



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 26—October 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of *Faiths Engage*.

In this issue you can read about our work with corporate groups; I am especially grateful to Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services for their interest and engagement with their local faith communities. The return of photos shows that we're also out and about more than we have been over the past few months. It has been a great pleasure to see the Centre facilitate visits to ISKCON Leicester and Secular Hall for Christian groups, as well as arranging for a Muslim faith practitioner to visit a local church for a taste of faith session.

Colleagues who work in Prevent have also been out and about, both visiting projects and facilitating training for the Prevent Young Leaders. They took a group to visit the National Holocaust Centre recently, which I can highly recommend as a place to go to learn more about living well together. The guides at the HNC are very skilled at explaining the lessons of the Holocaust we are in danger of forgetting, and everyone should take the chance to hear the testimony of survivors of the Holocaust whilst there is still an opportunity to do so.

I am hopeful that we will continue to be able to host in-person events over the next few months, whilst also recognising that covid is still circulating in the community and that we must do everything we can to keep people safe.

With every good wish,

Tom Wilson
Centre Director

Corporate Training

We have been very busy providing a broad range of sessions for fire services across the East Midlands. Since the start of this year we have run regular 'Religion & Belief in Nottinghamshire' sessions for the service there plus a highlight in September was a 'Sikh podcast'. In addition, we delivered a 'Faith & Policing: Lessons for the fire service' session for senior managers at Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service which opened up a wide series of conversations about developing the links further.

Our CSE project has now concluded the 1:1 meetings with each of the 5 places of worship involved. We are now exploring how we might support each venue as they look to enhancing their work in this area.

St Philip's Centre took part in the 'Force Faiths Forum' (FFF) which was chaired by Leicestershire Police. The FFF was created as a result of our 'Cops Communities Consent' project. The meeting involved colleagues from different faith communities and covered a range of topics including hate crime and Afghan community arrivals.

Riaz Ravat



Prevent Update

Eyres Monsell Club for Young People (EMCYP)

Prevent Services Officer, Louise Cox, recently had the pleasure of visiting one of our locally funded Prevent projects, Eyres Monsell Club for Young People (EMCYP). They hosted a workshop for young people to build resilience against complex social harms in response to rising community concerns around knife crime and anti-social behaviour. It was great to get back out amongst our local communities and see first-hand the impact of the work that EMCYP are undertaking. The young participants were very engaged and keen to debate which was great to see because as we know from our work in Prevent, difficult but productive conversations need to be had in order to enhance critical thinking skills and protect young people from harm. It was a fascinating evening and we're looking forward to further work with EMCYP as the year progresses.



Leicester Prevent Young Leaders

The Leicester Prevent Young Leaders programme is an opportunity for students in further education to enhance their knowledge around hate crime and extremism, whilst developing their organisational and leadership skills through a variety of projects and events during the academic year. This year's new cohort of Young Leaders from Gateway, WQE and Leicester College recently completed an induction day at the National Holocaust Centre and Museum.

The day's activities included a tour of the Holocaust Museum, impactful presentations on hate crime and Prevent and the opportunity to explore the beautiful gardens and sculptures at the centre.

Although sobering and challenging at times, the day gave ample opportunity for reflection and was an enriching experience for staff and students alike.



Young Leicestershire's AGM

Prevent Coordinator Sean Arbuthnot was happy to support Young Leicestershire at their recent AGM.

Young Leicestershire undertake street-based outreach as part of their locally funded Prevent project. Each year their experienced youth workers engage with over 600 young people in out-of-school settings in Leicester and discuss issues related to Prevent.

The AGM highlighted the abundance of great work undertaken by Young Leicestershire, even throughout the pandemic, and it was well supported by dignitaries including the Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire and the Police and Crime Commissioner.



Sean Arbuthnot

Work with Churches

On Saturday 11th September, we were pleased to arrange for a group of local Christians to visit the ISKCON mandir on Granby Street, both to learn about how the community have adapted the building for their needs, how the pandemic has impacted their ability to gather and what it means to be a member of ISKCON.

Some of the same group also visited Secular Hall on Humberstone Gate to have a similar conversation about secular and humanist perspectives. This is all part of our commitment to help people of different faith and belief perspectives learn how to live well together.

Tom Wilson



United Reformed Church Training

As part of our work with the United Reformed Church, Tom and James facilitated a session for URC ministers in which participants could ask Nima, from ISKCON, and Bernard, one of our Jewish Faith Practitioners, questions about their faith. A number of interesting conversations were had including funeral customs and how we engage young people in faith communities. There were also discussions around Christian Antisemitism and how that can be tackled by Christians and what we can do about it.

It was an enjoyable session and we look forward to working further with the URC in the months to come.

Intercultural Worshipping Communities

On 21st September, Imran Sulaman gave a talk at St Peter's in Oadby to a group of both Anglican Priests and lay people about being a Muslim in Leicester, as part of our work with the Intercultural Worshipping Communities of the Leicester Diocese. Of particular interest to many people was how anti-Muslim hatred impacts men and women differently and is an issue we should all be more aware of.

It was a fascinating evening and a number of people commented on how much they had learned. We look forward to future work with IWC in the next few months.

The Diversity Study

Dr Julian Hargreaves, Woolf Institute

**Thursday 7th October, 7pm
St Philip's Church**

What do we think of our neighbours? And what do they think of us? When it comes to race, religion and immigration, what divides us and what brings us together? Do we all share the same experiences of the diverse everyday world around us? Or is diversity something other people do?

These are some of the questions that motivated the Woolf Institute to produce *How We Get Along: The Diversity Study of England and Wales 2020*.

**If you would like to attend this event, please let us know as soon as possible for catering purposes:
maureen@stphilipscentre.co.uk**



Understanding the Bhagavad Gita: A Chinmaya perspective

**Dr Ramesh Pattni
DPhil (Oxford) OBE**



There are many different perspectives on the Bhagavad Gita within Hindu thought. Dr Ramesh Pattni, of the Chinmaya Mission UK, will share his understanding of the Gita over four sessions, run online using Zoom, all at 11am:

**Tuesday 14th September, Tuesday 12th October
Tuesday 9th November, Tuesday 7th December**

Email onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk to book a place

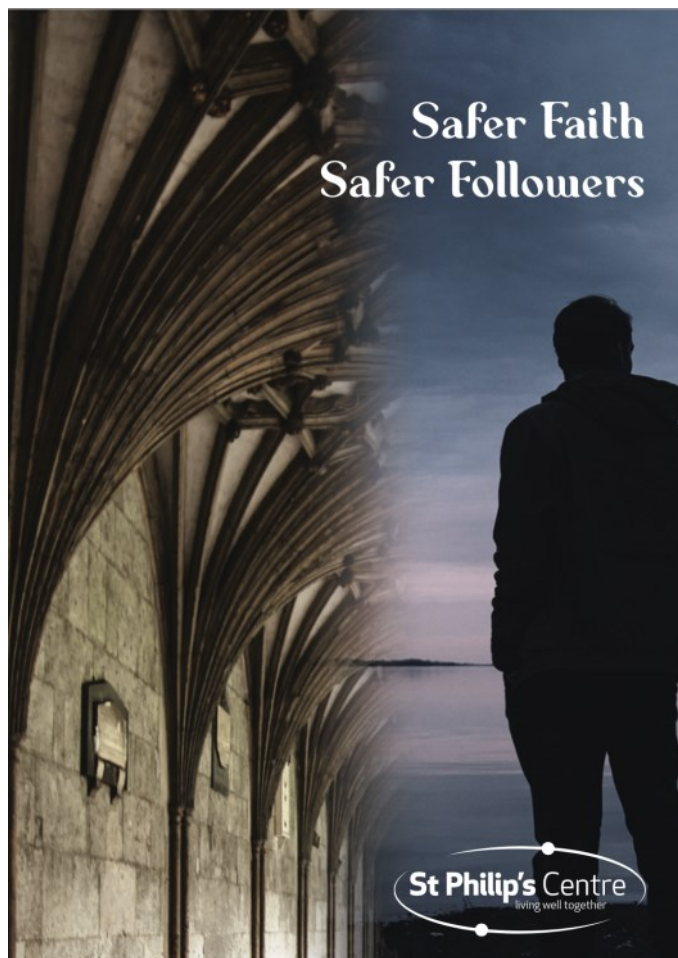
Safer Faith, Safer Followers

The recently published report from the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse (IICSA) into child protection in religious organisations and settings makes for sobering reading. It follows the pattern set by the deep dive investigations into particular issues, places and people connected to the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. The main point all the IICSA reports make is that people of all faiths have failed in their duty to safeguard children. I realise this sounds harsh, and it is not my intention to point fingers at individuals nor to focus on apportioning blame. But the reality is that children and adults have been harmed by those who were supposed to provide them with care and support. What makes this worse is that even if there were concerns, and at times even when people knew that inappropriate, illegal and abusive behaviour was being perpetrated, nothing was being done about it. The latest IICSA report mentioned Leicester directly, bringing home to me the seriousness of the problem and the urgent need to do something about it.

At the St Philip's Centre, we make it our business to not simply introduce people to the positive aspects of faith. We also recognise that faith can become a pretext for abuse, misused to enable coercive control and exploited to hurt others. As part of our Near Neighbours work, we regularly offer organisations and groups opportunities to develop their safeguarding practices. As noted on the front page, we have been doing some bespoke work with five faith organisations in Leicester and Leicestershire. We are also holding conversations with individual faith organisations, denominations and groups drawn from across the faith traditions to help them develop healthier cultures where safeguarding is the norm and poor behaviour is challenged and stopped before it becomes dangerous.

If you are interested in finding out more about our work encouraging *Safer Faith, Safer Followers*, then please do get in touch.

Tom Wilson



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