



# Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 30—February 2022

## Welcome to the latest edition of *Faiths Engage*.

It is great to see so much going on after a quieter period in December. I look forward to seeing you at one of our events soon.

Tom Wilson

## Programmes for Churches


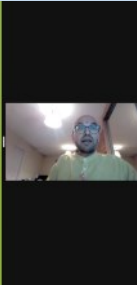
### Learning about Hanuman

On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January, Darsheet Chauhan led a discussion about Lord Hanuman in the Hindu tradition. We learned about some of Hanuman's different qualities and the stories associated with his life before having a more general discussion about the lessons we can learn for our own lives. The conversation continues on 10<sup>th</sup> February.

Please email [onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk) if you would like to join us.

**Different names of Hanumanji**

- ▶ Kapis - Lord of the monkeys
- ▶ Ramdoot - messenger of Rama
- ▶ Anjani putra - son of Anjani
- ▶ Mahabeer - valiant and brave
- ▶ Bajrangji - body of lightning
- ▶ Kesari nandan - son of Kesari
- ▶ Mangal murati - embodiment of blessings

### A Taste of Faith

James is really looking forward to hosting some 'Taste of Faith' sessions for various churches in the near future and is able to take bookings for more of these sessions.

'Taste of Faith' is a discussion and Q&A based session which is an excellent introduction to a world faith. We'll bring along a faith practitioner, a box of artefacts and some snacks related to festivals and cultural traditions. Participants can choose from a variety of faiths, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. You can watch a short film of a 'Taste of Faith' session on our YouTube Channel [https://youtu.be/BBxUSS\\_qY5Y](https://youtu.be/BBxUSS_qY5Y) or on our Facebook page: [\(15\) Facebook](#)



If you would like to book a session contact James on 07707 640885 or [courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

### Working from rest

On Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January, Tom and Beth hosted an online discussion on the topic of "working from a place of rest."

The aim of the session was to encourage people to develop healthy habits in their working pattern. We heard the different strategies participants used to maintain their focus and mental health, especially during the challenging times of working from home over the winter months.

Topics discussed included whether an after-lunch nap was a good or bad idea, and the importance of "deep play" as a way of recharging after a stressful day. This session was part of our work for Near Neighbours, on developing the capacity and resilience of local faith organisations.

Tom Wilson



### Christians in the Holy Land

6pm, Thursday 3rd February

What is the current situation of Christian communities across the Holy Land? What are the particular impacts of covid-19 and the lockdown on families who derive their income primarily from caring for pilgrims and tourists?

How can we support the Christians of the Holy Land through our prayers and actions as this testing time?

Dcn. Dr. Georgios Tsourous of the International Community of the Holy Sepulchre and Professor Francis Davis of the University of Roehampton will discuss all this and more at this unique session.



To book a place, email [onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

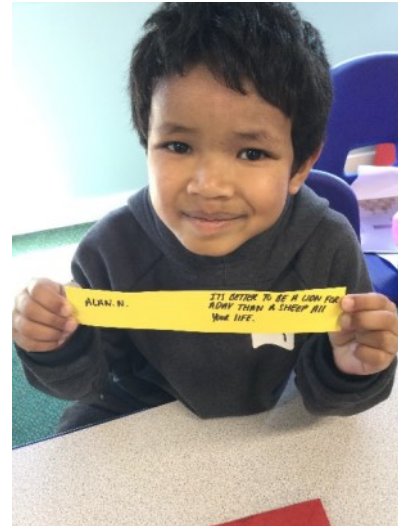
St Philip's Centre

# Linking Projects

## Intergenerational Linking

Intergenerational Linking has had a great start to the year with Scout Groups beginning their links with Care Homes and we still continue to add School and Care Home partnerships.

Currently, the way the younger and older people connect remains predominantly virtual or remote including sharing messages, words of wisdom and photos as well as singing songs or asking each other questions over a video link.



But as we move towards the Spring we hope partners will be able to involve face-to-face events and to support this we have been able to offer small amounts of funding for the schools and care homes to make these meetings memorable and fun for all.

Playing board games, sharing stories, singing, yoga and gardening together are some of the activities planned as part of Intergenerational Linking this year. Other plans include children and residents planting a tree to mark the Queen's Jubilee or creating a time capsule together, as well as making and sending Easter-themed cards and gifts.

## Schools Linking

As we start the Spring Term, our Primary schools are taking part in many creative exchanges with their partners – sharing bunting to introduce themselves, writing poems to explore their identities or exchanging school jumpers.



Secondary schools are engaging in the project through a programme of lessons known as Shuttle Dialogue where the two groups of young people take part in the same activity within their own class and then share their work with their partner class as a way to learn about each other. All are finding the work very rewarding— be it in developing students' self-esteem or pride in their own identity or in strengthening their understanding of intersectionality or the positivity of diversity. As one teacher said "Doing this project has given our students a voice and shown diversity is an advantage, it's beautiful, it's enriching...it awakened our students to this concept...that they can bring their authentic selves to school every day".

*Ruth Sinhal  
Linking Projects Officer*

# Prevent Programme

## Shama Women's Centre

Prevent Services Officer, Louise Cox, recently visited one of our locally funded Prevent projects, The Shama Women's Centre, when they hosted a talk by Nicola Benyahia from Families For Life.

Nicola spoke about her personal experience of radicalisation and shared her tragic story about the loss of her son, Rasheed, who was radicalised and left for Syria where he was killed.

Nicola delivered an in-depth presentation which enabled discussion around the dangers of online grooming and radicalisation and created awareness of the warning signs/different ways in which extremists may target individuals, whether that be with mental health vulnerabilities or via conspiracy theories etc. Nicola shared proactive solutions to counter extremism along with signposting of where to seek help and support. It was a very well-attended and engaged event with participants asking lots of questions together with Nicola providing case studies and interactive activities.

Nicola ended the talk with Rasheed's story and spoke about the impact on her life thereafter which was such an important and poignant reminder of the dangers of extremism and the devastation it can leave behind. Nicola's story seemed to resonate with the group who were clearly very moved and some took photographs of the slides, particularly in relation to the warning signs. Feedback to The Shama Centre included... *"feeling encouraged, inspired and motivated to talk about this difficult topic with family and friends"*.

It was humbling to see the first-hand the impact of some of the work that our projects are undertaking and the collaborative work with our communities to bring people together to help prevent incidences of terrorism.



## Eyres Monsell Club for Young People

Louise also attended another of our projects, Eyre's Monsell Club For Young People, where Nicola Benyahia gave a talk to the young people about the dangers of radicalisation.

Having previously watched a film featuring Nicola entitled "my son joined ISIS", the young people were really looking forward to meeting her in person and listened intently without interruption. They were clearly intrigued and moved by her own personal story. Nicola explained how she now works as a trained counsellor helping struggling young people and families in the hope that they never have to suffer a similar tragedy. She spoke about some of the manipulative tactics that extremist groups use to recruit young people and how this is usually a slow process, from making a simple connection (online or offline), to then gently building a relationship of trust before the radicalisation process begins.

She shared case studies of young people who had been befriended via social media or gaming, only to be later exploited or threatened emphasising the importance of staying safe online.

The young people were given the opportunity to get to know Nicola as a person and hear about her family life before and after the death of Rasheed and were able to ask Nicola any questions.

It was great to see our projects taking a joined-up approach in order to create a positive, impactful event to build resilience to extremism within society, and also to see the young people being given the opportunity to have open discussions and conversations, empowering them to explore areas and issues they may have not otherwise thought about. Engaging with a real-life situation such as this helps to debunk fake news and myths around the stereotyping of people from different faiths and backgrounds and helps to educate the young people to different views and facts so they can make their own informed decisions.

Feedback from some of the young people included... *"I was surprised about the propaganda that's online and how easy it is to go down the wrong path without you knowing you are". "I was shocked. This is real life and not just a person talking like in a school"*.

Paul Carlton, Deputy Manager from EMCYP said... *"just listening to Nicola's story has made an impact and will be something they won't easily forget, particularly seeing the effect it has had on Nicola and her family. I think the young people will think twice about clicking on random links and free online games on the internet"*.



# Corporate Training

## Cops, Communities, Consent seminars

Thanks to PC's Kim Thomas and Tom Page-Brown who joined Riaz at various points this month to deliver our 'Cops Communities Consent' seminars to students at Leicester College. The seminars provided an insight into policing challenges and community responses based on case study examples. We hope to deliver more in the coming months.



## New Education Centre at Leicester Synagogue

Riaz was delighted to have an opportunity to see the recently completed education centre at the Synagogue in Highfield Street which has been set up to preserve, celebrate and share Leicester's rich Jewish heritage. Many thanks to Sam Bodily for showing Riaz around.



## Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Training

On 24th January, our first Religion & Belief in Nottinghamshire online session of 2022 took place with fire crews from West Bridgford. Thanks for keeping our communities safe.



## A Thriving Place of Welcome

A group from a church came to a facilitated conversation I ran called 'Could your Place of Worship be a Place of Welcome' in 2019 before lockdown. This church group before lockdown did sporadic coffee mornings and bric-a-brac sales. Through the facilitated conversation I encouraged them to think about starting something regularly to bring people together and support their community.

In the autumn, they came along to a Near Neighbours grants workshop. They wanted to bring the community together with a weekly drop in and a monthly community lunch. They have been successful in receiving a grant and have now registered to become a Place of Welcome and recently I had the privilege of visiting them. Let me give you a taste of what it was like. There were men from different ages playing snooker in teams together. There were sewing enthusiasts fixing sewing machines together. There were elderly people from different backgrounds sitting together eating soup and drinking tea chatting with one another. Someone was making lace with bobbins and others were asking to be shown. Pre-school children were enjoying knocking over skittles on the floor. There was a real buzz of people enjoying being together.



If you would like to find out more about Places of Welcome have a look at the website-

<https://www.placesofwelcome.org.uk> and/or get in touch with Beth Henwood at [nn2@stphilipscentre.co.uk](mailto:nn2@stphilipscentre.co.uk)

## Funding Support

All Saints' Trust

Anglican Diocese of Leicester

The Dunhill Medical Trust

The Helen Jean Cope Charity

Home Office

The J R Corah Foundation Fund

Leicester College

Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation

Leicester City Council

The Linking Network

Methodist Connexion

N C Bellefontaine Trust

Near Neighbours—(DLUHC)

Northampton District of the Methodist Church

Open Society Foundations

P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust

The United Reformed Church



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