



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 59—July 2024

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

We held our AGM on 11th June, where we celebrated the successes of 2023 and launched our Friends scheme.

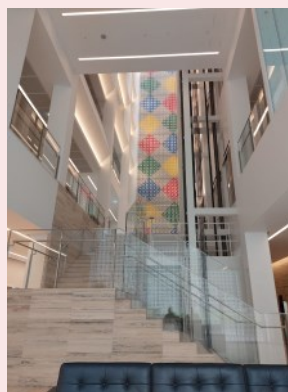
Thank you for all your support over the last year; please continue to support our mission of helping people learn how to live well together.

Revd Dr Tom Wilson
Director, St Philip's Centre

CORPORATE WORK

Visit to the Aga Khan Centre

In June, Riaz was provided with a tour of the Aga Khan Centre in London. The multi-storey building houses the Aga Khan Foundation and two academic institutions. The library houses a vast range of books related to Islamic history and practice and the Gallery displayed historic Qur'anic scripts from Central Asia. A particular feature of the centre were the multiple garden areas which were themed on different areas of the world. The visit enabled Riaz to hear more about the Ismaili tradition within Islam.



RE Conference

In June, Ramila and Riaz attended a Religious Education conference hosted by the Diocesan Board of Education. They were joined by Nicole, our Humanist faith practitioner. The event gave the centre an opportunity to engage with Anglican schools in Leicestershire and to highlight the range of programmes we have available. In the afternoon, colleagues took part in a panel discussion where they were able to focus on how to improve the quality of religious and worldviews education.



Highlights from the AGM : St Philip's Centre Review of 2023

Encounter

Education



69 programmes, to 58 schools, engaged with 558 adults and 7174 young people.



Linking Projects

30 Primary Schools with 56 classes took part, involving 1689 pupils. 4 Secondary schools participated, involving around 600 students. 14 intergenerational partnerships - 7 in Leicester and 7 in Leicestershire, with 900 participants.



Corporate training

8 training days for 155 Leicestershire Police new recruits, 2 workforce development programmes for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
1 workforce development programme for Leicestershire County Council
1 development session for PGCE students at the University of Leicester.
4 CARE Silver and 1 CARE Gold Prevent training courses.



Understand

Churches

Confident Christianity project, funded by a grant from the Methodist Connexion, featuring Abrahamic, Hindu-Christian and Sikh-Christian dialogue as well as one-off events.



Training for curates from the Diocese of Leicester and for Anglican ordinands based at St Mellitus and ministers in training at the Queen's Foundation.

Community

Community consultations over the proposed "Grace Space" at Leicestershire County Cricket Club.

An oral history project "Memories of Living Well Together," funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, interviewed 31 people who migrated to Leicester from overseas.



Trust

Prevent

The Centre's work in delivering the Prevent strategy in Leicester and Leicestershire continued to be held in high regard both nationally and internationally.

Corporate

The Open Societies Foundation funded project, "Cops, Communities, Consent" completed its programme of work, including focus groups, Police Expo, RISE (Resiliency Interfaith Skills and Employability) programmes, and Community Cases seminars, engaging over 2500 students.



Co-operate

The Centre continued as the Near Neighbours hub for Leicester, delivering grants, capacity building and personal development sessions.



We continued our funded project to develop the safeguarding capacity of faith-based organisations in Leicester and Leicestershire, developing action plans based on the baseline audit conducted for us by the NSPCC, and delivering bespoke safeguarding training in collaboration with partners including Leicester City Football Club, the University of Leicester, and the REIGN collective.

Annual General Meeting

The Keynote Speaker for our Annual General Meeting on 11th June was Professor Andrew Davies, Professor of Public Religion at the University of Birmingham, and Director of the Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion. He spoke on *'The Future of Inter-religious Relations'*. He recognised that this year had been a challenging time for inter-religious relations, with the demise of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, a rise in community tensions, the Middle East conflict and the complex political context. Traditional approaches to interfaith had failed in some ways. He suggested that too much interfaith work had been based on rational interaction and had been too academic and clinical. It had also perhaps been based too much on individual friendships and cited a number of challenges and flaws in interfaith work including theological flaws (e.g. too theological and not focussed enough on lived experience) and operational flaws (e.g. insufficiently representative and insufficiently inclusive).



He went on to talk about what a new approach might look like:

- Shared purposeful experiences in order to combat shared issues common to many religious communities such as extremism, disdain for life, hatred and racism etc. Faith should bring hope, opportunity, and purpose in the world. As people of faith, we can be united around working together.
- Shared values: As people of faith, we share many values, and this is something which should be promoted.
- Shared stories of how faith has shaped our journeys.
- Shared opportunities: Together people of faith can have a greater influence in policy terms and a greater impact in practical terms.
- Shared endeavour—working alongside each other, confronting challenges.
- Shared benefits—a world more at peace with itself, a world in which we can be ourselves freely, a world which recognises religion as a fact of life without privileging any tradition, a world where inspirational leaders with faith and values can flourish.

We are very grateful to Andrew for taking the time to come and speak to us. It was a most interesting and insightful evening.



Join the Friends of St Philip's Centre

St Philip's Centre is a small organisation with a big impact on society. We passionately believe that, even with the challenges of today's world, people can learn to live well together. At our recent AGM we launched our Friends scheme, for like-minded people to join us in learning how to live well together.

We work to build knowledge, understanding and trust among people from many different backgrounds. The Centre also has a real and continuing commitment to help facilitate the search for solutions when community threats and tensions emerge. We work across society providing a safe space where difficult and complex issues can be discussed, and solutions found.

Feedback on our work with schools and colleges

"Seeing the pupil engagement across the room was a wonderful sight. Thank you so much for this open-minded and heart-warming display" (Teacher comment on a Religion and Belief Roadshow).

Feedback on our work with the public and private sector

"It was brilliant – thank you. I have a much better understanding and it has been a privilege meeting/learning with the local community and different religions." (Participant in a new Police recruits training course).

Feedback on our work with the community

"The course enabled me to look with different eyes, learning from the perspectives of diverse faith communities. This is really helpful for working in a team where people belong to many different faith groups" (Participant in a leadership development course).

Feedback on our work with churches

"It's been brilliant ... just to be able to ask different faith groups about what they believe and why they do certain things. In normal life I personally don't get the opportunity to have that discourse, to ask those awkward questions" (Participant in a session for clergy).

Please join as a Friend and support this vital work.

St Philip's Centre is an independent charity. We need your help.

Whether you tell your friends about St Philip's Centre or encourage businesses and other organisations to use our services or sponsor us, we would love to hear from you.

You can also help by volunteering your time.

To find out more, visit www.stphilipscentre.co.uk

Funding Support

*All Saints' Educational Trust
Anglican Diocese of Leicester
Home Office
The J R Corah Foundation Fund
Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation
The Linking Network*

*The M B Reckitt Trust
Methodist Connexion
N C Bellefontaine Trust
Northampton District of the Methodist Church
P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust
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