

# **CHAIRS REPORT 2021**

IFCF AGM 23/11/21

1900hrs

2021 saw the gradual return to some familiarity as the year progressed. Even though we were not able to hold our HMD event in person, we were fortunate to produce and complete a full HMD Programme virtually. This fifty-minute-long video depicts a wide range of contributions from Schools, Policing, Local Authorities and Specialist Speakers. This was uploaded to and can be found on, the Suffolk County Councils Youtube channel.

Similarly, we held our delayed Faith Lecture virtually through zoom on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Dr Edward Kessler's webinar on The Changing Landscape of Religion and Belief: Standing at the Crossroads was both well attended and well received. The date he shared and insights he provided during his presentation were thought provoking and interesting. Dr Kessler stated that literacy and encounters are two valuable approaches in improving and fostering good relations between people of different faiths and communities.

Unfortunately, like many events the Suffolk Justice Service held every year, hosted by the High Sheriff was postponed from March to June. As in previous years, an invitation was extended to a range of Faith Communities such the Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Buddhist and Muslim communities to offer a contribution on Law and Justice from their faith's perspective. IFCF were able to aid in facilitating contact between the High Sheriff's Office and the respective individuals.

Throughout the year, myself and few trustees had been contacted regarding funeral arrangements for individuals and family members who had sadly passed away, but were relatively new to Suffolk and their respective faith communities and required assistance in making contact with the appropriate individuals for funeral arrangements, this was especially difficult at the time due to restriction being in place. However, we were able to assist where possible.

More recently in September, Michael Madden of the Ipswich Quakers extended an invitation for a multi faith dedication of the Tree of Peace in Woodbridge. Denis Johnston attended and spoke on behalf of IFCF,

In November, every year the Remembrance Day Service is held in Ipswich at the Cenotaph in Christ Church Park. As in previous years, a representative from various faith groups have been invited to offer a prayer or bidding during the Service. IFCF has been invited once again to lay a wreath at the service. This year the organisers have allowed the laying of a white poppy wreath, which will be laid by members of the Ipswich Quakers. This has been a topic of discussion for some years and IFCF is happy to share this positive news.

Looking ahead we are currently finalising details for our first Storytelling zoom event. We will be inviting storytellers from the Pagan and Hindu tradition to share some insights, background and stories from their respective traditions.

We also plan to hold our HMD event in person on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021. We are finalising details in terms of location and participants, and all being well with restrictions we look forward to welcoming you back to this live event.

Our Faith Lecture is also in the planning process and we look forward to inviting you to this lecture. It has not been finalised if this will be a virtual or live event at this time. Our guest speaker for next year is our very own, Mr Robin Herne.

As you know and can imagine we are all still learning to adapt and work through this continuous situation. IFCF is still working hard to carry out our aims and objectives, regardless of the obstacles we face. Bring people together, even electronically like this evening's meeting is still a valuable and worthy cause to continue to work towards.

I would like to end by thanking the trustees for their continuous effort, hard work and contribution to IFCF especially over the last two years. I look forward to working with them moving forward.

Thank You.