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Ramadan message from the Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane Cllr Diane Taylor

I send my warmest greetings to all Muslims observing the Holy Month of Ramadan as it starts this week. Ramadan Kareem.

Over the past few years I have had the privilege of meeting with many local Muslims and have learned that this holy month is a very special time for those of the Muslim faith – a time for fasting, prayer, reflection and enjoying a sense of community.

This year, of course, Ramadan comes at a very unusual time due to the Government's Covid-19 restrictions and advice on social distancing. You face the difficult challenge of observing Ramadan from your homes, in self-isolation, rather than meeting friends and family in local mosques and at social gatherings. In addition, Mosques, as with all places of worship, are closed to congregational prayers until restrictions are lifted.

I do hope that you will all manage to get through these times and find spiritual renewal and refreshment over the next month despite the difficulties. We humans are great adapters and I am confident that you will be able to cope with the current circumstances and find new ways of connecting and supporting each other. Perhaps the enforced isolation will even enhance your spiritual communication and devotion.

I am sure, like many of us, you are making use of social media and platforms, such as Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams etc., as a solution for getting together to talk, learn and worship. It is vital to stay in touch with others to enjoy human interaction. A chat and a laugh with friends and family can make everyone feel happier.

We look forward to a return to a better Ramadan next year when you can again meet with others to share food, say prayers and celebrate together. We are all looking forward to times when we can get back to normal life in our various ways and meet again with friends and family.

Thank you for all you are doing to support our community at this time.

Keep well and stay safe.

Cllr Diane Taylor
The Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane