

Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 81—July 2026

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

At St Philip's Centre, we continue to bring people together across difference through learning, dialogue and shared experiences. This edition highlights our work across leadership development, professional training, youth engagement and interfaith encounters, all contributing to stronger and more connected communities.

We are pleased to launch the next cohort of *Leicester Leading Together*, equipping emerging leaders with the skills and relationships needed to lead effectively in a diverse city. Our ongoing training with the LLR Safeguarding Partnership continues to support professionals in understanding religion and belief in practice.

A recent visit to the National Holocaust Centre and Museum provided a powerful opportunity for reflection, reinforcing the importance of challenging prejudice and fostering understanding. Our Education team has also delivered a two-day primary school roadshow in Great Yarmouth, introducing children to different religions, beliefs and traditions and encouraging respect for diversity from an early age.

Supporting young people remains central to our work. The launch of the CO-IN programme at The City of Leicester College, alongside a range of interfaith visits and activities, is helping to broaden perspectives and prepare young people for life in a diverse society.

Thank you to all our partners and participants who continue to make this work possible.

Revd Canon Dr Tom Wilson

Bringing Faith into Focus in Medical Education

When I first arrived at St Philip's Centre in 2015, one of the first pieces of work I do was support the delivery of a module for medical students at the University of Leicester. The focus was on how lived religion and belief impact access to healthcare. For various reasons, the course stopped a few years ago. It has therefore been a delight to facilitate a pilot "student selected component" for third year medical students. We're still part way through the course, but we've completed all our visits and input from external speakers. Thanks to all who have taken part, I've learned lots - and from what they say, the students have as well. Here is a photo of us visiting Gurdwara Sahib Leicester.



Leicester Leading Together

About the course

Leicester Leading Together is a 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 differences such as culture, religion & worldview, socio-economic background. The course will enable you to reflect on:



1. how to be more effective as a leader, working with people who are different from you.
2. how to manage both upwards and downwards, how to think strategically and operationally, how to look after your people and fulfill the demands of those to whom you are responsible.
3. how to balance home and work life to ensure that all competing pressures, tasks, and obligations are met as fully as we can whilst also looking after yourself.

What do past participants say about the course?

“As People Operations at Mindera, I completed the course and found it exceptionally practical. It strengthened my confidence as a senior People professional, sharpened my ability to “read” organisations, people and systems, and improved how I respond under pressure. Most importantly, the structured, equal-status learning with leaders from business, community, education, faith and the voluntary sector deepened my intra-cultural and interfaith awareness. I now have a trusted cross-sector network I can call on to solve shared problems—something that has already benefited our inclusion, wellbeing and community engagement work.”

Who is the course for?

8 people will be selected to take part in each course. It is aimed at those with management experience who aspire to more senior roles, and participants will be carefully selected to ensure there is a good level of diversity in the cohort and that participants are at a similar stage in their career development. The course runs under the Chatham House rule. Only one person from any organisation can attend the course at any one time.

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 next of dates on which the course will run are:

- 10:00 – 13:00 on Tuesdays: 8th September, 13th October, 3rd November, 8th December, 12th January and 9th February

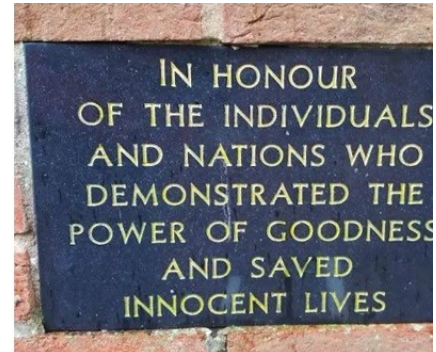
What will the course cover?

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: what is leadership; managing self under pressure; running an organisation well; when crisis hits; towards solutions; remaining connected.

To apply, contact Revd Canon Dr Tom Wilson, Director, St Philip’s Centre, director@stphilipscentre.co.uk, by 31st July 2026.

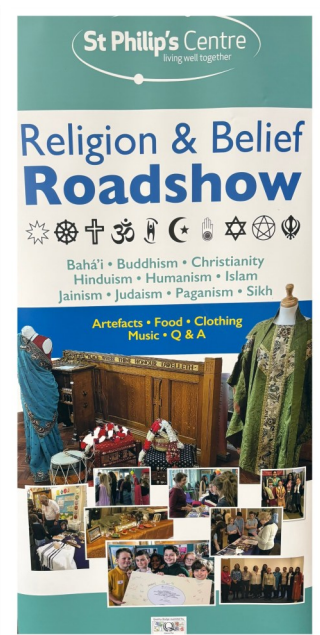
A Day of Reflection and Learning: Visit to the National Holocaust Centre and Museum

At the end of June 2026, we invited staff from some of our partner organisations – Leicester City Council, Gateway College, Leicester Tigers Foundation and the Leicestershire & Rutland Cricket Foundation to join us for a day of learning at The National Holocaust Centre and Museum in Nottinghamshire. The powerful day ended with a testimony from a 96 year-old Jewish Holocaust survivor who shared her stories and feelings. Earlier on in the day, our delegation heard about ordinary life under repression and the normalisation of caricatures and myths.



Exploring Faith Together as Schools Visit St Philip's Roadshow

On 9th June, as part of the Centre's 20th anniversary celebrations, we held a Religion and Belief roadshow in St Philips Church. Rather than the usual format of us going to school for the whole day, this time we based ourselves in St Philip's Church and had a number of schools visiting us in turn. There was still the usual energy and excitement as the children chatted with the faith practitioners tried on clothes and handled the artefacts. It was a great example of the Centre's values in action as people encountered different worldviews and began to understand them. What saddened me slightly was to learn of pupils whose parents had decided they were not allowed to come. Of course this is the parents' legal right, but nevertheless I think it's a shame because if we don't encounter difference, how can we learn to be comfortable living alongside each other?



Corporate: Building Understanding Across Communities

In May and June, we held two 'Introduction to Religion & Belief in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland' training days for staff working in the LLR Safeguarding partnership. Delegates were from local authorities and their commissioned agencies. A key part of the day was to highlight the seminal report by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) entitled 'Child Protection in Religious Settings and Organisations'.

Feedback from a few of the delegates:

"The game was great, and the visit to faith settings. Lovely people, it felt a very safe space."

"I think the course was perfect - so many more people should attend this session."

"This was such a valuable course—thank you."



Inspiring Young Minds: launch of the CO-IN Programme at the City of Leicester College

We began our multi-week CO-IN (Community Integration) programme for students in Year 12 at The City of Leicester College. The Head of the Sixth Form at the school said: "Here at TCOLC our Sixth Form really values the CO-IN programme and its delivery from the St Philip's Centre. The programme allows our students to understand greater societal issues in Leicester, the UK and on global and political affairs across the world. We feel by broadening their experiences at this age it will help prepare them to be better citizens and young people within our communities. Additionally, the CO-IN programme has shown our young people some of the realities of life, life stories from guest speakers highlights that there is no set pathway for many of us and that some of harsher truths of society are still battles we contend and face on a daily basis. I am proud to have the team and Riaz from the St Philip's Centre support us and our ethos of Ambition for all at TCOLC. I would wholly endorse the programme as in ever changing times in society, young people truly benefit from these initiatives.

Some of the delegates felt the most useful part of the day included:

"Hearing views of another person in a completely different field/position—eye opening"

"Learning the impact of world events on businesses"

"Being able to hear a different perspective in Leicester"



Education: Roadshow Goes to the Seafront!

In June, our schools team delivered a groundbreaking first – two consecutive Religion & Belief Roadshows which required overnight stays. This time we engaged several schools which attended our event at Great Yarmouth Minster – an amazing setting which saw nearly 400 children and several tourists coming along to speak to our team. We are grateful to the Diocese of Norwich who partnered us for this venture which saw our team delivering our furthest Roadshow in the East of the UK!



Giving Thanks for 20 Years of the St Philip's Centre

On Sunday 15th June we gathered at St Philip's Church, Evington for a Thanksgiving service celebrating 20 years of the St Philip's Centre. It was inspiring to see staff, trustees and supporters—past and present—come together in gratitude, connection and community (with a celebration cake to finish, of course).



Conversations, Connections and Communities of Faith

Our **Tea and Samosas** chat group visited Halstead Hill Farm this week for a picnic with Miriam Stokes who, along with her husband Chris, owns the farm. Miriam is interested in spiritual aspects of life and in particular how that relates to the land. Conversations were had around how festivals relate to the farming year with Hina telling us about how the almost monthly Hindu festivals relate to the time of year various crops are harvested. Miriam shared some of her knowledge about ancient practices passed down but now almost lost with regards to medicinal and culinary properties of plants. At our previous meeting we talked about music – how culture and religion affected our choices and whether our likes and dislikes had changed over the years.



Chatting Faith, our Young Women's group also visited Halstead Hill Farm. We were invited to sample treats made from farm produce including lime leaf and elderflower teas whilst chatting to Miriam about the ethos of how they run the farm and what they kept and grew. Chris has been experimenting with beekeeping and we watched honey being extracted from the combs before getting to try a sample.

Walking through the farm we talked about how being in nature can be a spiritual experience; at the end of the walk we spent some quiet time reflecting. We also talked about what references were made to nature in each other's scripture.

Prior to this meeting, the group visited East Park Road Gurdwara where we were shown around the five storey building before being invited to partake of Langar. We had chance to talk about what it means to serve others and how important this was to our faith.



St Philip's Centre organised a day of Faith based visits for Students of the **CCJ Campus Leadership Programme**. The programme develops individual students, giving them the knowledge and skills to run their own interfaith events. The first stop was Masjid Al Falah where students were given a brief overview followed by an opportunity for questions about Islam. Students gained a greater understanding particularly about prayer and prayer times. One student felt that listening to the speaker talking about their faith felt very similar to listening to his own Rabbi. The next stop was the Jain Centre where over lunch, students had the opportunity to find out how a Jain's diet fits in with their value of causing as little harm to living things as possible. This was followed by a tour of the building whilst the basic concepts of Jainism were explained. The final visit of the day was to Leicester Hebrew Congregation Synagogue. The students were shown around the building whilst being offered insights into the practices of Judaism with a chance to ask questions along the way. Before heading back to various cities, the students discussed what they had seen and found out. They were all impressed by how open the hosts had been and how happy they were to share their faith and knowledge.

Cathryn Parsons, Churches Training Officer



A Warm Welcome: Belgrave Library's chat and Chai Visit to Leicester Cathedral

On Thursday 30th April, I hosted Belgrave Library's Chat and Chai group at Leicester Cathedral. We were welcomed by our tour guides Alex, Rachel and Sara who explained a little bit about the difference between churches and a cathedral, what a Diocese is and the various roles within the Cathedral.

Most of the Hindu ladies hadn't been to Leicester Cathedral before which made the trip particularly meaningful as they were unaware that the Cathedral was for everyone in the Diocese, no matter what religion. Shaun was able to join us and introduced the Living Together exhibition—read more about that below.

Following this, we split into two groups for a tour of the Cathedral looking at the various Chapels, learning about the stained glass and of course viewing King Richard III's tomb. There were a lot of interesting questions asked about the history of the cathedral and about practices such as burials in the building.

Following the tour, we repaired for tea, cake and a discussion about similarities between Christian and Hindu practices sparked by what had been seen during the tour.



Living Together: A Celebration of Leicester's Diverse Voices

The Living Together exhibition, which celebrates the themes and stories from 103 oral history interviews conducted with people who today call Leicester home, will be on display in a variety of locations between now and the end of the year.

To see the full list of venues, visit www.leicesterlivingtogether.com/exhibitions-and-events
If you have a venue that would like to host the event, please email admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk

Living Together in Leicester: Stories of Kindness and Community

On Wednesday 10th June we gathered at Christchurch Clarendon Park to hear four people share their “only in Leicester” experiences. Salim talked about how during the covid pandemic, his whole street worked together to prepare an Eid hamper for him when, because of the travel restrictions, he thought he would be celebrating Eid alone. Barbara talked about how when she was seriously ill, people of many different religions prayed for her recovery. She said that God had been bothered by so many people of so many religions, the only option was to ensure she recovered. Princess shared her experience of growing up in Nigeria, where everyone was like her. Leicester was so different, with people of many religions, cultures, and worldviews. But she felt right at home, because other people in Leicester speak her dialect, and it is easy enough to buy the food she wants. Werner talked about his research into the South Asian business community, and how people travel from all over the world to come and shop on Belgrave Road.

You can read these, and many other stories at:

<https://www.leicesterlivingtogether.com/>



Funding Support

St. Philip's Centre is grateful for the funding it receives from the following and from many individual supporters, Friends, Associates and Member Churches.

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