

The Watford Celebration this year was another successful event

Francoise Murphy
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The Watford Celebration this year took place on the first Bank Holiday – Monday 6th May. It was another successful event, bringing together the various communities of Watford in a day of celebration and friendship that gave the opportunity to all to find out about one other. This year attracted more support and interest than any of the Celebrations before. Some said that it was among one of the best. The programme filled up quite rapidly and it was a real challenge to fit everyone in who wanted to participate. The programme was the same as previous years, with performances and sharing of each other's ethnic food in the Multi Cultural Community Centre (MCCC), interfaith dialogue in the vestry of St Michael and All Angels Church, stalls and a model railway in the church, and various activities for the children in the Littlebury Hall, including a bouncy castle outside.



Our special guest speakers were Hertfordshire High Sheriff, Sarah Beazley, and Deputy Lieutenant, David Cansdale. Introduced by Rev Dr Geoffrey Calvert, Chair of Watford Celebration, both expressed their delight at being invited, and their main interest in building stronger communities and interfaith relations. The Deputy Lieutenant also announced the nomination of the MCCC for the Queen's award for Voluntary Service. Besides our two speakers, in attendance were the Elected Mayor of Watford, the Chairman of the Watford Borough Council, various Councillors and representatives from the Police and the Watford Football Club. As the celebration cake was ready to be cut, Harry the Hornet – the mascot of the Watford Football Club – rushed in and crouched in front of the cake, to the amusement of the children

and everyone.

For the whole afternoon, the community centre was buzzing with music and dances from the various ethnic and faith groups living in Watford. There were Chinese traditional dances, Sikh martial arts, Indian Kathak, songs from the Polish Saturday school children, a gospel choir, a recorders ensemble, an over 50's dance group, Bulgarian traditional dances, and more. At around noon, people queued to sample food from all over the world.



Children from the Watford Saturday Polish School

The topic chosen for the interfaith discussion was: 'How can Faiths heal the circle of Hatred?' Representatives from 7 different faiths gave their view on the topic and the public joined in the discussion afterwards. The children enjoyed craft-making, playing on the bouncy castle, watching the model railway and meeting the firemen with their shiny fire engine. There were also stalls in the church of various community groups and a stall where you could check your health.

The money collected by the raffle went to [Hope UK](#), a drug education charity helping young people to make drug-free choices. £300 was raised for the charity.

At the end of the afternoon, the Chairman of the Watford Borough Council, inspired by the whole event, asked those present to write letters to the Mayor to request his support to bring the Watford Celebration to the Watford Colosseum, the largest public venue in Watford. Will you see us at the Colosseum next year?

– Françoise Murphy

You can view photos of Watford Celebration, taken by Christophe Murphy, on the [Watford Celebration Facebook page](#) or via this [link](#). You can also visit our [YouTube channel](#), where some of the clips taken on the day will be uploaded.

