



# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 29—January 2022

## Happy New Year and welcome to the latest edition of *Faiths Engage*.

2021 was a challenging year for all of us, and I am incredibly grateful to all the staff, volunteers and trustees of the Centre for everything they did over the past year. When we reflected together as a staff about all we had achieved in the past year, it was really impressive to consider the number of people reached, the range of in person and online events we facilitated and the quality, breadth and depth of engagement between people of different faith and belief perspectives.

No doubt 2022 will bring its own challenges, not least in ensuring people who see the world differently from each other have the opportunity for meaningful and sustained encounters where they can build relationships of trust to co-operate together for the good of all. If you have any ideas for events or activities you'd like us to put on this year, do please get in touch.

All the best,

*Tom Wilson*

Centre Director

## Corporate Training & Events

On 30th November, we were delighted to welcome Leicestershire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Rupert Matthews to St Philip's Centre. The PCC met our Chair of Trustees and staff to learn more about the Centre's work in relation to Policing such as our long standing training courses for new recruits and our Cops Communities Consent international project. Colleagues also explained the Prevent strategy set up in partnership with the Home Office and Leicester City Council.



On 2nd December, we ran another Religion & Belief training day for Leicestershire Police Recruits. This time we were able to incorporate a visit to Gurdwara Guru Panth Parkash on Ashford Road. We are very grateful to them for their hospitality.



Exactly a week later, we carried out Religion & Belief training online for 14 new fire service recruits from Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service.

*Riaz Ravat*

## Church-facing Work

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, I accompanied Uri Gordon and Liz Wilson to the monthly training session held for Church of England Ordinands. Our focus was a discussion of past and present relationships between Jewish people and Christians. Uri gave a presentation from his perspective of the positives and negatives of both historic and current relationships and a lively discussion ensued. After a break, the ordinands reflected on their learning and Liz shared her experience of interfaith relations as a Parish Priest in the Diocese of Leicester. We're grateful for the opportunity to discuss such an important topic with a group of future leaders in the Anglican Church.

*Tom Wilson*



# Linking Projects

The Schools Linking Project 2021-22 got off to a fantastic start this year, with 8 Secondary and 24 Primary schools taking part in online training sessions recently. During these sessions there is an opportunity to discover details of the activities and resources which are provided by [The Linking Network](#) and teachers have time to meet their link teacher and plan when, what and how they will work together over the coming months.

Each class is linked or partnered with a class from another school, enabling the young people to meet others who live in a different locality in our region and may have different socio-economic, faith or ethnic backgrounds. The project is open to all schools from the City and County. The relationships are built through working on the same activities and exchanging work between the classes. The lessons focus on 4 key questions: Who am I? Who are we? Where do we live? How do we live together? – which address the key concepts of identity, diversity, community and justice.

The Primary programme has grown year on year and this year we will involve over 75 classes in the work. The activities are carefully designed to develop critical thinking and empathy and an understanding of issues related to identity, diversity, community and justice. The focus is on valuing every individual's uniqueness and promoting the power of diversity. Through highlighting the benefits and strengths of differences whilst acknowledging similarities and shared characteristics, the project builds young peoples sense of a shared Leicester identity. It offers wonderful opportunities to address a range of areas from PSHE to Art, Citizenship, Computing and RSE.



**However, it is also firmly rooted in the English curriculum and provides an opportunity for real, meaningful oracy and literacy activities that address multiple skills.**

This year we are so pleased to have had such a growth in interest from Secondary Schools, with over 25 classes engaging. We are keen to have more join during the year. The Secondary project is structured around a programme of five lessons, incorporating virtual ways of connecting two classes from two different schools or two groups of students from within the same school. Students work on the same activities within their own classes and then exchange their work/ideas with their link class/group and through this process of "Shuttle

Dialogue" they discover similarities and differences between themselves and their link class and build a connection.

This Schools Linking work enables young people to have real experiences of connecting with "others" which gives them the ability to challenge false narratives that they may hear and reject misinformation, stereotypes and discrimination. As quality fiction and non-fiction books play a key role in the Schools Linking programme, all schools engaging this year will soon be receiving a pack of carefully curated, inclusive books to support with the delivery of the project, broader SMSC development and anti-racism work across the school. We are still hoping and planning for face-to-face meetings to happen in the summer term and will be supporting all the classes to host and visit their partner classes.



Our new **Intergenerational Linking Project** has also been really successful this year with 10 Care Homes and schools beginning their connections, virtually of course, and another 5 expected to get started soon. In one partnership the younger and older people have connected over their shared interest in mindfulness, breathing and yoga, sharing videos of themselves taking part in these activities. This focus on mental health and well being has acted as a way to initiate the relationships between the generations and get their project off to a wonderful start. In other partnerships the focus has been around gardening, local history and arts and crafts.

The Intergenerational Linking work enables younger and older people to connect over shared activities and interests whilst challenging stereotypes and building connections across the generations within our local communities. Currently, connections are mainly virtual or indirect, such as sending videos or cards, or exchanging questions or "Words of wisdom." Some schools even arranged for pupils to visit care homes and sing carols from outside the windows! We are still hoping and planning for face-to-face visits in the summer term and will be supporting all the partnerships to achieve this.

*Ruth Sinhal  
Linking Projects Officer*

# Prevent Programme

## Autism Support and Online Safety Event

In November, St Philip's Centre helped coordinate an event on Autism Support and Online Safety organised by East Midlands Counter Terrorism Policing, which was held both interactively online and in person at The Pitches in Hinkley. The aim of the event was to improve the links between Prevent, local support groups and services.

Due to the surprising demand for this event, an alternative venue was sought to accommodate the increased number of attendees and coaches were therefore arranged to take attendees from our local community to and from the venue from the St Philip's Centre.

The event covered how to ensure children are safe from online grooming and radicalisation, what ongoing support is readily available and some guidance around reporting. Local Authority representatives were present alongside a number of local support groups, guest speakers and services who provided presentations and information stands. Parents and carers had the opportunity to meet and chat with the various support groups and with each other and there was help to discover what support is available for families of autistic children or those who have yet to receive a diagnosis in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Mark Bebbington, Leicestershire Police Prevent Officer, said *"The event was a huge success and all feedback was very positive ...with much thanks received on email. I think we achieved what we set out to do"*. He also thanked St Philip's Centre for our help in supporting such a positive event.



## Meeting with the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce

In December, our Deputy Director, Riaz Ravat together with Prevent Services Officer Louise Cox, delivered a presentation to HR leads in companies which are members of the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce. They provided delegates with an overview of the Prevent agenda, its objectives and offered companies the opportunity to hear about local sources of support available.

Whilst the Prevent duty does not apply to the private sector, there is still a duty of care. Therefore, the case for having a strong literacy of the Prevent agenda is clear in order to protect not only their businesses but employees and stakeholders alike.

Riaz began the session by highlighting the wider work of St Philip's Centre, in particular the training on religion and belief diversity which is provided for many organisations. Louise advised that one of the principal ways in which we assist organisations on Prevent was through our CARE (Confidently Addressing Radicalisation & Extremism) Silver course. This is a substantive and comprehensive course which develops resilience to and awareness of radicalisation. CARE is specifically tailored to those with supervisory roles, line management and those responsible for protecting staff wellbeing. Louise also gave a briefing on the latest counter terrorism threats, the impact that the pandemic has had in our area and what can be done to address them. CARE also provides an opportunity to encourage companies to establish 'Prevent Champions' who can provide links and support.

Chamber colleagues commented on the "useful content" and plan to remain in touch.

*Louise Cox*

Prevent Coordinator Sean Arbuthnot was privileged to attend the recent launch of Resilience in Unity, a unique project that records the stories and testimony of people affected by acts of terrorism around the world. The project has been developed by Travis Frain, a survivor of the Westminster Bridge terror attack on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 and it aims to establish a meaningful and lasting digital legacy in memory of those who have lost their lives in acts of terrorism across the globe, and those who were injured, witness to, or responded to these attacks. It was an emotional and inspiring day during which Sean had the opportunity to meet the Countess of Wessex and chat briefly about the work that Leicester Prevent does to tackle radicalisation.



As Covid restrictions eased, Sean Arbuthnot and Riaz Ravat hosted an informal engagement dinner with the Federation of Muslim Organisations (FMO) and key stakeholders in order to listen to local concerns and consider ways in which we can reconnect with local communities in a post-pandemic setting.

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# PREVENT PROGRAMME

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Sean Arbuthnot recently attended Leicester City Football Club's new training facility to provide Prevent training for the club's U18 youth team. During the day the players participated in a workshop and received new and improved Real Talk cards, developed by local project provider Streetvibe Young People's Service. The cards can be scanned on a phone or tablet and they use augmented reality technology to raise awareness of right wing extremism, fake news and radicalisation. The players engaged well with the inputs, asked lots of questions and their awareness of extremism increased significantly.



## Horses, history, and heritage

### Urban Equestrian Project visit

In the last round of Near Neighbours funding, we worked with The Urban Equestrian Academy. Urban Equestrian are a social enterprise giving people from inner city areas and BME backgrounds an experience of the equestrian world.

Our small grants programme supported a volunteer at Urban Equestrian to successfully apply for funding for the first time. The project brought together people from primarily Sikh and Muslim backgrounds to learn and discuss the role of horses in their different faiths.

The project also gave people an opportunity to groom and care for the horses. A highlight of the project was people having a chance to ride horses for the first time.



## Funding Support

St. Philip's Centre is grateful for the funding it receives from the following and from many individual supporters, Friends, Associates and Member Churches.

*All Saints' Trust*

*Anglican Diocese of Leicester*

*The Dunhill Medical Trust*

*The Helen Jean Cope Charity*

*Home Office*

*The J R Corah Foundation Fund*

*Leicester College*

*Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation*

*Leicester City Council*

*The Linking Network*

*Methodist Connexion*

*N C Bellefontaine Trust*

*Near Neighbours—(DLUHC)*

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*Open Society Foundations*

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