

*A joint statement from leaders of faith communities across the borough*



We, the undersigned leaders of faith communities across Hertsmere, speak with one voice today to condemn the surge of toxic and hateful discourse that has spread across local social media in recent days. It followed the announcement of the good news that Hertsmere Borough Council has secured the land and legal framework to enable the building of the borough's first permanent mosque and Muslim-led community centre at Maxwell Road, Borehamwood. It is shameful that a place of peace, prayer and welcome should provoke such hostility.

Hertsmere is well-known as a place of diversity, respect and community spirit. We are proud to play our part in that and will not stand by while a minority seeks to stir animosity. We must not allow ourselves to drift into a divided society. It is important that we continue to challenge hatred wherever it arises. Hatred against any community is hatred against all. An attack on one is an attack on all.

We will not be silent.

**As faith leaders across Hertsmere, we therefore commit to:**

- 1. Call Out** race-hate, Islamophobia, antisemitism, all forms of religious hatred, prejudice and intolerance; teach our communities to do likewise and provide meaningful support to survivors of violence and hate speech.
- 2. Call On** everyone to live together in love, peace, respect, unity and friendship across all communities in our Borough.
- 3. Call Together** our council, schools and colleges, police, community groups, businesses, trade unions and residents to build a borough where people of all backgrounds live in safety, peace and friendship.

To those spreading hatred, our message is simple: **YOU DO NOT SPEAK FOR HERTSMERE.**

Please spread this message to others, thank you.

Signed:

- Barry Shooter, Chair, Bushey Interfaith Forum
- Julian Berman, Chair, Herts Jewish Forum
- Yogesh Joshi, Vice-Chair, Watford Interfaith Forum & Watford Indian Association
- Reverend T Richardson, Aldenham Foundation Chaplain
- Reverend L Collins, Team Vicar, The Parish of Elstree and Borehamwood

- Amir Choudhury, Chair, Borehamwood Islamic Society
- Rabbi Gershon Silins, The Liberal Synagogue Elstree
- Rabbi Paul Freedman, Radlett Reform Synagogue
- Rabbi David-Yehuda Stern, Radlett Reform Synagogue
- Ashwin Mehta, Trustee, Srimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur
- Reverend Emma-Jane Wilkinson, King Charles the Martyr
- Rabbi Anna Wolfson, The Liberal Synagogue Elstree
- Rabbi Miriam Lorie, Kehillat Nashira
- Rabbi Elisheva Salamo, Radlett Reform Synagogue
- Josh Moont, Chair Borehamwood and Elstree United Synagogue
- Her Grace Visakha Dasi, Temple President of Bhaktivedanta Manor and Hertsmere Mayoral Chaplain 2026/27
- Rabbi Nick Kett, Radlett United Synagogue
- Colin Stodel, Volunteer Chaplaincy, West Herts Hospital Trust
- Zain Anhar, Potters Bar Islamic Community Centre

*If you lead or represent a faith group in Hertsmere and wish to add your name to this statement, please contact [community.services@hertsmere.gov.uk](mailto:community.services@hertsmere.gov.uk).*