



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 74—November 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

October was a month of vibrant connection—from Diwali lights and interfaith conversations to strategic global insights and grassroots listening. We brought communities together through art, heritage and shared stories, all with a focus on living well together. As we head into November, we're excited to share upcoming events and training opportunities to keep the momentum going.

With every good wish.

Revd Canon Dr Tom Wilson

Director, St Philip's Centre

Education

October started with a Diwali Celebration workshop at Thrussington Primary School where a small group of Early Years children enjoyed the story of Diwali, and enjoyed activities which included making rangolis, dressing up and enjoying some Indian Diwali treats.

"This wonderful, sensory-rich experience helped bring the story and celebration of Diwali to life, nurturing curiosity, cultural awareness and respect for different traditions. The workshop was highly engaging and beautifully supported our EYFS curriculum, particularly in the areas of Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design."



Later in October, the Religion and Belief Roadshow reached a new geographic milestone by visiting Debenham High School in Suffolk, representing the longest distance the team has travelled to date. The roadshow successfully engaged with more than 360 children (ages 10-13), including students who travelled in from surrounding primary schools. Though the schedule was demanding, the team was highly motivated by the students' eagerness to learn and participate. Our sincere gratitude goes out to the team for their exceptional dedication and continued support.



Ramila Chauhan
Education Officer

Saturday Heritage Fair

Sean Dudley and Tom Wilson attended the Saturday Heritage Fair on Saturday 11th October. It was a great opportunity to network and share insights from our oral history project “Living Together,” which is funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. We interviewed 103 people from all over the world who have made Leicester their home. Two exhibitions, a book and a website are all in the works for 2026. We'll keep you posted as to how things develop. There's lots to digest from the interviews. One point I am pondering is how can Leicester celebrate its achievements more? It's such a great place to live, we ought to make more noise about it!



Leicester Listening Together

Tom Wilson hosted a “Leicester Listening Together” event at the King Power stadium on 7th October. It was good to be with like-minded people talking about how we at the grassroots can make a real difference and help people in Leicester learn how to live well together. The purpose of the event was to develop a short survey which we are encouraging people to fill out to share their thoughts about how we in Leicester can improve our social cohesion and concern for one another.

The Main questions:

- ♦ What is one thing you like about Leicester? Why did you choose this?
- ♦ What worries, fears and misunderstandings make it harder for people from different cultures or communities to engage and live well together?
- ♦ How do you think people in Leicester can be supported to meet, connect, and learn from those with different backgrounds or experiences?
- ♦ What do you think ordinary people can do to help people live well together in Leicester? What do you think leaders should do?

You can respond online: <https://forms.gle/BX4YYfgrFDWkrner5>. Or if you would like St Philip's Centre to host a listening workshop in your organization please do get in touch.



Thank You, Sr Chris

On behalf of all of the staff, volunteers, and trustees of St Philip's Centre would like to wish Sr Chris James all the best as she moves from Leicester to Gloucester. Chris has an incredibly long history with us, having worked behind the scenes managing our accounts, supporting education work, as well as providing invaluable IT support and technical know-how. We are grateful to Chris, both for the time she worked for the Centre and also when she selflessly volunteered. We will miss her greatly.



RCDS

On Thursday 23rd October, we welcomed a group of 17 people who were taking part in the Royal College of Defence Studies year long program on developing strategic leadership and insight. We host the group most years and it's always a fascinating experience. Our remit is to introduce the participants, who are



normally heading for senior military positions, to community dynamics and to give them insights into grassroots faith groups. The discussion is normally free ranging covering topics of mutual interest. Over the course of the evening I learned about the required minimum and maximum length of a military beard, what it means to deploy forces in the field, discussed how SPC evaluates the impact of our programs, how we are funded, and how we determine where we work, as well as the issues and challenges we face in helping people learn how to live well together. Personally, I think there's always something to learn and I gain more than I give for these sessions. I'm very much looking forward to next year's group.

Tom Wilson

LEICESTER LEADING TOGETHER

Leicester Leading Together is a pilot training course, which aims to help people to develop their skills in leading and effecting change in their professional context and to build relationships within Leicester across difference (e.g., culture, religion & worldview, socio-economic background).

When and where is the course taking place?

The course will run at St Philip's Centre, 2a Stoughton Drive North, Leicester, LE5 5UB

There are two sets of dates on which the course will run in 2026:

- ♦ 10:00 – 13:00 on Wednesdays: 14th January, 11th February, 11th March, 15th April, 13th May and 10th June
- ♦ 10:00 – 13:00 on Tuesdays: 20th January, 17th February, 17th March, 21st April, 19th May and 16th June

What will the course cover?

Throughout the course, we will hear from a speaker with senior leadership experience and apply that learning to our own contexts. There are six modules to the Leicester Leading Together course:

- Module 1: What is leadership?
- Module 2: Running an organisation well
- Module 3: Managing self under pressure
- Module 4: When crisis hits
- Module 5: Towards solutions
- Module 6: (Dis)-connected

How to apply: contact Revd Canon Dr Tom Wilson, Director, St Philip's Centre,
director@stphilipscentre.co.uk
by 30th November 2025.

Research Placement Opportunity

'Children's engagement with religions and worldviews in Leicestershire schools: the role of interfaith educational programmes in supporting trust and belonging'. A collaborative placement project supervised by [Tom Wilson](#) (Director at the St Philip's Centre, Leicester), [Richard Hall](#) (De Montfort University) and Line Nyhagen (Loughborough University). We welcome applications for this 12-week, part-time opportunity. See <https://lnkd.in/dSrHses2>



Light in the darkness



Introductory panel discussion, followed by conversation in small groups on how faith gives us hope in troubled times

6:30 - 8:00pm, Thurs 13th Nov
Christchurch, 105A Clarendon Park Road
Leicester, LE2 3AH

Organised by



<https://lightinthedarkness.eventbrite.co.uk>



Safer Faiths, Safer Followers

Understanding and Countering Spiritual Abuse in Faith Communities
TOM WILSON

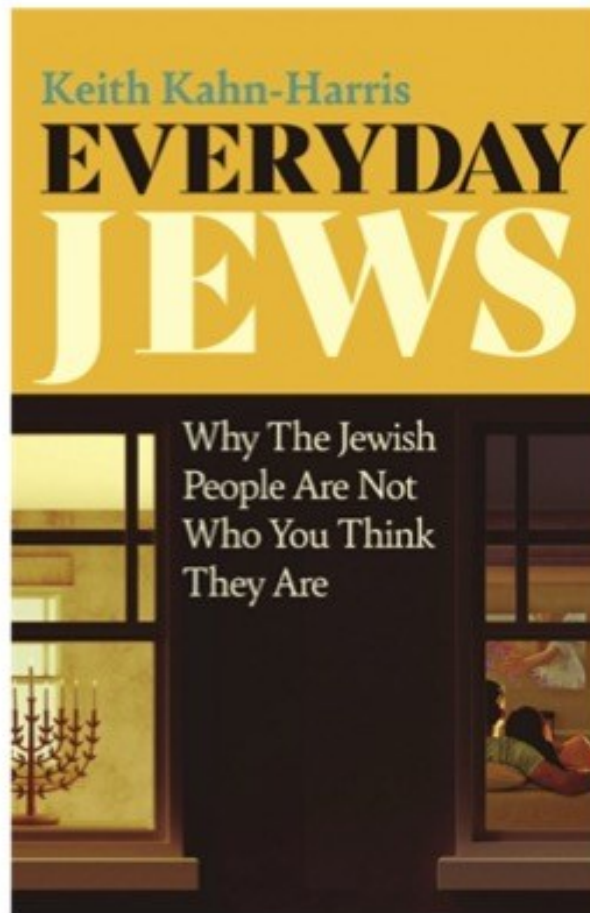


You are warmly invited to a book launch
“Safer Faiths, Safer Followers”

18:30 -19:30
on
Wednesday 12th November
at
Bishop Street
Methodist Church
10a Bishop Street
Leicester
LE1 6AF

Please register, and notify of dietary or access needs, via
admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk

**The Leicester Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews
invites you to a talk from Dr Keith Kahn-Harris**



7:00 – 8:30pm, Tuesday 4th November 2025

St James the Greater Hall, St James Terrace, Leicester, LE2 1NA

Or online:

<https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/96864052019?pwd=wo07gSXsn4TBPule1XhtxFttKXZ1fX.1>

**All Welcome Voluntary donation
To be followed by the branch AGM**

To book a place please contact: director@stphilipscentre.co.uk

Speak up about Cricket!

The domestic Cricket season may have ended but the work does not! Since September, we have been running a series of focus groups engaging different groups from South Asian backgrounds. The wider work is being led by the Leicestershire & Rutland Cricket Foundation (LRCF). Our involvement consists of running a limited number of focus groups to hear in more detail, what people think about the game of Cricket – whether they play or not and whether they follow or not. The sessions have uncovered a wide range of learning about the opportunities and barriers to both.



This month has been a busy period with just under 100 people who have taken part in total ranging from the Belgrave area to Highfields and Spinney Hills. Communities from Bangladeshi, Indian, East African Indian and Pakistani backgrounds are just some of those who have taken part with a high representation of females who have voiced their opinions.

Over the coming period, further sessions will be run including engaging more young people. The aim of the overall programme is for the LRCF to act upon some of the recommendations and put in place provisions to address some of the central questions around increasing participation and awareness.

Alongside the focus groups, LRCF are running a survey for South Asian communities which people can contribute to. Please feel free to complete the details and share with others: <https://forms.office.com/e/VrvNZgdh22>

Strengthening communities



This month we have continued to work with local residents in the Eyres Monsell area through the Eyres Monsell Club for Young People to strengthen knowledge and understanding of communities across Leicester. Eyres Monsell is one of the most deprived parts of the county and the engagement has been hugely beneficial.

The multi-week scheme began in the summer with young adult peer mentors and has now extended to adults in this phase. Over a series of weeks, local residents meet colleagues from across different faith communities where mutual learning takes place. In the period ahead, we have arranged some visits to places of worship.

More great feedback from Police training day

During October we trained 24 new recruits at the Guru Panth Prakash Gurdwara which was well received. Here are just a few of the comments:

"Brilliant and informative course"

"Lovely staff, and helpful. Very well put together and I'm overall really impressed with how engaging and informative the day was"

"Everyone during the day allowed for open and honest discussions which heightened learning"

Riaz Ravat
Deputy Director

Connecting Communities

Hosted by St Philips Church, after much planning and collaboration between St Philip's Centre, Leicester Islamic Art Heritage (LIAH) and Leicester Museum and Art Gallery, the Pop up Museum and Family Art Day was upon us.

The theme 'The Tree of Life', was picked as a unifying symbol for all faiths. Families from all over Leicester enjoyed handling museum artifacts - many of which were based on trees - before taking part in Arts and Crafts. Four artists, whose work is inspired by their faith, came to demonstrate their specialisms, each creating a large piece of their own whilst sharing techniques with participants. There were lots of lovely chats between artists and visitors.

Hayley Fern, a Christian textile and embroidery artist had help sewing leaves for her Ecclesiastical banner.

Representing LIAH, Safira Ali demonstrated patterns in Islamic Geometry using stencilling and isometric grid patterns whilst Tazim Hamid used recycled materials for various collage pieces.

As a Jain, Shashi Mehta uses Rangoli during celebrations and brought several examples along. Visitors were invited to use coloured rice to make their own patterns.

Before heading home, many of our 260 visitors accessed our open craft table where they decorated leaves for our tree using techniques they had learned during the day.

The day gave a great chance for mixing and learning about each other's art and craft traditions. It was wonderful to see so many families from different faiths and cultures enjoying time together.

Cathryn Parsons

Churches Engagement Officer



Funding Support

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All Saints' Educational Trust
The Anglican Diocese of Leicester
The Garfield Weston Foundation
The Keswick Hall Trust
Active Together
Home Office

The P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust
The N C Bellefontaine Trust
The Northampton District of the Methodist Church
The National Lottery Heritage Fund
Leicestershire and Rutland Cricket Foundation



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