

Faith

CHARITIES FORUM

10.09.2025

15 Hatfields, London

**Bridging Divides – Faith,
Policy and Social Justice**

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Exploring the intersection of faith and policy
- Faith, finance and climate justice across traditions
- Harnessing faith traditions to inspire action and impact
- Faith, Power and Trust – Safeguarding and the risk to reputation
- Unlocking the power of community to affect change



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08:30	Registration, coffee & networking	
09:20	Chair's welcome – Paul Parker , recording clerk, Quakers in Britain	
09:30	Opening keynote – Exploring the intersection of faith and policy We are delighted to welcome Lord Khan of Burnley in his new role as Lords Minister for Faith. In this keynote address, he will share the Labour government's vision for strengthening partnerships with the faith sector to drive social impact and develop stronger, more connected communities. Lord Khan of Burnley , Lords Minister for Faith	
09:50	Navigating change: latest legal developments for faith organisations This focused session will highlight the key legal developments shaping the charity and faith sectors in 2025. Delivered by Stone King, a leading charity and faith sector law firm, it will cover updates on governance, safeguarding, compliance, property, and employment law. The session will draw on practical case studies to illustrate how these changes play out in real-world scenarios, leaving you better-informed and equipped to navigate change and ensure compliance. Harriet Broughton, Lee Coley, Rosamund McCarthy Etherington and Chris Sharpe , partners, Stone King	
10:30	Networking & refreshment break	
	Stream A Chair Paul Parker , recording clerk, Quakers in Britain	Stream B Chair Lucy Bushill-Matthews
10:55	1A. Faith, finance and climate justice across traditions The climate crisis is one of the greatest threats facing humanity – and faith communities have a vital role in driving a just response. This session is led by Faith for the Climate, a small but influential organisation that coordinates the UK's multi-faith climate movement. Punching above its weight, Faith for the Climate empowers religious groups to take action through sustainable practices, advocacy, and grassroots engagement. The session will explore how faith traditions are shaping climate justice, with a focus on transforming the global financial and economic system through specific calls such as a tax on major polluters, an end to tax avoidance and evasion, debt justice, and a more just financial system between the Global South and North – essential tools for unlocking fair and effective climate solutions. Chair – Shanon Shah , director, Faith for the Climate Speakers – Sarah Edwards , executive director, JustMoney Movement, Maria Finnerty , lead economist, CAFOD and Suraiya Rahman , campaigner, Islamic Relief UK	1B. Sacred Giving: harnessing faith traditions to inspire action and impact This session will explore how different faith traditions promote generosity and community service. By examining the spiritual, ethical, and communal motivations behind these practices, it highlights actionable insights for charities seeking to deepen engagement, foster trust, and increase donations and volunteering. The discussion offers practical takeaways on how organisations can respectfully align their campaigns with faith-based values, build interfaith partnerships, and time appeals around key religious moments to maximise impact. Mohammed Rahman , community connector, Keech Hospice Care and Rev Wendy Pawsey , head of giving, Evangelical Alliance
11:35	Transit time	
11:35	2A. Holocaust Educational Trust case study: virtual reality, real stories As we mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps of Europe and the end of the Second World War, this is likely to be the last milestone year that survivors will be able to be part of commemorations. We mark this anniversary year in challenging times – antisemitism is rising globally, and the distortion and denial of the past is sadly all too common. This session will showcase the Holocaust Educational Trust's Testimony 360: People and Places of the Holocaust, a ground-breaking free digital education programme that combines virtual reality with eyewitness testimony. In an age where the ethical use of technology is the subject of much debate, this initiative exemplifies how innovation can preserve truth, ensure legacy, and enhance education. Karen Pollock , chief executive, Holocaust Educational Trust	2B. Navigating Genuine Occupational Requirements: faith, equity, and belonging This session will explore how faith-based charities interpret and apply Genuine Occupational Requirements (GORs) in varied ways – and the complexities this presents when striving to build inclusive, effective organisations. We'll hear from different perspectives on how to balance mission-driven roles with the need to reflect and relate to the diverse communities charities serve. Join us as we discuss how to create organisational cultures that support different belief systems, including non-belief, while ensuring equity, belonging, and impact remain at the heart of faith-led work. Panel – Revd Ben Cahill-Nicholls , chief executive, Clergy Support Trust, Mustafa Faruqi , chair, Muslim Aid and Denise Hatton , chief executive, YMCA England

12:15	Transit time
12:20	ESG under fire: What's next for sustainable investing? For decades, investors and trustees have aligned their investments with their values, driving momentum behind ESG and responsible investing. But in recent years, ESG has faced increasing scrutiny and backlash, creating new challenges for those committed to sustainable strategies. In this session, we'll explore the origins of this backlash, its impact on the investment landscape, and how ESG investors can adapt. What does the future hold for values-driven investing? How can investors respond to regulatory shifts and political pressures? Join us for a thought-provoking discussion on the next chapter of ESG investing – and how you can stay ahead. Laura Hobbs , investment director, Greenbank
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Regulatory update: Charity Commission developments impacting the faith sector In a rapidly evolving world, the Charity Commission continues to update its guidance to support charities in meeting emerging challenges. This session offers key insights into the latest research on public trust and confidence, along with essential updates on revised guidance around paying trustees, safeguarding protocols and best practice governance. Designed for faith-based charities, this session is crucial for staying ahead of regulatory changes and strengthening both compliance and impact. Colette Bennett , charities engagement manager, Charity Commission
14:20	Faith, Power and Trust – Safeguarding and the duty to protect In faith communities, safeguarding is not merely about compliance – it is a theological and ethical imperative that lies at the heart of spiritual care. This session will focus on the practical realities of safeguarding within faith settings, from navigating power dynamics in spiritual leadership to balancing pastoral care with professional boundaries. With growing uncertainty around forthcoming IICSA recommendations, and in the wake of high-profile scandals such as the Church of England's, faith groups face increasing scrutiny. Some are now declining to offer social care due to reputational risks. This session will explore how communities can move beyond a 'tick-box' approach by embedding safeguarding into every day decision-making and equipping staff with the ongoing training needed to build trust and accountability at every level. Justin Humphreys , chief executive, Thirtyone: eight, Sukhvinder Kaur , chair/faith and exploitation lead, Sikh Women's Aid, Michael Wegier , chief executive, Board of Deputies of British Jews
15:05	Optional Grounding Meditation (offered by Shambhala London) Join us for fifteen minutes of guided stillness, led by a practitioner from Shambhala London. Rooted in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Shambhala meditation cultivates mindfulness, awareness, and a sense of basic goodness. This optional practice offers a moment to reset and reconnect before we continue with the afternoon's discussions – whether you choose to participate or simply observe.
15:20	Networking break
15:40	Unlocking the power of community to affect change Matt Finch has been a Methodist minister for over twenty years and is currently part of the national team supporting pioneers and those creating new Christian communities across Britain. He regularly contributes to Pause for Thought on BBC Radio 2, bringing reflections on faith, hope, and everyday life to a wide audience. His work takes him into the complex realities of people's lives, where he sees – given the right support – how ordinary people can find extraordinary hope, even in the hardest places. He founded the UK's first CALMtown in St Ives, a grassroots movement putting wellbeing at the heart of community life. CALMtown has helped reduce stigma around mental health, encouraged people to care for themselves, and empowered communities to look out for those who are struggling. In this uplifting talk, he reminds us of the power of community to affect change. Rev Matthew Finch , trustee, CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)
16:10	Faith in friendship: The Rabbi, the Imam and the importance of dialogue - Since October 7th, global events have strained relationships between Jewish and Muslim communities, leading many to fall silent or, tragically, to turn against one another. In the midst of this turmoil, a Rabbi and an Imam chose a different path: they held onto their friendship. Refusing to be divided by conflict, they stood side by side, leading dozens of interfaith initiatives and proving that dialogue, empathy, and shared humanity can endure even in the most challenging times. This powerful session is testament to what's possible when we lead with compassion, listen deeply, and dare to reach across painful divides. Rabbi Dovid Lewis and Imam Nasser Kurdy
16:55	Chair's closing remarks
17:00	Networking reception

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