



Press and Public statement - Faith and Community Leaders Urge Safety, Prayer and Unity

As Leicester and parts of Leicestershire enter into a further lockdown due to the increase in positive cases of COVID-19, 60 public, faith and community leaders have issued a joint statement urging people to be vigilant and to follow new guidelines, in the initiative led by the Leicester Council of Faiths.

Fayyaz Suleman, Chair of the Leicester Council of Faiths said

“Our thoughts are with those that have contracted the virus and have been affected by it. This united statement is evidence that we are all in it together. Nobody is to blame for this virus and this lockdown and we don’t know yet the real verifiable causes of the recent spike. People should avoid pre-mature conclusions that can cause unnecessary anxiety and tensions.

But the priority is the safety of everyone and all faith and community leaders, groups and places of worship will be playing their part and re-enforcing the messages of following government guidelines and social distancing.

We need to support each other and, as a collective, work to unlock more support for people, organisations and businesses from the government during this new lockdown. But with this statement it should bring some comfort in knowing that the whole united family of Leicestershire will be praying for those affected by the virus and for the virus to be over and for normality to return as soon as possible.”

Public Statement

The safety of every one is paramount.

Leicester, like the majority of the country, has been exemplary in adhering to the governments message of staying home and saving lives since March. Countless stories of personal sacrifices are to be found everywhere, ranging from not visiting elderly relatives to not attending funerals of family members. Collective places of worship were shut down even before Government guidelines came in to force and days of communal festivals and celebrations were toned down to minimal private affairs.

Now more sacrifices are needed to contain the spread of the virus. People will understandably be disappointed at the latest news of the lockdown. We must however not allow this frustration to sow division in our wonderful City. The constant media narrative of Leicester being an ethnic majority City, in its reporting of the story, is alluding to racial undertones which could give rise to a blame game against certain section of our communities, especially BAME communities. Social media is

already rife with these sentiments. We as faith, community and public leaders confirm our commitment to unity in this city and in Leicestershire and condemn these sentiments. The virus has impacted and continues to impact all communities of Leicestershire in various ways and all communities, including BAME communities, have paid a heavy price already with the loss of so many lives and their sacrifices at the front line in treating patients.

While we await a comprehensive analysis of the data to enable us to understand the reasons for the spike, we should avoid jumping to conclusions and let the authorities deal with containing the spread of the virus. We are in this together and will play our part and we will overcome this adversity together. We continue to pray for the city and for Leicestershire as a whole that we overcome this virus soon and that the lockdown is eased soon. We pray that Leicester and Leicestershire communities remain united as one family during this unprecedented time.

Fayyaz Suleman	Chair - Leicester Council of Faiths
Resham Singh Sandhu	Life Member of LCOF
Dr Atualla Siddiqui	Life Member of LCOF
Suleman Nagdi	Life Member of LCOF
Father John Lally	Vice Chairman – LCOF & Sacred Heart (Roman Catholic)
Parish & Our Lady of Good Counsel Church	
Narendra Waghela	Treasurer LCOF & BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir Member
Minou Courtazzi	Assist, Sec LCOF & The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Leicester
Father Paskal Clement	Leicester Anglican Diocese Representative & Church of the Resurrection
Cllr Ashiedu Joel	The Redeemed Christian Church of God (City of Favour)
Manjula Sood	Member of the Hindu Faith Community & Board
Harminder Singh Jagdev	Ramgharia Sikh Gurdwara Representative
Leon Charikar	Leicester Progressive Jewish Congregation Representative
Yasmin Surti	Federation of Muslim Organisations Leicestershire Representative
Sulakhan Singh Dard	Sikh Faith Chaplain & Member of Sikh Faith Community
Ramanbhai Barber	Member of the Hindu Faith Community & Board
Smita Shah	The Jain Centre Representative
Vic Allsop	Churches Together Leicestershire
Zubeir Hassam	Oadby & Wigston Muslim Association – Oadby Central Mosque
Usha Mehta	Jain Samaj Europe
Ashok Mohindra	Geeta Bhavan Leicester
Malik Salim	Islamic Centre Leicester
Vibhooti R Acharya	Shree Sanatan Mandir
Pramod Thakar	Jalaram Temple
Abdul Karim Gheewala	Chair FMO & Islamic Education Trust – Masjid Al Falah
Shital Adatia	Hindu Temple and Community Centre
Pradip Gajjar	ISKCON Leicester
Bharti Acharya	Shree Sanatan Mandir
Razak Ghumran	Muslim Khatri Association
Ashok Kotecha	Ram Mandir
Nikunj Shah	Oshwal (Jains) Association of UK

Praful Thakrar
Molana Mohammed Lokat
Tajinder Jagdev
Shockat Patel
Rajni Mehta
Jaspal Singh Minhas
Tony Nelson
Janice Miller
Peter Singh
Rita Patel
Ramesh Bellur
Mussa Saleh
Ruth Heath
Kartar Singh Bring
Ahmed Makda
Julie Harrald
Ian Vernon
Representative)
Sunil Budheou
Rabbi Shmuli Pink
Cllr Rashimkant Joshi
Reverend Levy Gono
Dr.Gurpreet Parmar
Janette Macdonald
Gajendra Chhatrishia
Ramesh Mashru
Dr. Angela Jagger
David Young
Marcus Solanki
Rosemarie Fitton
Elizabeth Wayne

Shreeji Dham Haveli Mandir
As Salam Trust (Peace Centre)
Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara
MEND Leicester
Jain Centre Leicester
Leicester Asian Business Association
Leicester Hebrew Congregation
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter a Day Saints
Gurdwara Sahib Loughborough
Shri Ram Krishna Centre (Temple) Loughborough
East Midlands Buddhist Association Representative
Dedza Welfare Trust
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter a Day Saints
Chair, UK Sikh Healthcare Chaplaincy Group
Masjid Ur Rahman
LCOF Member (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
LCOF Member (The Pagan Federation – East Midlands

Shree Jalaram Mandir Representative
LCOF Member of the Jewish Faith Community
LCOF Member of the Hindu Faith Community
LCOF Member of the Christian Faith Community
Member of the LCOF (Sikh Faith)
LCOF Member of the Bahai Faith Community
LCOF Member of the Jain Centre
LCOF Member of the BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir
Member of the LCOF (Anglican Faith)
Member of the LCOF (Roman Catholic Faith)
Member of the LCOF (Anglican Faith)
Member of the LCOF (Multi-faith Harmony Interest)
Member of the LCOF (Anglican Faith)