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Federation of RE Centres

Letter from the Chair - Summer 2018

Hello and welcome to the 2018-2019 FREC News Digest!

My thanks to Ken Johnson for his work on this and to all who have contributed to it with articles, comments, photos, news or views.

My thanks also to you - whether you are a full, or an associated member. The FREC is only as strong as its membership and today, despite shrinking budgets, staff changes (and the loss of the Gloucester Centre) we are a relatively robust group.

As you will know, the world of RE has negotiated many challenges over the years. The Religious Education Council (REC) and many other agencies are currently supporting the work of the national RE Commission. We have a voice in this process through our representatives Chris Boxley and Lydia Revett.. If you have particular views on the Commission or anything to do with the REC then please do get in touch.

We have also seen changes of priorities in many Dioceses over the last year. There are common national strands and increasing local diversity of courses and training. Stronger mission initiatives and fewer staff have led to new pressures and needs in this context that some of us are trying to support. If resourcing this is something that you are struggling with (or making successes in the support of) then it would be good to hear from you.

Some of us work in multi-faith contexts. I believe we have much to learn from each other as we support a diverse number, and range, of faith communities and groups in a world that, in the press at least, seems to be becoming less respectful and more polarised. If your Centre has any home grown guidance that you think we would be able to share nationally please do send it over - sometimes the work that is done locally is essential and pioneering. The point of our Federation is mutual support and care - if we can help each other and share good practice then I believe our £10 a year is already well spent!

In the midst of these challenges we beaver away. Quietly but expertly supporting children, teachers, schools, churches, faith groups and a wide range of other people and organisations that use our services.

We clearly owe a huge debt of thanks to Lydia for her sterling work as Chair over the last few years and for the wisdom that she still offers at the end of an email. We also give thanks to Sean (Treasurer), Simon (Membership), Dave (website) and Chris (REC) for all they currently do to steer our small but well resourced fleet of centres over an uncertain but adventurous sea.

I am hoping that under my tenure as Chair the FREC grows and strengthens. If you have any views on how we might do that, how we can support each other or if you have any updates on your Centres that you would like me to share in my termly email please do email me: I would be very happy to hear from you.

See you in Winchester in 2019 (for details please see P10!)

Karenza Passmore



Handing over the baton.....

Reflections as an ex-Chair of FREC

Unbelievably it has been twelve years since I was persuaded in 2005 by Ian Knight (who then ran the Winchester Diocesan Resources Room) to take over as chair from Shirley Nicholls ...

“don't worry, all you'll have to do is to chair an annual business meeting; we'll do everything else”.

And so it began ... However, my responsibilities gradually changed, with the departure of the personnel at our member centres who ably managed the finances, membership and newsletters, to latterly feeling as if I was almost single-handedly keeping FREC going. So, as my energy waned, it was with much relief that I handed the baton of chair over to the unstoppable Karenza Passmore in January. What a phenomenon - she seems to have more enthusiasm and drive in her little finger than I can summon up in total on a good day! I know that FREC is in good hands and will go from strength to strength ...

Some happy memories and some thoughts on closures

Since joining what was originally the *Federation of National and Regional Religious Education Centres - Southern Regional Group* on my appointment to the post of Hampshire's RE Centre Manager back in 2001, I have enjoyed many conferences and day meetings.

The highlights for me would include (for amusing photos of these visits, see the [newsletter archive on our website](#)):

- driving to meetings with Ian Knight, navigator *extraordinaire*
- the majesty of Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden
- experiencing Wintershall's *The life of Christ* Regent's Park Mosque
- Walsingham and Sutton Hoo
- Charles Darwin's home at Down House
- a laughter workshop at Clear Vision in Manchester
- Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre
- Mappa Mundi in Hereford Cathedral (followed by a drink or three in a pub in Ludlow, Mell!?)
- meeting Cloud at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Newcastle
- visits to numerous other places of worship across the country
- exploring the resources in many of our centres including St Alban's, Banbury, Bristol, Brunel, Croydon, Gloucester, Guildford, Ipswich, London, Hereford, Wells, Nottingham and Durham.



The overall sense when we get together is of mutual support and camaraderie from a group of people spread over considerable geographical distances, often lone workers. We manage to make some time in our busy diaries to meet once in a while for CPD in world faiths, sharing of knowledge, networking and support. Whatever the itinerary at our meetings, a highlight is the sight of colleagues browsing the shelves of each other's centres, asking questions, making appreciative noises and notes of resources to take 'back to the ranch'. And that has been and will continue to be a joy.

It has also been a deep sadness to see dedicated people have to close down their centres for financial or other reasons. This is a result of pressures we are all under. So we who remain should be proud to be in the fortunate position of continuing our work in these fulfilling roles.

It has also been fascinating to attend the meetings of the Religious Education Council along with my fellow FREC rep Chris Boxley for the last eleven years, to see how an organisation made up of such diverse faith and professional bodies comes together for the benefit of religious education across England and Wales. It is important to remember that as an REC member, FREC has a voice concerning RE at a national level so, as passionate supporters, we should make our voice heard.

I'm sure I will see many of you next year in Winchester (details of this appear elsewhere in this newsletter) and at future events.

Every good wish for FREC's future, which is in good hands.

Lydia Revett

FREC Membership Secretary writes....

I was very happy to take over Stephanie Maddison's duties as Membership Secretary of FREC, especially since she left everything in apple pie pie order, and filled me in comprehensively on everything she did in this role.

I've also enjoyed working with FREC Treasurer Sean Smith, developing new ideas.

At Sean's suggestion, I've recently scanned through the membership of ABTAPL as represented on their website, and contacted a number of the centres listed that fit the FREC membership model. It is early days, but I've received some positive responses to these approaches, and also approaches to likely centres that are not part of ABTAPL.

Drawing on my experiences working as the Quaker representative on Durham Churches Together, an ecumenical group, it occurred to me that FREC member centres might appreciate a certificate to display, to show that they are members: the certificate is now well on in the planning stage.

As the RRC staff member who has prepared the centre's response to new GDPR Data Protection legislation, I have reviewed FREC's data handling procedures and devised a paragraph of Data Protection information to be displayed on the FREC website: this states that the FREC is compliant with the new legislation, and reminds data providers of their rights vis a vis our use of their data.

I look forward to meeting FREC colleagues at the Conference next year!

FREC Membership Officer, Simon Webb

FREC Treasurer reports....

All expenditure was authorised by the Treasurer and FREC Officers. The 2016-2017 accounts have been examined and passed by an independent person as required. There were no issues to report.

Efforts have been made during the last financial year to strengthen and promote the FREC as agreed at the FREC Conference in 2017. There has been no significant expenditure related to this and membership income has remained stable.

The bank used by the FREC have notified us of their GDPR compliance via a statement to the Treasurer as main signatory. This can be forwarded to other signatories upon request.

Bank Reconciliation 1st July 2017 – 30th April 2018

Opening Balance 1st July 17	£1015.11
Income	£110.00
Expenditure	£166.30
Closing Balance 16th April 18	£958.81

Income is from membership subscriptions.

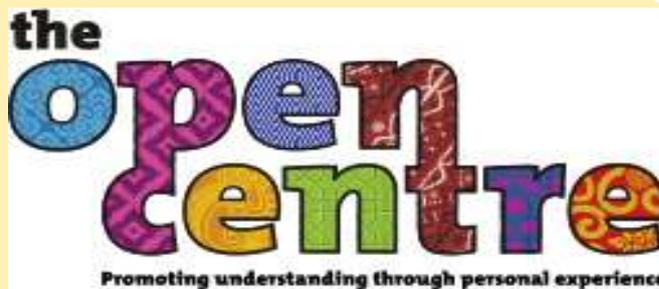
Expenditure is for:

Religious Education Council subscription pledge: £99 NERLRC Ltd invoice for the 2017 conference: £67.30;

FREC treasurer's statement from Sean Smith

WELCOME TO DERBY'S OPEN CENTRE

www.derbyopencentre.org



This has been another busy year for the Open Centre in Derby which has hosted over 11,000 visitors, aged from 5 to adults, on their faith tours of the places of worship in central Derby. The local Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Baptist communities have warmly welcomed our visitors giving them an insight into their faith and traditions



Some of our schools have also ventured over to Nottingham to be hosted by the Liberal Jewish community there. We have hosted schools visiting from as far as Shropshire and Birmingham, taking advantage of the fact that we have so many places of worship in walking distance of each other. As well as hosting visitors in Derby, we have run over 150 workshops out at schools across Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

Children have tasted a host of foods, danced, sang, met new languages, made a variety of objects such as diva lamps and Wesak lanterns, and tried on traditional clothing.

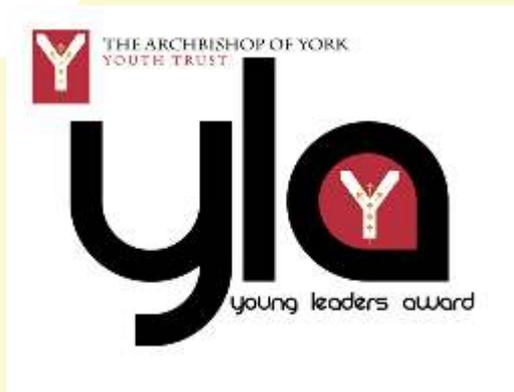
We have also run sessions for student teachers and existing teachers covering Faith through the Arts, diversity training and the deepening of subject knowledge. On top of this, we have organised faith talks across the area and schools have also hired our lottery funded 'Our Heritage' mobile exhibition where children get to hear from Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh and Humanist Derby families. We have been so busy that we have taken on new staff and volunteers from the Muslim, Sikh and Jewish communities to cater for the enquiries we receive.



The next academic year is also shaping up to be a busy one with schools planning ahead and booking for 2019. A variety of new workshops are being planned such as Welcoming a Baby, the 5 Ks and Turban tying and Hindu Worship. We hope to further develop our links with partner organisations such as Derby Cathedral, the Faith and Belief Forum and, of course, the Federation of RE Centres.

Eve Sacker - Deputy Manager





The **Young Leaders Award** is an active citizenship programme that empowers young people to make a difference in their local communities by developing their leadership skills and character virtues and encouraging them to 'be the change they want to see'.

The Award enables pupils to develop key life skills and foster a desire for justice and a concern for others that will transform lives and communities.

Pupils learn about leadership skills and inspirational leaders, they explore the needs of their local, national and global communities and are challenged to take action and make a difference through personal, school and community challenges.

The Award is available for **KS2**, with a new KS1 Award launching in **January 2019**.

Young Leaders Award schools are provided with a comprehensive set of resources and support from the **Archbishop of York Youth Trust** team.



Find out more at www.abyyt.co.uk or contact rozy.brian@abyyt.com



There will be celebrations to mark the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower on 16th September 2020.

By visiting the website below you can find out events which are planned around the country and there is a tab with educational ideas as well

<https://www.mayflower400uk.org/>



**WELCOME TO
PLYMOUTH CENTRE FOR FAITHS AND CULTURAL
DIVERSITY**

Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity was established as a charitable trust in June 2001. A trustee group oversees the Centre with its members being drawn from six different faith communities across the city.

The Centre is founded upon the principles of interfaith understanding and dialogue, supported by the values of mutual respect and compassion. The main aim is to promote awareness, understanding and education of religious and cultural diversity and to explore common values and a vision for the future well-being of the community.

The Centre seeks to create a resource where people, and especially the young, can experience and be moved by the opportunity to deepen awareness and understanding of belief, faith and culture. Through this rich diversity we can see the common thread of human/spiritual values that underpin what it means to be human. The values that ensure the future security and well-being of our local and global community.

“You can only be safe and secure in a society that practises tolerance, cherishes harmony and celebrate difference.” Rabbi Hugo Gryn

Over the past seventeen years the Centre’s work has grown exponentially and now focuses on providing, each year, over five-hundred sessions to schools in Plymouth and more widely across Devon and Cornwall run by Faith Speakers and visits to places of worship such as Plymouth Synagogue and PIETy Islamic Centre, for pupils of all ages, thus developing Religious Education and religious literacy across the community.

The Centre has a “bank” of around forty Faith and Cultural Speakers drawn from a wide range of majority and minority communities across the city. All the speakers are trained in-house and supported with regular CPD sessions and feedback.

Schools report such interactions provides a significant contribution to community cohesion and the development of British values, in particular; the promotion of respect and understanding of people with different faiths, cultures and beliefs.

As one Head teacher put it;

“Our children (and teachers too) are enriched by meeting and getting to know people who are not like them!”

We work to support schools and young people in understanding the rich diversity of faith and culture whilst appreciating our local and national heritage; essential learning in order for young people to play an active role in a diverse 21st century Britain.

We currently have over 70 schools that subscribe to our services each year through our 4-tier subscription system as well as a large number of schools and other establishments who use our services on a Pay-As-You-Use basis.

This is a unique service and achievement which was recognised in 2008 in the Queens New Years Honours List, when the founder, Jonathan Marshall was awarded an MBE for services to the community. To the best of our knowledge, there is no similar service providing such opportunities for young people anywhere else in the country.

The Centre also offers adult training, running Understanding Islam courses and supporting the Prevent Agenda by providing experienced Trainers to facilitate the successful Workshops to Raise Awareness of Prevent.

Sara Wells (Centre Manager) and Yukio Yoshioka (Bookings Assistant)



Plymouth Centre for
Faiths & Cultural Diversity



The Nottinghamshire RE Centre is self-financing and as with other FREC centres ,we offer loans of which are collected then returned by schools to the Vine Community Centre. Our subscribers select from our range of artefacts on line, but this service is not sufficiently viable by itself.

The Centre started to offer the Faith Experiences to schools, which makes us a viable centre, quite a few years ago and FREC visited us in Nottingham as we were staring out on this in 2010 . We offer this service to schools and transform a classroom / hall into a representation of a place of worship of the faith requested. Our sessions last up to 2 hours, though with younger children a shorter time can be more appropriate, but we do negotiate with the schools about their aims and objectives.

Below you can see how we might do this :-



During the experience we encourage the pupils to think what it is like in the “place of worship” we have created and why certain things have to be done. We prefer to work with a maximum of 30 young people at once as this makes it more personal which increases participation.

We offer some interactive parts of the session, depending upon the religion being studied. We also try to offer things which would not happen in the place of worship on a visit by a school. It takes us around 45 minutes to complete the makeover. We explore the “place of worship” together learning about the place and the faith through this. We show a film of the real place of worship and talk about the similarities and Differences,

We do hands on - where they touch items connected with the faith and find out more through this. Our feely bag session is where they feel and, if time permits draw their object without seeing it and so learn about the faith as we discuss their findings





Sometimes we are asked to provide an opening lesson to a period of study on the faith, other times it comes part way through the learning or else as a climax to the study. All children receive a post-card to say they have been on the experience and we give the school material to follow up with as well as suggesting various activities during the workshop.



Our work is to encourage schools to visit places of worship where that is possible, we do not try to replace a visit to the real place of worship. Through charging for these experiences, the Centre raises the finances it needs to meet our overheads.



Some schools, also ask us to develop a special theme within the experience which might mean that we have to find materials to use in a creative manner.

Some schools use experiences up to 4 times a year as they find it beneficial. We work with around 3,000 young people a year, mainly in Primary Schools but we have done GCSE Revision on Islam as well as working in Special Schools. We have been invited into schools across our County & the City of Nottingham as well as neighbouring areas..



We do not have any salaried staff and are grateful to those who assist us in various ways to stimulate and inform young people about the rich diversity of faith in our society.

What do teachers say about Faith Experiences?

“The nearest experience the children could get to going to a Gurdwara without actually going. They were gripped – thank you!” “A fantastic immersive day for all children” Holy Trinity RC Academy Newark

“A truly worthwhile experience for pupils living in a community that is basically non religious. Fantastic experience that was delivered at an age appropriate level for the children.” Poolsbrook School Derbyshire on Hanukah

“ A parent watching the session said it was fantastic, that the children gained a lot by being involved in drama, movement and looking at artefacts .” St John’s Primary Worksop

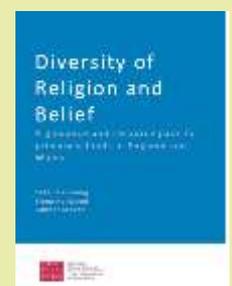
“A great range of resources and topics covered- with engaging delivery- a wonderful experience. which helped bring learning to life for the children.” John Harrison Barrow Upon Humber

“Fantastic way to give students a wide range of experiences. “ Derbyshire Special School

“Fantastic staff CPD! Children all engaged and very enthusiastic. “ Retford

We were invited to address a meeting at Warwick University to speak on the need for RE teachers to be qualified as well as sharing the work done through Faith Experiences as well as attending the Lincolnshire teachers RE Hub to share our work.

We were invited to become involved with the work from Cardiff University which resulted on the publication: “Diversity of Religion and Belief “.. A Guidance and resource pack for primary schools in England and Wales. In this you can see more pictures of our work.



Ken Johnson

New Developments from

north east Religious Resources

your religious learning resources centre



The Religious Resources Centre in the North East continues to develop new, bespoke resources and last year added 40 new home grown topic bags to their collection. Here are some new resources they have launched over the last year topic boxes/bags:-

Bible Eggsplorers: The Church family



This is a great resource in teaching who is who in the church and what their jobs are. It has fun activities and teachers notes and uses these fun egg figures that kids love to play with!

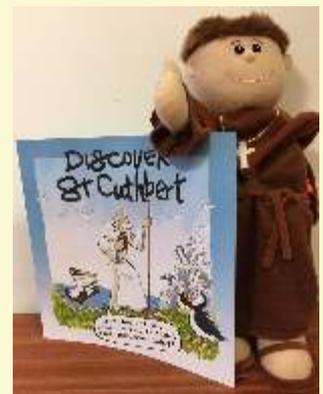


Saint Peter's Topic box -

This creates and dramatises the dream scene where God teaches Peter that it is ok for him to converse and teach about God with Gentiles and Non-Jews and eat any animal, not just kosher ones!

Discover Saint Cuthbert Topic bag

- Is good fun with a Monk puppet and an interactive story telling book of Saint Cuthbert's life story!



Trinity Topic bag

- Exploring the Trinity using wooden symbols and a copy of the Nicene Creed.

FREC IN WINCHESTER 2019

Dates: Thursday 4 & Friday 5 July 2019

Staying at:

Winchester Premier Inn (1 mile out of centre), or

Winchester Wessex Hotel (close to Cathedral)

Delegates book their own accommodation & travel.

Draft itinerary:

Lunchtime arrival **Thursday 4 July**

Lydia to collect from station – visit Winchester Diocesan

**Resources Room, talk by Cheryl Bryan (Cathedral Education Officer),
Cathedral Learning Centre, visit to Winchester Cathedral.**

Optional walk to St Cross Hospital.

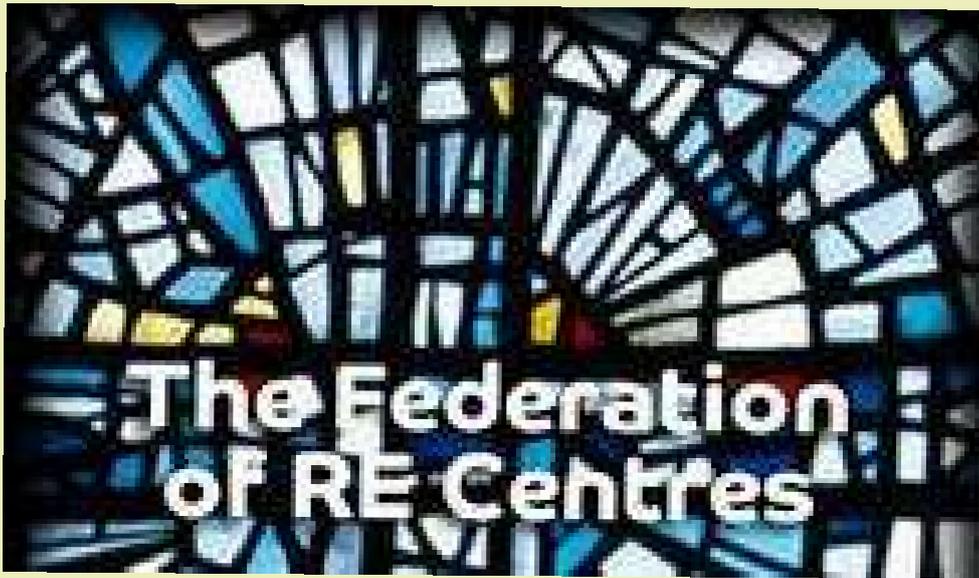
Dinner in Winchester (self pay)

**Friday 5 July - transport to Hampshire County RE Centre, browse,
business meeting, meet Hampshire RE inspector(s) to talk about
resourcing RE in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth & Isle of Wight**

Lunchtime departure Friday 5 July



Hampshire RE Centre above



Directory

- Chair: Karenza Passmore k.passmore@resourcescentreonline.co.uk
- Treasurer Sean Smith sean.smith@resourcescentreonline.co.uk
- Membership Simon Webb simon.webb@resourcescentreonline.co.uk
- REC reps Chris Boxley / Lydia Revett / Emma McVittie
- Newsletter Ken Johnson info@rsresources.org.uk

FREC Members

Please check your centre's contact details on the website:
<http://www.recentres.org.uk/pages/members.html>

Any amendments to Membership Secretary by email
simon.webb@resourcescentreonline.co.uk