

Places of Worship Protective Security Fund open for applications

Mosques and Muslim faith schools have been given access to £24.5 million for security measures to protect their places of worship and schools and make our streets safer, the security minister has announced today (19 May).

Muslims continue to experience an increased threat of hate crime. In 2020/2021, 45% of religious hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales were targeted against Muslims.

From today, places of worship can bid for funding to put in place security measures to help tackle this threat. This could include the installation of CCTV cameras and perimeter fencing to ensure that adequate measures are in place to protect worshippers. Muslims will be also able to register their interest in security guarding services at mosques, to ensure that their communities can worship safely and without fear.

In addition, £3.5 million is available for other faith communities through the government's [Places of Worship Fund](#). Applications are now open and all places of worship who feel they are vulnerable to hate crime are encouraged to apply. This scheme runs alongside the Jewish Community Protective Security grant, which provides protective security for the Jewish community and was recently renewed for this year.

This latest round of funding marks the government's ongoing commitment to protecting people's right to practise their faith without fear and to making our streets safer.

Security Minister, Damian Hinds said:

It is a fundamental right to be able to practise your faith in your community.

This new round of funding will cover the costs of security measures for places of worship to deter and prevent hate crime attacks on vulnerable communities, making our streets safer.

I encourage any place of worship which feels vulnerable to hate crime to apply for funding through the Places of Worship fund.

Director of Tell MAMA, Iman Atta said:

The additional support from this government to ensure security support through guarding services is warmly welcomed and much needed.

Tell MAMA has regularly called for additional support to Islamic institutions and mosques and in line with the national anti-Muslim hate crime monitoring and support services that Tell MAMA provides on an ongoing basis. Collectively, this support from the government should be welcomed and applauded.

The Places of Worship Fund is part of the government's commitment to ensure that faith communities in England and Wales are protected from the threat of hate crime attacks by providing funding to places of worship such as churches, mosques, gurdwaras, temples and associated faith community centres in order to improve physical security.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows a long-term decline in overall hate crime. Increases in police recorded hate crime in recent years have been driven by improvements in crime recording and a better identification of what constitutes a hate crime.

As part of this increased package, the government is introducing a new scheme for Muslim faith schools to provide additional protection that will be rolled out later in the year.

Commission orders the winding-up of charity funding TV programmes which encouraged hate speech and violence

The Charity Commission has found misconduct and/or mismanagement by the trustees of Islamic Research Foundation International (IRFI). This includes their decision to continue to fund Peace TV channels despite several breaches of Ofcom's Broadcasting Code.

IRFI was registered in 2007, with the aim of advancing the faith and religious practices of Islam. Its principal focus and expenditure had been to support Peace TV channels.

The Commission opened an inquiry into IRFI in April 2020, after engagement with the trustees about the charity's governance and their report of a serious incident regarding the media regulator Ofcom's investigation into Peace TV channels.

Ofcom's investigation found that since 2009, Peace TV channels repeatedly broadcast programmes that breached the Ofcom Broadcasting Code. This included programmes that incited violence and murder, and programmes containing hate speech and abusive treatment.

The inquiry found that the trustees mismanaged the charity and did not act in its best interests. This included their decision to continue funding for Peace TV.

The inquiry also concluded that the trustees repeatedly failed to consider changes or alternatives for applying charitable funds and did not learn any lessons, following Ofcom's adverse findings.

Between 2015 and 2020, 96% of the charity's expenditure, amounting to around £3.6million, was granted to Universal Broadcasting Company, the parent company of the Peace TV channels' two licence holders. Some of the charity's trustees had been directors of companies within this group structure whilst also acting as trustees of the charity. The inquiry saw no evidence that conflicts of interest were appropriately identified and managed.

Prior to the inquiry opening, the Commission disqualified by Order the charity's founder and one of its trustees, Dr Zakir Naik, from acting as a trustee and from holding senior management functions in any charity in England and Wales. This was appealed to the Charity Tribunal which ruled in its decision of 4 December 2020 that he should be disqualified for 7.5 years.

In July 2020, the Commission appointed an interim manager to take over the management and administration of the charity to the exclusion of its trustees and to make a determination as to the charity's viability. The interim manager concluded that the charity was no longer viable. The Commission issued an order to direct the interim manager to wind-up the charity, which was removed from the register on 11 May 2022. The charity's remaining funds of £57,950 have been transferred to three charities with similar objects.

Tim Hopkins, Assistant Director, Investigations and Inquiries at the Charity Commission, said:

This charity was mismanaged by its trustees, including through their failure to manage the charity's relationship with Peace TV channels following Ofcom's findings. These and other repeated governance failures rendered the charity unviable, and the Commission's intervention has secured its dissolution.

As part of our intervention into this charity we determined that Dr Naik's conduct makes him unfit to act as a trustee or hold senior management positions in any charity in England and Wales. Our order protects charities by prohibiting him from acting.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

2. The inquiry report can be seen [here](#).
3. The Charity Tribunal's judgment on Dr Naik's disqualification can be seen [here](#).

[Quintet of Attorneys General Statement of Support for the Prosecutor General of Ukraine and Investigations and Prosecutions for Russian War Crimes](#)

News story

Statement from the Quintet of Attorneys General in support of Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova and the Ukrainian people



The Quintet of Attorneys General have issued the following statement of support for the Prosecutor General of Ukraine and investigations and prosecutions for crimes committed during the Russian invasion of Ukraine:

The Attorneys General of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand join in support of Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova, her Office, and the Ukrainian people in ensuring accountability for war crimes committed during the Russian invasion.

We support the pursuit of justice by Ukraine and through other international investigations, including at the International Criminal Court, the United Nations, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and in our own jurisdictions, in order to ensure prompt, fair and effective investigation and prosecution of such offences under Ukrainian, domestic or

international law.

We join in condemning the Russian Government for its actions, and call upon it to cease all violations of international law, to halt its illegal invasion and to cooperate in efforts to achieve accountability.

We look forward to working together with the Prosecutor General and her Office to ensure every perpetrator faces justice.

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[Stranded fish rescued in Northumberland](#)

Press release

The Environment Agency has rescued more than 1,300 fish as a Northumberland river naturally changed course following heavy rainfall, leaving the fish stranded.



Fish including salmon and minnow were rescued

Over recent weeks the Environment Agency has been developing an incident response plan following evidence the River Coquet was likely to 'avulse' into the Barrow Burn at Alwinton.

An avulsion is a natural process which happens when a river diverts from an

established channel into a new permanent course. The switch of the Coquet into the Barrow Burn left a 300-metre stretch of the main river depleted of water and around 1,300 fish stranded.

Environment Agency fisheries specialists relocated fish in the cut off stretch – including salmon, lamprey, eel and minnow – back into the main river to ensure their survival. Some of the rescued fish were juvenile salmon and sea trout smolts on their migration to the sea, as well as younger fish of both species.

One of the rescued eels

The Environment Agency has been working with partners to prepare for the natural phenomenon, including Natural England, local tenant farmers, and ecologists for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), which provides ecological advice to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and which originally reported the issue to the Environment Agency. The MOD owns land in the area.

One of the rescued young salmon

Coquet is a ‘dynamic, wandering river’.

The Environment Agency’s Alastair Laverty, a geomorphology expert, said:

The River Coquet between Thropton and Alwinton is a dynamic, wandering river, which maintains good connection to its floodplain and is still largely unmodified – a rarity for a river of this size in England. The switching of channels and the creation of new channels within the floodplain is an entirely normal occurrence.

Once we were aware of the potential for the river to move course, we began developing an incident response plan to reduce any impact on communities, the environment and wildlife, and as part of our response on the ground more than 1,000 fish were rescued.

The River Coquet is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and we are committed to retaining and restoring this complex and dynamic river to ensure it remains a good habitat for wildlife.

In March last year, the river set a new course through Castron Lakes near Rothbury following a period of heavy rainfall. The Environment Agency and partners activated an incident response plan to reduce flood risk to the community and protect the environment.

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Rededication services for Irish soldiers lost in the Great War

The graves of Lieutenant (Lt) Frederic Hornby Lever Rushton MC and Private (Pte) John Martin Roberts, who died whilst serving with Irish regiments in the Great War, have been rededicated in France more than a hundred years after they died.

The services, which were organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), also known as the 'MOD War Detectives', were held at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Montcornet Military Cemetery on 17 May and Queens Cemetery, Bucquoy, on 18 May.

Rosie Barron, JCCC case lead said:

"It has been a privilege to work with The Royal Irish Regiment and The Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry to organise these rededication services. Both Lt Rushton and Pte Roberts were amongst the first men sent to the Western Front in August 1914 as part of the British Expeditionary Force. Their fates were very different, but ultimately both men laid down their lives in service of others.

"Sharing this experience with their families brings their stories to life and ensures that their sacrifices are not forgotten."

Lt Rushton, known as Hornby, was killed aged 26 whilst leading an assault on an enemy machine gun position on 15 September 1914 at Vailly-sur-Aisne, in eastern France. Having already been treated for a wound to his shoulder, he had been urged not to go back into the attack but he had insisted on doing so. Lt Rushton was serving with 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment and had been on the Western Front since 14 August 1914 and already taken part in the Retreat from Mons where he is said to have saved the life of his Commanding Officer and the Adjutant. Members of Lt Rushton's battalion were given permission by a German Officer to recover his body. However, after the First World War Lt Rushton was found to be missing and he was commemorated on La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial.

Captain Chris Rushton – Royal Irish Regiment – and great great nephew of Lt Rushton, attended the service alongside other family members. Crown copyright.

Lt Rushton's great nephew, Nigel Salt, who attended the rededication service at Montcornet Military Cemetery along with his family, said:

"We are particularly grateful that Hornby's grave has at last been

identified and cannot thank enough all those involved that have made this possible. My Grandmother was totally devastated by the loss of both her brothers. This would at least have given her some consolation.”

Pte Roberts, aged 30, served with The North Irish Horse. He arrived on the Western Front on 17 August 1914, just days after Lt Rushton and like Lt Rushton took part in the Retreat from Mons and the Battle of the Aisne in 1914. In March 1918 The North Irish Horse was dismounted and became a Cyclist Battalion. Having survived almost the duration of the First World War, Pte Roberts was killed in an attack near the River Ancre on 21 August 1918. He was commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial. Two of Private Roberts' brothers were also killed during the Great War, a third died of wounds following the conflict.

Captain Andrew Robertson of 'B' Squadron Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry, lays a wreath at the grave of Pte Roberts. Crown copyright.

The rededication service at Queens Cemetery, Bucquoy, was attended by members of Pte Roberts' family, including his great grandson, Craig Roberts. Craig Roberts said:

“John Roberts' involvement in WW1 was a long-forgotten story in my family. It wasn't until I began researching my family tree that I discovered the sacrifice John and his brothers had made during the war. When I heard that John had been found, it made a person I had only read about online seem more real. Our family would like to give special thanks to Phillip Tardif, who investigated and linked John's death and burial location, allowing John to be identified, thus enabling this ceremony to happen.”

The services were attended by representatives of the British and Irish Embassies as well as members of their families and serving soldiers of The Royal Irish Regiment and The Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry. They were conducted by the Reverend Dr Isaac Thompson MBE, TD, DL, HCF, Chaplain to The Royal Irish Regiment. As part of their engagement with MOD JCCC in the run up to today's service, the Royal Irish Regiment realised that one of their soldiers was actually related to Lt Rushton. Captain Chris Rushton is Lt Rushton's great-great-nephew. The soldier was invited to attend the service by his regiment and attended alongside other family members who were also present.

The Reverend Dr Thompson said:

“Lt Rushton, came from a village from near Wrexham, but joined the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment in 1909. In August 1914 he had reached the Front where he saved the life of his Commanding Officer and subsequently that of his Adjutant. Pte Roberts, was a young Irishman, born in Dublin. Both he and his two brothers, William and Albert, lost their lives in the conflict. How the family, back in Dublin, coped with the loss of three sons, one cannot begin to imagine.”

The location of Lt Rushton and Pte Roberts' graves were discovered after

researchers submitted evidence to CWGC suggesting that their final resting places could be identified. After further investigation by CWGC, the National Army Museum and JCCC, the findings of the researchers was confirmed by JCCC.

The headstones over their graves will now be replaced by the CWGC, who will care for their final resting places in perpetuity.

CWGC Commemorations Officer, David Avery, said:

“Thanks to the efforts of many and in the presence of their families, we are honoured to mark the graves of Lieutenant Frederic Hornby Lever Rushton MC and Private John Martin Roberts with new headstones bearing their names. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission ensures that all those who served and fell are commemorated by name and today we renew this commitment to caring for their graves, and their memory with dedication in perpetuity.”