



Faiths engage

Monthly Newsletter—Issue 67—March 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of Faiths Engage

We decided to mark International Women's Day a bit early this year, to maximise attendance owing to a busy March period. It was a lovely evening- you can read all about it in this issue. We've continued our busy programme of activities for schools and colleges and training for the police, county council, NHS as well as a CARE course. We were honoured to be visited by the Children's Commissioner and had very productive discussions about how we ensure the voices of children and young people are heard.

Finally, Maureen, our Office Manager retires later this year and we're advertising for a replacement. Do pass the information on to anyone who is interested in the role.

With every good wish.

Rev Dr Tom Wilson
Director, St Philips Centre

Corporate Work

As part of our 'Real People, Honest Talk' series of Near Neighbours engagements with young people, we held a 'Best in Business' talk at WQE College. The guest speaker was Dharmesh Lakhani from Bobby's Restaurant who explained his family's migration from Uganda to the UK and the family restaurant business which is now a famous landmark of Leicester's 'golden mile'. Also in February, we held part II of our focus groups with students at Gateway College who shared their ideas about a project which they would like us to help them deliver.

In June 2026, St Philip's Centre will mark its 20th anniversary since opening. This month we hosted a small group led by our former Trustee and Chair – Gordon Arthur— to gauge ideas about how we might mark the important landmark next year.

This was a key month for our 'Safer Faiths, Safer Followers' project. A week after we had hosted Dame Rachel D'Souza - the Children's Commissioner (see previous page) we received Katy Jackson (photo below)— Safeguarding Advisor for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Safeguarding in Faith, who was also interested in hearing about our work.

In addition to all the above, we have continued our training on Religion & Belief with various organisations— including Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board, Leicestershire County Council and Police Community Support Officers.



Children's Commissioner Visit

Since 2017, the St Philips Centre has piloted work responding to issues of safeguarding within religious organisations, as part of our Safer Faiths, Safer Followers project. We have seen good progress but the need for support in developing safeguarding policies and procedures remains significant. The role of St Philip's Centre has been to encourage and assist where we can, as each organisation is independent and responsible for their own safeguarding. Our inter-religious approach is pioneering and is only possible in a city like Leicester, where people of so many religious perspectives live in such proximity to each other.



It was a great pleasure to welcome the Children's Commissioner for England to the Centre in February. We shared details of our project and its impact with Dame Rachel and colleagues. We chose this topic because of the importance of ensuring religious communities keep children safe and the fact that concerns about child sexual exploitation have made inter-religious relationships challenging in recent years. We had a great discussion and some useful visits to places of worship, to bring the learning to life.

Interfaith Poetry

I enjoyed spending a few hours at "We are the headliners" poetry event at Leicester Central Library on Saturday 15th February. Poetry has a way of opening up conversation and ways of thinking that prose cannot touch. Here are some snippets to get you thinking:

Do you only agree with what agrees with you?
We're addicted to our own selfish views....

Have you heard the sound of silence as it whispers in the dark?

We all belong here- a rich bouquet of diversity.

The radiant flash of bird's wings enhances sullen clouds.

Relaxation in the absence of questions.

We all love the variety of food we eat.
So why don't we love the variety of cooks?

Not just thinking outside the box but seeing no box or boundary.



Tom Wilson

International Women's Day

On Tuesday 25th February thirty four ladies and men came to St Philip's Centre's International Women's Day event held at Christchurch Clarendon Park.

We heard from three inspirational speakers:

- Mezmin Malida, a self supporting charity worker and Community Champion shared her passion and desire to make the quality of life better for others. She has broken through stereotypes for Muslim women to achieve her dreams of supporting the vulnerable in her community.
- Vanessa Bardsley, Executive Principal of Avanti Trust schools in Leicester told how she had broken down barriers that women face in academia, showing the difference one person can make by thinking outside the box when it came to promotions, encouraging job share and flexibility in working for both men and women within her schools.
- Dr. Camille London-Miyo is a leading light for black educators, co-founding the Phoenix Agenda school, Co-leading the Teaching to Transform Programme and so much more. Through her story she showed that no matter your stage in life, you can keep going to reach the stars. She also highlighted the fact that racism in education is still a major problem and talked about her lifelong work in challenging this. Her passion and desire to make a difference shone through.



Cathryn Parsons

Education Work

Since the start of 2025, we have kept our faith practitioners and places of worship busy with school activities. So far, 13 schools have visited between one and three places of worship in a single day, along with a visit by trainee teachers, four faith workshops, a "World in One Street" visit to Narborough Road, and four roadshows. We extend our gratitude to our faith practitioners and places of worship for their continued support. Here are images from some of those activities:



Dunton Bassett World in One Street - 23rd Jan 2025



One of the three visits to places of worship by Burton-On-The-Wolds Primary School



Roadshow visits - St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Mansfield

In addition to the above, St Philip's team of faith practitioners delivered a Roadshow at Haven High Academy. This is what the teacher had to say:

"I am glad the team enjoyed the day. Our students all had very positive things to say about the day. They really enjoyed asking questions and one student commented that it was the best day she had ever had at school, with another saying he thought it was incredibly interesting. In fact, the most overwhelming comment was that the students wanted longer and more time as they were so interested."

Head of Humanities, Haven High Academy



Vacancy—SPC Office Manager

St Philip's Centre is an ecumenical Christian charity set up in 2006 and is rooted in the multi-faith environment of Leicester, the UK's most ethnically diverse city. Its primary aim is to help people learn how to live well together. We work to promote positive interfaith relationships and understanding.

We are recruiting someone to act as Office Manager and Company Secretary, to run our office and administrative support functions. We are looking for someone who enjoys engaging with all kinds of people and who has patience, a calm manner, a good sense of humour, and can multi-task to meet the needs of the Centre.

- Are you a motivated self-starter with an eye for both detail and planning ahead?
- Do you enjoy working in a busy office?
- Does the Centre's vision of helping people learn how to live well together inspire you?

Full details of the role are at:

<https://www.charityjob.co.uk/jobs/st-philip-s-centre-ltd/office-manager/1008530?tsld=6>

Shortlisted candidates will be notified by Wednesday 2nd April and interviews will take place on Monday 7th April.

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The Anglican Diocese of Leicester;

The Garfield Weston Foundation;

The Home Office;

The Keswick Hall Trust;

Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation

The N C Bellefontaine Trust;

The National Lottery Heritage Fund;

The Northampton District of the Methodist Church;

The P & C Hickinbotham Charitable Trust;



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