



# Faith Talks

## **Faith Talk - Immigration - What Needs to Change?**

**We held the second of our popular Faith Talks series on Wednesday night and our engaging main speaker and panelists were warmly received by an attentive audience who contributed to the discussion through interactive polling and questions.**

**Krish Kandiah, Founder of the Sanctuary Foundation and our main speaker spoke of recent dangerous rhetoric surrounding immigration, with the term asylum seekers being replaced by illegal immigrants who "flood" and "swarm" the system. Krish challenged politicians to "build anchors, not walls" by increasing educational development in economically disadvantaged countries and for our society to move away from "dead cat politics", a political technique which blames the most vulnerable in society to distract from our own failings.**

**Ron Mushiso, Conservative Party Candidate for Greater London Assembly pointed to a concerning race to the bottom, with some politicians scoring political points; "we've allowed the language to be hijacked by people trying to position themselves in political leadership by appealing to a certain group". Emma Lowth, Associate Vicar, Christ Church, Gipsy Hill, Minister to Farsi Community offered a route forward; "we need to offer spaces of comfort in community" and John Azah, CEO of Kingston Race and Equalities Council (KREC) agreed, noting Kingston's Korean community is the largest in Europe yet "no-one is picketing Heathrow to stop them coming into the country".**

**The panel accepted that no-one wants a totally open border, but that we can be both open and secure, controlling and hospitable with a porous border, working to change perceptions of immigrants by trying to understand their motivation and backstory through their visibility in our communities which in itself will change policy; "the power of proximity is incredibly transformative"**