To increase understanding and trust between different faiths, building on common ground between them yet respecting the unique contribution which each brings
c) To work towards greater social cohesion and community integration in Luton
d) To see inter faith co-operation as linking into global co-operation between faiths and cultures for the creation of a better world

Management and Governance arrangements

The constitution provides for a minimum of five trustees. Where there is a requirement for new trustees, these would be identified and appointed by the remaining trustees, subject to the approval by AGM. The chair of the trustees is responsible for the induction of any new trustee which involves awareness of a trustee's responsibility, the governing document, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the charity. The trustees have taken steps to identify major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Achievements and Performance of the Charity

LCoF received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services
In 2021, Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) completes 25 years, since founded as Inter Faith Forum and 20 years since registered as independent Charity. It was so well timed to be receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services in this year.

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Helen Nellis, while presenting the award said;

"It is a great honour for me to present this award on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen. This is the highest award given to Volunteer Groups in the UK. To win this award is a tremendous achievement and shows the highest recognition of all the volunteers and staff of Luton Council of Faiths. With volunteers at the heart of its activities, Luton Council of Faiths is an exceptionally well-run, high quality organisation and represents the very best example of how well co-ordinated and dedicated volunteers can make a genuine impact on everyone."

High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Eric Masih said the greatest legacy anyone can leave behind is to positively impact the lives of others and LCoF has done exactly that.

Mayor of Luton Cllr Mahmood Hussain thanked LCoF for making Luton stronger and resilient by keeping Luton's diverse faith communities together.

Cllr Hazel Simmons applauded LCoF for being one of the most stable institutional partners that the Luton Council has worked over the years.

LCoF's Chair Zafar Khan & Vice Chair Gulie Butcher thanked all for their support, encouragement and goodwill, particularly its progenitor GRASSROOTS Programme, Luton Borough Council and now the support from Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation (BLCF) and the London Luton Airport Ltd (LLAL) Community Investment Fund programme.

Thanking God for LCoF's services, using the famous quote, Bishop Richard Atkinson said "For all that has been, Thanks. For all that is to come, Yes!"

"Mental Health with a Heart" – Luton Project Commended at Windsor Castle
It was an honour for Luton that Ryad Khodabocus, LCoF's Head of Community Relations and Development was invited at an esteemed gathering at St Georges House, Windsor Castle (Oct 14 2021) where his project "Mental Health with a Heart" scored the top rank.

LCoF Director Awarded MBE
In the Queen's New Year's Honours List 2022, an MBE has been awarded to David Jonathan of Luton Council of Faiths, Grassroots and the Near Neighbours Programmes, for services to community cohesion and interfaith relations in Luton. http://grassrootsluton.org.uk/news-events/2022/1/17/felicitations-amp-greetings-mbe-has-been-awarded-to-david-jonathan

Covid – 19 Work Update

During and after the Covid Lockdowns, the phrase that "We are all in this together" has been echoed all around us and yet some of us involved in the community and voluntary sector know this more than the others that we may have been in the same storm but not everyone has been in the same boat. Some have been affected disproportionately. The pandemic has clearly highlighted the social inequalities and injustices that exist, not just locally or nationally but also globally. Secondly, we mustn't forget that the coronavirus pandemic has been as much a mental health emergency as it has been a physical one. Interestingly it is community, voluntary and faith sectors which have done the MOST with the LEAST resources because they are motivated by their faith, not by profit. Therefore, the work that charities have done over the past year in responding to the pandemic has been nothing short of remarkable.

As far as coronavirus impact on our organisation and our activities is concerned, we are still "proceeding with caution". Much of our activities and events, meetings, networking and liaison remains online, as many people still have lots of fears, apprehensions and uncertainties about in-person meetings, considering which much of our activities remain online. On the other hand we have continued to support the voluntary, community and faith sectors and we have also helped statutory agencies to effectively liaise and work in partnership with the local communities.
During and after the easing of lockdown(s), our work included;

1. attending weekly briefing and networking meetings re Covid-19 convened jointly by the local authority, public health & Police
   a) Faith and Community Group Briefings
   b) Covid-19 Champions meetings
   c) Various networking meetings about tackling health inequalities

2. supporting Places of Worship to go through guidelines about RE-OPENING after restrictions were lifted in Jul'21

3. publishing Faith Matters Columns in the weekly Luton News highlighting positive contributions of Luton's different faith communities

Despite being effective in our community engagement locally, in the light of the various crises caused by the pandemic affecting people in multiple ways, we were required to respond differently. We therefore produced a series of video casts addressing a range of practical and real issues impacting people's general health and well-being. In these video casts we talked about and raised awareness of a healthy lifestyle to improve people's immunity through proper nutrition, stress & emotional management for a better mental health and overall well-being. These video casts are categorized in the following 6 overarching themes and can be found at this link; https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrnKCdMvQKnaSWKDApqxR3A

1) Building Resilience from a Faith Perspective
2) Building Resilience Through Arts
3) Building Resilience: Young people's voice
4) Health and Resilience during the Pandemic
5) Resilience and Racism in the context of the Pandemic
6) Resilience - Beyond Death

In addition, we also produced over 100 bite-size video clips to increase & diversify our capacity to reach out to local communities and support them in a meaningful way.

We also organised 3 different training sessions of the mental health peer support project in which 33 young people from different High Schools came together to receive an accredited Mental Health First Aid training, lasting 7 hours each. The course covered key topics such as Stress suicide, self-harm, PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder), phobias, anxiety and depression.

Key Highlights – Other LCoF Events

Black Lives Matter
After promoting Windrush events in the summer, we fostered racial justice conversations amongst the communities, the clergy and the lay leaders. We facilitated C of E Bishop Richard Atkinson to engage in helpful conversations with the senior faith and denominational leaders. We also facilitated two faith communities' consultations to review Luton Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy.

Climate Change
Highlighting disproportionate impact of climate change on some more than the others, we worked alongside Luton's faith communities to highlight the urgency of the Climate Emergencies. Ahead of COP26, we held 4 major events in Luton;

a) At the footsteps of Town Hall, we welcomed 70-year old British south Indian climate activist Pushpanath Krishnamurthy (called Push) during his epic walk for climate justice (400 miles or one million steps) from London to Glasgow from 2nd October to 2nd November 2021. Chair of Luton Council of Faiths Prof Zafar Khan said, "Our gathering today signifies unity of purpose and unity of action for climate justice. We are united in our collective quest for climate justice." Push said, "I am encouraged by the immense sense of fraternity shown by Luton. Climate change is already happening. It is the poorest people who have done the least to create the problem are suffering its worst impacts. Hence our collective quest for climate justice is much needed".

b) On 23rd Oct'21, commemorating the UN Day we organised a virtual event "Climate Crisis: Faith in the Environment" involving 9 different faiths & belief representatives, who shared the importance of actively preserving the creation and living in harmony with the environment. Speakers from different faiths were invited to talk about their key beliefs and religious teachings of preserving creation. Quoting a UNDP research figure of $423 billion spent globally every year to subsidise fossil fuels, UNA Luton Chair Dr Nazia Khanum,OBE, DL said, "This could pay for three times the annual amount needed to eradicate global extreme poverty." Professor Zafar Khan Chair Luton Council of Faiths said, "Climate Change is much bigger than any of us, but the importance of our actions cannot be under-estimated. Faith communities have much to contribute."

c) With the UK hosting COP26 many people in the UK joined the COP26 Coalition Day of Action on Sat 6 November, in their own local areas. In Luton over a hundred people had gathered at the Town Hall. We helped facilitate the presentations. Numerous speakers spoke at this event from different organisations including Bedfordshire Climate Change Forum, Luton Quakers, Friends of the Earth. Jeremy Williams - Luton based author and activist running The Earthbound Report, recognised as the best green blog by the UK Blog Awards said, "There's little reason to think that COP26 is going to be different from the 25 conferences that came before it. For the world's most vulnerable, for the natural world and for our children – We can do better. An event participant said "The role of a combined faith voice is valuable - I hope that it can grow in Luton and worldwide."

d) In the Annual Peace Light service, a flame is brought from Bethlehem to mark Jesus' birth celebrations. Considering Climate Change was big on everyone's agenda, this year's Peace Light Service was dedicated to the cause of Climate Justice and therefore, the theme of the service was "Peace with the Planet". We helped in bringing different faith leaders to read out short statements from their faith perspectives, on "how their faith inspires them to establish peace with the planet". Welcoming the Peace Light, Luton's Mayor Cllr Mahmood Hussain said, "May this light be a sign of our commitment to making peace with the planet – our earthly home." A closing prayer said, "May we see the world, our common home, not as a resource to dominate and exploit, but as a gift to be cherished by all generations."

Peace Garden

In partnership with Luton's faith communities, we have supported the development of a Peace Garden for those died of Covid in Luton. Working closely with Luton Council's Park Services, to date, 357 trees have been planted. We helped and facilitated the fundraising https://bit.ly/3niSwdi and creation of a short awareness video about the project https://t.co/X0u1SboQO0?amp=1. This project demonstrates that Luton cares. This is an opportunity to share our grief together, while also working for a better and a greener world for all.

'Zoom Peace' Event

At the 'Zoom Peace' event held virtually (due to Covid) for the second consecutive year on the International Day of Peace (21st Sep'21), after watching a colorful picture presentation, commemorating 25 years of Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF), a faith leader said, "A tiny mustard seed has grown into a big safe and secure tree". At this event, several people's contributions covered a range of issues including Racial Justice, Mental Health, Climate Change, Bee Keeping, Luton Peace Garden initiative, helping refugees etc. A feedback was received "We were inspired and enriched by the presentations, inputs and reflections shared at this event".

4 Events held during Inter Faith Week 14-21 Nov'21

In the 4 events held during Inter Faith Week we highlighted the contribution of faith groups to society and encouraged even greater inter faith understanding and cooperation between those of religious and non-religious beliefs for the common good. Inter Faith Week is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday to encourage that we remember the services of millions of non-British non-European soldiers too who were killed in action alongside British/European soldiers.

During the Remembrance Services, we highlighted that our soldiers and civilians did not sacrifice their lives for the kind of 'nationalism', 'hate' & 'racism' we see all over the world today. We must therefore not allow the society to recreate the mistakes from the past. We reinforced the fact that we have no other option but to learn to appreciate the importance of co-existence. We need one another for the well-being of all and that of our common home, the planet earth.

In an a Covid-safe socially distanced event titled "Strengthening Cohesion in Luton" on Mon 15th Nov'21, people from different faiths were invited to celebrate Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) 25th Year Anniversary and the fact that in this year, LCoF had also received The Queens Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS). This event acknowledged the tremendous contributions of several of its volunteers, faith and community leaders, supporters and partner organisations.

At another Inter Faith Week event on 17th Nov'21 jointly organised with the Church of England St Albans Diocese it was highlighted that as a diverse diocese, it must demonstrate its commitment to engaging and partnering with members of different faith communities for the common good. At this event Luton's faith & community leaders shared positive stories of living well together as good neighbours and gave practical examples of navigating their way through the difficult issues.

We facilitated C of E Bishop Richard Atkinson's visits to different places of worship across Luton. During these visits we addressed issues of Israel-Palestine conflict, Black Lives Matter issues and India's emerging political landscape impacting community relations in Luton.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2022

In keeping with Luton's Fairtrade Town status, during this year's Fairtrade Fortnight 21st Feb – 6th Mar 2022, we held a Fairtrade Cake Baking Competition. This event helped address issues of poverty, deprivation, unfairness and inequality across the world, globally as well as locally. 'Inter-dependence' on one another is at the very heart of the Fairtrade message. Fairtrade is not charity; it is about doing justice.

International Women's Day Event

Concerned with women's safety & wellbeing, this year's International Women's Day theme was Keeping Women Safe. Women made relevant contributions from different religious and professional perspectives, but some personal survival stories were tremendously powerful and inspirational. To educate women about identifying the signs and threats and for signposting women to the right places, numerous other organisations such as Women's Aid in Luton, Luton All Women's Centre, Luton Against Sex Trafficking (LAST), Luton Samartians were also invited to share valuable information at these events.

Refugees Support Work

Through Luton's different faith communities we assisted efforts to support refugees. The numbers of Afghan refugees' were far greater when compared with other areas. Committing to play its part, Leader of the Council highlighted the plight of Luton's already overstretched services. Commending the role of the faith and other community organisations, she said we don't want our communities' generosity being taken advantage of. Later in the year, the formation of Luton City of Sanctuary Steering Group has been extremely helpful to coordinate support for refugees. Luton now has the City of Sanctuary status.

Networking with the Public Sector Stakeholders
In several meetings held during the year, various issues and matters of practical concern were raised by Luton's different faith communities. We helped them liaise with the Luton Council and vice-a-versa.

Conclusion
Firstly, in the context of Black Lives Matter and Luton's diverse communities, we learnt that diversity is even more diverse now and that we are called to be one but not the same. As human beings we are wondrously complex and diverse and what makes people different needn't be reduced to certain labels e.g. BAME (Black & Minority Ethnic) communities. Such initialism and the acronym BAME has been growing in prominence, but critiques say it does lump a lot of minorities together and is used to tick a box. Considering life isn't black and white, discussions about valuing and embracing diversity in all its shades are important so that we grow in the way we view, perceive and understand the world.

Secondly, as we see ever-deepening global, political and social polarisation, Holocaust & Srebrenica Memorial events remind us of the horrific consequences that can result from inaction. We must always take sides. Late Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor said, "Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must – at that moment – become the centre of the universe".

Therefore in Luton, as a leading multi-faith organisation, we remain committed to create safe and brave spaces for communities to engage with one another on issues, no matter how difficult or divisive it can be at times, so that collectively we can exchange our common aspirations for peaceful co-existence and re-affirm our commitment to work together for peace and unity in Luton locally, but also globally.

Financial review and reserves
The net incoming resources for the year was a deficit of £1,554 (2021 – £3,860). At the end of the financial year the reserves were £44,459 (2021 - £45,638) of unrestricted funds and a deficit of £18,289 (2021 – deficit of £17,914) of restricted funds. The adequacy of the reserves policy is reviewed annually. The trustees are satisfied that reserves are presently more than adequate to meet future expenditure. The reserves policy is to have reserves available in order to ensure the day to day operation continue into the foreseeable future.

Future plans
The trustees intend to continue provide relief in a similar manner as before.

Post balance sheet events
The events of the Coronovirus outbreak shall significantly affect the operations of the charity, the results of these operations or the state of affairs of the charity in the financial year subsequent to the financial period ended 31st March 2022. There is likely to be a reduction in the charity's income and subsequently a reduction in expenditure. We anticipate this would be a short term affect and would not affect the charity's ability to operate in the longer term.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities
Charity law requires the trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and its financial activities for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent examiner

The trustees intend to ask the existing accountants to undertake the independent examination of the trust in the following year.

Signed on behalf of the trustees


..... Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson


..... Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer

Date: 14/06/2022

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022	Restricted income funds 2022	Endowment Funds 2022	Total funds 2022	Total funds 2021
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		2,000	-	-	**2,000**	**3,165**
- Investments		-	-	-	**-**	**-**
- Charitable activities	6	51,838	-	-	**51,838**	**53,602**
- Other Income		-	2,550		**2,550**	**1,500**
Total incoming resources		53,838	2,550	-	**56,388**	**58,267**
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds						
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	**-**	**-**
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	**-**	**-**
Investment management costs		-	-	-	**-**	**-**
Charitable activities		3,603	541	-	**3,604**	**322**
Governance and support costs		51,663	-	-	**51,633**	**54,085**
Other expenditure		291	2,384	-	**2,675**	**-**
Total expenditure		55,017	2,925	-	**57,942**	**54,407**
Net Movement in Funds		(1,179)	(375)	-	**(1,554)**	**3,860**
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		45,638	(17,914)	-	**27,724**	**23,864**
Total funds carried forward		44,459	(18,289)	-	**26,170**	**27,724**

The notes on pages 11 to 14 form part of these accounts.

Luton Council of Faiths

Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022	Restricted income funds 2022	Endowment Funds 2022	Total this year 2022	Total this year 2021
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		26,770		-	26,770	28,634
Total current assets		26,770		-	26,770	28,634
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(600)	-	-	(600)	(600)
Net current assets		26,170	-	-	26,170	27,724
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		44,459			44,459	45,638
Restricted Income funds			(18,289)		(18,289)	(17,914)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		45,638	(17,914))		26,170	27,724

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

..... Mr Zafar Khan - Chairperson Date: 14/6/22

..... Mr Kishore Kaler - Treasurer Date: 14/06/2022

Luton Council of Faiths
Year Ended 31st March 2022

1. Accounting policies

a) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

b) Recognition of Income – there are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources and monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

c) Investment income is recorded when receivable

d) All expenditure is included in the accounts on an accrual basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the SOFA as incurred.

e) The restricted funds of the charity are expendable funds which is regularly increased or retained as capital at the trustees' discretion.

f) All capital related expenditure costing more than £750 is capitalised. Depreciation on fixtures and fittings is charged on a straight line basis over 5 years.

2. Taxation

Luton Council of Faiths is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they apply to charitable purposes.

3. Restricted

The restricted donations in the current year and the previous year represent income mainly from Grants but also from donations to the Luton Council of Faiths restricted funds only.

4. Analysis of employees costs

		2022	2021
		£	£
Salaries and PAYE		29,762	30,175
Employers Pension		2,340	2,405
Total		32,102	32,580

The number of full-time employees during the year was one and there were no average part time members of staff.

5. Related Party transactions

None of the trustees were paid any remuneration or expenses by the charity during the year (2021 £nil)

6. Analysis of Income from Charitable activities

	2022 Unrestricted	2022 Restricted	Total 2022	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£
Community Investment Fund LLAL Grant – core costs	51,838	-	51,838	53,602
Other donations	2,000	-	2,000	3,165
Total	53,838	-	53,838	56,767
				Total 2021

7. Analysis of Other income

	2022 Unrestricted	2022 Restricted	Total 2022	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£
Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours	-	2,550	2,550	1,500
Total	-	2,550	2,550	4,350

8. Analysis of Charitable expenditure

The charity has undertaken direct activity to meet its charitable purposes. The following is the analysis of the charity's direct expenditure:

	2022 Unrestricted	2022 Restricted	2022 Total	2021 Total
	£	£	£	£
Fair Trade Project	-	541	541	-
Queens' Award for Voluntary services	1,360	-	1,360	-
Books Resources	64	-	64	139
Other Events, Programmes and items	1,639	-	1,639	183
Total	3,063	541	3,604	322

9. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2022		2021
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

10. Other resources expended by the charity include:

	2022 Unrestricted	2022 Restricted	2022 Total	2021 Total
	£	£	£	£
Near Neighbours	-	2,384	2,384	-
Charitable giving and donations	291	-	291	-
Total	291	2,384	2,675	-

11. Governance and Support costs

Support costs, consisting of the rent and rates and staff salaries are split between charitable activity and governance on an actual or equal estimated basis. This is because it is difficult to estimate the expense attributable to each activity. Support costs apportioned to the different aims of the charity are shown in the note below.

	Basis of Apportionment	2022 £ Unrestricted	2022 £ Restricted	2022 £ Total	2021 £ Total
Office costs	Actual	2,519	-	2,519	4,671
Subscriptions	Actual	115	-	115	30
Travelling and general expenditure	Actual	937	-	937	427
Equipment	Actual	989	-	989	1,313
Salaries	Actual	29,762	-	29,762	30,175
Pensions	Actual	2,340		2,340	2,405
Grass roots	Actual	12,000	-	12,000	12,000
Insurance	Actual	870	-	870	874
Telephone and website	Actual	408	-	408	719
Professional	Actual	772	-	772	790
Advertising and publicity	Actual	298	-	298	115
Volunteering	Actual	653	-	653	427
Total		51,663	-	51,663	53,946

Tangible Fixed Assets

There were no movements or any tangible fixed assets currently held by the Charity during the year.

12. Analysis of Debtors

	2022		2021
Restricted funds	-		-
Total	-		-

13. Analysis of Creditors

	2022		2021
Independent examiner's fee	600		600
			-
Total	600		600

Independent examiner's Report to the Trustees of Luton Council of Faiths

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2022 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit in not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true or fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

I Hussain and Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

England & Wales - Charity number 1089850

Accounts



LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

Annual Report

2020-2021

Luton Council of Faiths

Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) began with a group of people from different faiths during 1994-1995, as part of the Grassroots Programme.

On 10th July 1997, the Luton Interfaith Forum was launched and then in 2000 the name 'Luton Council of Faiths' was adopted.

LCoF then achieved independent charitable status in 2001.

Since then LCoF has continued to work as a partner with the Grassroots Programme and Luton Borough Council, whilst also networking with many other organisations within and beyond Luton's borders.

Visit Our Website:
www.lutonfaiths.org

Email Us:
info@lutonfaiths.org

Call Us:
01582 416946

Write To Us:
Luton Council of Faiths
C/O Grassroots Programme
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 0BW

Like / Follow Us Online:

www.facebook.com/groups/LutonFaith

www.twitter.com/LutonFaiths

Charity no: 1089850

Front Cover Image:

In memory of all those who lost their lives during this Pandemic

Funders, Partners and Volunteers

Core Funder

- Bedfordshire & Luton Community Fund (BLCF) as part of the London Luton Airport Limited Community Investment Fund



Projects Funders

- Near Neighbours Fund

Key Partners

- Grassroots Programme
- Luton Council
- Bedfordshire Police
- Luton SCARE

Key Supporters – Faith & Voluntary Organisations

- Churches Together in Luton
- Sunni Council of Mosques
- Luton Council of Mosques
- Guru Nanak Gurdwara
- Shri Guru Ravi Dass Sangat
- Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj Hindu Temple
- BAPS Swami Narayan Hindu Temple
- Bedfordshire Progressive Synagogue
- Luton United Synagogue
- Luton Bahai Community
- Luton Quakers
- Luton Sathya Sai Service Organisation
- LanTern Luton
- OM Group
- Our Minds Matter (OMM)
- Luton Fairtrade Steering Group
- St Mary's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation
- Faiths Against Child Sexual Exploitation (FACES)
- Luton Polish School
- Luton Polonia
- Luton Irish Forum
- Luton Sixth Form College
- University of Bedfordshire & Treehouse Chaplaincy
- Ghar se Ghar
- The Luton News and Herald & Post
- Khayaal Theatre Company
- Near Neighbours Programme

Along with the names above, we would also like to thank all those individuals who volunteer with Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF), offering their time, experience and expertise for the work we do!

CONTENTS

Message from the Chair – Professor Zafar Khan ..... Page 2

Few Words from the Director – David Jonathan ..... Page 3

LUTON FAITHS COMMUNITIES COVID-19 RESPONSE ..... Page 4

- Discover Islam ..... Page 4
- Shri Guru Ravidass Sangat ..... Page 5
- The Luton Salvation Army ..... Page 6
- Go Dharmic ..... Page 7
- Digital Poverty ..... Page 8
- Working with Public Health & messages ..... Page 9

COMMUNITIES: FAITHS LEADERS UNITED FOR PEACE ..... Page 10

MENTAL HEALTH & FAITHS DURING COVID ..... Page 11

COMMUNITIES: PRAYERS OF HOPE FOR COVID-19 ..... Page 14

ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ..... Page 15

PEACE WALK 2021 ..... Page 16

COMMUNITIES: BLACK LIVES MATTER ..... Page 17

OTHER FAITHS COMMUNITY EVENTS ..... Page 18

HONOURiNG OUR LOCAL HEROES ..... Page 19

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES ..... Page 20

BALANCE SHEET ..... Page 21

APPENDIX ..... Page 22

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



What a year we have left behind!

No one could have foreseen such a terrible and devastating impact of the pandemic that has left millions of people in our world and in our country and hundreds in our town isolated, grieved and bereaved by the losses of their loved ones due to Covid-19.

In a town like Luton, there are many who are also affected economically due to job losses and loss of work opportunities during the lockdowns.

Still it is worth celebrating the fact that communities have pulled together. We have all been looking out for each other. We can all be so proud and grateful for our NHS, frontline and various key workers and also people working on the till, bin collectors, postmen, care workers and several others and volunteers as society relied on their services.

We are also hugely proud of the significant contributions made by our faith communities. In marking the International Day of Peace through our online Zoom Peace event we had celebrated Luton's faith communities' outstanding contributions during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns. We showed video clips, news items and pictures of communities in action.

Amidst fear, anxiety, bewilderment, grief and loss caused by the ongoing pandemic, the role of faith communities and places of worship has remained crucially vital in sustaining individuals, communities and public and voluntary sector institutions and organisations, particularly in places like Luton where 78% of people are religiously affiliated.

Places of worship and faith leaders have been the first port of call, for people in distress facing death, bereavement, isolation, mental health issues and issues of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Supporting and reassuring our faith leaders that they are not alone and that we are all together in this has been at the core of all our work undertaken during the last year.

We were also extremely saddened at George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis (US) in summer last year. As Luton's faith communities we believe that racism is abhorrent in all our religious traditions and practices. We therefore, condemn any attempt to misuse religion or religious scriptures to silence those who highlight the scourge of racism in our societies. We express our solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter Global Network. It is essential for our human well-being that different races, religions and ethnicities meet together to listen, learn and share knowledge and expertise for the common good, always being mindful of the dignity and inestimable value of every human being.

We also stand in solidarity with people across the world especially minorities and refugees facing similar life-threatening challenges. It is our duty to protect the vulnerable by making our voices heard condemning acts of racism, oppression, denial of fundamental Human rights and violence against innocent people because of their racial, religious or ethnic backgrounds.

May we restore communal harmony by initiating healing where traumatic past & present hinders it and so that we may all stand and act together for the common good to bring in justice, equality, equity and fairness in our world!

Professor Zafar Khan

FEW WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR



The World Bank predicts that 100 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty this year, erasing almost all progress made in the last five years.

By the end of this year in the UK, the number of people classed as destitute (unable to afford essentials like housing, energy, and food) is estimated to rise by around 700,000.

Although we have said “We are all in this together” we must know some of us are affected more than the other and that the poor are impacted the most.

More than half of Luton’s population includes people who are vulnerable to disproportionate impact and severity of COVID-19, including BAME (Black, Asian & minority ethnic) communities, elderly and deprived populations. Luton Council’s severe budget cuts due to Covid-19, added with local economic downturn due to sharp drop in income from the London Luton Airport, is having a massive knock on effect on the Council’s services and its voluntary & faith sector partners.

Besides high deprivation, many people in Luton have been pushed further to the margins due to job losses or loss of work opportunities during the lockdowns. Therefore, the defining assumption of “business as usual” that there is little need to change, needs to be examined, keeping in mind our responsibilities, not just towards the fellow human beings but also towards the environmental well-being.

Therefore, while on one hand, we are still supporting and promoting local fundraising initiatives and food donations for Luton Food Bank, but on the other hand, during the Fairtrade Fortnight 2021 we also promoted the theme – “Choose the World You Want – Climate, Fairtrade & You”. This campaign emphasized on the need for our collective activism for climate justice. The campaign highlighted how climate change affects farmers and workers in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Honduras, who have done the least to contribute to climate change, but are disproportionately affected by it.

In the light of such life-threatening realities, as we go further into this period of having to live our lives so very strangely compared to what we are used to, it is right that we commit ourselves and invite others also to join in, to be at the forefront of fighting not just the pandemic but also the threats of racism, poverty, unemployment, climate change and we believe that together we can get through this.

We are still discerning how the coronavirus pandemic will change the face of our country and our town and what new challenges it might bring for us and particularly for those marginalised and living in extreme poverty. Locally, many volunteers, community & faith leaders have been involved at various fronts trying to support local people and the community based services as well as offering assistance to grieving families. It's been crucially important to have stayed in touch with all and align efforts where possible. Luton is known for its resilience and its ability to come together in solidarity during challenging times – it’s been so true in the last year and we remain optimistic that this will continue to make us a stronger community as we continue to wrestle our way through this critical phase, so that Covid-19 crisis is remembered, not just for the loss of life, but also for the community compassion, care and collaboration.

David Jonathan

LUTON FAITHS COMMUNITIES COVID-19 RESPONSE

We would like to honour the great deal of work in our faith communities especially during this pandemic that has hit hard on many people, many families and has increased poverty. From emergency packs, to giving away food parcels and PPE, our communities have been at all fronts delivering help and service. Generosity comes from nobility. We cannot applaud enough the on-going generosity across faiths in our town. Below are some of the key and iconic images of the faith-based organisations that have been visibly at the forefront serving the needy in our town.

Discover Islam





During the Lockdown Discover Islam team helped to save over £100k worth of food produce with limited shelf life from ending up on landfill. These food items were distributed to assist and support the organisations working on the front lines in Luton. Moreover, from its curry kitchen to working with the homeless, addressing child poverty and uniform exchange for the needy, Discover Islam has established a proven track record of its on-going community service in Luton, partnering with many organisations, especially Christian charities in Luton, for the common good.



DISCOVER ISLAM

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH level trust

LETS MAKE SURE
#NOCHILDGOESHUNGRY
IN LUTON THIS WINTER

The impact of COVID-19 has been devastating and the coming months will only become more difficult and challenging for our most vulnerable families.

At Discover Islam we're committed to ensuring every child in Luton schools has access to a free breakfast, if they need it, this winter.

Breakfast is often described as the most important meal of the day, so lets make sure every child has a great start to their day.

If you require cereals for your school pupils, please email:
contact@discover-islam.co.uk

LUTON FAITHS COMMUNITIES COVID-19 RESPONSE cont…

Shri Guru Ravidass Sangat

From April 2020 – March 2021 Shri Guru Ravidass Sangat has provided 16,000 hot meals serving charities, the community gardeners, the NHS and the needy on a weekly basis. This is a remarkable measure for any organisation, more so for the size of this Sikh community in Luton. Our Sikh friends have certainly been busy and working in partnership with the rest of the town.









The Luton Salvation Army

Families, companies, charities, churches, mosques and schools donated in total, over 5000 toys to Luton Salvation Army Christmas Toy Appeal, which benefitted 1072 children just during the Christmas period.

Of course the Salvation Army is known for more than that; its work never stops. From helping the homeless to helping people with debt, the organisation is crucial for the survival of needy in our town. It has also been delivering hot meals like Fish and Chips, gifts and goodies to lots and lots of elderly, lonely and vulnerable people in Luton.





THE SALVATION ARMY

Luton
Salvation Army

THE SALVATION ARMY

If you need an

Emergency Food Parcels

over the New Year Period

Call 07776965931 before

3pm each day

LUTON FAITHS COMMUNITIES COVID-19 RESPONSE cont…

Go Dharmic

Recently founded in Luton, Go Dharmic is a Hindu led charity with its motto ‘love all – feed all’. When we were in the middle of this pandemic last year, the charity reached a landmark of serving one millionth meal in Luton. Go Dharmic has been working with businesses and local restaurants from across different faiths and has been serving communities, schools and the local university too.







LUTON FAITHS COMMUNITIES COVID-19 RESPONSE cont…

Digital Poverty

In Luton 46% of young people live in poverty. Poverty means young people do not have all the equipment they need for learning from home, including a digital device and WiFi. The government scheme to provide digital access will only supply devices to Year 10 students (14-15 year olds) who are entitled to a free school meal. There is no provision for students in other year groups, or for young people who live in poverty but do not get a free school meal.

Without a device to work on at home, young people fall behind in their studies and miss out on developing key skills when compared to their peers.

This causes young people to worry because they know that they do not have what they need to fully participate in their studies, leaving them to feel more uncertain than ever about their future.

Luton Learning Link has been put together by the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire and a group of organisations from Luton including Luton Borough Council Education Service, Luton Council of Mosques, Luton Sunni Council of Mosques, Leve Trust and We Are Luton.







LUTON FAITHS COMMUNITIES COVID-19 RESPONSE cont…

Working with Public Health & Messaging

A special Community and Faith leaders meeting ran weekly, throughout the pandemic, to advise and support public health messages to the local communities which has been crucial to get the right information to the public. Luton's faith communities supported this by taking action at their own cost and creating their own community messaging providing much needed help and advice to the communities.









COMMUNITIES: FAITHS LEADERS UNITED FOR PEACE

Far-right activism, Hinduphobia, Antisemitism and Islamophobia

Britain First

Firstly, it was deeply saddening to see that Britain First groups felt the need once again to visit Bury Park area of Luton on 19th Oct'20 and 12th Dec'20. Due to lockdown and restrictions there wasn't much they could do, but their presence was enough in stirring up (inter) communal anxieties locally and certainly digitally as they film provocative aspects of their presence in Luton and upload on the social media to stir and mislead people. Britain First's focus on "Grooming Gangs" is a very sad reflection of how little they know about Islam, about the realities of sexual exploitation of young people, and about Luton. They want to know nothing about the work Muslims and Christians have done together in FACES (Faiths Against Child Sexual Exploitation). The challenge of any such unpleasant extremist intervention can be disastrous for community relations as they seek to incite hatred and they deliberately and tactfully provoke people to react in a way which can prove the fact that they are victims in their homeland at the hands of the so-called foreigners. The network of Christian leaders passed on their sincere commiserations and ensured together with everyone Luton sends a strong message of condemnation to all such tactics that seek to divide the town. Bedfordshire Police and the Luton Council explored looking into obtaining a further injunction given the success of the last one to help dissuade any such activities.

Reading Stabbing:

Following the stabbings in Reading on 20th June 2020, in a statement published locally, Luton's faith communities shared solidarity with people in Reading, sending a strong message of defiance to all extremists, that we will not be divided. A letter expressing solidarity from Luton's Mayor to Reading's Mayor was also a commendable effort.

Hate Mail sent to Hindu Temple

Following a hate mail sent to the Hindu Temple on 18th Nov'20, anonymously by someone posing as a Muslim required both Hindu-Muslim communities to come together, to feel acknowledged and affirmed and to be reminded of the need for us to care for one another, because attack on one is attack on us all. To avoid any breeding ground for doubts and hate, it was proposed that a meeting, if considered necessary, could be arranged between Hindu & Muslim community leaders/representatives to exchange and re-affirm the mutual communal solidarity. Considering pandemic restrictions, it was difficult to meet physically but before a virtual meeting could be explored, Councils of Mosques formally wrote to the Hindu Temple saying *"this is upsetting and unacceptable behaviour. We have shared this across our Mosques and the responses have been unequivocal in their dismay and sadness that you have been hurt in this way. We stand in absolute solidarity with you at this time - as we stand beside any faith group that is targeted by such malicious attempts to ridicule others and incite hatred. As Muslims we have often been at the receiving end of such hostile communications, and we know first-hand the anxiety and fear it can create within a community."*

We had also raised this matter in one the bi-monthly meetings of the Luton Council of Faiths. Everyone condemned this malicious act and in that meeting, Chair of Luton Council of Faiths (being a Muslim) said it out loud that this is not consistent with Islam and its core beliefs. Strongly condemning it, he said unacceptable acts such as these are not to be tolerated and joined by others he strongly recommended that it must be reported to the Police so that any malicious efforts such as these inciting hatred are traced and eliminated.



MENTAL HEALTH & FAITHS DURING COVID

As the numerous faiths/voluntary groups were busy starting a series of great and key initiatives and taking swift actions to address poverty in the town, to support the NHS and the key workers, as a Council of Faiths we identified a missing dimension of pandemic impacting people's mental health and addressed it by raising awareness about it right at the start of the pandemic by working in partnership with the faith-based mental health charity called Our Minds Matter. We also created and produced resources providing guidance for people, especially for those working from home.



LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

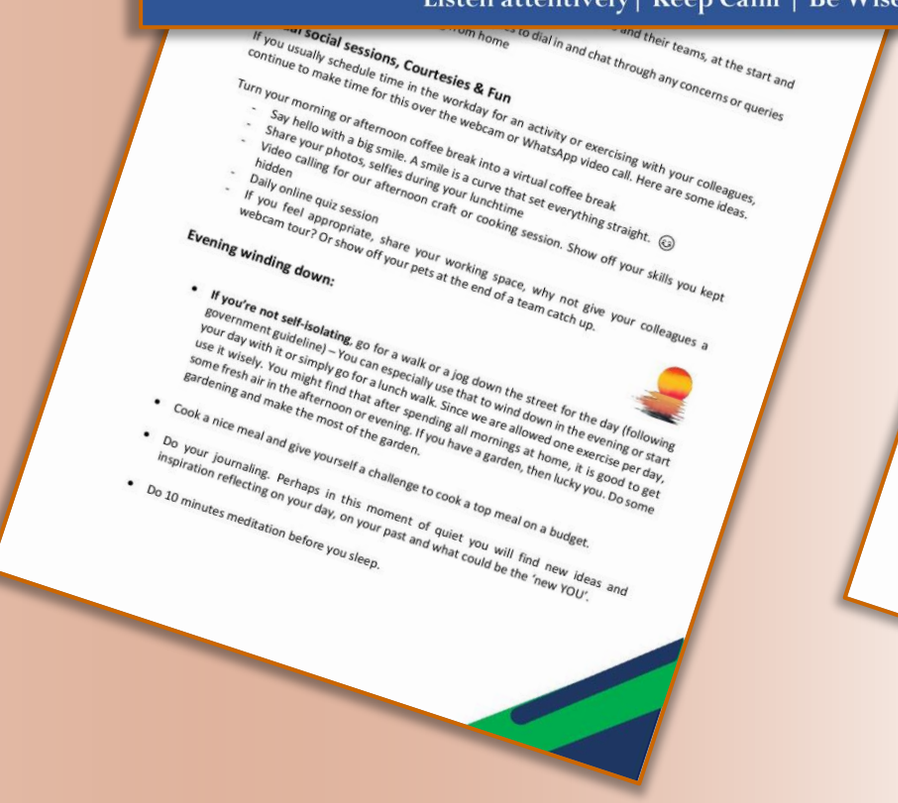
MY DAILY ACTION PLANNER:

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THRUSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
"You may not be able to control any situation and its outcome, but you can control your attitude and how you deal with it"			1 Plan your days. Set small steps towards your goal.	2 Wash your hands. Smile to them for what they do for you!	3 What are you grateful for in this moment and why? Write them down.	4 Eat well and healthy and drink plenty of water.
5 It's easy to move & stretch indoors. You are blessed to have a home.	6 Pray for those who are most needy and those saving lives.	7 Be the kindest in where you are and in your response.	8 Have a tech free day and have old games with the family. Turn off the media.	9 Breathe. Take deep and slow breath and smile to your heart as you do that.	10 Look for a free course online for your personal growth.	11 Stay in touch with your family by phone or video conferencing.
12 Play a game you enjoyed when you were a child.	13 Talk to someone if you are feeling alone or share your feelings.	14 See the good in other and see what you can learn.	15 Say Hi to your neighbor over the fence by keeping safe distance.	16 Be generous with your time and money and help a charity.	17 Smile and make your smile viral brightening someone's day	18 Cook something new that you never tried before.
19 If breath is life, movement is living. Keep the exercise!	20 Thank someone you are grateful for and tell them why.	21 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others.	22 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing.	23 Read the books you never had time to read before.	24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go	25 Hold an online surprise party. Get those creative juice working.
26 Enjoy some good sleeping hours. Have some self-compassion.	27 Keep the kindness and increase it. Make kindness viral	28 If you are healthy, help the elderly and the vulnerable.	29 Do some arts and craft that you can be proud of.	30 Remember this is temporary use your time wisely!	The only reason you may leave home: ✓ To go to work if you are a key worker. ✓ To shop for groceries, essential and medicine when needed. ✓ To exercise outside (once a day). ✓ To provide care or help to the vulnerable. ✓ [illegible] medical need.	

www.facebook.com/groups/LutonFaiths

Small daily action leads to a revolution

Listen attentively | Keep Calm | Be Wise | Be Kind



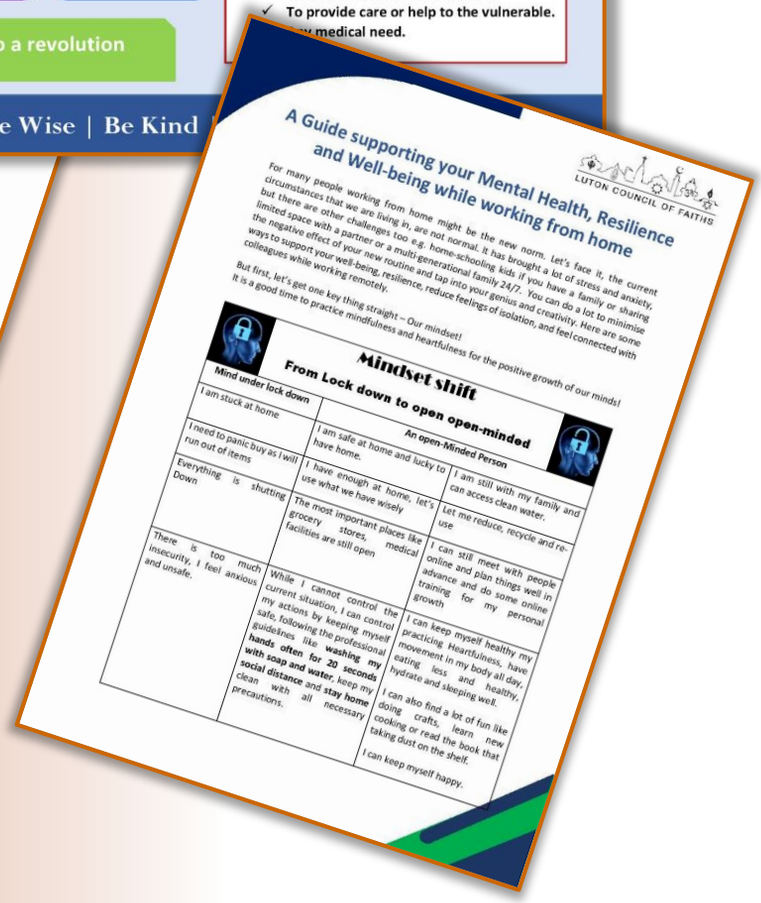
Social sessions, Courtesies & Fun

If you usually schedule time in the workday for an activity or exercising with your colleagues, continue to make time for this over the webcam or WhatsApp video call. Here are some ideas.

Turn your morning or afternoon coffee break into a virtual coffee break
- Say hello with a big smile. A smile is a curve that set everything straight.
- Share your photos, selfies during your lunchtime
- Video calling for our afternoon craft or cooking session. Show off your skills you kept hidden
- Daily online quiz session
- If you feel appropriate, share your working space, why not give your colleagues a webcam tour? Or show off your pets at the end of a team catch up.

Evening winding down:

- **If you're not self-isolating**, go for a walk or a jog down the street for the day (following government guideline) – You can especially use that to wind down in the evening or start your day with it or simply go for a lunch walk. Since we are allowed one exercise per day, use it wisely. You might find that after spending all mornings at home, it is good to get some fresh air in the afternoon or evening. If you have a garden, then lucky you. Do some gardening and make the most of the garden.
- Cook a nice meal and give yourself a challenge to cook a top meal on a budget.
- Do your journaling. Perhaps in this moment of quiet you will find new ideas and inspiration reflecting on your day, on your past and what could be the 'new YOU'.
- Do 10 minutes meditation before you sleep.



LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

A Guide supporting your Mental Health, Resilience and Well-being while working from home

For many people working from home might be the new norm. Let's face it, the current circumstances that we are living in, are not normal. It has brought a lot of stress and anxiety, but there are other challenges too e.g. home-schooling kids if you have a family or sharing limited space with a partner or a multi-generational family 24/7. You can do a lot to minimise the negative effect of your new routine and tap into your genius and creativity. Here are some ways to support your well-being, resilience, reduce feelings of isolation, and feel connected with colleagues while working remotely.

But first, let's get one key thing straight – Our mindset!

It is a good time to practice mindfulness and heartfulness for the positive growth of our minds!

Mindset shift

Mind under lock down	From Lock down to open open-minded	
	An open-Minded Person	
I am stuck at home.	I am safe at home and lucky to have home.	I am still with my family and can access clean water.
I need to panic buy as I will run out of items	I have enough at home, let's use what we have wisely	Let me reduce, recycle and re-use
Everything is shutting Down	The most important places like grocery stores, medical facilities are still open	I can still meet with people online and plan things well in advance and do some online training for my personal growth
There is too much insecurity, I feel anxious and unsafe.	While I cannot control the current situation, I can control my actions by keeping myself safe, following the professional guidelines like **washing my hands often for 20 seconds with soap and water**, keep my **social distance** and **stay home** clean with all necessary precautions.	I can keep myself healthy, my practicing Heartfulness, have movement in my body all day, eating less and healthy, hydrate and sleeping well.
		I can also find a lot of fun like doing crafts, learn new cooking or read the book that taking dust on the shelf.
		I can keep myself happy.

Faith Matters

What's happening in Luton's faith communities

Science and spirituality together

Written by
David Jonathan

Grassroots and Luton Council of Faiths



L to R: Podcast hosts Ryad Khodabocus and Jolel Miah, and contributors Bishop Richard Atkinson, Dr Viaks Acharya, Dr Mamnun Khan and Prof Gurch Randhawa

In an unprecedented step to mitigate Covid-19 fears and anxieties affecting people's mental health, Ryad Khodabocus, head of community relations and development at Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF), and Jolel Miah, founding chair of Our Minds Matter, have together produced a podcast on 'Spirituality and Mental Health' from different faiths' perspectives, bringing science and spirituality together.

Digital audio files can be downloaded FREE from https://anchor.fm/ourminds matter to listen to guest speakers invited from different faiths, sharing how they apply spirituality to understand mental health.

So far, Rt Revd Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford, has shared insights from a Christian perspective.

Dr Vikas Acharya has shared insights as a NHS doctor in L&D Hospital, but also through the lens of his Hindu faith, while Dr Mamnun Khan has talked on Covid-19 from a science point of view, but also adding to it an Islamic perspective and advice for Ramadan.

Prof Gurch Randhawa, public health researcher at the University of Bedfordshire, has talked from a Sikh perspective about his work and its impact on diversity.

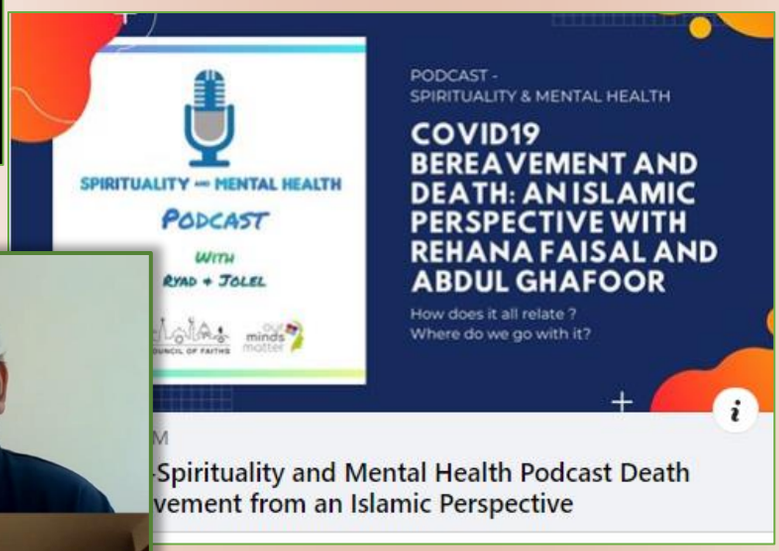
Emphasising HeartMath techniques of meditating and synchronising brain and heart, LCoF officer Ryad Khodabocus - using his health psychology background as a professional coach in stress and emotional regulation - has produced a very helpful guide supporting mental health, resilience and well-being.

The guide is available for FREE download from www.lutonfaiths.org

MENTAL HEALTH & FAITHS DURING COVID cont….

Podcast Series on ‘Spirituality & Mental Health’ and ‘Death & Bereavement’











COMMUNITIES: PRAYERS OF HOPE FOR COVID-19

Prayers by faiths communities- Hope in the face of Loss & Despair

Different faiths communities were invited to contribute a message of hope, a prayer or poem to elevate people's spirits. These contributions were designed and published online. From the many contributions we had received, a few selected prayers, scriptures & inspirational quotes are presented below.

The Holy Quran verses reminded us not to despair. Along difficulty, Allah grant ease. The Bahai reflection highlighted transformation in human world; in adversities, many are uniting to help those in need.

The Torah encouraged us not to despair. God performs the role of comforter. It reminded that surviving despair is a character-transforming experience. You realise life is not about you. It is about others. A humanist poem called us to value the love of our friends and neighbours and the beautiful creation. Hindus, Sikhs and Jains Diwali celebrations reminded us that "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." Reading of Psalms from The Bible and St Mary's Church's 900 years history of witnessing human suffering and its recovery were powerful symbols of God's restoring power in the difficult times.

Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh quote summed up this event well. "Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."

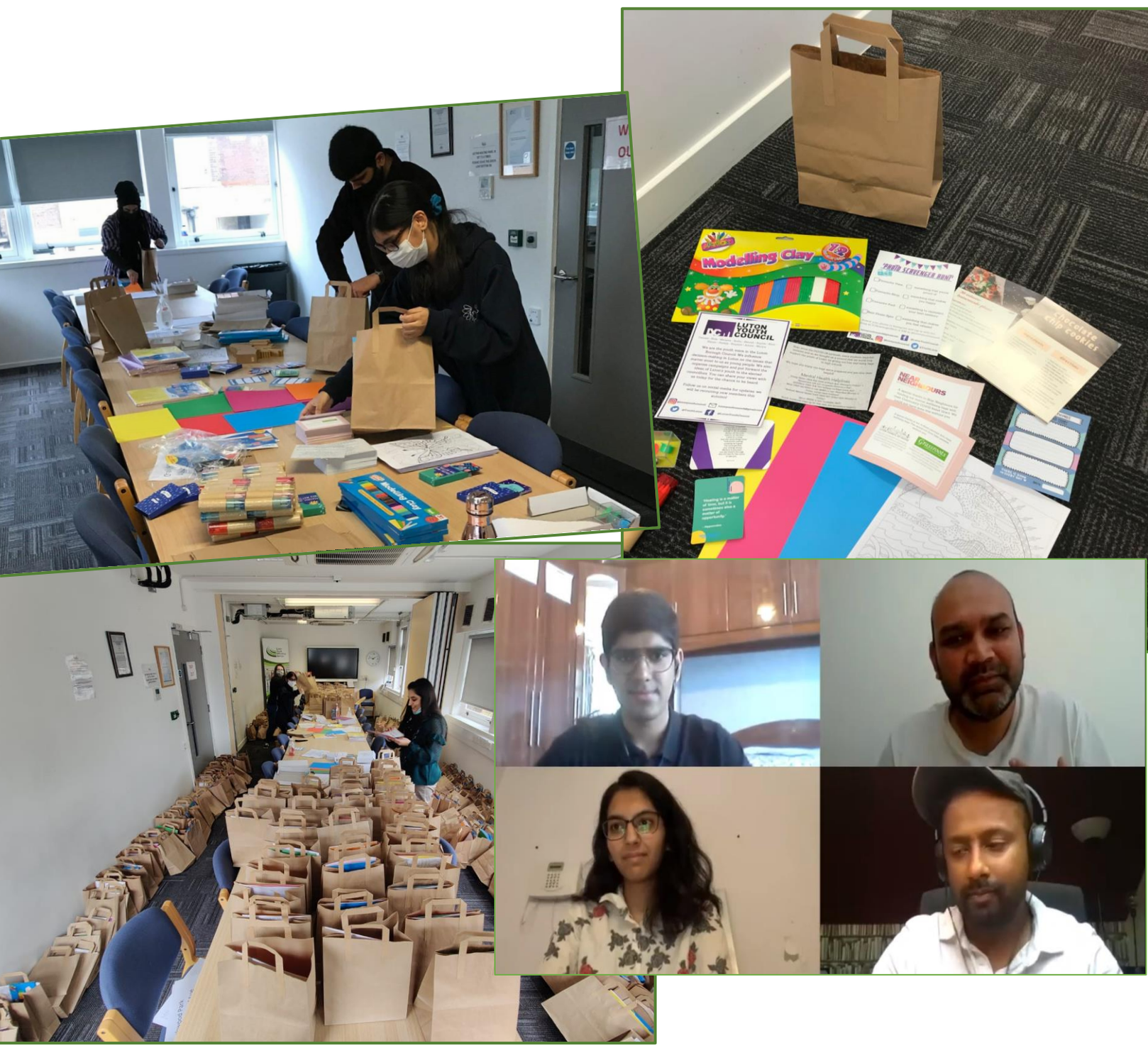


ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

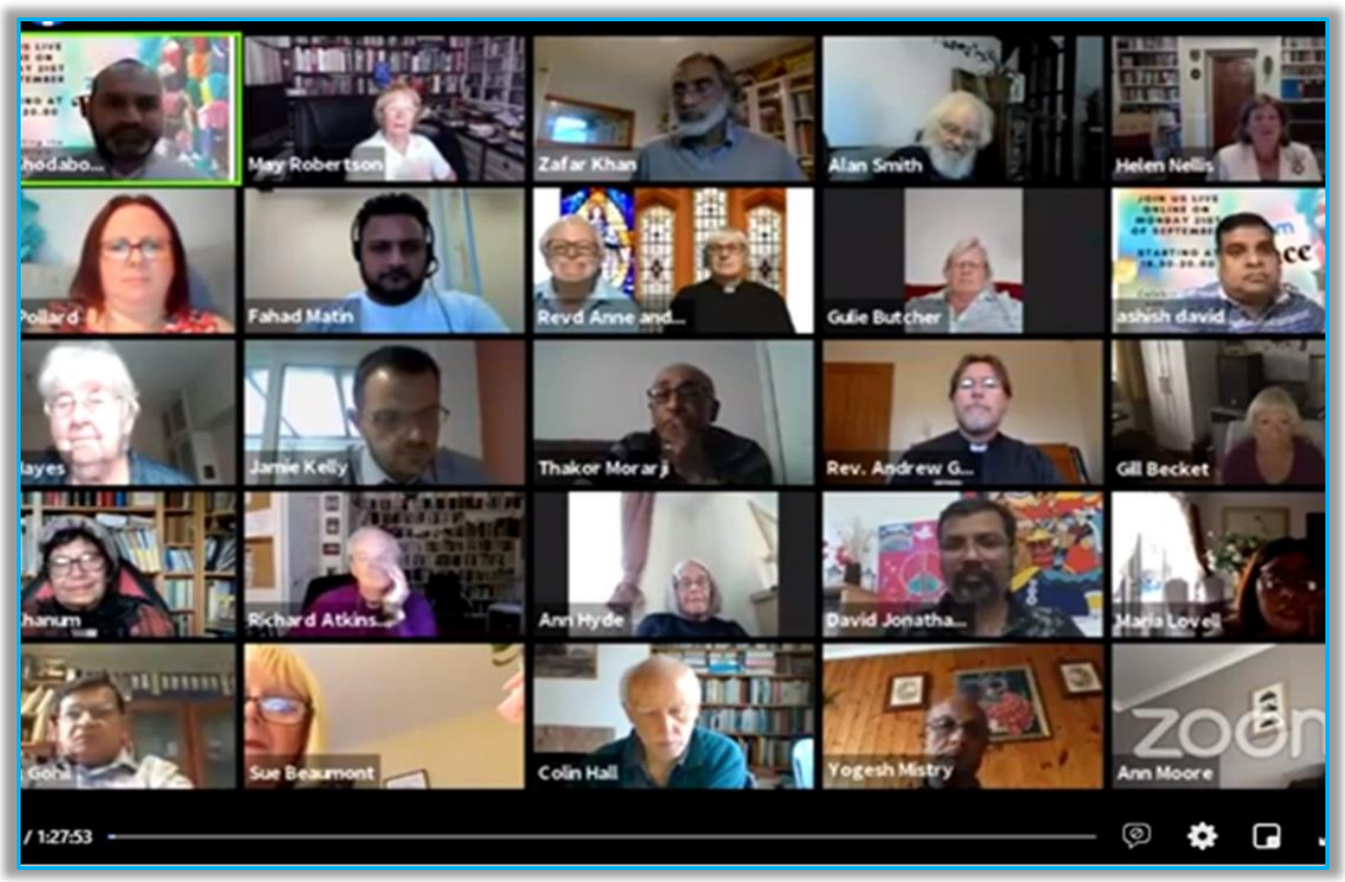
Mental Health

During our podcast series on Spirituality and Mental Health we also engaged with our young people exploring how COVID-19 has impacted on their spiritual and mental health. This followed up with one of our volunteers Nitin Varma who led a project with the Luton Youth Council and produced over 500 Mental Health Wellbeing Bags. A number of High Schools in Luton welcomed the project.

.



PEACE WALK 2021



Zooming Peace

This was quite an inspiring event commemorating International Day of Peace. Every year, LCoF commemorates International Day of Peace at its Annual Peace Walk event in which Luton's communities of faith or no faith background visit different places of worship and enjoy hospitality. Due to Covid –19, this year's peace walk event was held online. Therefore, it was called 'Zoom Peace' event.

It celebrated Luton's faith communities' outstanding work during the Covid-19 pandemic, by showing video clips, news items and pictures of community in action. All dignitaries (including Lord Lieutenant, Mayor of Luton, MPs, Chair of United Nations Association, Luton) admired and applauded Luton's faith communities, saying places of worship and faith leaders have been the first port of call, for people in distress facing death, bereavement, isolation, mental health issues and issues of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

It is great that on 'International Peace Day' our communities are being recognized and affirmed for their outstanding services. Southfield and Chantry Primary School pupils shared poems and numerous community leaders and representatives contributed to the evening uplifting everyone's spirit to continue serving those in need. Concluding the evening Right Reverend Richard Atkinson, C of E Bishop of Bedford said we are all created, loved and valued by God. We must therefore continue to ask what more I can do for others. High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Susan Lousada said, "Two words I take from this evening are 'HOPE' & 'PEACE'.

COMMUNITIES: BLACK LIVES MATTER

Black Lives Matter Luton protest was described and praised in the media as being a “profound”, moving” and “dignified” protest in the town.

The killing and death of George Floyd in Minneapolis (US) on 25th May had triggered widespread protests calling out the systemic racism embedded in our society. In Luton, nearly 2000 people had joined in the Black Lives Matter protest on Sat 6th June at 2pm at the Luton Town Hall War Memorial. It was mainly initiated by a group of (important to say here) black and white young people, but to avoid disruptive and rogue participation of those like anarchists, it was considered best that faith leaders act as stewards at the protest. Since the protest will have taken place anyway, even the Bedfordshire Police had favoured the idea that faith leaders were there, not to support, promote or partake in the protesting, but to ensure it goes safe & peaceful.







OTHER FAITHS COMMUNITY EVENTS

International Women's day

This year's Precious Pearls event celebrating women across faiths & cultures focused on the theme "Women Somewhere Over the Rainbow". It was held online by Ghar se Ghar (Hindi/Urdu Words meaning 'Home to Home') – a Luton based women's co-op group. In the event, women shared stories how they had come from 'somewhere over the rainbow' (distant parts of the world) to Luton, to fulfill their hopes, dreams and aspirations and have made Luton their much loved home now. Revd Jo Burke of All Saints Church shared how different faiths have come together to help the refugees in Luton, providing them the winter clothing and English lessons. Jill Boyd of the Oasis Centre talked of helping women with drop-in sessions and homework clubs. Faith Merriwether talked of LASE (Luton Against Sexual Exploitation) and Azalea charity concerned with women's sexual health in Luton. Elizabeth Chapman of Signposts charity talked of helping the homeless in Luton. Pari Rashid shared how she had started 'Ghar se Ghar' group in 1990s, which has served hundreds of women over the years.There were other presentations of poetry, singing, piano recital and dance movements using hands only.

Annual Peace Light Service

The Annual Peace Light Service held online on 14th Dec'20 in which a flame is brought from Bethlehem to mark the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Vicar of All Saints Church Revd David Kesterton said, "In a year when darkness seemed to have prevailed in so many ways, we have seen the light of kindness and generosity shared across our communities, not from the position of power but moved by love and vulnerability, which reflects exactly the sort of love we celebrate at Christmas." We helped bring in the contributions from Hindu, Sikh & Muslim friends who spoke on "what my faith tells me about the light that shines in the darkness". High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Susan Lousada DL said, "The whole service was delightful. I see the Christmas trees and the Christmas lights, but this service had highlighted the true meaning of Christmas."

Tree of Hope

St Mary's Church launched Tree of Hope in its Churchyard opposite the Mall. Whatever creed or colour, all were welcomed to express prayers, laments, sorrow, pain, hopes and dreams by hanging a ribbon on the Tree, to signify the collective heart cry of Luton people, in hope for everyone's well-being in our town, nation and world.



The Bedfordshire High Sheriff Award

The High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Awards this year honoured a number of our local faiths activists for their outstanding work mentioned in this report. It makes our faith communities feel proud for such well-deserved recognition has been bestowed upon them for their relentless efforts throughout the pandemic, despite all the odds they faced.





Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		3,165	-	-	**3,165**	**3,859**
- Investments		-	-	-	**-**	**-**
- Charitable activities	6	53,602	-	-	**53,602**	**68,925**
- Other Income		-	1,500		**1,500**	**1,500**
Total incoming resources		**56,767**	**1,500**	**-**	**58,267**	**74,284**
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds						
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		322	-	-	**322**	**1,490**
Governance and support costs		54,085	-	-	**54,085**	**60,149**
Other expenditure		-	-	-	**-**	**9,860**
Total expenditure		54,407	-	-	**54,407**	**71,499**
Net Movement in Funds		**2,360**	**1,500**	**-**	**3,860**	**2,785**
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**43,278**	**(19,414)**	**-**	**23,864**	**21,079**
Total funds carried forward		**45,638**	**(17,914)**	**-**	**27,724**	**23,864**

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total this year 2021	Total this year 2020
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Total current assets		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(600)	-	-	(600)	(600)
Net current assets		27,724	-	-	**27,724**	**23,864**
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		45,638			45,638	43,278
Restricted Income funds			(17,914)		(17,914)	(19,414)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		45,638	(17,914))		**27,724**	**23,864**

Appendix – 1 Letter to Prime Minister

27th May 2020

To

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson
Prime Minister
10, Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

Greetings from Luton Council of Faiths!
The ongoing global Coronavirus pandemic is putting everything to test. Everyone, public institutions, businesses, voluntary organisations are under pressure. However, we are concerned that the places of worship are overlooked.

In a faith leaders and stakeholders' meeting convened online by the Luton Council of Faiths on 26th May 2020, it is agreed that we highlight these concerns.

Amidst anxiety, fear, bewilderment, grief and loss caused by the ongoing pandemic, the role of faith communities and places of worship has remained crucially vital in sustaining individuals, communities and public and voluntary sector institutions and organisations, particularly in places like Luton where 78% of people are religiously affiliated.

However, without any income during this lockdown period, the very survival of our places of worship is at stake.

In addition, we already know that the faith sector in Luton, along with the rest of the town, is going to be hit particularly hard due to the seismic economic impacts of the town's airport being shut down for such a long period. This is a matter of considerable concern of which I know you are aware since the local community and council has brought it to your attention.

Therefore, we are writing this letter to

- highlight the fact that places of worship and faith leaders are the first port of call, for people in distress facing death, bereavement, isolation, mental health issues and issues of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

- request that government's plans for help at this time must include Britain's places of worship too, as it is critical to sustaining the overall well-being of our nation.

- thank the government's previously announced places of worship Security Fund. A similar specific fund needs to be generated to help ease the pressures on places of worship as there's an ever increasing demand on their services, after difficult and challenging times.

- strongly support the community campaign on behalf of the whole town to provide a crisis fund to Luton to stop essential services for our most vulnerable people being drastically cut or closed from as early as July 2020.

Thanking you.
Yours sincerely,

Zafar Khan
Chair, Luton Council of Faiths

Cc: Luton's Faith Communities & Places of Worship, MPs Luton North and Luton South,
Lord Stephen Greenhalgh, Faith Minister
Robert Jenrick MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Faith and Communities)
Stephen Timms MP, Chair of the APPG Faith and Society



LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS

Registered charity number: 1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

Luton Council of Faiths
Period Ended 31st March 2021
Contents

1. Charity Information
2-7 Trustees' Report
8. Statement of Financial Activities
9. Balance Sheet
10-13. Notes to the Financial Statements
14. Independent Examiner's Report

Luton Council of Faiths
Charity Information as at 31st March 2021

Charity name
Luton Council of Faiths

Charity number
1089850

Principal address
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 OBW

Trustees
Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson
Mrs Gulie Butcher – Vice Chair
Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer
Mr Dhansukh Panchal
Mr Ramnik Gohil

Bankers
The Co-operative Bank
Alma Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2PL

Lloyds TBS Bank Plc
60 George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BB

Independent examiner
I. Hussain & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Luton Council of Faiths
Trustees Annual Report

History, objectives and activities of the Charity

On constitution it was believed the multicultural cohesion of the religious and cultural communities in Luton required addressing. The charity began with an initial grant. Both the initial grant and subsequent grants since have been under the terms which allow the trustees to either retain the amounts as capital or to spend them.

The objectives of the charity include;

a) To bring together members of the different faith communities in Luton for deeper dialogue and co-operation
b) To increase understanding and trust between different faiths, building on common ground between them yet respecting the unique contribution which each brings
c) To work towards greater social cohesion and community integration in Luton
d) To see inter faith co-operation as linking into global co-operation between faiths and cultures for the creation of a better world

Management and Governance arrangements

The constitution provides for a minimum of five trustees. Where there is a requirement for new trustees, these would be identified and appointed by the remaining trustees, subject to the approval by AGM. The chair of the trustees is responsible for the induction of any new trustee which involves awareness of a trustee's responsibility, the governing document, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the charity. The trustees have taken steps to identify major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Achievements and Performance of the Charity

Introduction
What a year we have left behind. No one could have foreseen such a terrible and devastating impact of the pandemic that has left thousands of people in our world and in our country and hundreds in our town isolated, grieved and bereaved by the losses of their loved ones due to Covid-19. More than half of Luton's population includes people who are vulnerable to disproportionate impact and severity of COVID-19, including BAME (Black, Asian & minority ethnic) communities, elderly and deprived populations. Luton Council's severe budget cuts due to Covid-19, added with local economic downturn due to sharp drop in income from the London Luton Airport, is having a massive knock on effect on the Council's services and its voluntary & faith sector partners. Besides high deprivation, many people in Luton have been pushed further to the margins due to job losses or loss of work opportunities during the lockdowns.

Still it is worth celebrating the fact that communities have pulled together. We have all been looking out for each other. We can all be so proud and grateful for our NHS, frontline and other key workers and also people working on the till, bin collectors, postmen and several others. We must also feel proud of the significant contributions made by our faith communities.

Amidst fear, anxiety, bewilderment, grief and loss caused by the ongoing pandemic, the role of faith communities and places of worship has remained crucially vital in sustaining individuals, communities and public and voluntary sector institutions and organisations, particularly in places like Luton where 78% of people are religiously affiliated. Places of worship and faith leaders have been the first port of call, for people in distress facing death, bereavement, isolation, mental health issues and issues of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Supporting and reassuring our faith leaders that they are not alone and that we are all together in this has been at the core of all our work undertaken during the last year.

We were also extremely saddened at George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis (US) in summer last year. As Luton's faith communities we believe that racism is abhorrent in all our religious traditions and practices. We therefore, condemn any attempt to misuse religion or religious scriptures to silence those who highlight the scourge of racism in our societies. We express our solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter Global Network. It is essential for our human well-being that different races, religions and ethnicities meet together to listen, learn and share knowledge and expertise for the common good, always being mindful of the dignity and inestimable value of every human being.

We also stand in solidarity with people across the world especially minorities and refugees facing similar life-threatening challenges. It is our duty to protect the vulnerable by making our voices heard condemning acts of racism and violence against innocent people because of their racial, religious or ethnic backgrounds.

May we restore communal harmony by initiating healing where traumatic past & present hinders it and so that we may all stand and act together for the common good to bring in justice, equality, equity and fairness in our world!

Covid – 19 Work Update

During and after the easing of lockdown(s), our work & main activities have included;

1. attending weekly briefing and networking meetings re Covid-19 convened jointly by the local authority, public health & Police
   a) Faith and Community Group Briefings
   b) Care of the Deceased Group Meetings addressing 'cremation and burial' concerns
   c) Community Fora Meetings
   d) Covid-19 Champions meetings
   e) Excessive Death Planning Meetings
   f) Pastoral Care Scheme for NHS staff and for communities
   g) & a special briefing on managing isolation in Multi-Generational Households & cascading it through our faith networks particularly in black, Asian & minority ethnic (BAME) communities

2. supporting and promoting appeals for donations from Luton Food Bank to Luton's faith communities, which saw the biggest drive of service, raising fund, food donations, delivery of hot meals particularly during the religious festivities.

3. supporting Places of Worship to go through guidelines about RE-OPENING and get advice from the Council & Public Health, particularly in the months of June & Nov'20

4. collecting & presenting devotional/scriptural quotes/prayers from Luton's faith communities, to all in our networks, for support, encouragement, comfort and healing

5. promoting and supporting Pope Francis call for all faiths and none fasting together with Muslims on 14th May'20 during Ramadan for end of COVID-19 https://ara.tv/6ga3n

6. Sourcing helpful information re SAFE (Security Advice for Everyone) guidance for safety against extremist attacks and for secure livestreaming of religious services and other similar meetings and events held online by different faith communities, through the expertise of the Community Security Trust (CST – a British charity primarily concerned with the safety and security of the Jewish communities in the UK)

7. Helping Church of England St Albans Diocese in preparing a Covid-19 Pastoral Care Scheme, for NHS and for communities, across the county of Bedfordshire in which Luton Council of Faiths remained one of the key contact points for multi faith needs in Luton

The following resources, produced kindly by Luton Council of Faiths, were also widely circulated, appreciated, admired and applauded by over 900 people.

8. A Guide supporting your Mental Health, Resilience and Well-being while working from home https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5271666ae4b08363c17bd7b4/t/5eaf1ea937ba131c87f41eee/1588534981177/LCoF+Supporting-your-mental-health-LCOF-Final.pdf

9. My Daily Action Planner https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5271666ae4b08363c17bd7b4/t/5eaf1e61606a9567bc3da0c3/1588534895774/LCoF+DAILY+PLAN+LoCK+Down.pdf

10. Faith Matters Column published in the Luton News highlighting positive contributions of Luton's different faith communities

Key Highlights – Other LCoF Events

Zoom Peace Event (Sep'20)
This was quite an inspiring event commemorating International Day of Peace. Every year, LCoF commemorates International Day of Peace at its Annual Peace Walk event in which Luton's communities of faith or no faith background visit different places of worship and enjoy hospitality. Due to Covid –19, this year's peace walk event was held online. Therefore, it was called 'Zoom Peace' event. It celebrated Luton's faith communities' outstanding work during the Covid-19 pandemic, by showing video clips, news items and pictures of community in action. High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Susan Lousada said, "Two words I take from this evening – 'HOPE' & 'PEACE'."

Hope in the face of Loss & Despair – Seeing 'Light' through the Dark (Nov'20)
In this event friends from different faiths had made their contributions and shared briefly prayers, scriptural & other inspirational quotes on the theme. The Holy Quran verses reminded us not to despair. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief. A verse from the Sikh scripture Shri Guru Granth Sahib assured, "Why are you afraid, O human! The Creator will save you." Quaker Book of Faith and Practice said light is already shining into the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Bahai reflection highlighted transformation in human world; in adversities, many are uniting to help those in need.

The Torah encouraged us not to despair. God performs the role of comforter. It reminded that surviving despair is a character-transforming experience. You realise life is not about you. It is about others. A humanist poem called us to value the love of our friends and neighbours and the beautiful creation. Hindus, Sikhs and Jains Diwali celebrations reminded us that "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." Reading of Psalms from The Bible and St Mary's Church's 900 years history of witnessing human suffering and its recovery were powerful symbols of God's restoring power in the difficult times. Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh quote summed up this event well. "Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."

Government Research Projects (Oct & Dec'20)

The Prime Minister had asked Danny Kruger MP for proposals to sustain the community spirit we saw during the first lockdown. We contributed our responses from Luton asking for a more local, more humane, less bureaucratic, less centralised work ethics. In Oct'20, The Prime Minister responded positively to Kruger's proposals and a report is available for download here:
https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/communities-report

In Dec'20 the Independent Faith Review was carried out by Colin Bloom as the Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). He led this review to discern how best the government should engage with faith groups.
https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-faith-engagement-review-call-for-evidence

Key Highlights – Community Events

Tree of Hope (Sep'20)

St Mary's Church launched Tree of Hope in its Churchyard opposite the Mall. Whatever creed or colour, all were welcomed to express prayers, laments, sorrow, pain, hopes and dreams by hanging a ribbon on the Tree, to signify the collective heart cry of Luton people.

Annual Peace Light Service (Dec'20)

In the Annual Peace Light Service held online on 14th Dec'20 a flame, as always, was brought from Bethlehem to mark the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Vicar of All Saints Church Revd David Kesterton said, "In a year when darkness seemed to have prevailed in so many ways, we have seen the light of kindness and generosity shared across our communities, which reflects the love we celebrate at Christmas." High Sheriff of Bedfordshire and Hindu, Sikh & Muslim friends also spoke on "what my faith tells about the light in the darkness".

UNA Luton Events (Oct'20 – Feb'21)

We supported & promoted the UNA Luton branch to organise online events as following;

a) 20th Dec'20 – UN Int'l Human Solidarity Day
b) 24th Oct'20 – UN Day on
c) 10th Jan'21 – UN Model Citizens' Assembly on "Should the UK Join the UN's Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)?"
d) 30th Jan'21 – Climate Crisis: Our Ocean, Our Future
e) 27th Feb'21 – Int'l Mother Language Day: Valuing Identity, Culture, Diversity & Peace

Precious Pearls 2021 (Women Only Online Event) 11th March

This year's Precious Pearls event celebrating women across faiths & cultures focused on the theme "Women Somewhere Over the Rainbow". It was held online by Ghar se Ghar (Hindi/Urdu Words meaning 'Home to Home') – a Luton based women's co-op group. In the event, women shared stories how they had come from 'somewhere over the rainbow' (distant parts of the world) to Luton, to fulfill their hopes, dreams and aspirations and have made Luton their much loved home now. We are never too small to make a difference was the key message in this event.

Key Challenges

Reading Terror Attack

Following the stabbings in Reading on 20th June 2020, in a statement published locally, Luton's faith communities shared solidarity with people in Reading, sending a strong message of defiance to all extremists, that we will not be divided.

Britain First Groups (Oct & Dec'20)

It was deeply saddening that even during the pandemic Britain First groups felt the need to show up in Luton. Due to the lockdown and restrictions there wasn't much they could do, but their presence was enough in stirring up (inter) communal anxieties locally and certainly digitally as they mislead people using the social media. Joined by all faith communities, Christian leaders in particular passed on their commiserations and projected a strong message of condemnation to all such tactics that seek to divide the town

Covid – 19 Postcode Racism

Constant scapegoating of the 'other' within our society, hostility and inaccurate perceptions exacerbated by negative and inaccurate reporting of facts in the media/social media, has led to the postcode racism on multiple occasions. Unprecedented levels of racism have been shared across social media platforms towards Asians & Muslims. This is despite Luton's faith communities doing their best to speculate the Covid-19 threats and put in safety measures even before the government introduced the lockdown, which helped significantly in saving many lives.

Covid – 19 Impact on Places of Worship (PoW)

No lettings of places of worship buildings and facilities severely affected income to sustain religious buildings. A letter was sent to the Prime Minister asking for a specific fund for help.

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

The killing and death of George Floyd in Minneapolis (US) in May 2020 had triggered widespread protests calling out the systemic racism embedded in our society. In Luton, nearly 2000 people from different faiths and ethnicities had joined in the Black Lives Matter protest held on Sat 6th June at 2pm at the Luton Town Hall War Memorial. Many faith leaders volunteered to act as protest stewards to ensure protest remains peaceful & safe for all. Pas Llyod Denny, Chair of Luton in Harmony said "We just cannot be spectators. We must call out injustices we see and we must do so, inspired by love for all."

Conclusion

In the light of all the work undertaken last year and challenges highlighted in this report, it is evident that we are all created to be inter-dependent, just like the ecosystem is and that when suffering bypasses race, gender, religion, and nation, we have no other option but to live in mutual solidarity.

Luton Council of Faiths remain committed to

- foster our collective human solidarity to sustain us through these extra-ordinary times
- encourage us all to choose peace over panic, hope over hysteria and faith over fear

Financial review and reserves

The net incoming resources for the year was a surplus of £3,860 (2020 – £2,785). At the end of the financial year the reserves were £45,638 (2020 - £43,278) of unrestricted funds and a deficit of £17,914 (2020 – deficit of £19,414) of restricted funds. The adequacy of the reserves policy is reviewed annually. The trustees are satisfied that reserves are presently more than adequate to meet future expenditure. The reserves policy is to have reserves available in order to ensure the day to day operation continue into the foreseeable future.

Future plans

The trustees intend to continue provide relief in a similar manner as before.

Post balance sheet events

The events of the Coronovirus outbreak shall significantly affect the operations of the charity, the results of these operations or the state of affairs of the charity in the financial year subsequent to the financial period ended 31st March 2021. There is likely to be a reduction in the charity's income and subsequently a reduction in expenditure. We anticipate this would be a short term affect and would not affect the charity's ability to operate in the longer term.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and its financial activities for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent examiner

The trustees intend to ask the existing accountants to undertake the independent examination of the trust in the following year.

Signed on behalf of the trustees

..... Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson 24/5/21

..... Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer

Date: 18.05.2021

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		3,165	-	-	**3,165**	**3,859**
- Investments		-	-	-	-	-
- Charitable activities	6	53,602	-	-	**53,602**	**68,925**
- Other Income		-	1,500		**1,500**	**1,500**
Total incoming resources		**56,767**	**1,500**	-	**58,267**	**74,284**
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds						
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		322	-	-	**322**	**1,490**
Governance and support costs		54,085	-	-	**54,085**	**60,149**
Other expenditure		-	-	-	-	**9,860**
Total expenditure		54,407	-	-	**54,407**	**71,499**
Net Movement in Funds		**2,360**	**1,500**	-	**3,860**	**2,785**
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**43,278**	**(19,414)**	-	**23,864**	**21,079**
Total funds carried forward		**45,638**	**(17,914)**	-	**27,724**	**23,864**

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these accounts.

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total this year 2021	Total this year 2020
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Total current assets		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(600)	-	-	(600)	(600)
Net current assets		27,724	=	-	27,724	23,864
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		45,638			45,638	43,278
Restricted Income funds			(17,914)		(17,914)	(19,414)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		45,638	(17,914))		27,724	23,864

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

..... Mr Zafar Khan - Chairperson Date: 18.05.2021

..... Mr Kishore Kaler - Treasurer Date: 18.05.2021

1. Accounting policies

a) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.
b) Recognition of Income – there are included in the Statemen of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources and monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.
c) Investment income is recorded when receivable
d) All expenditure is included in the accounts on an accrual basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the SOFA as incurred.
e) The restricted funds of the charity are expendable funds which is regularly increased or retained as capital at the trustees' discretion.
f) All capital related expenditure costing more than £750 is capitalised. Depreciation on fixtures and fittings is charged on a straight line basis over 5 years.

2. Taxation

Luton Council of Faiths is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they apply to charitable purposes.

3. Restricted

The restricted donations in the current year and the previous year represent income mainly from Grants but also from donations to the Luton Council of Faiths restricted funds only.

4. Analysis of employees costs

		2021	2020
		£	£
Salaries and PAYE		30,175	32,339
Pension		2,405	2,643
Total		32,580	34,981

The number of full-time employees during the year was one and there were no average part time members of staff.

5. Related Party transactions

None of the trustees were paid any remuneration or expenses by the charity during the year (2020 £nil)

6. Analysis of Income from Charitable activities

	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£
Community Investment Fund LLAL Grant – core costs	53,602	-	53,602	59,000
National Lottery Community Fund		-	-	9,925
Other donations	3,165	-	3,165	3,859
Total	56,767	-	56,767	72,784

7. Analysis of Other income

	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£
Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours	-	1,500	1,500	4,350
Total	-	1,500	1,500	4,350

8. Analysis of Charitable expenditure

The charity has undertaken direct activity to meet its charitable purposes. The following is the analysis of the charity's direct expenditure:

	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
Fair Trade Project	-	-	-	443
Peace Walk	-	-	-	500
Books Resources	139	-	139	128
Other Events, Programmes and items	183	-	183	416
Total	322	-	322	1,490

9. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2021		2020
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

10. Other resources expended by the charity include:

	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
National Lottery Community Fund – working in Peace and Harmony	-	-	-	9,393
Charitable giving and donations	-	-	-	467
Total	-	-	-	9,860

11. Governance and Support costs

Support costs, consisting of the rent and rates and staff salaries are split between charitable activity and governance on an actual or equal estimated basis. This is because it is difficult to estimate the expense attributable to each activity. Support costs apportioned to the different aims of the charity are shown in the note below.

	Basis of Apportionment	2021 £ Unrestricted	2021 £ Restricted	2021 £ Total	2020 £ Total
Office costs	Actual	4,671	-	4,671	7,155
Subscriptions	Actual	30	-	30	-
Travelling and general expenditure	Actual	427	-	427	2,754
Equipment	Actual	1,313	-	1,313	74
Salaries	Actual	30,175	-	30,175	32,339
Pensions	Actual	2,405		2,405	2,643
Grass roots	Actual	12,000	-	12,000	10,000
Insurance	Actual	874	-	874	838
Telephone and website	Actual	719	-	719	1,298
Professional	Actual	790	-	790	790
Advertising and publicity	Actual	115	-	115	1,391
Volunteering	Actual	427	-	427	767
Total		53,946	-	53,946	60,149

12. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2021		2020
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

Tangible Fixed Assets

There were no movements or any tangible fixed assets currently held by the Charity during the year.

13. Analysis of Debtors.

	2021		2020
Restricted funds	-		-
Total	-		-

14. Analysis of Creditors

	2021		2020
Independent examiner's fee	600		600
			-
Total	600		600

Independent examiner's Report to the Trustees of Luton Council of Faiths

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2021 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit in not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true or fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



I Hussain and Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton LU1 2BJ

Registered charity number: 1089850

LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

Luton Council of Faiths
Period Ended 31st March 2021
Contents

1. Charity Information
2-7 Trustees' Report
8. Statement of Financial Activities
9. Balance Sheet
10-13. Notes to the Financial Statements
14. Independent Examiner's Report

Luton Council of Faiths
Charity Information as at 31st March 2021

Charity name
Luton Council of Faiths

Charity number
1089850

Principal address
47 High Town Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 OBW

Trustees
Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson
Mrs Gulie Butcher – Vice Chair
Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer
Mr Dhansukh Panchal
Mr Ramnik Gohil

Bankers
The Co-operative Bank
Alma Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2PL

Lloyds TBS Bank Plc
60 George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BB

Independent examiner
I. Hussain & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BJ

Luton Council of Faiths
Trustees Annual Report

History, objectives and activities of the Charity

On constitution it was believed the multicultural cohesion of the religious and cultural communities in Luton required addressing. The charity began with an initial grant. Both the initial grant and subsequent grants since have been under the terms which allow the trustees to either retain the amounts as capital or to spend them.

The objectives of the charity include;

a) To bring together members of the different faith communities in Luton for deeper dialogue and co-operation
b) To increase understanding and trust between different faiths, building on common ground between them yet respecting the unique contribution which each brings
c) To work towards greater social cohesion and community integration in Luton
d) To see inter faith co-operation as linking into global co-operation between faiths and cultures for the creation of a better world

Management and Governance arrangements

The constitution provides for a minimum of five trustees. Where there is a requirement for new trustees, these would be identified and appointed by the remaining trustees, subject to the approval by AGM. The chair of the trustees is responsible for the induction of any new trustee which involves awareness of a trustee's responsibility, the governing document, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the charity. The trustees have taken steps to identify major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Achievements and Performance of the Charity

Introduction
What a year we have left behind. No one could have foreseen such a terrible and devastating impact of the pandemic that has left thousands of people in our world and in our country and hundreds in our town isolated, grieved and bereaved by the losses of their loved ones due to Covid-19. More than half of Luton's population includes people who are vulnerable to disproportionate impact and severity of COVID-19, including BAME (Black, Asian & minority ethnic) communities, elderly and deprived populations. Luton Council's severe budget cuts due to Covid-19, added with local economic downturn due to sharp drop in income from the London Luton Airport, is having a massive knock on effect on the Council's services and its voluntary & faith sector partners. Besides high deprivation, many people in Luton have been pushed further to the margins due to job losses or loss of work opportunities during the lockdowns.

Still it is worth celebrating the fact that communities have pulled together. We have all been looking out for each other. We can all be so proud and grateful for our NHS, frontline and other key workers and also people working on the till, bin collectors, postmen and several others. We must also feel proud of the significant contributions made by our faith communities.

Amidst fear, anxiety, bewilderment, grief and loss caused by the ongoing pandemic, the role of faith communities and places of worship has remained crucially vital in sustaining individuals, communities and public and voluntary sector institutions and organisations, particularly in places like Luton where 78% of people are religiously affiliated. Places of worship and faith leaders have been the first port of call, for people in distress facing death, bereavement, isolation, mental health issues and issues of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Supporting and reassuring our faith leaders that they are not alone and that we are all together in this has been at the core of all our work undertaken during the last year.

We were also extremely saddened at George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis (US) in summer last year. As Luton's faith communities we believe that racism is abhorrent in all our religious traditions and practices. We therefore, condemn any attempt to misuse religion or religious scriptures to silence those who highlight the scourge of racism in our societies. We express our solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter Global Network. It is essential for our human well-being that different races, religions and ethnicities meet together to listen, learn and share knowledge and expertise for the common good, always being mindful of the dignity and inestimable value of every human being.

We also stand in solidarity with people across the world especially minorities and refugees facing similar life-threatening challenges. It is our duty to protect the vulnerable by making our voices heard condemning acts of racism and violence against innocent people because of their racial, religious or ethnic backgrounds.

May we restore communal harmony by initiating healing where traumatic past & present hinders it and so that we may all stand and act together for the common good to bring in justice, equality, equity and fairness in our world!

Covid – 19 Work Update

During and after the easing of lockdown(s), our work & main activities have included;

1. attending weekly briefing and networking meetings re Covid-19 convened jointly by the local authority, public health & Police
   a) Faith and Community Group Briefings
   b) Care of the Deceased Group Meetings addressing 'cremation and burial' concerns
   c) Community Fora Meetings
   d) Covid-19 Champions meetings
   e) Excessive Death Planning Meetings
   f) Pastoral Care Scheme for NHS staff and for communities
   g) & a special briefing on managing isolation in Multi-Generational Households & cascading it through our faith networks particularly in black, Asian & minority ethnic (BAME) communities

2. supporting and promoting appeals for donations from Luton Food Bank to Luton's faith communities, which saw the biggest drive of service, raising fund, food donations, delivery of hot meals particularly during the religious festivities.

3. supporting Places of Worship to go through guidelines about RE-OPENING and get advice from the Council & Public Health, particularly in the months of June & Nov'20

4. collecting & presenting devotional/scriptural quotes/prayers from Luton's faith communities, to all in our networks, for support, encouragement, comfort and healing

5. promoting and supporting Pope Francis call for all faiths and none fasting together with Muslims on 14th May'20 during Ramadan for end of COVID-19 https://ara.tv/6ga3n

6. Sourcing helpful information re SAFE (Security Advice for Everyone) guidance for safety against extremist attacks and for secure livestreaming of religious services and other similar meetings and events held online by different faith communities, through the expertise of the Community Security Trust (CST – a British charity primarily concerned with the safety and security of the Jewish communities in the UK)

7. Helping Church of England St Albans Diocese in preparing a Covid-19 Pastoral Care Scheme, for NHS and for communities, across the county of Bedfordshire in which Luton Council of Faiths remained one of the key contact points for multi faith needs in Luton

The following resources, produced kindly by Luton Council of Faiths, were also widely circulated, appreciated, admired and applauded by over 900 people.

8. A Guide supporting your Mental Health, Resilience and Well-being while working from home https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5271666ae4b08363c17bd7b4/t/5eaf1ea937ba131c87f41eee/1588534981177/LCoF+Supporting-your-mental-health-LCOF-Final.pdf

9. My Daily Action Planner https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5271666ae4b08363c17bd7b4/t/5eaf1e61606a9567bc3da0c3/1588534895774/LCoF+DAILY+PLAN+LoCK+Down.pdf

10. Faith Matters Column published in the Luton News highlighting positive contributions of Luton's different faith communities

Key Highlights – Other LCoF Events

Zoom Peace Event (Sep'20)
This was quite an inspiring event commemorating International Day of Peace. Every year, LCoF commemorates International Day of Peace at its Annual Peace Walk event in which Luton's communities of faith or no faith background visit different places of worship and enjoy hospitality. Due to Covid –19, this year's peace walk event was held online. Therefore, it was called 'Zoom Peace' event. It celebrated Luton's faith communities' outstanding work during the Covid-19 pandemic, by showing video clips, news items and pictures of community in action. High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Susan Lousada said, "Two words I take from this evening – 'HOPE' & 'PEACE'."

Hope in the face of Loss & Despair – Seeing 'Light' through the Dark (Nov'20)
In this event friends from different faiths had made their contributions and shared briefly prayers, scriptural & other inspirational quotes on the theme. The Holy Quran verses reminded us not to despair. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief. A verse from the Sikh scripture Shri Guru Granth Sahib assured, "Why are you afraid, O human! The Creator will save you." Quaker Book of Faith and Practice said light is already shining into the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Bahai reflection highlighted transformation in human world; in adversities, many are uniting to help those in need.

The Torah encouraged us not to despair. God performs the role of comforter. It reminded that surviving despair is a character-transforming experience. You realise life is not about you. It is about others. A humanist poem called us to value the love of our friends and neighbours and the beautiful creation. Hindus, Sikhs and Jains Diwali celebrations reminded us that "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." Reading of Psalms from The Bible and St Mary's Church's 900 years history of witnessing human suffering and its recovery were powerful symbols of God's restoring power in the difficult times. Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh quote summed up this event well. "Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."

Government Research Projects (Oct & Dec'20)

The Prime Minister had asked Danny Kruger MP for proposals to sustain the community spirit we saw during the first lockdown. We contributed our responses from Luton asking for a more local, more humane, less bureaucratic, less centralised work ethics. In Oct'20, The Prime Minister responded positively to Kruger's proposals and a report is available for download here:
https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/communities-report

In Dec'20 the Independent Faith Review was carried out by Colin Bloom as the Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). He led this review to discern how best the government should engage with faith groups.
https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-faith-engagement-review-call-for-evidence

Key Highlights – Community Events

Tree of Hope (Sep'20)

St Mary's Church launched Tree of Hope in its Churchyard opposite the Mall. Whatever creed or colour, all were welcomed to express prayers, laments, sorrow, pain, hopes and dreams by hanging a ribbon on the Tree, to signify the collective heart cry of Luton people.

Annual Peace Light Service (Dec'20)

In the Annual Peace Light Service held online on 14th Dec'20 a flame, as always, was brought from Bethlehem to mark the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Vicar of All Saints Church Revd David Kesterton said, "In a year when darkness seemed to have prevailed in so many ways, we have seen the light of kindness and generosity shared across our communities, which reflects the love we celebrate at Christmas." High Sheriff of Bedfordshire and Hindu, Sikh & Muslim friends also spoke on "what my faith tells about the light in the darkness".

UNA Luton Events (Oct'20 – Feb'21)

We supported & promoted the UNA Luton branch to organise online events as following;

a) 20th Dec'20 – UN Int'l Human Solidarity Day
b) 24th Oct'20 – UN Day on
c) 10th Jan'21 – UN Model Citizens' Assembly on "Should the UK Join the UN's Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)?"
d) 30th Jan'21 – Climate Crisis: Our Ocean, Our Future
e) 27th Feb'21 – Int'l Mother Language Day: Valuing Identity, Culture, Diversity & Peace

Precious Pearls 2021 (Women Only Online Event) 11th March

This year's Precious Pearls event celebrating women across faiths & cultures focused on the theme "Women Somewhere Over the Rainbow". It was held online by Ghar se Ghar (Hindi/Urdu Words meaning 'Home to Home') – a Luton based women's co-op group. In the event, women shared stories how they had come from 'somewhere over the rainbow' (distant parts of the world) to Luton, to fulfill their hopes, dreams and aspirations and have made Luton their much loved home now. We are never too small to make a difference was the key message in this event.

Key Challenges

Reading Terror Attack

Following the stabbings in Reading on 20th June 2020, in a statement published locally, Luton's faith communities shared solidarity with people in Reading, sending a strong message of defiance to all extremists, that we will not be divided.

Britain First Groups (Oct & Dec'20)

It was deeply saddening that even during the pandemic Britain First groups felt the need to show up in Luton. Due to the lockdown and restrictions there wasn't much they could do, but their presence was enough in stirring up (inter) communal anxieties locally and certainly digitally as they mislead people using the social media. Joined by all faith communities, Christian leaders in particular passed on their commiserations and projected a strong message of condemnation to all such tactics that seek to divide the town

Covid – 19 Postcode Racism

Constant scapegoating of the 'other' within our society, hostility and inaccurate perceptions exacerbated by negative and inaccurate reporting of facts in the media/social media, has led to the postcode racism on multiple occasions. Unprecedented levels of racism have been shared across social media platforms towards Asians & Muslims. This is despite Luton's faith communities doing their best to speculate the Covid-19 threats and put in safety measures even before the government introduced the lockdown, which helped significantly in saving many lives.

Covid – 19 Impact on Places of Worship (PoW)

No lettings of places of worship buildings and facilities severely affected income to sustain religious buildings. A letter was sent to the Prime Minister asking for a specific fund for help.

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

The killing and death of George Floyd in Minneapolis (US) in May 2020 had triggered widespread protests calling out the systemic racism embedded in our society. In Luton, nearly 2000 people from different faiths and ethnicities had joined in the Black Lives Matter protest held on Sat 6th June at 2pm at the Luton Town Hall War Memorial. Many faith leaders volunteered to act as protest stewards to ensure protest remains peaceful & safe for all. Pas Llyod Denny, Chair of Luton in Harmony said "We just cannot be spectators. We must call out injustices we see and we must do so, inspired by love for all."

Conclusion

In the light of all the work undertaken last year and challenges highlighted in this report, it is evident that we are all created to be inter-dependent, just like the ecosystem is and that when suffering bypasses race, gender, religion, and nation, we have no other option but to live in mutual solidarity.

Luton Council of Faiths remain committed to

- foster our collective human solidarity to sustain us through these extra-ordinary times
- encourage us all to choose peace over panic, hope over hysteria and faith over fear

Financial review and reserves

The net incoming resources for the year was a surplus of £3,860 (2020 – £2,785). At the end of the financial year the reserves were £45,638 (2020 - £43,278) of unrestricted funds and a deficit of £17,914 (2020 – deficit of £19,414) of restricted funds. The adequacy of the reserves policy is reviewed annually. The trustees are satisfied that reserves are presently more than adequate to meet future expenditure. The reserves policy is to have reserves available in order to ensure the day to day operation continue into the foreseeable future.

Future plans

The trustees intend to continue provide relief in a similar manner as before.

Post balance sheet events

The events of the Coronovirus outbreak shall significantly affect the operations of the charity, the results of these operations or the state of affairs of the charity in the financial year subsequent to the financial period ended 31st March 2021. There is likely to be a reduction in the charity's income and subsequently a reduction in expenditure. We anticipate this would be a short term affect and would not affect the charity's ability to operate in the longer term.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and its financial activities for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent examiner

The trustees intend to ask the existing accountants to undertake the independent examination of the trust in the following year.

Signed on behalf of the trustees

..... Mr Zafar Khan – Chairperson 24/5/21

..... Mr Kishore Kaler – Treasurer

Date: 18.05.2021

Luton Council of Faiths

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Period Ended 31st March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
Incoming resources						
Income and endowments from:						
- Donations and legacies		3,165	-	-	**3,165**	**3,859**
- Investments		-	-	-	-	-
- Charitable activities	6	53,602	-	-	**53,602**	**68,925**
- Other Income		-	1,500		**1,500**	**1,500**
Total incoming resources		**56,767**	**1,500**	-	**58,267**	**74,284**
Resources expended						
Expenditure on:	4-10					
Raising funds						
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising trading costs		-	-	-	-	-
Investment management costs		-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		322	-	-	**322**	**1,490**
Governance and support costs		54,085	-	-	**54,085**	**60,149**
Other expenditure		-	-	-	-	**9,860**
Total expenditure		54,407	-	-	**54,407**	**71,499**
Net Movement in Funds		**2,360**	**1,500**	-	**3,860**	**2,785**
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		**43,278**	**(19,414)**	-	**23,864**	**21,079**
Total funds carried forward		**45,638**	**(17,914)**	-	**27,724**	**23,864**

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these accounts.

Luton Council of Faiths
Balance Sheet
As at 31ST March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total this year 2021	Total this year 2020
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current Assets						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Total current assets		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(600)	-	-	(600)	(600)
Net current assets		27,724	=	-	27,724	23,864
Funds of the Charity						
Unrestricted funds		45,638			45,638	43,278
Restricted Income funds			(17,914)		(17,914)	(19,414)
Endowment funds				-	-	-
Total funds		45,638	(17,914))		27,724	23,864

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

..... Mr Zafar Khan - Chairperson Date: 18.05.2021

..... Mr Kishore Kaler - Treasurer Date: 18.05.2021

1. Accounting policies

a) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.
b) Recognition of Income – there are included in the Statemen of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources and monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.
c) Investment income is recorded when receivable
d) All expenditure is included in the accounts on an accrual basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the SOFA as incurred.
e) The restricted funds of the charity are expendable funds which is regularly increased or retained as capital at the trustees' discretion.
f) All capital related expenditure costing more than £750 is capitalised. Depreciation on fixtures and fittings is charged on a straight line basis over 5 years.

2. Taxation

Luton Council of Faiths is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they apply to charitable purposes.

3. Restricted

The restricted donations in the current year and the previous year represent income mainly from Grants but also from donations to the Luton Council of Faiths restricted funds only.

4. Analysis of employees costs

		2021	2020
		£	£
Salaries and PAYE		30,175	32,339
Pension		2,405	2,643
Total		32,580	34,981

The number of full-time employees during the year was one and there were no average part time members of staff.

5. Related Party transactions

None of the trustees were paid any remuneration or expenses by the charity during the year (2020 £nil)

6. Analysis of Income from Charitable activities

	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£
Community Investment Fund LLAL Grant – core costs	53,602	-	53,602	59,000
National Lottery Community Fund		-	-	9,925
Other donations	3,165	-	3,165	3,859
Total	56,767	-	56,767	72,784

7. Analysis of Other income

	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£
Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours	-	1,500	1,500	4,350
Total	-	1,500	1,500	4,350

8. Analysis of Charitable expenditure

The charity has undertaken direct activity to meet its charitable purposes. The following is the analysis of the charity's direct expenditure:

	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
Fair Trade Project	-	-	-	443
Peace Walk	-	-	-	500
Books Resources	139	-	139	128
Other Events, Programmes and items	183	-	183	416
Total	322	-	322	1,490

9. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2021		2020
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

10. Other resources expended by the charity include:

	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
National Lottery Community Fund – working in Peace and Harmony	-	-	-	9,393
Charitable giving and donations	-	-	-	467
Total	-	-	-	9,860

11. Governance and Support costs

Support costs, consisting of the rent and rates and staff salaries are split between charitable activity and governance on an actual or equal estimated basis. This is because it is difficult to estimate the expense attributable to each activity. Support costs apportioned to the different aims of the charity are shown in the note below.

	Basis of Apportionment	2021 £ Unrestricted	2021 £ Restricted	2021 £ Total	2020 £ Total
Office costs	Actual	4,671	-	4,671	7,155
Subscriptions	Actual	30	-	30	-
Travelling and general expenditure	Actual	427	-	427	2,754
Equipment	Actual	1,313	-	1,313	74
Salaries	Actual	30,175	-	30,175	32,339
Pensions	Actual	2,405		2,405	2,643
Grass roots	Actual	12,000	-	12,000	10,000
Insurance	Actual	874	-	874	838
Telephone and website	Actual	719	-	719	1,298
Professional	Actual	790	-	790	790
Advertising and publicity	Actual	115	-	115	1,391
Volunteering	Actual	427	-	427	767
Total		53,946	-	53,946	60,149

12. The resources expended by the charity include:

		2021		2020
Independent examiner's fee		600		600
Total		600		600

Tangible Fixed Assets

There were no movements or any tangible fixed assets currently held by the Charity during the year.

13. Analysis of Debtors.

	2021		2020
Restricted funds	-		-
Total	-		-

14. Analysis of Creditors

	2021		2020
Independent examiner's fee	600		600
			-
Total	600		600

Independent examiner's Report to the Trustees of Luton Council of Faiths

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2021 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit in not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true or fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



I Hussain and Co Limited
Chartered Accountants and Business advisors
11 George Street West
Luton LU1 2BJ