

**COVID-19**  
CORONAVIRUS



# Annual Report

## 2020-2021

## Luton Council of Faiths

Charity no: 1089850

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

On 10<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.lutonfaiths.org)

### Email Us:

[info@lutonfaiths.org](mailto: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:



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[www.twitter.com/LutonFaiths](https://www.twitter.com/LutonFaiths)

### 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!

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## 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.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



### LET'S 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 let's 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](mailto: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.





## LUTON FAITHS COMMUNITIES COVID-19 RESPONSE cont...

### 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.



**Luton  
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.



**There is a significant risk that disadvantaged children have less access to teaching than their peers, in part due to having reduced access to technology, exacerbating the impact of school closures.**

*Impact of School Closures on the Attainment Gap (Education Endowment Fund, 2020 report)*

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**Help us bridge the digital divide**  
[www.lutonlearninglink.org](http://www.lutonlearninglink.org)  
[admin@lutonlearninglink.org](mailto:admin@lutonlearninglink.org)




**BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE  
SCHOOL BY SCHOOL**

**14 SCHOOLS**

**21 MILES**


**141 MILES**

**A MASSIVE  
THANK YOU**

For Donating

**£18,271**

To Help Ensure Children Have The Equipment They Need To learn.



**INSPIRE FM** 105.1' POSITIVELY INSPIRING THE COMMUNITY

**DISCOVER SLAM**

**LUTON COUNCIL OF MOSQUES**

**LSM** Luton Sunni Council of Mosques



## 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.



## MY DAILY ACTION PLANNER:





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b>"You may not be able to control any situation and its outcome, but you can control your attitude and how you deal with it"</b></p>			<p>1 Plan your days. Set small steps towards your goal.</p>	<p>2 <u>Wash your hands</u>. Smile to them for what they do for you!</p>	<p>3 What are you grateful for in this moment and why? Write them down.</p>	<p>4 Eat well and healthy and drink plenty of water.</p>
<p>5 It's easy to move &amp; stretch indoors. <u>You are blessed to have a home.</u></p>	<p>6 Pray for those who are most needy and those saving lives.</p>	<p>7 Be the kindest in where you are and in your response.</p>	<p>8 Have a tech free day and have old games with the family. Turn off the media.</p>	<p>9 Breathe. Take deep and slow breath and smile to your heart as you do that.</p>	<p>10 Look for a free course online for your personal growth.</p>	<p>11 Stay in touch with your family by phone or video conferencing.</p>
<p>12 Play a game you enjoyed when you were a child.</p>	<p>13 Talk to someone if you are feeling alone or share your feelings.</p>	<p>14 See the good in other and see what you can learn.</p>	<p>15 Say Hi to your neighbor over the fence by <u>keeping safe distance</u>.</p>	<p>16 Be generous with your time and money and help a charity.</p>	<p>17 Smile and make your smile viral brightening someone's day</p>	<p>18 Cook something new that you never tried before.</p>
<p>19 If breath is life, movement is living. <u>Keep the exercise!</u></p>	<p>20 Thank someone you are grateful for and tell them why.</p>	<p>21 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others.</p>	<p>22 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing.</p>	<p>23 Read the books you never had time to read before.</p>	<p>24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go</p>	<p>25 Hold an online surprise party. Get those creative juice working.</p>
<p>26 Enjoy some good sleeping hours. Have some self-compassion.</p>	<p>27 Keep the kindness and increase it. Make kindness viral</p>	<p>28 If you are healthy, help the elderly and the vulnerable.</p>	<p>29 Do some arts and craft that you can be proud of.</p>	<p>30 Remember this is temporary use your time wisely!</p>	<p><b>The only reason you may leave home:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To go to work if you are a key worker.</li> <li>✓ To shop for groceries, essential and medicine when needed.</li> <li>✓ To exercise outside (once a day).</li> <li>✓ To provide care or help to the vulnerable.</li> <li>✓ For medical need.</li> </ul>	

[www.facebook.com/groups/LutonFaiths](http://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 the 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 minds!

It is a good time to practice mindfulness and heartfulness for the positive growth of our minds!

Mindset shift From Lock down to open open-minded	An open-Minded Person
<p><b>Mind under lock down</b></p> <p>I am stuck at home</p> <p>I need to panic buy as I will run out of items</p> <p>Everything is shutting down</p> <p>There is too much insecurity, I feel anxious and unsafe.</p> <p>While I cannot control the current situation, I can control my actions by keeping myself safe, following the professional guidelines like <u>washing my hands often for 30 seconds with soap and water</u>, keep my social distance and stay home clean with all necessary precautions.</p>	<p><b>An open-Minded Person</b></p> <p>I am safe at home and lucky to have home.</p> <p>I have enough at home, let's use what we have wisely</p> <p>The most important places like grocery stores, medical facilities are still open</p> <p>I can still meet with people online and plan things well in advance and do some online training for my personal growth</p> <p>I can keep myself healthy my practicing heartfulness, have movement in my body all day, eating less and healthy, hydrate and sleeping well.</p> <p>I can also find a lot of fun like doing crafts, learn new cooking or read the book that taking dust on the shelf.</p> <p>I can keep myself happy.</p>



## Faith Matters

What's happening in  
Luton's faith communities

### Science and spirituality together

Written by  
**David Jonathan**

Grassroots and Luton Council of Faiths

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/ourmindsmatter> 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



**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**

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](http://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."

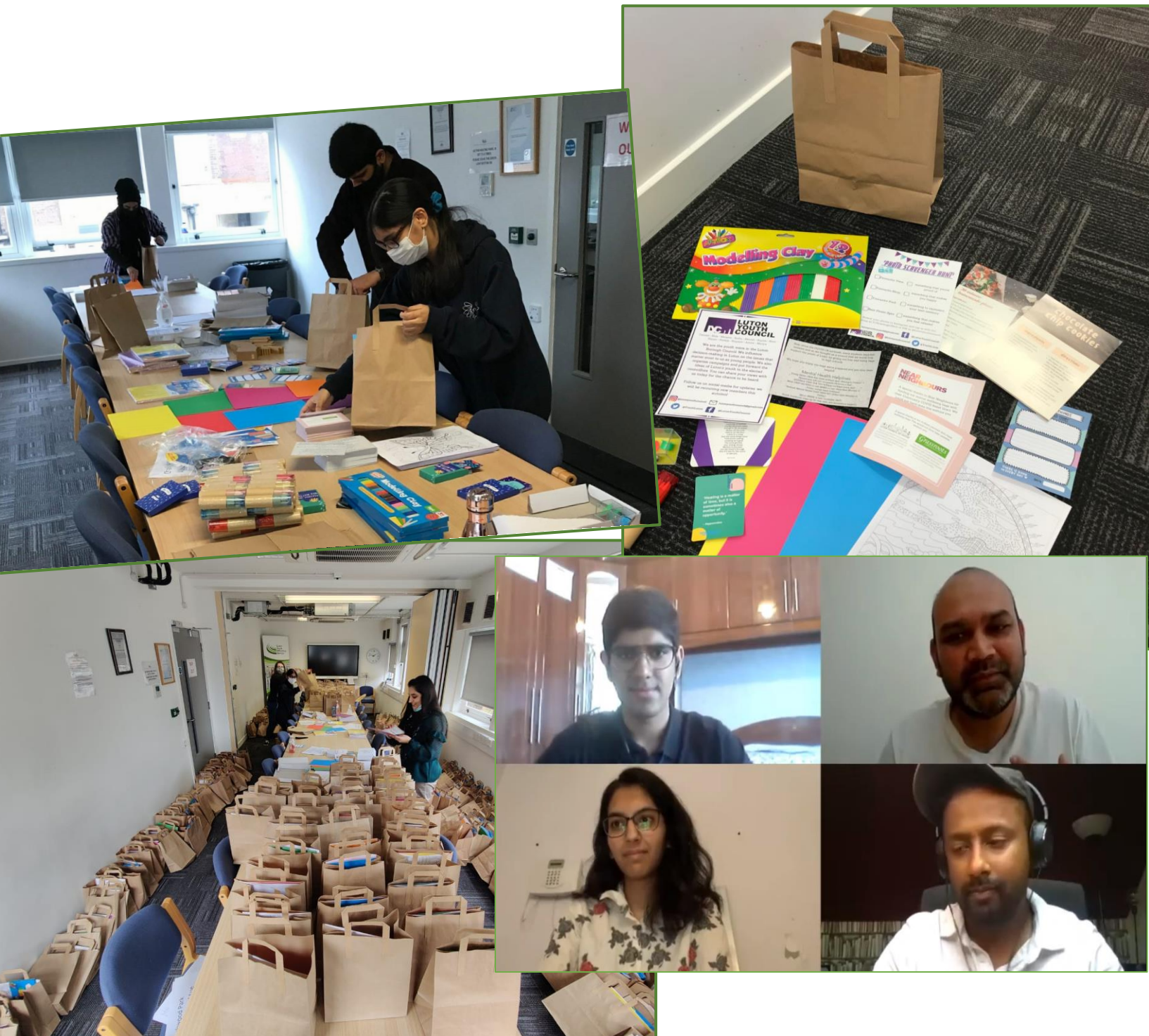




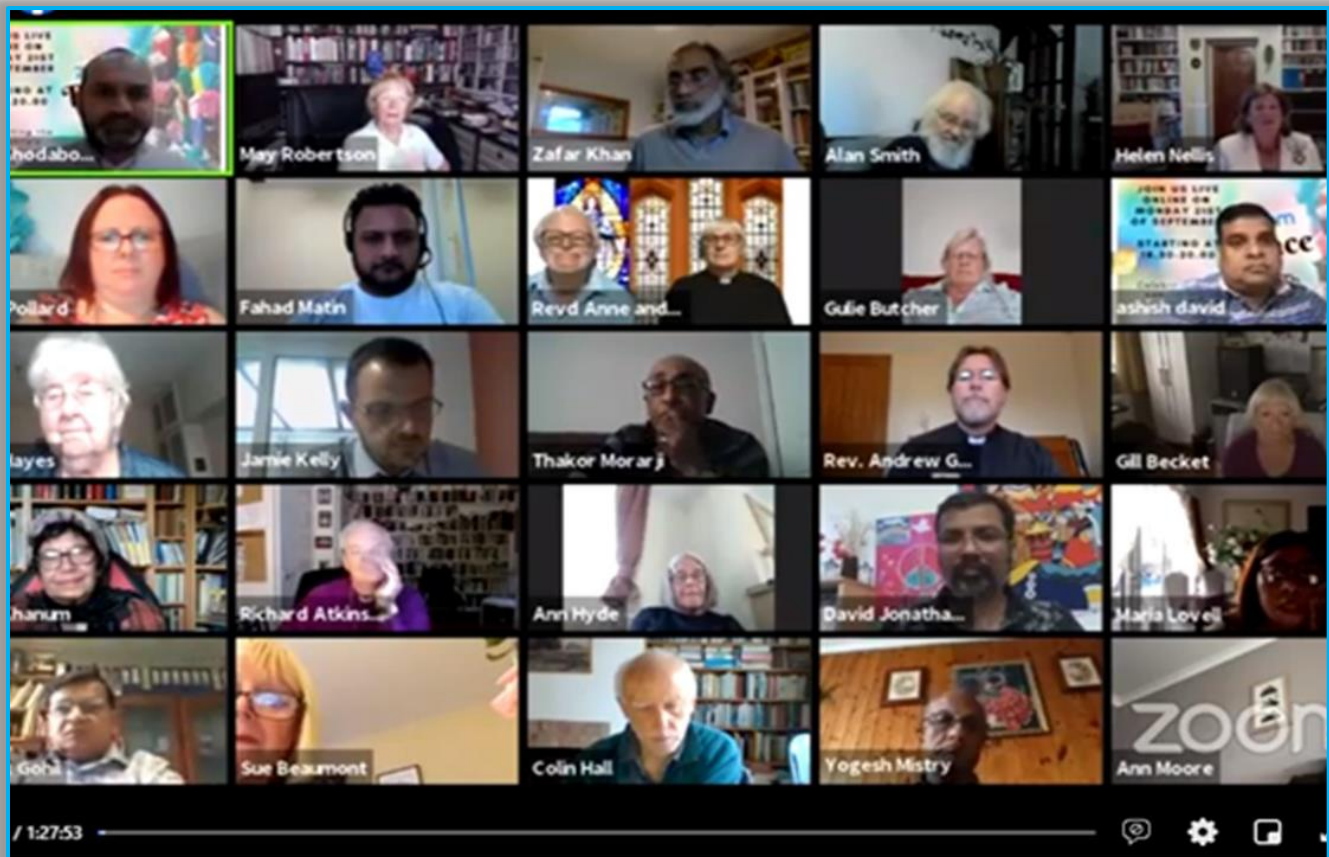
## ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

### 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.

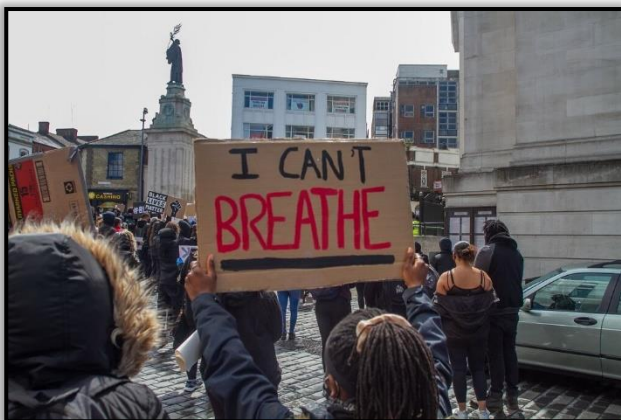
It is great that on 'International Peace Day' our communities are being recognized and affirmed for their outstanding services. Southfield and Chantry Primary School pupils shared poems and numerous community leaders and representatives contributed to the evening uplifting everyone's spirit to continue 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.



## HONOURING OUR LOCAL HEROS

### 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.



### High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Awards 2020/21

#### Citizen Award 2020/21

The High Sheriff and a panel of five judges drawn from across the county had an extremely tough decision choosing the winners from so many nominations.

-  **Collett and Phil McKinley**, the backbones of Changing Lives4Ever, they provide meals and food parcels to the elderly and disadvantaged in Luton
-  **Major Ralph Walker** working tirelessly with the Salvation Army in Luton for the homeless and disadvantaged
-  **Sujel Miah and Rehana Faisal** challenging online racism, fighting food and digital poverty and fundraising within the Luton communities
-  **Hammond Sproson** helping rough sleepers with food, water, clothing and other necessities in Central Bedfordshire
-  **Salma Khan** has ensured the survival of Luton foodbank by raising its profile, thereby securing funding and support to fight food poverty



# Luton Council of Faiths

## Statement of Financial Activities For the Period Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
<b>Incoming resources</b>						
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>						
- 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
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b><u>56,767</u></b>	<b><u>1,500</u></b>	<b><u>±</u></b>	<b><u>58,267</u></b>	<b><u>74,284</u></b>
<b>Resources expended</b>						
<b>Expenditure on:</b>	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
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b><u>54,407</u></b>	<b><u>±</u></b>	<b><u>±</u></b>	<b><u>54,407</u></b>	<b><u>71,499</u></b>
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>		<b><u>2,360</u></b>	<b><u>1,500</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>3,860</u></b>	<b><u>2,785</u></b>
<b>Reconciliation of Funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward		<b><u>43,278</u></b>	<b><u>(19,414)</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>23,864</u></b>	<b><u>21,079</u></b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b><u>45,638</u></b>	<b><u>(17,914)</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>27,724</u></b>	<b><u>23,864</u></b>

**Luton Council of Faiths**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As at 31<sup>ST</sup> March 2021**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total this year 2021	Total this year 2020
<b><u>Fixed Assets</u></b>						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>		-	-	-	-	-
<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
<b>Total current assets</b>		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(600)	-	-	(600)	(600)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>27,724</u>	=	-	<u>27,724</u>	<u>23,864</u>
<b><u>Funds of the Charity</u></b>						
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>		<u>45,638</u>			<u>45,638</u>	<u>43,278</u>
<u>Restricted Income funds</u>			<u>(17,914)</u>		<u>(17,914)</u>	<u>(19,414)</u>
<u>Endowment funds</u>				-	-	-
<b>Total funds</b>		<u>45,638</u>	<u>(17,914)</u>		<u>27,724</u>	<u>23,864</u>



## **Appendix – 1 Letter to Prime Minister**

27<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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





Registered charity number: 1089850

**LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

**Luton Council of Faiths**  
**Period Ended 31<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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) 10<sup>th</sup> Jan'21 – UN Model Citizens' Assembly on "Should the UK Join the UN's Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)?"
- d) 30<sup>th</sup> Jan'21 – Climate Crisis: Our Ocean, Our Future
- e) 27<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 Coronavirus 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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:

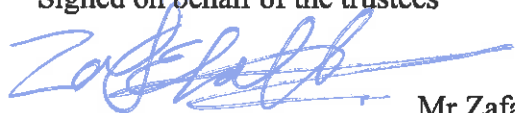
- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
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<b>Income and endowments from:</b>						
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- Investments		-	-	-	-	-
- Charitable activities	6	53,602	-	-	53,602	68,925
- Other Income		-	1,500		1,500	1,500
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>56,767</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>58,267</b>	<b>74,284</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>						
<b>Expenditure on:</b>	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
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>54,407</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>54,407</b>	<b>71,499</b>
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>		<b>2,360</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,860</b>	<b>2,785</b>
<b>Reconciliation of Funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward		<b>43,278</b>	<b>(19,414)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,864</b>	<b>21,079</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>45,638</b>	<b>(17,914)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27,724</b>	<b>23,864</b>

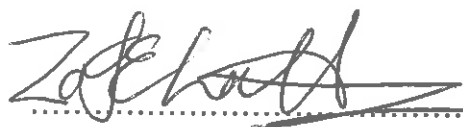
The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these accounts.



**Luton Council of Faiths**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As at 31<sup>ST</sup> March 2021**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total this year 2021	Total this year 2020
<b><u>Fixed Assets</u></b>						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>		-	-	-	-	-
<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
<b>Total current assets</b>		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(600)	-	-	(600)	(600)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>27,724</u>	=	-	<u>27,724</u>	<u>23,864</u>
<b><u>Funds of the Charity</u></b>						
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>		45,638			45,638	43,278
<u>Restricted Income funds</u>			(17,914)		(17,914)	(19,414)
<u>Endowment funds</u>				-	-	-
<b>Total funds</b>		<u>45,638</u>	<u>(17,914))</u>		<u>27,724</u>	<u>23,864</u>

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

**Luton Council of Faiths**  
**Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 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		<u>32,580</u>	<u>34,981</u>

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	<u>56,767</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>56,767</u>	<u>72,784</u>

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	-	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>4,350</u>

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,860</b>

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 £	2021 £	2021 £	2020 £
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	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
<b>Total</b>		<b>53,946</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53,946</b>	<b>60,149</b>

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 is 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

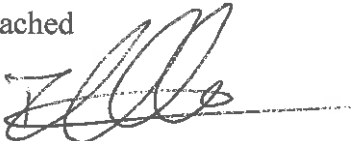
In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(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 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

**Luton Council of Faiths**  
**Period Ended 31<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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) 10<sup>th</sup> Jan'21 – UN Model Citizens' Assembly on "Should the UK Join the UN's Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)?"
- d) 30<sup>th</sup> Jan'21 – Climate Crisis: Our Ocean, Our Future
- e) 27<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 Coronavirus 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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:

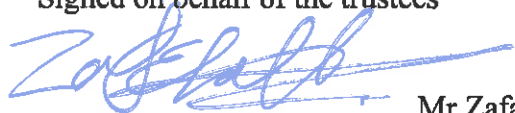
- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

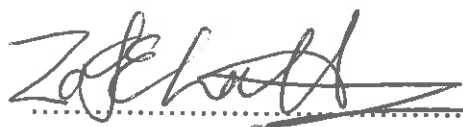
	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
<b>Incoming resources</b>						
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>						
- Donations and legacies		3,165	-	-	3,165	3,859
- Investments		-	-	-	-	-
- Charitable activities	6	53,602	-	-	53,602	68,925
- Other Income		-	1,500		1,500	1,500
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>56,767</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>58,267</b>	<b>74,284</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>						
<b>Expenditure on:</b>	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
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>54,407</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>54,407</b>	<b>71,499</b>
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>		<b>2,360</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,860</b>	<b>2,785</b>
<b>Reconciliation of Funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward		43,278	(19,414)	-	23,864	21,079
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>45,638</b>	<b>(17,914)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27,724</b>	<b>23,864</b>

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

**Luton Council of Faiths**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As at 31<sup>ST</sup> March 2021**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted income funds 2021	Endowment Funds 2021	Total this year 2021	Total this year 2020
<b><u>Fixed Assets</u></b>						
Tangible Assets		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>		-	-	-	-	-
<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>						
Debtors	11		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
<b>Total current assets</b>		28,634		-	28,634	24,464
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(600)	-	-	(600)	(600)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>27,724</u>	=	-	<u>27,724</u>	<u>23,864</u>
<b><u>Funds of the Charity</u></b>						
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>		45,638			45,638	43,278
<u>Restricted Income funds</u>			(17,914)		(17,914)	(19,414)
<u>Endowment funds</u>				-	-	-
<b>Total funds</b>		<u>45,638</u>	<u>(17,914))</u>		<u>27,724</u>	<u>23,864</u>

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



**Luton Council of Faiths**  
**Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 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		<u>32,580</u>	<u>34,981</u>

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	<u>56,767</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>56,767</u>	<u>72,784</u>

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	-	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>4,350</u>

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,860</b>

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 £	2021 £	2021 £	2020 £
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	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
<b>Total</b>		<b>53,946</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53,946</b>	<b>60,149</b>

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 is 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

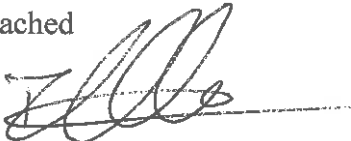
In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(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



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