



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 83—September 2026

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

As summer draws to a close, this edition of our newsletter highlights the many ways St Philip's Centre continues to bring people together through encounter, understanding and friendship. From shared meals and community visits to creative projects and educational opportunities, we are encouraged by the many examples of people connecting across faiths, cultures and backgrounds.

In this issue, we celebrate the success of our Come Dine project, made possible through funding from the Benefact Trust, and share stories of friendship and hospitality from visits between church groups and women's community groups across Leicester and Leicestershire. We also report on the latest conversations taking place through our Living Together oral history project, including a recent session at The Comfort Centre exploring belonging, identity and what it means to call Leicester home.

Looking ahead, we are delighted to launch the 'Only in Leicester' Creative Arts Competition, inviting children and young people to express what makes our city unique through art, poetry and creative writing. We also draw attention to an upcoming learning opportunity exploring the history and continuing impact of the antisemitic myth known as the Blood Libel.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support, involvement and encouragement. Together, we continue to build understanding, strengthen relationships and celebrate the rich diversity of our communities.

Revd Canon Dr Tom Wilson
Director, St Philip's Centre

Understanding the Blood Libel

The blood libel is the claim that Jewish people kill Christians – often a Christian child – to gather blood to make Matzah for Passover. Anyone who knows anything about Judaism will know that this is patently untrue. So how did the slander start? What role did Christianity have in spreading it? What can we do about it today?

This short session will examine these questions from Christian and Jewish perspectives, focused on developing responses to this antisemitic myth. The session will be led by Tom Wilson and takes place 14:30 – 16:00 on Monday 14th September at St Philip's Centre, 2a Stoughton Drive North, Leicester LE5 5UB.

Please register, giving details of any dietary or access needs, to receive the pre-reading, by emailing me (director@stphilipscentre.co.uk).

Do pass the information on to anyone who you think might be interested in joining us.

Come Dine, Connect and Create New Friendships

We were delighted to receive funding from the Benefact Trust which enabled us to run our popular 'Come Dine' project over the past few months. This project pairs people up with someone they have not met before. They meet for a coffee, a walk, a meal, and through understanding each other better, start a new friendship. The simple act of meeting for a meal can have a significant impact on helping us all learn how to live well together. Thank you to everyone who took part in this year's project.



From Places of Worship to Policing:

PCSOs Explore Faith and Belief

On Friday 28th August, St Philip's Centre welcomed 14 new Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to St Paul's Church, Oadby, for our popular Introduction to Religion and Belief Training Day.

The course provides a practical introduction to the faith and belief communities officers are likely to encounter across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

We were also delighted to welcome The High Sheriff of Rutland, Susannah Fish, and a Leicestershire Police Cadet. Susannah, a former Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire Police, shared inspiring reflections on leadership, community engagement and public service, offering valuable encouragement to the new PCSOs.

A key feature of the day was the opportunity to meet faith practitioners and ask questions in an open and honest environment. Through round-robin discussions and real-life case studies, participants explored how faith awareness can help build trust and strengthen community relationships.

The day received very positive feedback, with participants particularly appreciating the opportunity to ask questions directly to faith representatives and deepen their understanding of the diverse communities they will serve.

We are grateful to St Paul's Church for hosting the training, to Susannah Fish and Izzy Kilsby for joining us, and to all the faith practitioners who generously shared their knowledge and experience. We wish the new PCSOs every success in their careers and look forward to continuing our partnership with Leicestershire Police.



'Only in Leicester' Creative Arts Competition

St Philip's Centre, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is launching a county-wide digital creative arts competition for children and young people across Leicestershire.



Part of the **Living Together** oral history project, the competition invites young people to explore the theme '**Only in Leicester**', celebrating the city's diversity, heritage, identity, and community life while reflecting on how people from different backgrounds can live well together.

The Theme

Participants can creatively explore:

- What makes Leicester unique
- Stories of community, belonging, and identity
- How people from different backgrounds live well together
- Personal or imagined experiences of Leicester life

The competition supports **Interfaith Week (8th-15th November)** and encourages dialogue, understanding, and community cohesion.

What Can Be Submitted?

- Visual art (drawings, paintings, digital artwork, 2D or 3D creations)
- Poetry
- Creative prose (maximum 500 words)

Visual art and poetry entries must include a short explanation (up to 250 words).



Please note: AI-generated work and photography are not permitted.

Who Can Enter?

- KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4/KS5
- Special Schools
- Home-educated learners
- Faith groups and community youth settings
- Each school or setting may submit **up to 10 entries**. The competition is open to young people up to age 18 (Year 13).
- Entries may be submitted individually, in pairs, or in groups of up to four students.

Prizes and Recognition

- All participants receive a digital certificate
- Selected entries will receive prizes and goody bags

Submit Your Entry

Entries will be uploaded via <https://www.leicesterlivingtogether.com/digital-creative-arts-competition>

Schools and groups can submit up to 10 entries in a single upload.

Submission deadline: Thursday 9th November 2026

Exhibition and Prize-Giving Event: Thursday 3rd December, 6.00-7.00pm (venue to be confirmed)

For further information, please contact **Sean Dudley** at sean@goldfinchheritage.com

We hope children and young people across Leicester and Leicestershire will take part and share their unique perspectives on what makes our city special.

Help protect your community

Faith Security Training (FST) is a new **FREE** training scheme available for faith communities in England & Wales.

Learn how to help protect your place of worship from anti-social behaviour, crime and serious threats.



Where

You can attend an in-person training session, an online event, or eLearning.



Who

FST is for anyone connected with a place of worship - faith leaders, trustees, staff and volunteers.

Upcoming sessions

10:00-16:30

Tuesday 15th September

173 Loughborough Road, Belgrave,
Leicester LE4 5LR



Home Office



Sign up online or contact us

01242 542 201

contact@cdssupport.uk

www.fst.cdssupport.uk



FST is an optional resource that you can draw on and is designed to complement, not replace, existing training.

Working Across Cultures with Confidence

In a fast-moving, pressurised and complicated world, it can be difficult to know how best to build and deepen intercultural understanding at work. Our **Being Intentionally Intercultural at Work** workshop will help you develop confidence in engaging respectfully with colleagues across different cultures, beliefs and worldviews. You may be curious about how to ask thoughtful questions, understand different practices and perspectives, or recognise the festivals, histories and experiences that matter to your colleagues.

Whether you are beginning to explore intercultural engagement, already experienced in this area, or somewhere in between, this event will offer a welcoming and safe space for respectful curiosity and mutual learning. There will be plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion. You will leave with greater confidence in enabling intercultural engagement in the workplace.

The event takes place 5:30 to 7:00pm on Tuesday 6th October, at Avanti Fields School, Bhaktivedanta Marg, Leicester LE5 0BX

Please share details of this event with colleagues who are interested in joining us.

I am grateful to the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce for handling bookings. You can book your space here: https://www.emc-dnl.co.uk/events/being-intentionally-intercultural-at-work_q5FknsQlas/

We will hear from:

Amanda Scott - Amanda is the Director of Human Resources at Leicester College, where she leads the College's People Strategy, driving the development of an inclusive workplace where colleagues can thrive. Having worked in educational settings across Leicester, a city renowned for its rich cultural diversity, Amanda strives to embed intercultural understanding into everyday leadership, communication and workplace culture. She believes that creating an inclusive environment is not achieved through one off initiatives, but through intentional actions that encourage openness, mutual respect and a genuine sense of belonging.

Gemma Forest: As a People & Operations Lead at Mindera, Gemma specialises in connecting global teams and driving people-centred strategies that weave diversity, equity, and inclusion into the fabric of business operations. Passionate about fostering a culture of acceptance and curiosity, they leverage their experience to help embrace new initiatives that drive meaningful, inclusive change.

Jo Tilley: Jo has recently retired from her role of Executive Director People and Strategy, within the East Midlands Housing Group, where she was their executive lead for equality, diversity and inclusion. She also co-chaired the National Housing Federation's Governance Forum and has served as a trustee of a regional charity. She is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Housing and has an MBA from Birmingham Business School.



Sharing Stories, Building Understanding

Tom and Sean visited The Comfort Centre on Friday 21st August to run a session with participants about the Living Together Oral History project.

Topics discussed included how welcome people felt in Leicester, where people felt their home was, and what languages those present were able to speak.

The conversations around the room were interesting and insightful, and thank you to Susan Ower and The Comfort Centre for hosting us.



Parking at St Philip's Centre

As you may be aware, the car park adjacent to St Philip's Centre, which was previously owned by St Philip's Church, is now owned by Horizon Healthcare. They have recently introduced **ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition)** monitoring. This means that if you enter the car park, even for a very short time or simply to turn your vehicle around, you may be liable for a parking charge.

We do have two parking spaces available on our driveway. However, please take care when using them, as the camber on the pavement can cause some vehicles to dip, which may result in the underside of the car scraping on the pavement.

Building Friendships Through Shared Hospitality

This summer, St Philip's Centre helped bring together women from different faiths and communities through a series of visits, conversations and shared meals.

In August, members of a Bangladesh Women's Group visited Tugby Church for afternoon tea, where warm hospitality quickly led to lively conversations about family, work, faith and everyday life. New friendships were formed, and plans were made for future activities together.

A few days later, the Tugby group enjoyed a return visit hosted by their Bangladeshi friends at St Peter's Church in Highfields. Dressed in traditional clothing, they joined in walking football, shared a delicious homemade meal, and enjoyed music and dancing. The generosity, laughter and welcome shown by everyone made it a memorable day.

At the same time, members of the Belgrave Chai and Chat Group visited Skeffington Church for tea, cake and conversation. Discussions ranged from faith and community to shared life experiences, and new friendships quickly developed. The following week, the Skeffington group paid a return visit to Belgrave, where they enjoyed poetry, homemade food and dancing together.

These exchanges demonstrated the power of hospitality, conversation and shared experiences to build understanding and strengthen relationships across Leicester's diverse communities. We look forward to seeing these new friendships continue to flourish.

Cathryn Parsons

Churches Training Officer



Volunteer Opportunity: Office Support Volunteer

Are you organised, reliable, and comfortable using a computer? St Philip's Centre is looking for an **Office Support Volunteer** to help with a range of administrative tasks.

Time commitment: Approximately **4 hours** worked fortnightly or on an as-needed basis.

Tasks may include:

- Data entry
- Shredding confidential documents
- Preparing training packs
- Electronically cataloguing and organising photographs
- General office support

Skills and qualities:

- Good keyboard and IT skills
- Attention to detail
- Ability to work independently
- A willingness to support the Centre's work



This is a great opportunity to contribute to the work of St Philip's Centre, gain valuable experience, and support a friendly team making a positive difference in the community.

Interested?

Please contact Jacqui Dean, Office Manager, for more information or an informal conversation—
admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk

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.

The P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust

The Anglican Diocese of Leicester

Andrew Martin Trust

Leicestershire and Rutland Cricket Foundation

Keswick Hall Trust

The N C Bellefontaine Trust

The Northampton District of the Methodist Church

The National Lottery Heritage Fund



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