

Welcome to our commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day

Faversham Town Council is delighted to welcome you to our exhibition to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

The Holocaust was the mass murder of millions of people by the Nazis. Jews were targeted by the Nazis whose aim was to completely annihilate Jewish people. Six million Jews lost their lives in the Holocaust.

The Nazis also killed millions of other people simply because of who they were including people who were black, disabled, gay, gypsies (Roma and Sinti people), Freemasons, the homeless, from certain religious groups or those politically opposed to the Nazi Party.

Survivors of the Holocaust remade their lives all over the world, including here in Kent and other parts of the UK.

The scale of horror of the Holocaust challenged the fundamental idea of civilisation. Determination that we should never allow such atrocities to occur again led to the creation of charters such as the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. These identify and protect the basic rights of every human.

By identifying important personal rights to be protected by law, they follow in a tradition that includes England's Magna Carta, a copy of which is owned by Faversham Town Council and will soon go on permanent display here.

After the Holocaust the world recognised the concept of "genocide" but mass murder of groups of people has taken place again - in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

By remembering terrible events and drawing awareness to them, we can all make these events, or other acts of persecution against people, less likely to be repeated.

In our lives, all of us have witnessed incidents of racism, homophobia or other discrimination. This exhibition is a reminder that we should challenge it. We should call it out and demand better. That is true whether we are talking about a friend or neighbour or about our national leaders. All of our words and actions matter.

This exhibition is the initiative of Faversham Town Council's Equality & Diversity Working Group which we set up in the last year to promote equality, diversity and inclusion both in how our council works and throughout our town.

Considerable work by a member of our staff, Abi Rainbow-Williams, has made this exhibition possible. We have used content and media provided by the Holocaust Memorial Trust.

The Holocaust Memorial Trust is a charity to promote and support work to mark HMD in the UK. It provides information about the Holocaust and genocides that have taken place since.

We hope you find this commemoration informative, educational, dignified and moving.

We would be pleased to hear your thoughts and feelings arising from this exhibition.

Councillor Antony Hook