



# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 49—September 2023

## Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

We have been busy throughout August both delivering training and getting ready for the Autumn term. It was particularly good to welcome a German delegation for a visit originally planned for 2020.

We also said thank you to Allan Hayes who has stepped down after ten years of volunteering in our education and other programmes. We are very grateful for all he has done for us—he will be greatly missed by the whole team.

Best wishes,

Tom Wilson,  
Director, St Philip's Centre.

## Education

Earlier in the year, Thrussington C.E. Primary School's Early Years children enjoyed a 'Celebrations Workshop' based around Easter and this is what they said about it:

*I can't recommend St Philip's Centre highly enough to deliver religious workshops in schools. I am the Early Years class teacher at Thrussington Primary School and the children thoroughly enjoyed their hands on and interactive 'Celebrations' based around Easter workshop. The children had the opportunity to handle religious objects, act out parts from the Bible such as baptising adult Jesus and washing Jesus's feet. It was the perfect way to consolidate the children's knowledge.*



Jo Berry, Early Years

Although the schools have been closed during August for the holidays, we have not been resting on our laurels! Rather we have been busy preparing for the new school year, which looks as though it will be a very busy one with several Religion & Belief Roadshows and school workshops already booked for the coming term. No doubt, once the schools reopen, there will be a flood of bookings for next year, too. We're ready so bring it on!

In August, we also held a 'Thank You' event for one of our most experienced faith practitioners. Allan Hayes, who has been our Humanist colleague, has assisted us with programmes for nearly 10 years. Allan has particularly enjoyed our 'Religion & Belief Roadshow' which has toured schools across the region. Allan is now spending more time with his family and our team of faith practitioners gave Allan a perfect send off. On behalf of St Philip's Centre, we record our gratitude to Allan for his commitment, knowledge and wisdom.



# Corporate

The Centre continues to strengthen its work with public sector organisations. In recent weeks, staff from Leicestershire County Council have attended our programmes and we have plans to deliver Religion & Belief training to some fire services in the region. In September, we will welcome colleagues from Lincolnshire Police who wish to observe our Police recruits training.

On Tuesday 29th August, we were delighted that the High Sheriff for Leicestershire, Henrietta Chubb, was able to join us for our Introduction to Religion & Belief Training for Leicestershire Police. As usual, we received some great evaluations:

*"Thank you for an educational and engaging event." "The most useful parts of the course were visiting the place of worship and speaking to different communities. I've learnt a lot that I will take forward in my career as a police officer."*



## Abrahamic Dialogue Group: Prophetic Families

19th September: Adam and Eve  
24th October: Noah and his wife  
21st November: Abraham Sarah and Hagar  
19th December: Isaac and Rebecca  
23rd January: Jacob, Leah and Rachael  
20th February: Joseph and his brothers

**All meetings 7.00—8.30 pm at  
The Dialogue society, 105 The Lodge, Margaret Road, Leicester LE5 5FW**  
Email [courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk) to book a place

### Christian Engagement in a Multifaith World Tuesday 19th September 2023, 10am—3pm.

An opportunity to speak with Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh colleagues to learn how to live well together.

**Email [courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk) to book a place.**

### "Agency and Education" Sharing insights from research into spiritual abuse.

**Tom Wilson  
Wednesday 27th September,  
11am to 1pm at St Philip's Centre**

Lunch provided

Sharing findings from Tom's research into perceptions and experience of spiritual abuse in Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh contexts.

**Email [courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk) to book a place.**

# Linking Projects

## Connecting children through cultural collaboration

In June, sixteen classes of children were able to experience an artist-led workshop as part of their Schools Linking experience this year, thanks to funding from Arts Council England and University of Leicester's Attenborough Arts Centre.

The structure and content of the sessions were the result of a collaboration between Leicester Schools Linking Project, Attenborough Arts Centre and the appointed artist, Pasha Kincaid. Everything was carefully planned in advance to reinforce the aims and values of the Schools Linking programme and the workshop was provided as a way to celebrate the end of the linking year that the classes had been engaged in since October 2022.

At the start of the 2022-23 school year, 60 Primary classes were paired up – these linked classes then engaged in the activities provided by The Linking Network to explore concepts of identity, diversity, community and justice. By exchanging their learning with their link class and meeting remotely over live video calls the children build their understanding of these concepts, enhance their own self-esteem and build critical thinking skills.

When two linked classes attended the artist-led workshop together, this was a chance to meet face-to-face - for some this was the first time, whilst for others it was an opportunity to meet up once again after having previously visited each other's schools.

The sessions began with games and activities that the children were already familiar with from the Schools Linking programme and developed into large scale creative construction projects where the children worked in groups comprised of children from both classes to build bridges.

The sessions also enable many children to attend an art gallery for the first time and to experience the creative and cultural environment of the art centre. There was an opportunity to explore the exhibitions with their new friends and experience the different art on display there.

Both physically and symbolically many bridges were built over the eight sessions and the children all left with memories that will hopefully stay with them for a long time! This pilot project was a great success and very much enriched and enhanced our Schools Linking offer for schools.

Now we are working hard to source and access funding to enable this opportunity to be available to all the classes that take part in 2023-24 and are keen to make this cultural collaboration a key element of the Schools Linking experience.



*Ruth Sinhal*



**The Linking  
Network**

Identity Diversity Community Equality

# August Events

## Historical Pageant

Riaz and Tom were both guests of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on Thursday 3rd and Friday 11th August. We visited their site in Chorley, Lancashire, to watch *The British Pageant: Truth Will Prevail*, which tells the early history of the church in the British Isles, up to the first migration to the USA. It was an impressive performance from a dedicated cast. Many thanks to Jule Harrald for her hospitality and attention to detail.



## German Delegation

It was a great pleasure to welcome a group of visitors from Westphalia in Germany to the St Philip's Centre on Wednesday 23rd August. The visit was at least four years in the making. Originally scheduled for June 2020, it was postponed multiple times, but we got there eventually. What was particularly good was the variety of people in the group. They were of different faiths (Christian, Muslim, Bahai) and roles (clergy, students, academics, interfaith practitioners, retired). This meant we were asked all kinds of different questions, from all kinds of different perspectives. We offered a typical programme for such visits. We did a "Round Robin", where the group met somebody from the Bahai faith, a Sikh and a Pagan. We discussed sacred texts, working with two Hindu colleagues. We rounded the day off with a more general conversation, in which we talked about how the St Philip's Centre works in community cohesion, easing intra- and inter- community tensions.



There's great value in leaving your own context behind to learn from the context of others. I know that whenever I have made such trips, I have come back with lots to think about. If you would like to arrange a visit to Leicester, then do get in touch.

## Funding Support

*Active Together*  
*All Saints' Educational Trust*  
*Anglican Diocese of Leicester*  
*The Benefact Trust*  
*The Dunhill Medical Trust*  
*Home Office*  
*The J R Corah Foundation Fund*  
*Leicester College*  
*Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation*  
*Leicester City Council*  
*The Linking Network*

*Methodist Connexion*  
*National Lottery Heritage Fund*  
*N C Bellefontaine Trust*  
*Near Neighbours (DLUHC)*  
*Northampton District of the Methodist Church*  
*Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC)*  
*Open Society Foundations*  
*P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust*  
*Shire Funding*  
*The United Reformed Church*



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