

Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 22—June 2021

WELCOME

to the latest edition of FaithsEngage

I am really pleased to welcome Louise to the staff team – you can read all about her on page 2. We're also sad to say goodbye to Tripat, who has been a great support to the Centre while she has completed her youth and community work placement at the Centre.

As you can see from the other items in the newsletter, we are moving towards more face-to-face engagements, but in a careful and risk assessed way. This means that while we have set the date of the AGM – Tuesday 29th June – we are not yet in a position to confirm whether it will be face-to-face or online. Please make a note of the date, and I hope to see you in person or on a screen, as circumstances dictate.

With every good wish

Tom

CORPORATE PROGRAMME UPDATE



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

During Ramadan 2021 we held a 'Lunch & Learn' online session for staff at Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Services which included a Q&A with a Muslim female firefighter. Over the coming months we are looking to expand our work with the service.

We have begun a series of seminars for students at WQE College in Leicester which have focused on democracy and the rule of law within the framework of NATO. This has opened up wider discussions about freedom and liberty.



**WYGGESTON & QUEEN
ELIZABETH I COLLEGE**



**CROSS & CRESCENT
GROUP**

Our Cross & Crescent (Christian – Muslim) Group heard from Dr. Julian Hargreaves from the Woolf Institute who spoke about his ground breaking report 'How We Get Along' which highlighted a series of recommendations. Participants were able to share ideas about improving community relations.

Riaz was interviewed for a radio show 'Interfaith Insights' by the Edinburgh Interfaith Association on the theme of 'Come Together'.

We heard that Edinburgh will now follow Leicester's lead by launching their own 'Come Dine Together' project later this year.

You can see the interview here: <https://www.facebook.com/EIFA.page/videos/vb.122672657791731/1411717679183329/?type=2&theater>



**EDINBURGH
INTER FAITH
ASSOCIATION**

Staff News

We are delighted to welcome Louise Cox to the team as our Prevent Services Officer.

Louise has over 20 years' experience of working within the Criminal Justice System, both in public and private sector. She worked as a Community Safety Development Officer for Leicester City Council for over 7 years which led her into working with Prevent. Louise is also a qualified Coach and has coached on a wide a range of emotional issues.



Louise says:

"Having worked in different sectors over the years, I have been fortunate to work with colleagues and clients from a range of diverse backgrounds, cultures, ages and faiths. I feel honoured to be working at St Philip's Centre, amongst such experienced experts within the field and am very much looking forward to meeting the wider community and joint agencies and working together to unite in this ever-challenging and diverse world".

Annual General Meeting

St Philip's Centre's Annual General meeting will take place on **Tuesday 29th June 2021 from 5.30—7.00 pm.**

At the time of writing, it is unclear whether this will be an in-person meeting or a Zoom one because of the uncertainty around social distancing in the current pandemic.

However, please put the date in your diary and further details will follow in due course.



Safeguarding Children and Young People

The Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Reference Group to the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnership and Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board are looking for people with a particular interest in safeguarding to participate in the VCS quarterly meetings (via Zoom).

Members will be sent regular emails about emerging safeguarding themes, current safeguarding campaigns, key information and safeguarding training to cascade to their communities. The VCS are committed to the principle that safeguarding for children and young people is a cross-sector, multi-agency responsibility.

Please contact clare.fillingham@thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk if you would be interested in becoming a member of the Group or need further information.

My Placement at St Philip's Centre

Tripat Kaur is a final year student at De Montfort University studying Youth Work and Community Development. She has been on placement at St Philip's Centre for the last few months but her placement has now come to an end. Here are her reflections on her time at St Philip's Centre. Tripat writes:

"I have been very fortunate to carry out my university placement with St Philip's Centre which, due to the current situation, has been conducted mainly online. I have been involved in many projects such as RISE (for young leaders), the work around Child Sexual Exploitation and the Cross and Crescent Group—a Christian/Muslim dialogue group. I have been able to explore interfaith engagement in greater depth as my knowledge previously was very limited. I have learnt a range of new skills such as developing productive and professional working relationships, contributing to discussions, decision-making and administrative skills such as co-ordinating meetings. Being a practising Sikh, I am very passionate about my

religion but have also cultivated knowledge around other religions. Through St Philip's Centre I was able to run my own project called "The Aspiring Sikhs" which was an opportunity for a group of Sikh young people to speak openly about different topics and issues around Sikhism alongside the St Augustine's and St Paul's church group. Utilising St Philip's Centre as a platform for expression and critical thinking allowed young people to have a voice. The project was a success, and the environment was a safe space for both community groups.

I am grateful to have been part of a very supportive team who were very inclusive. I would like to thank St Philip's Centre for allowing me this experience and the opportunity to expand the community development side of my course."

Tripat Kaur

Churches' Work Update

Early Years Methodist Ministers and Islamic Pastoral Care Student

On 19th May we held a Zoom session for those who have been Methodist Ministers for less than five years and students on the Pastoral Care course at the Markfield Institute of Higher Education co-led by James Blackhall, Churches' Engagement Officer at the St Philip's Centre, and Rahmanara Chowdhury, Lecturer in Islam and Pastoral Care. Following a brief overview to the tenets and practices of each faith there was an open discussion on a number of topics.

The first main point of conversation was around how both Christians and Muslims understand their vocation and what drives them to do the work that they are doing. All involved found it fascinating hearing about different people's call to the work that they do - from the Methodist ministers who had followed a formal process of discernment to offer themselves in the service of the church to Muslims who had chosen to give up careers to work in chaplaincy.

Secondly, we discussed the challenges facing those engaged in pastoral care from demands on time and expectations as to how members of faith communities are viewed. We also discussed how the role of an Imam has become much more professionally-focused in recent years- and the implications of that. These challenges had much in common and it was fascinating to hear different experiences of both groups along with their common commitment to provide good quality pastoral care to those in their communities and beyond.

It was suggested that this link could continue and so if you would like to be part of that exploration do get in touch with James at courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk

Baby Krishna, Infant Christ Bishop Street Methodist Church

On 13th May James from SPC and Nima from ISKCON joined a group at Bishop Street Methodist Church to explore the birth stories of Krishna and Jesus. These stories have many interesting points of connection as well as contrast and this led to a rich discussion around things such as the supernatural aspects of the births; traditions around the births being at midnight and miracles. It also led to a rich discussion about how we deal with stories of violence in our own scriptures and thus not only allowed those who attended to learn about the Hindu faith but also to think about how what they had heard affected their own faith and understanding of Christian Scripture.

The session was well received as can be seen from the feedback that was given. Comments that "it was a really good way of getting to know some of the Krishna birth stories, to compare them with Jesus birth stories" and that "there is certainly room for further conversations in another setting" as well as thanking Nima for sharing her own faith so openly. It gave people a lot of food for thought and having worked with Bishop Street and ISKCON previously, with a session around hymns and songs in Christianity and Hinduism, we look forward to carrying on with this fruitful relationship between the three groups.

If you would like a similar event for your church please email James courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk or phone him on 07707 640885 he would be delighted to help.

Prevent Programme Update

As a Fellow of the Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR), Sean Arbuthnot recently took part in a video series collaboration with US-based Rantt Media. He was interviewed as part of a series showcasing expert analysis of right-wing extremism. During an in-depth and wide-ranging conversation with Rantt co-founder Ahmed Baba, Sean discussed community approaches to preventing radicalisation, the mainstreaming of extremism and successful Prevent case studies, including a former neo-Nazi's story of redemption. The full interview can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mxw9nZVaa5M>



Our local Prevent projects are now in full swing and it has been great to get out and about to see some of their good work in action. Sean Arbuthnot and Louise Cox recently attended the final of Leicester City in the Community's Ramadan Football League. Bringing local communities together and attracting 40 participants over a four-week period, the multi-faith league was a tremendous success. It showcased a high standard of football and players noted how the physical and mental benefits actually made Ramadan fasting easier and encouraged communities to grow stronger together.

Near Neighbours projects start to bring people together face-to-face

We have funded such a range of amazing projects in our last round of funding. I have had the great privilege of visiting and being part of some of the project sessions.

Moving Together

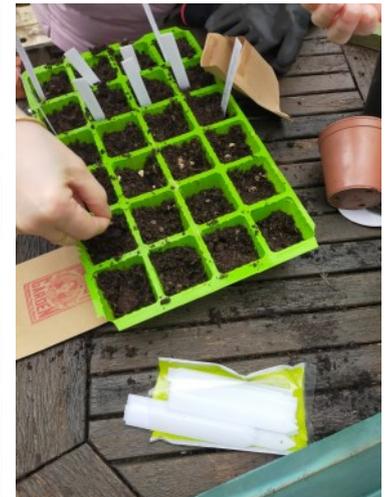
We funded 'Moving Together' a Leicester community dance project to run 'Dancing on your doorstep'. The project brought together a group of 20 over 55-year-olds from white British backgrounds with South Asian women mostly from Belgrave. The two groups came together and took part in online dance sessions which explored the group's experiences from the past year through discussion and movement tasks. Following on from the online sessions most of the women were filmed dancing on their doorsteps. These beautiful moments have been put together into a short film. It was so inspiring hearing the enthusiasm of the dance instructors and the confidence of the women to dance on their streets. I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in a filming day with Moving Together.



Leicester Community Links CIC

Community Links CIC have been running some online mental health sessions and face-to-face gardening sessions. An element of the online sessions has been encouraging people to take part in the gardening sessions face-to-face and hearing people's concerns regarding this. Those who took part in the gardening sessions found it enjoyable being in nature and doing something collectively with others. People brought along seeds and seedlings to grow in the allotment. I enjoyed planting seeds and learning about gardening when I visited.

Beth Henwood



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 Leicestershire Police
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 Methodist Connexion
 N C Bellefontaine Trust

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 Open Society Foundations
 P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust



faiths engage is the newsletter of St Philip's Centre Ltd

2A Stoughton Drive North, Leicester LE5 5UB

Tel: 0116 273 3459

admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk

[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Website](#)