Kingston Faith and Belief Forum

TERMS OF REFERENCE: *(currently in review - November 2026)*

TITLE

The Forum is currently known as the Kingston Faith and Belief Forum ('the Forum').

OBJECTIVES

The Forum will contribute to social cohesion in and around the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames ('the Borough') by:

1. Celebrating and supporting communities in Kingston
2. Promoting understanding and cooperation between people of differing religious, and non-religious, beliefs
3. Acting as a forum for communication between local religion or belief groups, and Kingston Council, and associated organisations, on issues of mutual interest, including those pertaining to Council policies and the "Religion or Belief" Protected Characteristic[1].

MEMBERSHIP

The Forum will welcome and promote membership from all religion or belief groups within the Borough, and those from surrounding areas with significant membership in the Borough. Each group will be encouraged to appoint up to two representatives to the Forum.

The list and contact details of members will be maintained by the Council's Strategy and Partnership Inclusion Leads.

[1] The Equality Act https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/10 defines "Religion or belief" as: *"(1) Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion. (2) Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief."* The Equality and Human Rights Commission adds the clarification that "*Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition."* https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics

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CHAIRING

A Chair and Vice Chair will be elected every two years by members. The Chair and Vice Chair/s will set the agenda, chair meetings, and suggest discussion topics.

FORUM COORDINATION

Working closely with the Chair and Vice Chair/s, the coordination will be supported by the Council's Strategy and Partnership Inclusion Leads who will keep and circulate notes and actions.

MEETINGS

Forum meetings will be held approximately four times a year at venues throughout the Borough (where possible hybrid). Other events and social gatherings may take place at other venues, including places of worship.

Alternates and exceptional invitations to meetings

- Where a topic is of particular interest to individuals or groups in Kingston, members are welcome to invite exceptional attendees. The members should be notified in advance of any exceptional attendees.
- If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they may invite an alternate to attend on their behalf.

CODE OF PRACTICE

Members of the Forum agree to act in line with the IFN UK's best practice guidance "Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs"[2], and to take into account its "Faiths Working Together Toolkit"[3].

[2] https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/building-good-relations-with-people-of-different-faiths-and-beliefs
[3] https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Faiths_Working_Together__Toolkit%2Brev.pdf

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RESOURCES

Funding for events will be arranged or agreed on an ad-hoc basis.

AMENDING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Changes to these Terms of Reference must be agreed by a majority of members.