



# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 70—June 2025

## Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

The reach of our religion and belief roadshow is increasing! In this issue, you can read about the expansion of our work to the Anglican dioceses of Ely, Norfolk, and Suffolk. We're grateful to the Keswick Hall Trust for the funding that makes this possible. You can also read about a Near Neighbours funded project, our new Community Integration course, my time with military chaplains and talking about Mars. Finally, do come to our AGM and our comedy night if you are able to.

With every good wish.

Rev'd Canon Dr Tom Wilson  
Director, St Philips Centre

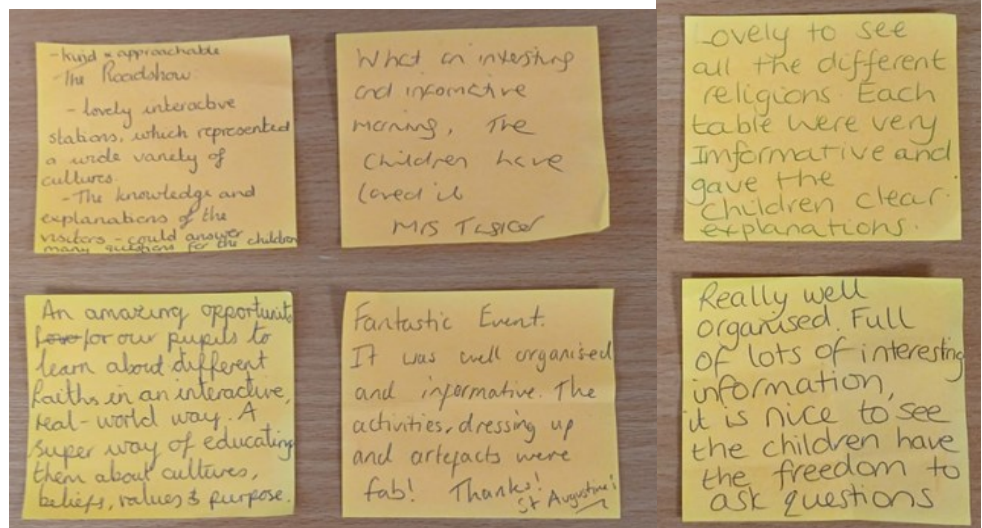
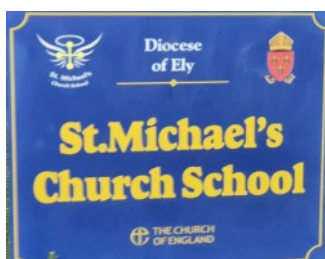
## Education

St Philip's recently received funding to deliver Roadshows across three dioceses in the East of England: Ely, Norfolk, and Suffolk. Our first session, held for the Diocese of Ely, brought together four schools at St Michael's Church School in Peterborough. The event was well received, with many children experiencing, for the first time, people of different faiths coming together under one roof. We are currently planning sessions in Suffolk and Norfolk for the new academic year.

We also delivered two Mini Roadshows—one as far afield as Middle Rasen in Lincoln, and another closer to home at Fairfield Prep School in Loughborough. At all our Roadshows include a suggestion post box. The photo shows some comments from teachers, staff and children about their experiences.

This month, we also had Nettleham School on their annual visit to the Golden Mile, including a visit to a Mosque and a Mandir, Southam St James CoFE Primary Academy visit to the Synagogue. and Richard Hill CoFE Primary School visit to a Synagogue and Gurdwara, followed by a Buddhism workshop.

Ramila Chauhan



# Chaplains

I had a great time on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> and Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, running a Continuing Ministerial Education course for Armed Forces chaplains. We were thinking about inter-religious relations, both in general and more specifically within military context. Sadly, like all the public sector, the military is chronically underfunded and massively overstretched. I cannot do anything about the big issues but note the point for my own context - you neglect investing in your colleagues and your equipment at your peril.

I left my two days with a great deal of respect for those who serve the armed forces through chaplaincy. It's an incredibly demanding role - not something that I could do. To everyone their own calling...

Tom Wilson



# Mars



On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May, Revd Jonathan Holder, Revd Lesley Moseley and I held a theological discussion in Leicester Cathedral. The Cathedral is currently hosting Mark Jerram's Mars, and this was the focus of our discussion. We had three launch points – war, space exploration and chocolate. A brief comment on each:

Mars is the God of war in the Roman pantheon. We live in an age of much debated and sadly forgotten conflicts – what are distinctively Christian perspectives on the associated ethical issues? We discussed pacifism, conscription, power, the evolution of military technology and environmental degradation.

Human beings talk about colonising Mars – but if we do, will we bring all the injustices, hubris and selfishness that characterises how we treat the Earth? Is there a Christian perspective on space exploration? What about emergent technologies, such as AI? How do we use these new powerful tools in an ethically and environmentally responsible way?

As the advert puts it, “A Mars a day helps you work, rest, and play.” But in an era of over-consumption and shrinkflation, how are Christians to live? Gluttony is to be avoided – but so is a joyless existence. Even moderation can be taken too far.

The focus was the conversation – we weren't there to solve anything, but to think theologically – living out the command to love God with all our minds. The conclusion we reached was the imperative for each generation to think afresh how to live out their Christian discipleship in an ever-changing world.

Tom Wilson



# Corporate Work

## CoiN in colleges!

An eventful month has witnessed the launch of our new programme entitled CoiN which is an acronym for 'community integration'. It is a scheme for young people to boost their confidence, awareness and abilities to promote inclusive social cohesion. The programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government via Leicester City Council. It began with 18 students at Gateway College followed by a similar beginning at The City of Leicester College (TCOLC) with 21 students. In the same month, we ran further CoiN sessions for young peer volunteers at the Eyres Monsell Club for Young People.

The sessions enabled participants to learn about the depth and breadth of religious and belief diversity in Leicester as well as to have powerful encounters with some of our faith practitioners which included a Sikh university student. All the engagements enabled two-way dialogue and over the coming weeks, field visits such as the 'Golden Mile' will take place to enable participants to connect with a broader range of learning. One highlight of CoiN was a talk on fame, racism and addiction at TCOLC by George Parris – a former Premier League footballer for West Ham United.

## Community engagement

Riaz and Tom visited Masjid al Husayn to see some of the latest developments to the building and to hear about some of their upcoming programmes.

## Safeguarding

We have continued to work with the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Safeguarding in Faith Communities as they have produced some written policy briefings on areas of improvement. Similar efforts to produce good practice guidance for the sector have taken place with Learning Outside the Classroom.



Vivienne Froggatt and I were invited by Judi Ogelsby from the Somali Community Parents Association -SOCOPA - to a pre-Near Neighbours event at the Dahab Eritrean restaurant on Churchgate.

The event was hosted by the Hiddo group which - initiated by SOCOPA - was set up by Somali mothers to rejuvenate Somali culture - passing on traditions to the younger generation through a variety of events and get togethers.

The Hiddo ladies have recently started working with an Eritrean group and hosted the evening as an introduction to Eritrean culture and food event. Two small groups came together along with some refugee and asylum seeker women who have been engaged with THRIVE.

This was a great opportunity to meet and chat with people from different cultures, sample Eritrean cuisine and experience traditional Somali dancing.



*Cathryn Parsons*  
Churches Engagement Officer

## St Philip's Centre's AGM

Tuesday 17th June at 5.00 pm

St Philip's Church, Leicester

Light Refreshments followed by a presentation on the Centre's

'Memories of Living Well Together' project

before the formal AGM business

All Welcome

RSVP with dietary requirements

by 4th June 2025

## Intercultural Comedy Night

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025

6.00 – 7.30 pm

### Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre

Do you need a laugh? Do you want to make new friends?

Do you fancy an evening out?

Please join us for Laugh Out Loud Leicester,  
a free intercultural comedy evening.

Bring your friends!

For catering purposes, please book a place via this link

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/laugh-out-loud-leicester-tickets-1365315016969?  
aff=oddtcreator](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/laugh-out-loud-leicester-tickets-1365315016969?aff=oddtcreator)

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The Home Office  
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