



**The  
Faith  
& Belief  
Forum**

# **Annual Report 2020 – 21**

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# Organisational details

## The Faith & Belief Forum - reference and administrative details of the charity, its trustees and advisers for the year ended 31 March 2020.

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of the Faith & Belief Forum for the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. In particular The Chair of the Board of Trustees wishes to record great appreciation of the efforts of the Director and all of the staff of the Faith & Belief Forum who in the gathering storm of the Covid pandemic took important strategic decisions and then implemented them indefatigably with great goodwill and personal effort, leading to a series of very successful outcomes. Further the Chair would like to thank warmly all of the Trustees of the Charity who gave in the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (and who continue to give) so freely and generously of their time and advice, both inside and outside formal meetings, and who donate with enthusiasm very many unpaid hours every year to ensuring the success of the Faith & Belief Forum and whose invaluable contribution is essential to its work.

### Trustees

Michael V Sternberg QC KCFO, Chair of Trustees  
Michael Anderson  
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**Charity registered number** 1173369

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HRH Princess Badiya bint El Hassan, Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP, Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Shabir Randeree CBE, Prem Goyal OBE JP, Mayor Andy Burnham, David Dangoor DL, Preet Kaur Gill MP, Bushra Nasir CBE DL

# Director's review

What a year it has been. Covid-19 has affected us all, albeit in different ways. At the Faith & Belief Forum we have played our part in supporting the positive response of faith and belief communities; we have become steadily more conscious of the nexus between our work and anti-black racism highlighted by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement; we have recognised the inequalities in education provision laid bare by the pandemic; the importance of partnership and of our interdependence with others at local, national and international levels, have become clearer; and we know that change and adaptation are going to be constant for some time to come.

Amidst all the upheaval and uncertainty, I have been heartened this year to witness the steady growth of our online resources for schools which help pupils of all faiths and beliefs learn more about identity and deal with some of the more difficult issues relating to inclusion. I have watched students on our ParliaMentors programme continue to explore leadership and social action by working in multifaith groups. I have welcomed the strengthening of our partnerships with local and central government stakeholders since they are critical to the inclusive provision of services. And I have been truly amazed by the way our staff have adapted to the challenges involved in moving our operation online.

We have continued to function through the year of the pandemic with minimal furloughing and no redundancies. We delivered community dialogue at scale in London, Birmingham and Walsall; we reached over 500 schools through our resources and linking; our LGBT+ Faith network is intact; our online London Faith & Belief Community Awards was attended by over 500 people; our Faith, Fitness and Feeling Good online campaign engaged over 50,000 people; we influenced the debate around the role of faith & belief in social cohesion through our report with the British Academy and the roundtables that followed its publication; we informed the

Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) human rights agenda through a peer reviewed report of our work in Israeli hospitals and a series of roundtable discussions engaging practitioners from around the world; we signed up to the Race at Work Charter; and our first online Gala broadened our supporter base as well as raising in excess of £30,000.

The fact that all this activity was online is testament to the creativity, adaptability, and energy of our staff team. Online delivery was low cost, and different in terms of impact (arguably more breadth, less depth). Expenditure was, therefore, significantly down on initial projections. Income, however, was significantly up (including three grants in the region of £200k each from City Bridge Trust, MHCLG and Porticus). This has enabled us to contribute approximately £50k to our reserves, invest in an expanded Senior Leadership Team to drive the next phase of our development, whilst also carrying over funds to give ballast to our 2021/22 budget.

Though this is a positive picture given the hugely disruptive nature of the pandemic, there have been costs and challenges too. We have lost two important senior staff; we have reduced staff hours and are now an organisation of part time workers; face to face encounter that is so central to our work has not been possible; and much of the progress made in interfaith relations over the last decade has been set back by social distancing restrictions. There is a lot to do as we look ahead.

Indeed, our mission of strengthening relations between people of different faiths and beliefs is more important than ever. As I look back at the year, I ask myself how well are we positioned to take up the challenge of reconnecting communities and building social cohesion? Have we retained sufficient momentum and creativity to respond well to a context shaped by the pandemic and Brexit? I see five signs of hope.

**First**, there seems some renewed interest amongst policy makers in exploring the positive role that faith and belief plays in social cohesion. Our report Social Cohesion: Faith & Belief, published together with Theos and the British Academy in July highlighted the policy trend of faith and belief being framed as a problem to be solved rather than an asset to be harnessed. The recently launched faith engagement survey by MHCLG suggests an appetite within government to address this, something backed up by the roundtable discussions with local authorities and faith communities on the back of our report.

**Second**, evidence of the contribution faith and belief organisations make to social cohesion is becoming more visible. It is not easy for small, grassroots organisations to be seen and appreciated. However, the pandemic has not prevented us from celebrating this in both London and Walsall through online showcase events. This is the fourth year we have run our Faith & Belief Community Awards in partnership with the Greater London Lieutenancy (GLL), with a special category for Community Resourcefulness in Response to Covid-19. There was no shortage of nominations.

**Third**, dialogue can work even when face to face engagement is not an option. When the first lockdown was announced in March, we were in the middle of a significant community dialogue project in Walsall, one of the five integration areas prioritised by MHCLG for additional support. We had to completely rethink the project and move it online in September. Signs of impact are now encouraging, with participants appreciating the safe, online space to get to know each other and discuss challenging topics. On the back of this we have extended our community dialogue work to Birmingham and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

**Fourth**, there is a noticeable demand for and interest in 'lived experience' resources within schools. The BLM campaign and school curriculum developments such as in Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Religion and Worldviews have helped fuel a demand for teaching about diversity, marginalisation, and discrimination. 'Lived experience' and 'lived faith' are at the heart of our approach to

education and we have spent lockdowns pushing through a range of new online resources based on this. We have also moved our school linking programme online, enabling schools to explore diversity of faith and belief first-hand despite travel restrictions. With our LGBT+Faith training programme also continuing online we have new tools to expand the reach of our education and learning work.

**Fifth** and finally, MPs remain positively engaged in our ParliaMentors programme at a time when the pandemic is presenting new political challenges. This programme aims to prepare undergraduates from different faith and belief backgrounds for their leadership journeys by working together and with MP mentors. MPs such as Preet Gill, Stephen Timms and Nadia Wittome have given their time to have Q&A sessions with the students online. It is important for both current and aspiring political leaders to have these exchanges, to help nurture leadership that can tackle an increasingly complex array of issues associated with identity, power, and politics in the wake of the pandemic.

It has been a hard year. Many lives have been lost. Many jobs have disappeared, lives disrupted. It is thanks to the creativity and support of staff, trustees, partners, and funders that we have been able to keep operating. There is some way to go before Covid-19, and Brexit, do not dominate the headlines. In the meantime, it is clear to me that we have good tools, both online and face to face, to nurture the interfaith collaboration and understanding needed to keep our communities strong.



**Phil Champain**

Director, The Faith & Belief Forum

# About us

Since 1997, the Faith & Belief Forum has been working to create understanding people of different faiths and beliefs.

Our vision is a connected and supportive society where people from different communities and cultures have strong, productive and lasting relations. We believe the future belongs to people of all beliefs, that intolerance has no place in society and that diversity adds value.

Our mission is to promote and build meaningful and resilient relationships across lines of difference through education, encounter, and social action opportunities. We consider ourselves to be an areligious, apolitical organisation which has inclusivity and integrity at its core.

**We work to achieve our mission and vision by meeting the following three goals:**

- 1** To equip more learners with the skills and tools they need to handle and influence relations between different faiths and beliefs
- 2** To generate stronger community-based movement aimed at strengthening faith relations and social cohesion in communities, with youth at the forefront
- 3** To project the voices of those we support and the impact of our partnership with them

Progress against these goals constitutes the report that follows.

# Overview of our work in 2020–21

As for many other organisations, the pandemic presented serious challenges for the delivery of our work. After reviewing and adapting many of our programmes to be delivered online, we were still able to have substantial reach and meaningful impact during a difficult year.

The online space proved to be an effective medium for bringing people of different faiths and beliefs together, and in some ways made it easier for people to experience interfaith encounters from the comfort of their own home. Through virtual events, video workshops, digital content, and online dialogues, we continued to connect and build good relations between people from different communities.

**Some key achievements include:**



**1,000,000** total engagements via digital channels



**18,000** people engaged in F&BF programmes



**2,900** people used F&BF's school resources and workshops



**2,200** engaged with our Faith & Belief Community Awards



**2,100** people read and discussed our reports and research



**1,460** people took part in ParliaMentors social action projects

# Goal 1: Equipping Learners

## Online resources

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly disrupted programme delivery in schools; almost all planned 'Encountering Faith and Belief' workshops were cancelled due to school closures announced in January 2021. In response, F&BF developed an extensive online portfolio of multimedia 'Encountering Faith and Belief' resources to enable schools to facilitate the workshops online or when students returned to school.

The portfolio of online resources was circulated to all schools signed up to the programme in March 2021, giving them exclusive access for one month. During this month, the portfolio webpage had 357 views.

The portfolio included 19 'story bank' videos (10 for primary schools and nine for secondary schools), in which individuals shared their religion or belief background. From 1st March to 1st April 2021, the videos collectively had 210 views.

The Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Christian speakers received the highest number of views, suggesting that the resources were used by teachers within the RE national curriculum, within which these five religions are the main focus.



## Skills for Dialogue lesson plans

*We developed new lesson plans for exploring identity and respectful relationships. This suite of lesson plans with accompanying films, presentations, and worksheets for KS3 have distilled 20 years of The Faith & Belief Forum's knowledge of equipping learners with tools for safe and meaningful dialogue.*

After a successful pilot, we launched an extensive range of online resources available to teachers to download and use. Detailed lesson plans with accompanying films, presentations and worksheets aimed at years 7, 8 and 9, to enable us to share our expertise and methodologies with education professionals in a scalable and sustainable way.

Our in-house team of educationalists have created these resources in collaboration with specialist RE teachers. The resources cover many learning objectives in the following subjects: RE, PSHE, RSE, Humanities and Citizenship.



**838 schools/teachers** around the UK and the world downloaded our resources from the TES online portal.

**1062 people accessed the lesson plans** on the F&BF website.

## Impact Story: Lesson Plans

“The Faith & Belief Forum have come up with a fantastic idea on how to deal with what I’m sure most teachers would agree are challenging topics to teach. Through these schemes of work and lesson plans, teachers will have access to innovative ways of teaching about Safe Space, Identity and Controversial Issues. Due to the array of themes which can be covered within these topics, it can be tricky to direct the learning to a certain track whilst keeping it interesting and relevant. Yet, F&BF have found a way to really ensure a strong classroom climate is maintained through this package whilst highlighting a positive teacher-student relationship due to an effective classroom identity being made prevalent.

I feel the RADIO principles make up a crucial aspect of every classroom as they tackle such important issues within our society today. By having this idea of a Safe Space in every classroom, pupils will be encouraged to be themselves and celebrate their identity and diversity. Not only does the package link in with the current curriculum and its needs but further builds on having a real sense of inclusivity for all.”

**AR, KS3 RE teacher in Birmingham**

## School Linking

*The School Linking Programme matches students and classes from different cultural or faith backgrounds to explore issues of identity, community, and belief. The Faith & Belief Forum’s linking programme is run as part of The Linking Network; the programme’s focus is to equip teachers with the skills, knowledge, and support to provide their students with meaningful opportunities to connect across difference.*

The start of the new academic year (2020–21) meant a rethink of how School Linking was to be delivered. Due to the continued issues linked to the pandemic, schools were unable to mix which meant that linking in person was out of the question.

Once we adapted the project to be delivered virtually, we began signing schools up to the programme. Before the Christmas school holidays, we managed to recruit and sign-up our target number of links (36 for Birmingham and 25 for London).

However, the second national lockdown was announced the day that many schools were due to return for the beginning of the spring term in January 2021. This meant that most of our schools had to once again drop-out of the School Linking Programme. They were again moved into crisis mode having to set-up home schooling and virtual teaching.

Work needed to be done to adapt school linking to be able to deliver it virtually. We also needed to speak to teachers about what support they needed. It was important that in our response we did not put pressure on schools to participate but were a supportive friend offering additional tools that would support them and their students.

We delivered **6 virtual CPDs** (3 for Birmingham schools / 3 for London schools) to **60 teachers** (24 Birmingham & 36 London).

We also delivered CPD2 for the Hackney RE Network.

**8 teachers attended.**

# Goal 2: Generating Movement

## ParliaMentors

*ParliaMentors is a UN award-winning leadership programme where teams of university students of different faiths and non-religious beliefs collaborate to create real social change while being mentored by MPs. Through expert-led training, support from local and national NGOs and access to Westminster, ParliaMentors gives students the networks and skills they need to effect real change in their communities, in their careers and in the political arena.*

Due to the pandemic, ParliaMentors ran all training, MP meetings and networking online. We were able to involve MPs in new ways during trainings by having sessions just with them and the cohort on Zoom in a much more candid way than the formal environment of Parliament.

Training was offered by the British Council (funding and delivery partner for ParliaMentors through the Active Citizens programme) on online delivery. This was very helpful for adapting our delivery for online and hybrid contexts.

Alumni were also involved in all aspects of the programme far more as they were able to deliver training remotely, take an active role in the recruitment (about 50 hours of alumni time on recruitment in 2020) of the new cohort, and meet lots of the current cohort in 121 meetings to help them with their career.

1-2-1 meetings and meetings with each university group were also very successful and easy to arrange as everyone has become used to online meetings. This helped students a lot as they dealt with changes to plans caused by covid restriction changes.



## ParliaMentors involvement

**460** people including **9** Parliamentarians, **44** ParliaMentors students, over **30** alumni, **20** members of the book club, and **hundreds** of people reached through social action projects

## ParliaMentors participants reported:

- 97%** The programme has provided me with opportunities to expand my personal and professional networks
- 94%** Meeting with my MP mentor increased my confidence in liaising with senior political figures
- 100%** My experiences on this programme have increased my knowledge and understanding of other faiths, beliefs and cultures
- 100%** I feel confident about my own identity and I am confident that I can effectively communicate and work with people from different faiths, beliefs and cultures
- 100%** I have the skills and networks to create social change in my local community

## Diversity and inclusion on the ParliaMentors programme

**ParliaMentors gives 45 young people a unique leadership opportunity, this year these young people were from the following backgrounds:**

- 53% of participants were eligible for free school meals and 56% the first in their family to go to university.
- 4 Sikh, 10 Muslim, 2 Jewish, 4 Hindu, 12 Christian, 2 Buddhist, 1 Pagan, 9 Non-Religious
- 16 White, 5 Other (inc. Arab and Persian), 6 Black, 3 Mixed, 14 Asian
- 30 women, 13 men, 1 non-binary
- 7 Gay, 1 Bisexual, 4 Other, 31 Heterosexual



## Impact Story: Birmingham City ParliMentors

The Birmingham City University team chose to focus their social action project on homelessness in Birmingham. Initially in lockdown the Team fundraised for a local charity providing emergency pandemic relief to homeless people, recognising that this was the most immediate way to have an impact. Once restrictions were eased the team identified a particular need around employability within the homeless communities they were engaging with. Through their networks, the students identified RMF, a construction company willing to give free, accredited training to anyone currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The group worked with RMF to initially deliver training to 15 people at risk of homelessness, with the view to it becoming a sustainable scheme.

One ParliMentor, Talha, stated: *“I am particularly proud of our ability to keep adapting our plans and increase our networks as the reality of the pandemic changed. It is thanks to all of our different skills that we have been able to do this.”*



The team were mentored by Jess Phillips MP, who was heavily involved in advising around this project. Jess built the confidence of the team, raising their aspirations of what could be achieved and also provided community contacts of people working on homelessness in Birmingham. At Graduation, Jess stated how proud she was of the team, given that homelessness reduction had been one of the issues that she worked on before becoming an MP and continues to champion in Westminster.



## Faith in Barking and Dagenham

*F&BF works in a partnership with Local Authorities to innovate, create new and exciting solutions to challenges, and build more resilient communities. Our Local Authority partnership with Barking & Dagenham was carefully planned in direct collaboration with Cohesion Officers, councillors, local faith leaders, schools, community groups and more.*

The pandemic hit as we were coming to the end of our project in Barking and Dagenham. This meant we could not have a final celebration event or wrap up relationships in the way we had envisioned. The focus of the faith and community groups we were working with was understandably diverted to supporting residents most impacted and therefore we focused on connecting leaders working at the front line.

We quickly and successfully pivoted the deliverables:

- Faith inclusion training for LBBDD Council staff took place online
- We hosted our 'Ways of Connecting' event online in which we launched a film we co-created with Studio3Arts and used it as end of project celebration
- We continued our work with Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum to launch and host local awards for communities doing good work in the area
- We supported the Local Authority and Faith Forum to connect and share resources between faith-based food banks

Following completion of Faith in Barking & Dagenham, the Council offered us an additional contract to support them to capture the impact of the ongoing pandemic on faith communities and faith-based organisations.

Our engagement project captured how organisations and individuals had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. Through this survey, we were able to amplify the voices of the faith sector – reporting to the Council on how faith groups and leaders had come together to support each other and help their communities through the pandemic.

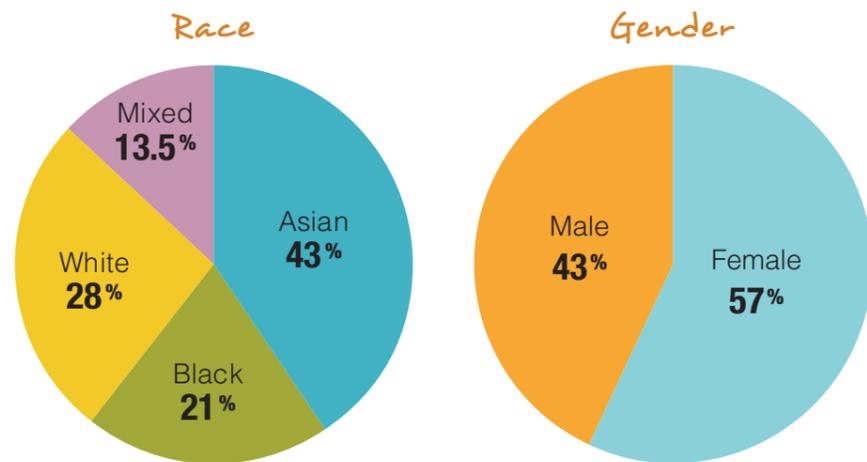
Throughout the whole project we ran 118 events, workshops, and meetings between 2018–2020. Our project enabled 1,260 residents to critically engage with concepts around faith and belief diversity, build their skills and confidence, and nurture strong local networks with people who hold different faiths and beliefs to themselves.



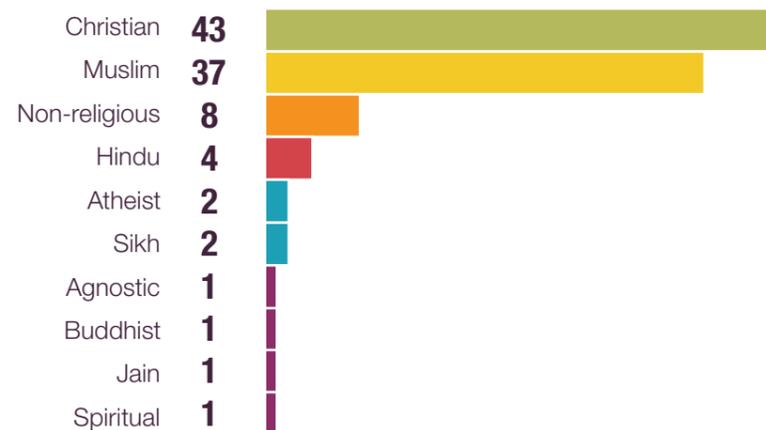
**1,260** residents engaged during the project

### Local leaders engaged

- 26** through engagement for our report
- 33** attended the 'Ways of Connecting' online event
- 50** Council staff through Faith Inclusion Training
- 15** through our 'Residents Guide to Interfaith' document



### Faith / belief %



Among Christian participants (43% of participants), we are aware of participants from denominations including Church of England, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Jehovah Witness, Pentecostal, and Salvation Army.

**90%** of residents changed their perceptions about people who are different to them

**81%** of residents had increased confidence speaking to people who are different

**64%** of residents intend to stay in touch with someone they met through our intervention

## Impact Story: Deepa

Deepa was involved in the Faith in Barking & Dagenham project as a volunteer speaker, going into schools to talk about her beliefs with students to give them a better idea of what Hinduism as lived faith can look like. Some of her experiences on the project:

*“A highlight of the training was seeing the connections that we all share – themes of family, love, connection to belief and ritual flowed throughout the lives of each participant and were brought to the surface in an interesting and authentic way through the workshop. The process of the workshop created an environment of openness and sharing. We were encouraged to share with conviction and confidence what we stand for.*

*It has been a privilege to volunteer as a speaker in three workshops at schools in Barking and Dagenham and to express what Hinduism means to me. It is so nice to see children listening so attentively and experience the questioning and curiosity of young minds.*

*I know that schools teach RE in a theoretical way but it is so important for kids to meet a real person so they can grasp the differences that we all have. By speaking alongside someone of a different faith who is equally confident in themselves the children can learn how to witness and embrace each other. It gives them assurance that disagreements and difference is okay and permission to be themselves.”*



## LGBT+Faith

*The Faith & Belief Forum have been working with and advocating for LGBT+ people of faith for many years. We create affirming, inclusive spaces for LGBT+ people of faith to meet others from similar and different backgrounds to themselves, connect, and share.*

We adapted our activities for the online space, tailoring to the new environment. This was well-received given that the LGBT+ organisations we work with have seen increased demand for their services during the pandemic.

We secured funding for a sustained online programme for LGBT+ people of faith for 2021–22 to support their wellbeing at this challenging time.

We delivered bespoke online training sessions for staff at two LGBT+ organisations, Gendered Intelligence and Just Like Us.

We held our third annual event National Interfaith Week event for LGBT+ people of faith in partnership with House of Rainbow, London Queer Muslims, and Sarbat LGBT Sikhs.

There was very positive engagement with our National Interfaith Week event, from both partner organisations and participants. We saw individuals open up and connect with each other about challenges being faced due to the pandemic, and gain strength from solidarity with each other. We also saw participants engage with the single-faith partner organisations who otherwise did not know about the valuable services they offer.

We completed our three-year project with the LGBT+ sector funded by Sir Halley Stewart in June 2020. This project was ground breaking not only in its ambition – to transform the LGBT+ sector into a more faith-friendly sector – but also in its interfaith, grassroots, and national approach.

“It was the first LGBTQ+ event for people of faith that I’ve been involved in since the start of lockdown, so it made for a welcome reminder that the community still exists. It was also one of the only interactive faith events I’ve been a part of in all these months. This lockdown has been a lonely time for us all, and it was helpful to acknowledge the ways in which lockdown has been particularly hard spiritually, and to hear that others have felt the same way.”

“It felt safe and that the spirit of the divine, however we describe or experience it, was the glue holding us together.”



**Over three years we worked with 296 individuals from 108 organisations in 10 towns and cities across the UK.**

**97%** of training participants learned strategies for inclusion of LGBT+ people of faith

**95%** of training participants better understand the diverse experiences of LGBT+ people of faith

**56** people attended our National Interfaith Week event

**100%** of participants agreed that as a result of this event 'I am feeling positive about the future for LGBTQ+ people of faith'

**100%** also agreed 'I met someone new from a different background to myself'

## Building Closer Communities

*Building Closer Communities was a new project from the Faith & Belief Forum which enabled residents in two regions – Birmingham, and Barking & Dagenham in London – to meet, share, and explore issues related to faith, belief, and culture. The project was funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.*

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The Building Closer Communities project connected people in Birmingham and Barking and Dagenham from different backgrounds online at a time when social distancing had left many leading isolated and insular lives.

In two local areas, the project linked 20 communities of different faith and belief characters, who would not ordinarily get the chance to meet, and helped them to connect over a series of conversations around identity, belonging and cohesion.

Through this multifaceted project, which also delivered schools sessions, local authority training and launched a youth council in each area, new relationships of trust were built between communities, and between communities and statutory bodies.

Dr Lucy Peacock, commissioned to evaluate the project, concluded "the programme was largely extremely successful in meeting its proposed outcomes and objectives, despite facing significant disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic" and "a subsequent, longer programme is recommended".



According to the findings, 82% (more than 8 in 10) participants' responses reported that they developed a greater sense of social trust towards people from different faith and ethnic backgrounds in their neighbourhood through community dialogue. The proportion increased to 93% of responses among those aged 50 and under.

The concept of social trust was in part perceived in terms of comfort. 90% of survey responses reported an increase in feelings of comfort in talking about issues related to faith and belief.

- Connected **20** diverse faith and belief communities across Birmingham and Barking and Dagenham, who each linked with a community from a different background for a series of discussions. There were **21** dialogue sessions with **172** participants, who took part in **2** dialogues each
- **24** Community Connectors were recruited to help lead the community dialogue project locally, and were trained grassroots facilitators and local interfaith ambassadors over **3** sessions
- **10** young people joined the Youth Council that met **6** times over the course of the project
- **32** participants took part in **10** hours of training for local authorities
- Seven online schools workshops were delivered to **270** students. A new online resource was developed, with **18** stories from **11** faith / belief backgrounds, with was accessed **553** times
- **100** people attended the final events connecting participants with statutory bodies, MPs, local council leaders and the wider community
- The **20** communities on the dialogue programme were from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Humanist and non-religious backgrounds
- The young people on the Youth Council were from Hindu, Sikh, Muslim (Shia, Sunni and Ahmadiyya), Jewish and Christian communities

## Impact Story: Kingsley Hall and Al Kawther Academy

One pair linked through community dialogue was Kingsley Hall (a church) and Al Kawther Academy (Muslim organisation). The groups were a few minutes walk apart in Dagenham, were aware of each other and had crossed paths a few times historically, but hadn't had the opportunity or confidence to meaningfully connect.

Through the dialogue sessions, the groups were able to share and explore their faith backgrounds, including different approaches to marriage and experiences of living in Dagenham, where one Christian participant reflected that their conversations opened their eyes to the Muslim communities experience of prejudice locally.

Community Connectors who worked on the project said:

*"It's funny that we needed someone from outside the borough to come and start these conversations, but I am grateful for your (F&BF) project as it has sparked a relationship. We now have a reason to connect with one another and a better foundation to build on – I look forward to continuing our conversations after the lockdown and look forward to meeting in person and working together."*

*"I think trust was established quite significantly, people felt that they were able to say things, they often worded the idea that they felt at home [... in the second dialogue] there was quite a lot of experiences during the pandemic that people talked about and particularly their faith sort of journey and their emotional state in the pandemic that they sort of expressed and they felt able to express those in that space because they felt comfortable. I think comfort is probably the best example of trust that we can have."*



F&BF staff facilitating a dialogue session between Sikh Womens' Alliance and the African Portuguese Speaking Community.

### Walsall Community Dialogue Project

*The project, delivered together with Walsall For All, captured the voices, stories and experiences of those living in Walsall around the themes of identity, diversity, belonging and living together. It also gave local people the opportunity to engage in conversations and create connections with people in the borough who they may not usually have the opportunity to meet.*

Because of the pandemic, we had to rethink the delivery of the whole project and sometimes start afresh due to previously participating groups not being able to commit due to online delivery. We summarised the project as phase 1 and phase 2. Phase 1 being pre-covid, while phase 2 was during covid.

We had to completely shift our dialogues to an online delivery. This posed many challenges. However, it was useful for the more marginalised groups, who would not have been heard before, how now felt they could participate.

At the end of the dialogue project, we had organisations and groups who felt inspired by the experience and wanted to continue doing something together. They felt the power of working collectively and the potential impact it can have to the community.

In total, in both phases we:

- Had a total of **54 dialogues**
- **8 Community Connector Trainings**
- Engaged with **20 groups**
- Had **46 Community Connectors trained**
- Engaged with about **139 participants**

## Impact Story: Walsall Community Dialogues

One participant from a Chinese background who joined one of the sessions was very emotional at the end of one of the sessions. She experienced quite a bit of racism towards herself and her toddler. She was reluctant to join the session. However, at the end of the session she said she was very happy to have participated, and that it's made her see people very differently. To see that not everyone is 'hostile' towards her and the fact that they condemn the bad experience she's had and the way she's been treated was wrong, has taught her that not everyone is 'horrible'. There's a lot of good people around too.

We also had one participant who started as volunteer, didn't have much confidence with leading groups. Grew her confidence during project. She continues to engage with F&BF. She's attended our Culham Focus group and participated in the Community Builders Course. She now has a paid job with Social Enterprise.



# Goal 3: Projecting Voice

## Freedom of Religion and Belief

*We brought together international experts to engage with questions of Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) through a series of online events.*

We hosted three interactive events to bring together civil society organisations, faith and belief groups, policy professionals, diplomats and academics to share thoughtful and productive discussions on FoRB in practice. Participants heard presentations of case studies from different regions, discussed and shared practical tools and advice. The dialogues informed a brief practical report on Working Together to Promote FoRB in Practice.

Many participants noted their usefulness for helping people reflect on how their programmes could include more people, connect with other human rights and related areas (such as development and peacebuilding) and advocate for better religious engagement beyond the usual calling point of religious leaders.

Participants from **18 different countries** took part in the FoRB roundtables.

This included **64 people** from civil society organisations, faith and belief groups, civil servants, diplomats and academics.

We engaged with over **154 people** local authorities, faith / belief groups, and interfaith organisations and other groups working for cohesion in **28 academics, policymakers, local authority staff and national interfaith organisations** through an event spotlighting UK research and resources on faith, cohesion and interfaith effectiveness.

## Social Cohesion Roundtables

We hosted and facilitated four roundtables on faith, belief, and cohesion at the local level, bringing together local authority staff, faith/belief groups, and interfaith organisations and other groups working for cohesion to share good practice and make recommendations for effective working together at the local level.

The process encouraged honest conversation between faith groups and statutory bodies at a local level at an extremely crucial time, particularly focussing on new interfaith relationships and faith/local authority collaborations formed during the pandemic and how to maintain these post-pandemic. F&BF is currently planning future programming to work on this question.

We engaged with over **134 people** from local authorities, faith / belief groups, interfaith organisations and other groups working for cohesion in **28 local authority areas** in England. The resource developed through this process was shared with **750 key stakeholders.**



## Cohesive Societies: Faith & Belief

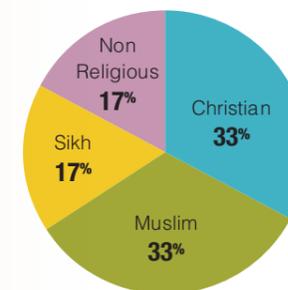
We continued to build our research partnerships, involving academics and other experts in the field to produce events and resources. *Cohesive Societies: Faith & Belief*, our most significant publication to date, was produced in partnership with the British Academy and written by the think tank Theos. The report, written by Dr Madeleine Pennington, explores the different ways in which faith and belief interacts with societal cohesion.

The report framed the history of cohesion policy as relates to religion and belief in the UK, documented the relevance of faith/belief groups and interfaith organisations to cohesive societies, and made practical recommendations for policymakers and practitioners for improving this engagement.

The report is part of the British Academy's ongoing Cohesive Societies programme, launched in 2017, which explores how societies remain cohesive in the face of rapid political, social, economic and technological change.

We engaged with over **400 people** as a result of the Report being written through primary research and consultation consultation at different levels, with over **100 attending** the online launch event. Other engagement has taken place through scoping seminars and various tendering and steering group processes.

Steering Group recruited to oversee writing of report:



The Report featured 12 case studies featuring good practice from around the UK which were:

- Interfaith ●●●
- Christian ●●●
- Muslim ●●●
- Hindu ●
- Sikh ●
- Spiritual ●

**“This report will enable a more informed and constructive discussion of the role of faith and belief in strategies for sustaining societal cohesion. Writing in July 2020, this seems more important than ever.”**

Professor Tariq Modood FBA on the Cohesive Societies report

## London Faith & Belief Community Awards

*The London Faith & Belief Community Awards celebrate the vital work of London's faith and belief communities by bringing together local heroes and shining a light on their inspirational work, demonstrating how people from all faiths and beliefs can work together for a fairer and more inclusive city. The Awards are delivered together with the Greater London Lieutenancy's Council on Faith.*

We launched nominations for the 4th London Faith & Belief Community Awards during this period. It was difficult to maintain the level of nominations (it dropped slightly from 129 to 106) as places of worship were closed and groups were focused on responding to the crisis / had to suspend their work.

All meetings and the awards ceremony had to be taken online, including the Barking and Dagenham Faith and Community Awards.

We redesigned the London Awards Ceremony to an online platform; this included the ceremony itself and the networking opportunities the event provides.

We hosted smaller networking events with Sir Ken Olisa LL and GLL Faith Council Chair, Dr David Dangoor DL, for award winners and invited high profile speakers (Floella Benjamin DL and Rev Richard Coles) to speak at the ceremony. This resulted in 553 people attending the virtual awards ceremony (our greatest engagement in an Awards event to date).

The goal of the Awards event is to showcase the vital work of faith and belief community groups, and to advocate for a more inclusive, stronger interfaith community of Londoners. This year, these goals were more important than ever due to the increased pressure faced by faith groups as they responded to their communities' needs, experienced funding challenges due to economic uncertainties, and suffered due to heightened inequalities that have been exposed by the pandemic. We were fortunate to have the continued support of awards sponsor Dangoor Education.

Notable nominations in terms of EDI goals - Association of Black Humanists (ABH), Black Business 4 Black Youth by The Salam Project CIC, People of colour team at the London Buddhist Centre / West London Buddhist Centre, #OutAndProudParentsDay

**553 people** attended the London Awards Ceremony. A video of the ceremony reached **1,150 people** on Facebook and was viewed **370 times** on YouTube. The Awards event was also featured by various media outlets, including BBC Asian Network, BBC London Radio, Religion Media Centre, East London Advertiser, Barking & Dagenham Post, and Slough & Windsor Observer.

This round of nominations identified projects from **25 London boroughs** and engaged with more organisations from minority faith backgrounds.

This year we received these nominations: **2 Buddhist, 7 Hindu, 1 Jain, 7 Jewish, 1 Rastafarian, 7 Sikh, 15 Muslim and 1 Zoroastrian.**

**100 people** attended the Barking and Dagenham Faith and Community Awards.

## Fitness Faith & Feeling Good

We hosted the online Fitness, Faith & Feeling Good festival from Monday 1st to Friday 5th February, which platformed a range of approaches to health and wellbeing, showcased by diverse partners from across London's faith and cultural communities. Activities displayed ranged from yoga to Israeli folk dance, from mindfulness to high-intensity gospel dance.

During a time which had a profound impact on people's physical and mental health, the opportunity to focus on health and wellbeing and learn from

different traditions and cultures was appreciated and we gained positive informal feedback. This project also allowed us to build relationships with single faith health and wellbeing charities whom we hoped to later work with through the Fun Run.

FFFG Festival videos were seen 10,000 times and social media posts about the festival, including the blogs, engaged over 50,000 people on social media.

## Impact Story: National Hindu Students' Forum UK

One organisation taking part in the festival was the National Hindu Students' Forum UK (NHSF UK). Founded in 1991, the National Hindu Students' Forum works in over 50 universities across the country, reaching over 10,000 students, providing education on Hindu and Dharmic values and ideas.

They run workshops and classes on various subjects, and a London Zone & South Zone Sports Competition. During the pandemic NHSF UK has moved many of their activities online. This includes running fitness classes and Hindu teaching workshops online, such as their "Yogasanga of the Week" and "Sanskrit Word of the Month" video series.

As part of Fitness, Faith & Feeling Good, NHSF UK will run a yoga and meditation session. The aim is for those taking part to leave the session feeling physically and mentally stronger, and with a deeper understanding of the history of yoga and meditation.

# Building good relations online

The Coronavirus pandemic presented serious challenges for an organisation whose work relies so much on face-to-face engagement and dialogue. With social distancing rules in place and larger gatherings of people forbidden, we had to rethink our entire approach to be able to continue to deliver our work.

Our staff team draw on all their previous experience and worked hard to come up with ways of delivering meaningful encounters on online platforms. As a result of this work, we were able to launch several new training and event models for connecting people from different backgrounds in the digital space.

We found that there were some benefits to these online models. Although some of the impact of the genuine face-to-face encounter might be lost, advantages include being able to engage with people regardless of their geographical location, and more easily involving people who might be hesitant to attend a physical event. We will keep integrating and using some of these digital models in our work even as we move back to face-to-face work.

*Here are some good examples of how some of our teams adapted their work to be delivered online:*

## Building Closer Communities

The Faith & Belief Forum had spent 8 months previously to starting the grant, adapting to new ways of working during COVID. New risk management processes and online delivery methodologies had already been developed and several staff members had taken training courses in online facilitation and were able to cascade learning to our new staff on this project.

The whole delivery plan for the project had to be reworked to work online in the context of the pandemic as it was originally written for face-to-face delivery. Schools workshops could not be delivered easily when digital classrooms were only teaching core curriculum.

Some communities were put off participating as they were not confident about engaging online, others who wanted to participate were inundated with COVID-related challenges ranging from decreased capacity from caring for the most vulnerable, to financial difficulties to increased requests for funerals.

We were flexible in terms of delivery times, particularly due to school closures and ensured content was family friendly in case participants had children in the room. We redesigned our schools offer, providing an online resource to teachers. We also ensured our participants were linked in with local COVID relief efforts, by inviting relevant council staff to dialogue sessions, and regularly sharing information with the local authority.

## School Linking

The pandemic seriously affected the School Linking Programme. Schools and teachers were in crisis mode, meaning that anything outside of teaching core curriculum subjects was stopped – and this included Linking.

Since we could not be physically present in schools, work needed to be done to adapt school linking to deliver it virtually. We also needed to speak to teachers about what support they needed. It was important to not put pressure on schools to participate but to be a supportive friend offering additional tools that would support them and their students.

Having reviewed the information that we were getting from schools, we adapted the programme in the following ways:

- Guidance and support received from The Linking Network (TLN) meant that we were able to use the expertise and shared experiences of other Linking partners to rethink how the programme could be run in the pandemic.
- We developed Continuous Personal Development (CPD) training to be delivered online, adapting the content and learning how to use virtual tools to engage teachers.
- We further developed online resources for teachers to use whilst children were being home-schooled and to be used once back in school in bubbles, and virtual approaches to linking with partner schools. A primary and secondary School Linking Toolkit was developed and shared with our teachers during the CPD.

- The School Linking Programme was adapted to be more flexible to allow for in class and virtual exploration of the traditional key themes (identity, diversity and community), and questions of ‘who am I?’, ‘who are we?’, ‘where do we live?’, and ‘how do we live together?’ Schools were invited to take part in ‘Link Encounters’ instead of ‘Link Days’.
- We planned for how link encounters could take place as a series of shorter sessions (as an alternative to three full days) and they were a combination of in-class focused activities that led to a virtual link encounter with partner schools.

We heard from our Linking Teachers that they felt that the key questions mentioned above, were even more relevant in the pandemic. There was now an opportunity to assess relationships; the world and community that we live in; and how this impacts our identity and our place in the world.

## ParliaMentors

Because of the pandemic, face-to-face work with ParliaMentors, MPs and community groups was not possible and changing restrictions made it difficult for participants to keep to plans they made for social action. Events run by and for alumni had to move online limiting new activities

As a result, we ran all training, MP meetings and networking online. We were able to involve MPs in new ways during training sessions by having sessions just with them and the cohort on Zoom. This led to more candid meetings than the formal environment of Parliament and timings were also much more flexible.

## Reports and Research

In many ways, this project was less impacted by the pandemic than others because it was a research project, and therefore felt like something that could go ahead, when there were questions about other programming. Roundtables, launch events etc. all had to be delivered online.

We extended the timeline of the project by three months to allow for COVID adaptations.

Particularly with the FORB roundtables, hosting online allowed us to draw in a large international audience, which was a key success of the project.

# Organisational Priorities 2021/22

Priority	Key milestones / deliverables
1 A new multi-year strategic plan in place that addresses the change we want to make and has full buy-in from the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather input from staff &amp; trustees</li> <li>Present and discuss with external stakeholders</li> <li>Complete first draft Strategic Outlook by December</li> <li>Finalise and launch March</li> </ul>
2 Improved evidence-base demonstrating the impact we make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Impact Report 2020–21</li> <li>Complete internal review of school engagement</li> <li>Establish clarity about data needed to measure impact, with input from Salesforce staff group</li> <li>Put in place external facing comms to promote impact of what we do in context of interfaith and social cohesion</li> </ul>
3 An organisational culture that reflects our values authentically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review our four core values</li> <li>Fold refreshed draft values into new strategic outlook</li> <li>Use refreshed values actively as part of supporting each other and holding each other to account</li> <li>Sign off together with new strategic outlook by March</li> </ul>
4 EDI targets set for each department, based on sound analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify what data we need to capture - both inward and outward facing</li> <li>Gather data to establish baseline</li> <li>Review and streamline EDI strategy in consultation with board EDI champions</li> <li>Set EDI targets for 22/23 by March</li> </ul>
5 Post pandemic working models agreed and working (office working, face-to-face delivery, innovation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice, in line with Government pandemic advice</li> <li>Launch guidelines and affiliated policy</li> <li>Review regularly in context of 'post pandemic' landscape</li> <li>Align approach with the need for innovation in changing context</li> </ul>

# Structure, governance and management

## Organisational structure and decision making

The Faith & Belief Forum is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The organisation was founded in 1997 as an unincorporated charitable trust called Three Faiths Forum (1092465). All activities, liabilities and assets transferred to the CIO (1173369) in 2017, and in 2018 the CIO changed its name to The Faith & Belief Forum.

The object of the CIO is to promote religious harmony and good communal relations through promoting knowledge and mutual understanding of, and respect for, the beliefs and practices of different religious faiths, and beliefs. Our vision is of a connected and supportive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures have strong, productive and lasting relations.

The organisation is governed by a board of trustees who meet regularly during the year. Finance and Compliance Committees meet before each board meeting to monitor and review relevant matters in more depth.

The board of trustees is authorised to appoint new trustees, as required, who are selected on the basis of their relevant skills, experience and knowledge and the active contribution they can make to the organisation. New trustees are briefed on the organisation's constitution, strategic plan, policies and procedures. They receive a copy of the previous years' financial statements and a copy of the constitution, and are expected to sign a declaration of interests form.

Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation and delegate management to the Director. The Director reports to the board on organisational performance against operational plans approved by the Board. The Director and Head of Operations report regularly via the Finance Committee on the financial position of the organisation.

The organisation seeks to create an internal culture that embodies the inclusive and welcoming values that we want to see in wider society, and are delighted that in summer 2018, more than 90% of staff surveyed said they are proud to work at this charity, enjoy the work they do, and believe they are making a difference.

The charity is grateful to its team of staff, consultants, freelancers, interns and volunteers for their outstanding dedication, hard work and commitment during the year.

# Financial Review

The charity generated incoming resources of £1,028,241 (2020: £868,840) The increase in income was caused by significant increase in restricted and unrestricted donations as a result of the pandemic £921,789 against £786,461.

There has been a consequent decrease in total costs which fell to £878,330 from £912,826 in the previous year. The decrease is principally due to a reduction in direct costs which decreased to £646,795 from £700,251. The decrease is driven by lower personnel costs and reduced event costs as events moved online because of the pandemic.

The charity recorded a net increase in funds of £149,911 being a surplus of £87,005 on unrestricted funds and a surplus of £62,908 on restricted funds because of reduced expenditure in the current year driven by changes due to pandemic delivery models. It is anticipated that this surplus will be utilised in the current year.

At 31 March 2021 the charity had net assets of £245,166 which was split between unrestricted funds of £182,260 and restricted funds of £62,906.

## Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies.

## Reserves policy

The trustees have examined the requirement for free reserves, which are those unrestricted funds not invested in fixed assets. It is currently the policy of the charity to maintain free reserves at a level considered adequate to provide sufficient funds for between one- and three-months' unrestricted expenditure, an amount equivalent to between £50,000 and £150,000. The free reserves amounted to £171,275 at 31 March 2021 which is at the higher end of that desired range. The trustees continue to monitor progress towards that desired level of reserve and anticipate that expenditure may be high. The Charity is in a position where significant funds are received for specific projects and restricted funds at 31 March 2021 amounted to £56,332. The charity's assets are held for the purpose of the aforesaid charitable purposes and the trustees consider that the financial position of the charity at 31 March 2021 is satisfactory to enable it to continue its activities.

## Pay policy for staff

We are committed to a fair and transparent pay structure that ensures we treat all staff equitably with regards to terms and conditions of employment, including pay. Employee salaries are awarded based on the organisation's salary scales. The scales are reviewed annually, taking into account inflation and cost of living increases (based on the Consumer Price Index and Retail Price Index), sector benchmarking, and funding available. It has adopted a policy regarding senior management pay of 1:3, meaning that the highest paid member of staff should not earn more than three times that of the lowest paid member of staff on a pro-rata basis. The Faith & Belief Forum fully supports the living wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) and will aim to pay at this level, subject to affordability.

## Risk management

The trustees assess on an annual basis the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. The principal risks faced by the charity are the security of its funding streams and the operational risks from working with young people in areas dealing with sensitive subjects. The trustees mitigate the risk to funding streams by diversifying as much as possible the sources of income. The operational risks are mitigated by having an effective safeguarding policy to which all staff adhere to. In addition, there is a staff handbook which reflects updated policies and procedures on whistleblowing and staff data handling and protection. Like all charities we have been affected by the ongoing Covid Crisis which began towards the end of the financial year 31st March 2020 and has continued through the financial year ending 31st March 2021, we have managed this by maintaining a reduced level of financial risk in the budget and utilising free reserves to ensure a balanced income and expenditure budget in the financial year 31st March 2021.

## Safeguarding

The charity trustees take their responsibility in relation to safeguarding seriously and have adopted a Safeguarding policy to protect vulnerable people from abuse and to prevent abuse from happening in the first place.

## Conflict of interest

All trustees give of their time freely and no trustee remuneration was paid in the year. The trustees and staff are required to disclose all relevant interests and where necessary withdraw from decisions where a conflict arises. The trustees also confirm that there is an appropriate and approved antibribery policy.

## Information on fundraising practices

The charity does not fundraise from the general public, but focuses its activities on specific charitable foundations. Therefore the trustees do not consider that the requirements of the fundraising code to be applicable to the charity.

## Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are required under the law applicable to charities in England and Wales to prepare a trustees' report and financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. 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.

This report was approved by the trustees, on and signed on their behalf by:



**Michael V Sternberg QC KCFO, Chair of Trustees**

Date: 19.01.22

## Independent auditor's report to the members of the Faith & Belief Forum for the year ended 31 March 2021

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Faith & Belief Forum (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and the notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has been withdrawn.

This has been done in order for the accounts to provide a true and fair view in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the charity through discussions with trustees and other management, and from our knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the charity, including the Charities Act 2011, taxation legislation and data protection, employment and health and safety legislation;

- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested a sample of journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- reviewing correspondence with relevant regulators.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*Blick Rothenberg Audit LLP*

### **Blick Rothenberg Audit LLP**

Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors  
Statutory Auditor

16 Great Queen Street, Covent Garden  
London WC2B 5AH

Date: 19.01.22

Blick Rothenberg Audit LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

## Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
<b>Income from</b>					
- Donations and legacies	2	416,572	611,625	1,028,197	866,911
- Charitable activities	3	-	-	-	1,779
- Other income		44	-	44	150
<b>Total income</b>		<b>416,616</b>	<b>611,625</b>	<b>1,028,241</b>	868,840
<b>Expenditure on</b>					
- Raising funds		57,789	-	57,789	56,025
- Charitable activities		271,822	548,719	820,541	856,801
<b>Total expenditure</b>	4	<b>329,611</b>	<b>548,719</b>	<b>878,330</b>	912,826
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		87,005	62,906	149,911	(43,986)
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
- Total funds brought forward		95,255	-	95,255	139,241
- Net movement in funds		87,005	62,906	149,911	(43,986)
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>182,260</b>	<b>62,906</b>	<b>245,166</b>	95,255

There were no recognised gains or losses other than those set out above.  
All of the activities of the charity are classed as continuing.

The notes on pages 49 to 61 form part of these financial statements.

## The Faith & Belief Forum Charity number: 1173369

### Balance sheet for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
- Tangible assets	9	17,539	5,661
		<b>17,539</b>	5,661
<b>Current assets</b>			
- Debtors	10	49,825	63,092
- Bank and cash balances		486,221	356,955
		<b>536,046</b>	420,047
- Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	(308,419)	(330,453)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>227,627</b>	89,594
<b>Total net assets</b>	13	<b>245,166</b>	95,255
<b>Charity funds</b>			
- Restricted funds	12	62,906	-
- Unrestricted funds	12	182,260	95,255
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>245,166</b>	95,255

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the trustees,  
on and signed on their behalf by:



**Michael V Sternberg QC KCFO, Chair of Trustees**

Date: 19.01.22

The notes on pages 49 to 61 form part of these financial statements.

## Statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
- Net cash used in operating activities	14	<b>146,946</b>	42,112
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
- Dividends, interests and rents from investments		<b>44</b>	150
<b>Purchase of tangible fixed assets</b>		<b>(17,724)</b>	-
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>		<b>44</b>	150
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
<b>Net cash provided by financing activities</b>		-	-
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		356,955	314,693
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	15	<b>486,221</b>	356,955

The notes on pages 49 to 61 form part of these financial statements.

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

### 1. Accounting policies

#### 1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The charity has elected to apply all amendments to FRS 102, as set out in the Financial Reporting Council's triennial review published in December 2017, and included in Update Bulletin 2 to the Charities SORP (FRS 102), prior to mandatory adoption for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair' view. This departure has involved following the Charities SORP (FRS 102) published on 16 July 2014 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The Faith & Belief Forum meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

#### 1.2 Going concern

On 11 March 2020 the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of a novel coronavirus, Covid-19, a worldwide pandemic. The resultant lock down in movement of people and the move to working remotely has had a significant impact on the charity's activities. The senior management team along with the trustees took action to control costs in light of the known income.

The trustees have considered a budget out to 31 December 2022 on the basis of known income and will revisit this in line with committed income once that has been received. Having considered that budget, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

### 1.3 Income

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the Trustees' report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable.

### 1.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Support costs are those costs incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include project management carried out centrally. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Costs of generating funds are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities and Governance costs are costs incurred on the charity's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.

### 1.5 Government grants

Government grants relating to tangible fixed assets are treated as deferred income and released to the statement of financial activities over the expected useful lives of the assets concerned. Other grants are credited to the statement of financial activities as the related expenditure is incurred.

### 1.6 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are carried at cost, net of depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, on a reducing balance basis.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

*Office equipment*            *25% reducing balance*

### 1.7 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

### 1.8 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

### 1.9 Liabilities and provisions

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the statement of financial activities as a finance cost.

### 1.10 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

### 1.11 Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

### 1.12 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

## 2. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Donations received	336,122	586,117	<b>922,239</b>	786,461
Donated services	80,450	-	<b>80,450</b>	80,450
Government grants	-	25,508	<b>25,508</b>	-
	<u>416,572</u>	<u>611,625</u>	<u><b>1,028,197</b></u>	<u>866,911</u>
Total 2020	408,231	458,680	866,911	

Donated services comprise rent and service charges of £77,950 (2020: £77,950) and donated payroll processing of £2,500 (2020: £2,500).

## 3. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Interfaith educational activities	-	-	-	1,779
Total 2020	-	1,779	1,779	

## 4. Charitable expenditure

	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Direct costs	171,277	478,519	<b>649,796</b>	700,251
Support costs	91,217	70,200	<b>161,417</b>	149,463
Governance costs	9,328	-	<b>9,328</b>	7,087
Fundraising costs	57,789	-	<b>57,789</b>	56,025
	<u>329,611</u>	<u>548,719</u>	<u><b>878,330</b></u>	<u>912,826</u>
Total 2020	427,122	485,704	912,826	

Fundraising costs represent the employment costs of those employees undertaking fund raising activity.

## 5. Direct costs

	Basis of allocation	Unrestricted	Education balance	West Midlands balance	Movement building	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Facilitation and School Expenses	Actual costs	-	450	-	-	450	2,609
Employment Costs	Staff time	157,341	38,428	73,306	173,152	442,227	496,064
Freelance Assistants	Staff time	10,626	63,342	2,062	78,892	154,922	102,154
Event Expenses	Actual costs	3,310	4,023	1,608	35,613	44,554	94,665
Mentoring Expenses	Actual costs	-	-	-	668	668	4,759
Dialogues	Actual costs	-	2,240	4,735	-	6,975	-
		<b>171,277</b>	<b>108,483</b>	<b>81,711</b>	<b>288,325</b>	<b>649,796</b>	<b>700,251</b>

## 6. Support costs

	Basis of allocation	Unrestricted	Education	West Midlands	Movement building	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
		£	£	£	£	£	£
General office costs	Actual costs	22,814	691	96	1,183	24,784	23,280
Bank charges and interest	Actual costs	352	-	-	-	352	972
Insurance	Actual costs	3,586	-	-	-	3,586	6,060
Intern expenses	Actual costs	14	-	-	40	54	967
Communication expenses	Actual costs	4,812	-	31	372	5,215	7,702
Travelling and subsistence	Actual costs	-	-	-	-	-	14,511
Marketing and publicity	Actual costs	4,000	30	10	10,963	15,003	5,833
Professional fees	Actual costs	30,762	-	-	-	30,762	10,238
Rent and rates	Actual costs	72,880	-	-	-	72,880	72,810
Bad debt write-offs	Actual costs	40	-	-	60	100	-
Staff training	Actual costs	2,826	-	-	-	2,826	3,872
Entertainment	Actual costs	9	-	-	-	9	1,331
Depreciation	Actual costs	3,654	-	-	2,192	5,846	1,887
Management fees	Fixed split	(54,532)	6,678	9,393	38,461	-	-
		<b>91,217</b>	<b>7,399</b>	<b>9,530</b>	<b>53,271</b>	<b>161,417</b>	<b>149,463</b>

## 7. Governance costs

	Basis of allocation	Unrestricted	Education	West Midlands	Movement building	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
		£	£	£	£	£	£
General office costs	All governance costs	9,328	-	-	-	9,328	7,087
		<b>9,328</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,328</b>	<b>7,087</b>

## 8. Staff costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	<b>443,766</b>	487,526
Social security costs	<b>34,641</b>	40,273
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	<b>21,609</b>	24,290
	<b>500,016</b>	552,089

The average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
Employees	<b>18</b>	17
	<b>18</b>	17

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
In the band £60,001–£70,000	-	1

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Director and the Head of Operations.

The total employee costs of the key management personnel of the charity were £81,827 (2020: £106,480).

## 9. Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment
	£
<b>Cost or valuation</b>	
- At 1 April 2020	25,146
- Additions	17,724
At 31 March 2021	<b>42,870</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>	
- At 1 April 2020	19,485
- Charge for the year	5,846
At 31 March 2021	<b>25,331</b>
<b>Net book value</b>	
At 31 March 2021	<b>17,539</b>
At 31 March 2020	5,661

## 10. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
- Trade debtors	-	57,492
- Other debtors	-	5,600
- Prepayments and accrued income	<b>49,825</b>	-
	<b>49,825</b>	63,092

## 11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
- Trade creditors	6,556	18,842
- Other taxation and social security	11,236	12,893
- Other creditors	231,230	263,418
- Accruals and deferred income	59,397	35,300
	<b>308,419</b>	330,453

Deferred income represents grants and donations received in respect of projects to be run in the following financial year.

## 12. Statement of funds

Current year	Balance at 1 April 2020	Income	Expenditure	Balance at 31 March 2021
	£	£	£	£
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	95,255	416,616	(329,611)	182,260
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
- Education	-	115,882	(115,882)	-
- West Midlands	-	93,933	(91,241)	2,692
- Movement building	-	401,810	(341,596)	60,214
	-	611,625	(548,719)	62,906
<b>Total of funds</b>	<b>95,255</b>	<b>1,028,241</b>	<b>(878,330)</b>	<b>245,166</b>

Prior year	Balance at 1 April 2019	Income	Expenditure	Transfers in/out	Balance at 31 March 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	127,635	408,381	(427,122)	(13,639)	95,255
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
- Education	4,017	239,149	(244,626)	1,460	-
- Movement building	7,604	221,310	(241,078)	12,164	-
- Middle East	(15)	-	-	15	-
	11,606	460,459	(485,704)	13,639	-
<b>Total of funds</b>	<b>139,241</b>	<b>868,840</b>	<b>(912,826)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>95,255</b>

The Education fund represents: workshops, school linking and training to help young people (and their teachers) handle different or controversial topics, learn dialogue skills, and to understand how people live their faiths or beliefs.

The Movement Building fund covers our universities work including a national leadership programme where students collaborate to create real social change while being mentored by MPs.

### 13. Analysis of net assets

<b>Current year</b>	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>
- Tangible fixed assets	10,965	6,574	<b>17,539</b>
- Current assets	328,726	207,320	<b>536,046</b>
- Creditors due within one year	(157,431)	(150,988)	<b>(308,419)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>182,260</b>	<b>62,906</b>	<b>245,166</b>

<b>Prior year</b>	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	<b>Total funds 2020 £</b>
- Tangible fixed assets	1,097	4,564	<b>5,661</b>
- Current assets	252,945	167,102	<b>420,047</b>
- Creditors due within one year	(158,787)	(171,666)	<b>(330,453)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>95,255</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>95,255</b>

### 14. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	<b>2021 £</b>	2020 £
- Net income for the period (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<b>149,911</b>	(43,986)
<b>Adjustment for:</b>	<b>-</b>	5,600
- Depreciation charges	<b>5,846</b>	1,887
- Investment income	<b>(44)</b>	(150)
- Decrease / (increase) in debtors	<b>13,267</b>	(15,769)
- (Decrease) / increase in creditors	<b>(22,034)</b>	100,130
	<b>146,946</b>	42,112

### 15. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	<b>2021 £</b>	2020 £
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>	<b>486,221</b>	356,955



# Acknowledgements

The Faith & Belief Forum's work of building bridges and encouraging dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs would not be possible without the following organisations.

We would like to thank them for their continuing support.

## Funders

- Anonymous Donor
- ASET Education
- The British Council
- The Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development (CREID) Consortium
- Dangoor Education
- DCD Family Trust
- DCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Govt)
- Dulverton Trust
- The Exilarch's Foundation
- Garfield Weston
- Sir Halley Stewart Trust
- The Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund
- Lerak
- The Linking Network The Linking Network-MHCLG
- The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham
- Martin Slowe Estates Limited
- Porticus
- The Reuben Foundation
- Sir Sigmund Sternberg Charitable Trust
- The Tamir-Sternberg Foundation
- TNL Community Fund
- The Tudor Trust
- Walsall Local Authority