Event Organiser Pack
Contents

- About Scottish Interfaith Week
- Theme: Connecting
- Benefits of hosting online events
- Helpful online platforms
- SIFW website and social pages
- Planning an event
Established by Interfaith Scotland in 2004, Scottish Interfaith Week provides an opportunity for interfaith groups, faith communities, schools, organisations and local communities across the country to celebrate Scotland’s religious diversity by planning events that bring people together to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Scotland’s diverse religious communities and cultures.

Getting involved is easy; you can organise anything from a small outdoor gathering to a large zoom event from your local place of worship, school or library. We encourage every one to participate and the SIFW team are always happy to help you with your Covid-safe ideas and through promoting your event.
2020 has been a challenging year for everyone with the global pandemic impacting on us all. The pandemic has forced us to lockdown and isolate and this has really highlighted just how much we actually cherish ‘human connection’ and we have found innovative ways to continuing ‘connecting. 2020 has found us not just connecting with each other but also with our deeper selves, with our neighbours, with nature, with technology, with global networks and with our creativity – just so many ways we are all connecting.

Sadly there will be some that are feeling disconnected and are struggling with the pain of loss, bereavement and loneliness and we hope that Scottish Interfaith Week will find us all doing whatever we can to reach out to others, to build meaningful human relationships and to create a world that is kinder and infinitely more connected. Please do hold an event, share our social media, reach out in friendship to others and ‘connect, connect, connect’.

-Dr. Maureen Sier, Director of Interfaith Scotland
Benefits of hosting online events

• Speakers and attendees from anywhere in the country or even internationally can attend events without needing travel or accommodation.

• It is cheaper to host events online as there is no expenditure on travel, venue, or meals.

• The disabled, elderly or people who live remotely can easily attend without worrying about travel cost, time or an inaccessible venue. The reduced hassle and exhaustion from the travel is a bonus.

• Better for many with communication problems. The ability to pop in, attend a lecture and leave without fuss can encourage socially anxious people to attend. The control over their own video visibility would be advantageous.

• Encourages turn-taking in discussion. Every attendee is equally visible.

• Online events provide a whole list of innovative ways of audience engagement by using screen share, polls, animations, mini-games etc.
• The ‘Chat’ function allows sharing of resources and other contributions easily. Participants can save these resources during the event or at the end by themselves without waiting for the event host to circulate them post-event.

• In an offline event one of the challenges is making sure the farthest person in the room can see the screen upfront. Shared screen provides an opportunity for every participant to see the slides and resources more easily and clearly.

• Breakout rooms (in Zoom) enable greater participation, quicker than moving a whole conference, no background chatter, and the host can decide to change the number of people per room anytime (even minutes) before launching the rooms, without worrying about moving chairs.

• Recordings (with permission) are a great help in sharing out important sound bites later and writing up reports.
In light of the social distancing norm, many events and conferences this year have been moved online. This is facilitated by a large number of new websites and software available online to help conduct them efficiently and provide innovative interactive methods.

There are some applications which are free which help with hosting events online. The most popular and convenient platform right now is Zoom which will be outlined in detail later, as well as other useful free websites which can also help plan and host events.

In the following pages there will be small descriptions of some of these applications. You can also click their logos to visit each website.
Planning an event on Zoom

Zoom features helpful in organising an event:

• Screen sharing
• Chat
• Pre-scheduling meetings
• User friendly
• Good quality audio and video
• Helpful website with instruction videos
• Recording
• Gallery view to accommodate up to 30 participants on screen (depends on screen size)

• Control over participants’ audio and video. It allows the host to mute all participants and turn off everyone’s videos.
• Break-out rooms makes this an ideal choice for dialogue events. Host can break up the participants into ‘rooms’ of size of their choice to provide space for group discussions.
• Zoom also offers a call-in service which allows people who don’t have internet access to phone-in.
Additional tips on using Zoom

• Make sure to sign-up for a Zoom account here - https://zoom.us/freesignup/ You need an account to host an event but not to participate in one. A free account lets you hold an event for up to a 100 people for a time limit of 40 minutes. One on one meetings have no time limit.

• If you are using a free account, plan the event according to the restrictions imposed on it - time, number of participants, video features.

• Once you have created the Zoom account, explore meeting settings to familiarise yourself with available features.

• It is advisable to use the Zoom app in a computer to host an event in order to have access to all the features. To attend an event the smart phone app is sufficient.

• If the event is small with restricted access, use waiting rooms to ensure extra security.

• If there are more than 10 participants it is best to mute all except the speaker to ensure good clarity.

• The ‘Spotlight’ feature allows the host to put the speaker’s screen on everyone’s main screen.

• If an event is being recorded seek permission from the speakers and let the participants know that the event is being recorded so that they can turn off their video if they don’t wish to be recorded.
• Make sure that the person recording the event stays out of gallery view to avoid accidentally recording anyone other than the speaker. The spotlight feature is very useful in this context. Even if someone accidentally unmutes themselves they won’t show up in the recording.

• Be careful about sharing meeting details on public platforms to avoid zoom-bombing.

• Keep screen sharing feature to host only. If a speaker wishes to share their screen make them a co-host.

• Disable "join before host”.

• Disable "allow removed participants to rejoin the meeting“.

• The chat space is useful for participants to share comments, questions, files and links. However make sure that one of the co-hosts keeps an eye on the chat to ensure undesirable content is not posted.

• Circulate the Meeting ID only through email for security. Include a password for the meeting.

• Have more than one host for an event with more than 20 participants. For an event of more than 50 it is best to have 3-4. One person has to be in charge of the technology. It is preferable that they stay the host while the others are co-hosts.
**Facebook** - The pioneer of social media offers a lot of features that make it easy to host an event. To create a Facebook account all you need is an email id. It is a good place to advertise events. Facebook has an Event Feature where you can post an event with all details for people to let you know their interest in the event and availability to attend. It’s simple, clear and efficient. It is also free advertisement. Facebook offers a live feature that lets you do a live stream of an event in the click of a button.

**YouTube** – This popular video streaming platform is a good way of reaching a large audience. It is ideal for posting demonstrations, tutorials and instructional videos. There is a live feature which provides a chat window (which can be disabled) for audience interaction.
**Instagram** - Instagram is a predominantly picture and video sharing social media platform. Its live feature and Instagram stories are a great way to promote events. It is a good platform for engaging young people.

**Twitter** – One of the most popular social media platforms, it is the fastest way of sending out information. It is a good promotional platform and also has a live feature. Live tweeting events, i.e. sending out tweets about events as they happen, is a good way of drawing attention to them. Use of a hashtag also helps.

#SIFW2020 #keeponconnecting
**Doodle** - It is a free meeting planning website. It offers a scheduling calendar which allows people to ‘vote’ for free dates.

**Eventbrite** - This very popular event management website is a good place to advertise and sell tickets (if required) for your event. It is free and all you need to do is create an account to post an event. Providing accurate information increases the event’s visibility on their website.

**Answer the public** - This website provides a list of the most commonly asked questions about a particular topic in a specific region. This can be helpful when trying to come up with dialogue topics.
Google Meet – This video conferencing app is free and only requires a Gmail account to host an event. One meeting allows up to a 100 participants. For the free account the time limit is 60 minutes. It offers a very unique feature of creating subtitles for meetings. This is useful for those with poor sound or are hard of hearing.

Skype - One of the older video calling apps, Skype is a very flexible app. It is free, can host up to 50 participants and offers good quality video. It offers basic conferencing features like screen sharing. It is a good option for small meetings and is quite user friendly.
SIFW website and socials

Click the logos to visit our website and socials. Follow, like and subscribe to get regular SIFW updates.
Planning an Event

Before Event
- Planning
- Submitting events to SIFW website
- Promotion

During Event
- Audience engagement
- Tweeting to SIFW using hashtags

After Event
- Write-ups
- Sharing Pictures
- Feedback
Before an event

Answer some of these questions before the event to help with smoother planning.

- Will the event be live, available to view afterwards, or both?
- Where do I want the content to be seen?
- Will access be charged or free?
- When is the best time for the event? Take into consideration the nature of the audience and when they would be most comfortable attending an online event. You can use a doodle calendar to help you choose.
- Will you require event registration?
- How will you promote the event?
- Do you plan to work with other partners?
- Will the event be recorded (with permission) so people still have access to the event once it’s over?
• Our website is the best place to promote your event. Anyone interested in attending an event will look at the website for information. Once the event is planned visit the SIFW website to submit your event.

• Facebook events - Facebook has a handy feature called ‘Events’ where you create a page for your event and interested people can let you know if they would like to attend. Once you have created it, share the event on the SIFW Facebook page for additional visibility.

• Eventbrite – Posting your event on Eventbrite is a great way to gain some visibility.

• Please use our hashtags #SIFW2020 and #keeponconnecting to raise awareness of your events and Scottish Interfaith Week.

• For a pre-recorded event, releasing one-minute videos as teasers of what to look forward to can increase attendance. Live tweeting during the recording works similarly.

• As part of your planning you would have decided on the best online platform for your event. Explore and familiarise yourself with the tech. Rehearse it. This includes ensuring that any videos, audio clips, presentations, and images to be shared during the course of the event are compatible.
• Prepare some notes on the tech regarding features and restrictions (if they apply to the event) to be announced at the beginning for the attendees’ convenience. For example: “Welcome to our Zoom webinar. At the end there will be a 20 min Q&A session with the speaker. Wait for a message in the chat box requesting questions at which point you may begin posting them”.

• Make sure clear language, large fonts, and high colour contrast is used at all points—including presentations. Provide captions and visuals where possible for audio, and provide descriptions where possible for video.
During the Event

While audience engagement can come easily in a face to face event, it is a bit more challenging in an online platform. On the other hand online platforms allow for a whole host of innovative ways to increase audience participation. Here are some ways to do that:

1. Start the meeting with an icebreaker question like ‘Where is everyone joining from?’ or ‘what do you expect to get out of today’s meeting/webinar?’ and ask participants to post the answers in chat. Read out some interesting ones.

2. Ask the audience for questions. They are likely to stay until their question is answered at least! If the numbers are small they may ask the questions by raising their hand if on video, or using the chat box to request to be called on. With a larger number we suggest they post questions in a chat box and have a moderator pose the questions to the speaker(s).

3. Polls are easy to host. Zoom offers a poll option which allows you to write the question and provide options. Participants can vote when you open the poll in the meeting. Twitter polls are very popular. It is simple enough to post the poll in your account and ask people to vote.

4. Live tweeting is another interesting route. While you might not get a large increase in numbers for that event, it generates interest in your group/organisation/profile which will increase traffic at the next event.

5. You can pre-design a quiz and give the audience some time to answer and share the results in real time. One of the advantages of online quizzes is that you don’t have to examine the answers. The software will do that for you.
After the Event

Now that your SIFW event is over, sit back, relax and enjoy a cuppa! After that, send us pictures, videos and write-ups so that we can enjoy finding out more about the different events that were held across the country.

If this is your first online event, let us know your personal experience of organising one. We would love to hear all about the new things you tried out.

You can contact us at info@scottishinterfaithweek.org
Enjoy #keeponconnecting during #SIFW2020