



# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 55—March 2024

## Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

In this issue you can read about our work for the NHS, our diverse work with schools, a recent visit from a group of church leaders from France and our continued work with Near Neighbours. With every good wish.

Revd Dr Tom Wilson  
Director, St Philip's Centre

## Corporate Work

In February, we continued our #WhatYouSaying project with the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Integrated Care Board. A number of focus groups were held as part of the 'Young Voices' project to find out about the experiences young people have had of the NHS.

Focus groups were held at the Amazing Grace Church, Gateway College and the Muslim School Oadby. In addition, we have been busy holding safeguarding training for various faith communities. This was run by the Ann Craft Trust as part of our 'Safer Faiths, Safer Followers' project.

Finally, in this month we were pleased to welcome the High Sheriff in nomination of Leicestershire – John Chatfeild-Roberts and the High Sheriff in nomination for Rutland – Richard Cole who took part in our Introduction to Religion & Belief training days for new Leicestershire Police recruits.

Looking ahead, the next few months will be exciting and energetic! We have a lot of training in the pipeline for Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service and a number of NHS bodies.

We are delighted that time after time, our evaluations are displaying very high levels of satisfaction. We remain committed to delivering the highest quality and authentic training content to equip frontline staff and senior leaders with knowledge and awareness to navigate the multi-faith agenda.



## Education

In February, we had the opportunity to present a Hinduism assembly and workshops at Kneesall C of E Primary School in Newark, Cottingham C of E Primary School in Market Harborough, Newcroft Primary School in Shepshed, and Woodstone Community Primary School in Ravenstone, Leicester. We welcomed Redmile Primary School from Nottingham for a visit to Geeta Bhavan Mandir, Leicester Hebrew Congregation Synagogue, and Guru Amar Das Gurdwara. At Woodstock Primary School in Leicester, we conducted two Islam workshops, marking our third annual visit to the school. Christ Church & St Peter's CE Primary School from Loughborough thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the Leicester Hebrew Congregation Synagogue. Uplands Junior Academy has scheduled eight different faith assemblies, which commenced on February 26th and will conclude in April.



Kneesall C.E. Primary School



Cottingham C.E. Primary School



Redmile Primary School



Christ Church & St Peter's C.E. School

# Linking Projects

## Tackling Racism in Our Schools

Along with delivering Schools Linking and Intergenerational Linking to over 35 schools across Leicester and Leicestershire I am sometimes asked to support teachers with wider issues related to their DEI JB (Diversity, Equality, Inclusion, Justice & Belonging) provision. This month has seen me receive one such request from a school with a serious problem - the new occurrence of the N-word being used by pupils. The N-word is a racist and offensive slur, used throughout history to demean, humiliate and degrade Black people. Learning about its history, use and harm is critical. However dealing with it effectively requires careful thought.

Initially pupils/ students' ability to participate in such discussions in a productive way, needs to be assessed. If you haven't had other discussions in your classroom about race and racism, **it would not be productive for the first lesson on race/ racism in your classroom to be about the N-word.**

The school in question was keen to respond in the most effective way and this involves a series of steps.

**Immediately:** any staff present / informed of an incident should deal with the child who said the 'offensive' word/comment, the child to whom it was said and any children who overheard the comment. One staff member must check on the wellbeing of the child who has had the offensive term used against them. Show empathy and understanding. Do not underplay the harm words can cause – especially this word. Follow up with relevant parents and assure them this will be dealt with as a priority. Explain that this will be followed up with the other child so that they can learn from this.

With the child who said the offensive word/phrase, explain that what they have said is unacceptable and offensive. Invoke the ethos of the school/school's values. Everyone's wellbeing is important. Everyone needs to feel safe. Language like this is unacceptable.

Follow up with the parents of the child who used the word, record as a racist incident and inform SLT teams as appropriate.

**Short term:** During the next opportunity for a whole class discussion, establish the ground rules, discuss appropriate and inappropriate language, the importance of the words we use, their impact...books such as Words and Your Heart can be appropriate for young children.

Schools Linking schools have access to lots of free activities related to this book.

**Medium term:** Hold a whole schools//key stage/class assembly, send letter to parents to reinforce the importance of using appropriate language, asking them to reinforce this message at home, displays around school reinforcing appropriate values, capturing and rewarding examples of appropriate, respectful language

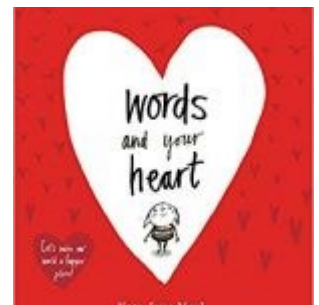
**Long term:** question for the whole staff – are there enough opportunities to educate pupils about Human Rights, race and racism, awareness of all forms of discrimination, appropriate language within the school curriculum – is it regularly revisited? Are the books, displays and lesson resources used every day representative of the diversity in our society? Representation matters in all schools; books (and other images/ stories shared in your school) like mirrors help reflect what we know about the world we live in. It is powerful to see someone 'like you'. But they also allow us to view and understand those who may be different in some way, like a window onto other experiences.

We recommend schools look to book sellers such as [Mirror Me Write](#) to diversify their book shelves and libraries and tackle discrimination and challenge stereotypes of 'others'.

The lessons included in the FREE Schools Linking programmes for both Primary and Secondary schools help to reduce prejudice and overcome barriers between young people. And we also offer specific guidance on Anti-Racism and teaching around Race and Racism.

[Teaching-about-racism-and-sensitive-topics.pdf \(thelinkingnetwork.org.uk\)](#)  
[Resources for Schools to help understand Race, Identity and Empathy - The Linking Network](#)

Becoming comfortable with difference is a process, not a one of event and we hope you can see how Schools Linking can play such a role in this.



*Ruth Sinhal*

# Work with Churches

## French visitors

One of the things I really enjoy about my work at the St Philip's centre is when I meet with people who see the world very differently from me. Two of our values as an organisation are "encounter" and "understanding." Encounters with those who have a worldview other than my own can lead to greater understanding of the complexity of society and equip me to learn how to live well together in a diverse yet cohesive society.

It was therefore a great pleasure to host a group visiting from France and elsewhere in the United Kingdom as part of the Reuilly Conference that met in Leicester from Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February. Inevitably samosas featured. This is because one of the things I have learned in my 8 years of working in Leicester is that food and vhospitality are important precursors to deeper, more meaningful conversations. We only had a couple of hours together, but we covered a lot of ground, focusing on the way Christian groups can work together with people of all faiths and no faith for the betterment of society and the good of all. This process of collaboration and cooperation will manifest itself differently in France from in Leicester, but the underlying motivation is the same. We see all people as created and loved by God, and want all to flourish, achieving their full potential. We can only do this if we remember that, as the late Jo Cox put it, we have more in common than that which divides us.



*Tom Wilson*

## Finding out about Paganism

In February Angela Langrick visited Christchurch Clarendon Park to discuss Paganism with them and to share the meaning of festivals. This was a really enjoyable conversation and one that many people commented was incredibly interesting. What became apparent was both similarities and differences between Christianity and Paganism and what we can learn from each other.

If you would be interested in hosting a similar sort of event at your church please email me at [courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk) and I would be really happy to organise that for you.

*James Blackhall*

## Forthcoming Events

### *The Epistle to the Hebrews*

**Tuesday 5th March 2024,  
10am to 12.30pm at St Philip's Centre  
Lunch provided**

An opportunity to discuss this complex  
New Testament text with Jewish and Christian  
colleagues  
Email [courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk)  
to book a place

### *International Women's Day*

**Tuesday 5th March 2024,  
2pm to 3.30 pm**

**St Denys' Parish Centre  
Church Road, Evington, LE5 6FA**

An afternoon to celebrate International Women's  
Day and to hear interesting speakers share their  
experiences. Q & A session, time for nformal  
conversations, tea and cake!

Contact Viv Froggatt for more information  
[nn2@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:nn2@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

### *What Vaisakhi means to me*

**Tuesday 9th April 2024,  
12 noon to 1.30pm at St Philip's Centre  
Lunch provided**

An opportunity to learn about Vaisakhi with  
Karter Singh Bring  
Email [admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk)  
to book a place



# Near Neighbours

I do not do my job for the adulation or praise I receive, but that does not mean to say I'm not touched when people show appreciation for the work I have done. During January and February, Viv and I have been meeting with a small group of people to run some personal development sessions as part of our Near Neighbours capacity development work. The first of our sessions was about working from rest. We've also talked about developing insight, growing in grit, (our ability to do tough things), and understanding the systems of which we are part. The final session was on coping well with adversity and conflict.

As with a lot of personal development training, the process was more important than the destination. We are not there to tick boxes, meet criteria pass exams or satisfy a rigid training regime. Rather we meet to grow as people, to get to know each other, to understand our different perspectives on the world and become better versions of ourselves. This is quite an intangible thing to measure, but at the same time you know when you've got it right. And I know we got it right for this group because they gave us presents when we finished.

It's easy to forget to say thank you, but I, like most of the people I know, am always very grateful when people recognise the effort we've put in. It's great to be appreciated. Who do you know who needs some recognition, praise, or thanks?

*Tom Wilson*

James has been helping establish new Places of Welcome in Leicester in his temporary role as 'Places of Welcome Coordinator' for Leicester City as part of our work with Near Neighbours. He is delighted that five new Places of Welcome have opened in Leicester at:

The Grand Meeting Unitarian Chapel;  
Belgrave Tenants Neighbourhood Cooperative;  
The Little Blue Church (Communities of Christ);  
Holy Apostles Church and Leicester Elim;

The logo for 'NEAR NEIGHBOURS' features the word 'NEAR' in purple and 'NEIGHBOURS' in a multi-colored font (purple, orange, yellow, pink, blue) with a stylized, colorful floral or mandala-like pattern behind the letters.

If you would like to find out more about Places of Welcome please visit [www.placesofwelcome.org.uk](http://www.placesofwelcome.org.uk). You will be assured of a warm welcome at any of them. There are a number of others that were already open in Leicester and Leicestershire and there is a map on the website.

## 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*  
*P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust*  
*Shire Funding*  
*The Spalding Trust*  
*The United Reformed Church*  
*The Westhill Foundation*



**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: @SPCLeicester Facebook: stphilipscentreltd