



# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 52—December 2023

## Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

November has been a particularly busy month for us, with a wide range of activities taking place, not least those associated with interfaith week. The school- and intergenerational- linking programmes have been busy as ever, we have done a significant number of Diwali workshops and facilitated visits to places of worship, as well as work in colleges and with community groups. We have also completed work on phase one of our oral history project and are looking forward to a launch event in early December.

As ever I am supremely grateful to both the hard-working staff and the dedicated volunteers that make all of this fantastic work possible. Thank you for what you do to help us to learn to live well together.

Tom Wilson  
Director, St Philip's Centre

## Memories of Living Well Together Oral History Project

As someone who was born and raised in Leicester, I have been fortunate to be part of the evolution of our vibrant and richly diverse city over the last 60 years. However, I have often wondered how it must feel to move into a new life in a foreign land. Over the past 6 months, James, Tom and I have experienced the immense privilege of hearing and recording the stories of 31 people who have migrated to Leicester from all over the world - ranging from the Pacific Islands of Vanuatu to just across the Irish sea in Ireland and all points in between. Their stories are full of insights into how migration feels from the perspective of children and adults who have been through that lived experience. The recordings explore their challenges and their joys, their hopes and their realities. This enabled us to build up a rich audio representation of life in Leicester for those who have made it their home.

We have selected some clips from the overall audio recordings which have been included in two discussion booklets. The first booklet is for use in schools and is accompanied by a teacher pack. The second booklet is designed to be a discussion-starter for adult groups. We would be very happy to provide copies of the booklet to anyone who is interested in using the resources and to facilitate sessions to open up conversations which explore the themes in more detail.



The project has been made possible by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and we are grateful to them and the people who play the lottery for funding this project. All the complete recordings will be stored in the East Midlands Oral History Archive in Leicester University, where it will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource.

Please contact me if you'd like to know more.

Viv Froggatt



Image by katermangosara on Pixabay

# Linking Projects

## Schools Linking and #iwill Week 2023

November 20th – 24th 2023 was #iwill week - an opportunity to celebrate the efforts of young people who are engaged in social action. Youth social action refers to activities that make a positive difference to others or the environment. This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the week of action which seeks to share the message, “*You don’t have to try and save the world on your own. Taking small positive actions to improve your home, school or local community can all make a big difference.*”

Social action is at the heart of our Schools Linking work and we strive to find ways to connect young people to their ability to create change. We have found the [#iwill principles](#) for high quality social action a very helpful guide to the design of our activities. Supporting young people to engage in social action is a great way of creating the conditions in which young people can work with others different to themselves, in an enjoyable and positive way. It is also a way to ensure young people retain a sense of hope and optimism in a very overwhelming world and key to that is ensuring they are supported to be part of the changes they identify as needed in their communities.

Schools Linking partner classes work together to explore and decide on social actions to engage in. Classes interact and gain a sense of one another’s values. This collaboration helps to highlight how compassionate values are **our shared values**.

Pupils are given the opportunity to learn about young activists such as Dr Mya Rose Craig, Marley Dias and Yash Gupta who individually campaigned on issues that struck a chord with them, from the environment, representation and inclusion to a campaign for young people to have access to glasses. By hearing these stories children are galvanised towards their own activism in their own lives.

Link Classes reflect and think about the things they care about and consider what **socially impactful** actions they can take to make changes in their school, community and wider world. Pupils might choose to create bunting carrying messages of equality to be hung in the local library, write top tips on how to reduce food waste and work with the school kitchen on a survey or create a wormery for the school.

Classes then share their social action journey with their Link class, school community and families using the image of a Kindness Tree.

The experience of working together towards common goals will build children’s awareness of the values held by their Link Class and develop the awareness that we all hold similar values. We hope this will help them play a part in building a kinder, more connected community.



The social actions chosen may benefit local people, the environment or a wider national or global community. But all help to build pupil agency – as children and young people are involved in choosing, planning and delivering their chosen project or action through carefully planned sessions. Pupils learn the power of working with others when they see how multiple small individual actions have a powerful impact when delivered together.



If you know a Leicester school, Primary or Secondary, Mainstream or Special that would like to get involved, please contact Ruth on [school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:school.linking@stphilipscentre.co.uk) or find us on Social Media:

Twitter/ X: @LinkingSchool

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/391105061351295/>

Ruth Sinhal

## Work with Churches

### Interfaith Week

For Interfaith Week 2023 St Philip's hosted a series of Interfaith Talks each day at Bishop Street Methodist Church. The talks were varied and a number of different people attended across the week. Topics explored included people's stories of faith and approaches to mindfulness and linking that to respective religious traditions. This was a really enjoyable week and we are really grateful to all those who participated. We are very grateful to: Tony, Rehana, Kevin, Surinder and Nima who shared their experiences.



### Christchurch Clarendon Park

James has been organising a number of 'Taste of Faith' sessions for Christchurch, Clarendon Park over the Autumn. In November he led a session aimed at helping to reflect on themes that have emerged and also thinking about what it means to be a Christian presence in the community at Clarendon Park and how relationships with other faith communities can be strengthened. If Taste of Faith sessions or discussions around how your church can relate well to its neighbours would be helpful, please contact James either by calling the Centre or emailing [courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

### Ordinands Visits

James has been taking a group of Anglican Ordinands to various places of worship. In November we visited the Guru Amar Das Gurdwara in Clarendon Park and to a local mosque. These visits have been really successful and enjoyable for all with mutual sharing of faith and stories. If you would be interested in visits, please do get in touch and we'd be happy to arrange them.



### **Abrahamic Dialogue Group: Prophetic Families**

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**

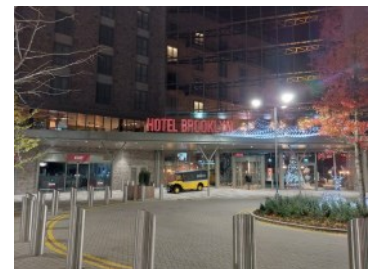
**The Dialogue Society, 105 The Lodge, Margaret Road, Leicester LE5 5FW**

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

## Corporate Work

### Church of England Disability Group

In November, Riaz Ravat was invited to talk about 'Leadership in a Multi-Faith Setting' to the Church of England Disability Group, which stimulated much discussion and lots of ideas. With thanks to the organisers for inviting Riaz to participate.



### Cops, Communities and Consent Expo at Brooksby College

On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, we held a 'Cops Communities Consent' (CCC) Expo event for just over 150 students at Brooksby Melton College in Leicestershire. Our Deputy Director – Riaz Ravat was kindly assisted by two colleagues from the Diocese of Leicester - Revd David Harknett and Revd Crystal McAllister as well as local Police Community Support Officer Amanda. We are grateful to them for their contributions and to the college who enabled us to interact with students reading uniform public services, sport and agriculture.





## Work with Schools

November has proven to be a busy month in the education calendar, beginning with a Mini Religion and Belief Roadshow at Scalford. This was followed by several visits to Places of Peace—Sketchley School from Burbage, Ratcliffe College with their Reception class, the second visit this year from Ranby House School, and Year 4 children from Burbage Junior School who visited Mandirs before engaging in faith-related activities at St. Philip's Church. They have two more visits planned for the new year. Lastly, Hallaton Primary School from Market Harborough visited a Mandir, Mosque, and Synagogue all in one outing.



Also in November, Tom and Nima visited Leicester Partnership School, to deliver five mini workshops on Diwali. The students who attended were all incredibly well behaved and engaged well with the material. One enjoyed it so much he tried to sneak in for a second workshop! The staff commented on how individual students were pushing beyond their own comfort zones to take part in activities they would normally find challenging to participate in. Thanks to the school for hosting us, and to Nima for her excellent input. We hope to come back next year for further workshops.

Diwali workshops were also carried out at Thrussington C of E Primary School. Jo Berry, EYFS Teacher there, said:

*"We recently had the pleasure of hosting an EYFS Diwali workshop for our young learners, and I cannot express enough how delightful the experience was. The workshop, curated by St Philips Centre, was a perfect blend of fun, education, and cultural enrichment. The interactive activities not only captivated the attention of our children but also provided them with a hands-on understanding of the Diwali festival. From vibrant rangoli art to engaging storytelling sessions, every moment was filled with excitement and learning."*



*What stood out the most was the thoughtfulness behind the activities. The organisers seamlessly integrated age-appropriate content, ensuring that the children not only enjoyed themselves but also gained valuable insights into the significance of Diwali in a way that resonated with their developmental stage. It was a valuable addition to our curriculum, aligning perfectly with our goal of providing a holistic education that extends beyond textbooks.*

*I wholeheartedly recommend the Diwali workshop organised by St Philip's Centre. It not only met but exceeded our expectations, leaving a lasting impression on both the children and the teachers involved. We look forward to future collaborations and more enriching experiences for our pupils."*

We would like to thank all our faith practitioners and places of worship for their continued support.

## 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  
The M B Reckitt Trust

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 Spalding Trust  
The United Reformed Church  
The Westhill Foundation



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