

# Celebrating Eid

For those who have taken part in Hajj, this is a season of new beginnings and Muslims across the globe will be taking time out to reflect on the significance of their faith in their own individual lives.

Sadly, we are witnessing a horrifying rise in Islamophobia which is often accompanied by exclusionary, right-wing nationalism. Islamophobic tropes are becoming commonplace and attacks on Muslims have been espoused by the man who has just become our Prime Minister. This is unacceptable. We must confront this poisonous rhetoric which, if left unchecked, will permeate our communities in the most extreme and hateful ways.

As Leader of the Liberal Democrats, I will continue to defend our country's liberal values and will redouble our Party's efforts to defeat discrimination in all its forms.

As we celebrate Eid, let us let us recognise the enduring and valuable contributions of Muslim communities across the country and let us refuse all attempts to divide our nation.

**My warmest wishes to all those celebrating. Eid Mubarak!**

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## Eid and Hajj, a time for togetherness

This year, [Eid ul-Adha](#) (The Festival of Sacrifice) begins on Sunday 11 August and end on Thursday 15 August. It is the second Eid occasion during the Islamic year; the first, Eid-ul-Fitr, marks the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

[Eid ul-Adha](#) signifies the end of the [Hajj Pilgrimage](#) – the world's largest annual pilgrimage to Makkah – and is a time for Muslims around the world to share, help others and be thankful, whilst remembering those who are less fortunate.

I was sent many messages from Muslims taking their leave as is the custom before one embarks on the pilgrimage of Hajj. Messages from an affluent Arab, a Syrian woman fighting cancer supported by the generosity of her local community to fulfil her one last wish, a volunteer from the Grenfell tragedy, many constituents from my borough and my own personal farewell to my brother and his wife.

We make this journey of a lifetime to Makkah to remember many things, but in the end we are all human beings and that compassion is the only emotion that can truly build humanity as it should be.

We celebrate Eid with family and friends, gathering to socialise and enjoy food, and we give money to charity to assist those in need. It is also an opportunity to interact with non-Muslims and share the purpose of Eid and its significance, whilst helping to dispel myths surrounding Islam and tackling Islamophobia. True Islam is a peaceful religion, which sadly has been hijacked by a minority of extremists of every faction and has had a hugely negative influence on public perception of Muslims.

[Media reporting about Islam](#) and Muslims is also alarming. A 2018 study revealed that 59% of all articles associated Muslims with negative behaviour and over a third of articles misrepresented or generalised about Muslims, with terrorism being the most common theme. 43% of all broadcast clips also associated Muslims with negative behaviour.

Is it any wonder that some Muslim communities are accused of not integrating when they are viewed with suspicion and isolated as a result? To quote the words of former Prime Minister, David Cameron, "Integration is a two-way street." And as [Sir Peter Fahy](#) said, "Integration is not about extremism". Nevertheless, the situation is not helped by comments from people like Nigel Farage – one of the most prominent Brexit advocates – who previously made many [inflammatory comments](#) about Muslims.

According to the anti-fascist group Hope's annual [State of Hate](#) report, more than a third of people in the UK believe that Islam is a threat to the British way of life.

As a Muslim, I have often been told that soon all UK banks will be controlled by Sharia law – this is offensive to me in the same way that a member of the Jewish faith finds the Rothschild bank slur offensive. There is no difference in the hurt caused or the hatred spread.

We should be celebrating the positive impact that Muslims have on our nation. They make a significant contribution to the UK economy and more are emerging as prominent figures in politics, particularly women who have had greater struggles in fighting against stereotypes and adversity to become successful and prominent citizens; people such as Nobel Peace Prize winner, Malala Yousafzai; Great British Bake Off Winner, Nadia Hussain, and Mishal Husain, leading presenter the for BBC. Young British Muslims are also becoming more liberal, but no less religious, as it appears that they are "finding ways to reconcile British culture with religion."<sup>1</sup>

As a child who grew up in the late 70s and early 80s in Kent where there were very few Muslims, my childhood was a great deal about connecting faith and people. Recollections of harvest time – and the gifts and sharing of food from that harvest – mirrored the giving of alms from my own faith and of my mother getting my basket of food ready for the elderly on our school visit.

I do remember my mother dressing our neighbour in one of her saris for a

wedding and celebrations during Eid. I remember that our white neighbours brought food to our home when my mother lost her father. I remember that there were moments that all my identities became submerged into one, of compassion and understanding, that of peace and friendship.

Eid is a time to celebrate life, forget our differences and join together as a community.

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## Thank you all

**We did it!**

We won the Brecon and Radnorshire by-election!

We won the Brecon and Radnorshire by-election!

**I am so incredibly grateful to every person that got me here.**

**Thank you** to everyone who traveled, from near and far, to get here and campaign with us. **Thank you** for the thousands of doors you knocked on, for the tens of thousands of leaflets you delivered, the letters you wrote and stuffed, the leaflets you bundled.

Within a week of Boris Johnson's premiership, we've reduced his majority to just one vote.

**Thank you** to the members in Brecon and Radnorshire, and in nearby constituencies, who opened your homes to host campaigners.

**Thank you** to the hundreds of people who helped us by making calls to voters.

**Thank you** to everyone that donated to this campaign, with money or food or office supplies – to make sure we could run the biggest operation possible.

**Thank you** to the core campaign team of staff and activists. They have gone above and beyond to mastermind this campaign – and I am so lucky to have them in my corner.

And **thank you** to the Green Party and Plaid Cymru, who stood aside in this seat.

We overturned an eight thousand majority, we've won a swing of 14% – and within a week of Boris Johnson's premiership, we've reduced his majority in the House of Commons to just one vote.

**Together, we've proved that united we can turn the tide on Boris Johnson.** We can hold back his plan of crashing out of the EU without a deal, and we can demand a different future.

Every day, the Liberal Democrats fight to stop Brexit, and offer an alternative – a richer, greener and safer future for Britain within the EU.

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**And the fight continues.**

We have two more huge by-elections happening.

In Shetland, Beatrice Wishart is standing to be a Member of the Scottish Parliament, as long time Lib Dem MSP Tavish Scott steps back from politics.

And in Sheffield Hallam (Nick Clegg's old seat) the Labour MP recently announced he will be stepping down as MP when Parliament returns in September. Laura Gordon, our candidate, has spent so much time in Brecon and Radnorshire campaigning for me – and I can't wait to do the same for her.

**I hope you take some time to rest and celebrate this huge success – and then I hope to see you back on the campaign trail soon.**

Thank you once again from the bottom of my heart.

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## **Winning here!**

**Jane Dodds and the local Liberal Democrat team just WON the Brecon and Radnorshire by-election!**

And we're all thrilled!

Brecon & Radnorshire, result:

LDEM: 43.5% (+14.3)

CON: 39.0% (-9.6)

BREX: 10.5% (+10.5)

LAB: 5.3% (-12.5)

MRLP: 1.0% (+1.0)

UKIP: 0.8% (-0.6)

– Britain Elects (@britainelects) [August 2, 2019](#)

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## Cummings Dark Arts have no place in Downing Street

The appointment of Dominic Cummings should send shivers down the spines of UK citizens.

This is a man who has peddled lies and flouted the truth for sheer, cynical political gain.

The dark arts that he proffers should have no place in Government, and no place in Downing Street.

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