

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin July 2022

The e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly within the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com

CAFOD LAUNCHES WORLD FOOD CRISIS APPEAL AS MILLIONS FACE SEVERE HUNGER

Laura Ouseley 20 June 2022

Millions of people are facing a food crisis that could be worse than any we've lived through. All around the world families are finding it harder than ever to put food on the table. In Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan, up to 20 million people are fighting for their very survival.

The Catholic aid agency, CAFOD, has responded by launching a World Food Crisis Appeal - which aims to raise urgent funds to support those facing acute hunger, help people rebuild their lives, and encourage people to take action that can help build a better, fairer food system that works for everyone.

In East Africa, many of the people worst affected have been learning to cope with the impact of climate change for years - but collapsing supply chains, on top of four consecutive years of unbearable drought, have put everything they've worked for at risk.

CAFOD is responding to the World Food Crisis in countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Christine Allen, CAFOD's Executive Director, has just returned from seeing the impact of the food crisis in northern Kenya. She said: "Even before the war in Ukraine started, the food system was in crisis and the impact of climate change was making it harder for those who grow most of the world's produce to put food on their own plates. The effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine are trickling down the already stressed food system, and the poorest are feeling it most acutely.

"In some of the places I visited in northern Kenya, it has only rained a matter of minutes in the last two years. Climate change has devastated the region. The majority of people I met had already lost their precious livestock to the drought. The women in Tulidimtu village mourned their camel's death like they would a friend's. Livestock are like a savings account and in a drought, the death of livestock is often followed by the death of people.

"This crisis was not inevitable and is a result of human action. Firstly, the UK Government and international donors must address the funding gap in East Africa: UK aid to the region has almost halved in the past year due to budget cuts. The root causes of the crisis must also be addressed, including tackling climate change, fixing our broken food system, and providing more funding to community level responses."

The world food crisis is affecting people all around the world - but as with all crises, the most vulnerable are hit hardest. In a remote, mountainous village in Afghanistan, CAFOD is supporting families with cash so that they are able to buy food from the local market. One father told us: "We did not have enough food for days. We had only bread for two mealtimes. For another mealtime, my children would eat grasses. My wife and my boy are hospitalised for eating grasses. Doctors said that their stomachs have problems and their intestines are damaged."

For more information and to donate to CAFOD's World Food Crisis Appeal see: www.cafod.org.uk/foodcrisis
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/44942>

AID AGENCIES PROTEST AT G7 FAILURE TO ADDRESS GLOBAL FOOD SHORTAGE

Source: CAFOD/Christian Aid 29 June 2022

Both CAFOD and Christian Aid have expressed grave concern at the failure of the G7 Leaders' Summit to adequately address the looming global food shortage.

Graham Gordon, Head of Policy at CAFOD, said: "We welcome G7 leaders' focus on the food crisis in Eastern Africa, caused by drought and spiralling food and fuel prices, but the money pledged to help is a drop in the ocean of what is needed. Governments must act with the same urgency and generosity as they did responding to Ukraine and must ensure funds reach local organisations rooted in the communities affected. Aid pledged through the UN and World Bank is also welcome, but it won't reach frontline local responders unless deliberate steps are taken to ensure this happens.

"The G7 summit also failed to address the flaws in our global food system. The G7 spend billions propping up our failing industrial food system but to prevent future crisis they must shift this finance towards more diverse, local food systems that are more resilient to shocks. G7 countries also need to tackle the market failures that send food prices spiralling upwards, such as excessive speculation on food commodities and the lack of transparency by companies and investors on grain stocks."

Christian Aid has said the G7's \$4.5 billion pledge to tackle global hunger amounts to "chasing headlines" despite millions more at increasing risk of famine. Christian Aid's Head of Global Policy and Advocacy, Fiona Smyth, said: "The hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa is deteriorating quickly. Even though people across the region are on the brink of famine due to severe climate-induced drought and the war in Ukraine, world leaders have once again failed to act with the urgency and scale needed. Just like the \$7bn committed by the G7 in the Famine Compact to end starvation just last year, there is no indication of where this year's \$4.5bn money is coming from or when it will reach people desperately in need. Chasing headlines doesn't save lives. Equally, world leaders must tackle the overlapping nature of the climate crisis and global hunger by delivering on new climate finance. If the COP27 summit later this year is going to truly tackle the climate crisis, we need more than hot air to address loss and damage."

With four failed back-to-back rainy seasons, the Horn of Africa is suffering the worst drought in 40 years. In addition, the war in Ukraine has escalated conditions by pushing up the cost of food and fuel prices. The UN estimates 18.4m people face food insecurity.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45004>

The G7 leaders' statement on global food security can be found here. www.politico.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/28/2022-06-28-statement-on-global-food-security-data.pdf

DOWN TO EARTH: HOW WORLD LEADERS JUST WENT BACKWARD ON CLIMATE

With all eyes on Ukraine, our planet lost out at this week's G7 summit

Fiona Harvey *the Guardian*: Taking place in the shadow of the war in Ukraine, this year's G7 leaders' meeting was always going to be a fraught affair. But where the global climate is concerned, this year's meet proved even worse than expected, reversing progress made in recent years and leaving the outlook for global climate action increasingly uncertain.

G7 countries agreed at Schloss Elmau in Germany that they would continue to offer finance for the exploration of fossil fuel reserves, giving a green light that is directly contrary to expert advice. Last year, the International Energy Agency warned that no new fossil fuel exploration and development could take place from this year on if the world was to limit global heating to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, in line with scientific advice and with the resolutions made at the UN Cop26 climate summit last November in Glasgow.

The central problem is this: Vladimir Putin's actions have left key countries, Germany the biggest among them, with a gas supply crunch and soaring prices. G7 countries want to exploit fossil fuel resources in other countries, particularly the developing world, to ease that crunch and bring down prices. Developing countries are also keen for this finance. But new exploration will only lock in high carbon dioxide emissions from these fossil fuel resources for years to come, long after the immediate consequences of the Ukraine war have passed.

In an illustration of how fluid the situation is, G7 energy ministers had agreed to stop taxpayer-funded fossil fuel financing overseas by the end of this year, at their meeting in May. But at the insistence of German chancellor Olaf Scholz, this commitment – which would have sent \$33bn to help with renewable energy development – was reversed on Monday.

Germany is in a tricky position. If Russia turns off the gas taps completely, as Vladimir Putin has threatened, the consequences this winter could be dire. Already, the country is returning to coal-fired electricity in response.

The situation is not helped by the decision close to a decade ago, after the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan, to shut down all of Germany's nuclear reactors. Any option of keeping a few of the remaining power stations open a little longer seems to have been discounted. Whatever one's opinions of nuclear power in the long-term, in the short term this throws Germany even further into reliance on fossil fuels.

Green campaigners slammed Germany's reversal. Laurie van der Burg, co-lead on global public finance at Oil Change International, said: "The G7 under the leadership of Chancellor Scholz has prioritised filling the pockets of the fossil gas industry over protecting people's lives. Investing in new gas infrastructure is not a viable strategy to reduce Russian fossil fuel imports – these projects take years to build and do not support energy security in the long run. Renewable energy and efficiency solutions can be deployed faster, better serve development and energy access needs, and do not come with the stranded assets and financial stability risks of fossil gas."

"The G7 countries have once again proved that they are morally bankrupt and have no real intention to solve the climate crisis and take responsibility for this crisis caused by their disproportionate use and relentless support for fossil fuels," Tasneem Essop, executive director of the Climate Action Network, added. "It is simply selfish for high emitters to continue to squander the remaining, and rapidly diminishing, carbon budget beyond their fair share with their use of fossil fuels."

Down to Earth info@email.theguardian.com

PALESTINE/HOLY LAND

Pat Devlin: Source Sabeel-Kairos

We have all watched in horror as the war in Ukraine has unfolded before our eyes on our television screens and I doubt if anyone would oppose the swift action of western governments to impose sanctions on Russia – even if the cost of them will be felt in our own countries and many would urge our government to go further.

However, we have to ask why this has not been the response to other situations of injustice, violent oppression and human rights abuses. When it comes to our government we think particularly of the situation in Israel Palestine because of the British historical role which has been a major contributory factor leading to the current situation described at the UN in March of this year as follows:

Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, said the report addressed the question as to whether Israel's acquisitive and repressive practices over the course of its 55-year-old regime had curdled from an endless occupation into something darker, harsher and more ominous. He had concluded that the political system of entrenched rule in the occupied Palestinian territory satisfied the prevailing evidentiary standard for the existence of apartheid. First, an institutionalised regime of systematic racial oppression and discrimination has been established. Second, this system of alien rule had been established with the intent to maintain the domination of one racial-national-ethnic group over another. And third, the imposition of this system of institutionalised discrimination with the intent of permanent domination had been built upon the regular practice of inhuman(e) acts. This was apartheid. With the eyes of the international community wide open, Israel had imposed upon Palestine an apartheid reality in a post-apartheid world.

We may often feel powerless in the face of human inhumanity but we are not helpless here, there are 2 actions we can take in relation to our Church and State:

1. We can write to our MPs about the Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions Bill

In the Queen's Speech on 10 May, the Government introduced its Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Bill, which would prevent public bodies from taking ethical investment decisions regarding climate, arms and human rights concerns. This is very problematic in the Palestinian context when we know that many European companies profit from the occupation of the Palestinian people and could also negatively impact on our campaign Investing for Peace. Sabeel-Kairos are part of the large Right to Boycott Campaign, made up of churches, climate activists and Palestinian rights groups to oppose this legislation. Find our statement here: <https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/write-to-your-mp-oppose-the-anti-boycott-bill/> Please write to your MP now to oppose this legislation.

2. We can take action in our dioceses re divestment from companies profiting from the Occupation

Sabeel Kairos UK write: We believe that Morally Responsible Investment is a means of peaceful resistance that will one day bring Peace and Justice to the Holy Land. There are campaign groups for each denomination and the Catholic Group urgently need a wider spread of dioceses represented because investments in our Church are dealt with at diocesan level. Pax Christi wrote to all diocesan finance officers about this before COVID and we have been developing relations with the new Catholic Fund created by investment advisors CCLA whom many dioceses are now using. We are keen to look broadly at putting a human rights screen in place and to work in cooperation with the fossil fuel divestment campaign You don't have to be a financial wizard to take action in your diocese It's more important to be convinced of the moral imperative – so please consider joining the Catholic Campaign group.

The meetings are roughly bi-monthly by zoom. If you would like to know more, please email Phoebe at advocacy@sabeel-kairos.org.uk or contact Pat Devlin on patdev48@btinternet.com

Action - Condemn racist Israeli 'flag marches'

A few weeks ago we witnessed Israel's 'flag march' - a disturbing annual occurrence where Israelis celebrate their military occupation of East Jerusalem by parading through Palestinian neighbourhoods. The parade is invariably marked by the chanting of racist slogans - such as "death to Arabs" and "we will burn your villages" - and harassing of Palestinian residents. Around 25,000 Israelis took part in this year's march, which celebrates the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967. East Jerusalem is internationally recognised as Palestinian land, and ongoing attempts to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from their city is a war crime.

See: <https://www.radio.gov.pk/30-05-2022/palestinians-pm-condemns-israeli-flag-march-in-jerusalem>

We can't let this provocation go unnoticed in parliament, so have asked our MP allies to table Early Day Motion (EDM) 153 decrying this horrific event.

Motion text: That this House condemns the annual Israeli flag march through Palestinian neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem marked by widespread racist chants, including death to Arabs and we will burn your village; further condemns the frequent attacks on Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem by marchers, and attacks on journalists, including this year a BBC crew filming the event; notes with deep concern the endorsement and participation in the march of members of successive Israeli Governments; further notes the failure of the Israeli Government to issue its own condemnation of these events and to take action to prevent them, and believes this failure is indicative of broader discrimination against Palestinians in government policy which Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory have all concluded to be the crime of apartheid against the Palestinian people. <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/59857>

Please ask your MP to sign this motion. To date (30 June) this motion has been supported by 16 Scottish National MPs, 2 English Labour and 2 English Independent MPs.

COMMEMORATING THE NAKBA

Heather Kiernan writes: On 15 May we commemorate the Nakba —the Palestinian people’s violent and catastrophic displacement in 1948—and remember all those who have suffered and continue to suffer the injustices perpetrated against the Palestinian people.

Since then, Palestinian poets and writers, musicians, and visual artists have reflected the sentiments of loss, displacement, and nostalgia as well as of dignity, defiance, and steadfastness in their work.

Fadwa Tuqan’s poem, “*The Deluge and the Tree*,” is an overarching metaphor for Palestine and the Nakba.

As the “deluge” and “hurricane” of war assault the tree, it nevertheless stands steadfast, and its roots remain alive and growing.

The Palestinians are drawn back to this mother tree, which is lush with green leaves growing abundantly in the sun. They are like birds that return home to claim their birthright; in fact, the last line of the poem is “The birds shall return.”

THE DELUGE AND THE TREE ~ Fadwa Tuqan

When the hurricane swirled and spread its deluge
of dark evil
onto the good green land
'they' gloated. The western skies
reverberated with joyous accounts:
'The Tree has fallen!
The great trunk is smashed! The hurricane leaves no life in the Tree!

'Had the Tree really fallen?
Never! Not with our red streams flowing forever,
not while the wine of our thorn limbs
fed the thirsty roots,
Arab roots alive
tunnelling deep, deep, into the land!

When the Tree rises up, the branches
shall flourish green and fresh in the sun
the laughter of the Tree shall leaf
beneath the sun
and birds shall return.
Undoubtedly, the birds shall return.
The birds shall return.

PRAISE AS HEALTH SECRETARY BREAKS THE SILENCE AROUND SUICIDE

Health Secretary Sajid Javid MP has been praised for delivering a moving speech described as a seismic shift in the conversation around suicide. The national charity POPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide says Mr Javid’s decision to open up about his own brother’s death will empower others to break the silence.

The Health and Social Care Secretary shared his family tragedy at the launch of a new suicide prevention strategy for England at an event hosted by POPYRUS. The charity’s Chief Executive, Ged Flynn, said: “A senior, serving minister in the government sharing his experience of losing his own brother Tariq to suicide four years ago was public exposure of deeply personal and private pain. “The significance of his speech cannot be overstated. It was a seismic shift in the societal conversation. When somebody in such a high-profile position of leadership in our country dares to break the silence around suicide and links that to their own personal story, stigma is reduced. Sajid Javid said that ‘keeping quiet can kill.’ Many stay silent, suffering privately with thoughts of ending their own lives. We want people to speak about and ask about suicide, seek help and find it.”

Mr Javid was at the London offices of POPYRUS to announce a new strategy for England focussing on reducing suicides. Ahead of his speech he attended a round table event at which key stakeholders in suicide prevention shared their ideas for the new action plan. During his visit the Health Secretary also had a private meeting with parents bereaved by suicide including Harry Biggs-Davison, the Chair of Trustees at POPYRUS, whose son Patrick took his own life. He also met Philip Pirie whose son Tom died by suicide. Mr Pirie had been asking for a meeting with Mr Javid to respond to calls for a review of flawed clinical suicide assessments.

POPYRUS, which is marking 25 years since it was founded by a group of bereaved parents, says it was honoured to welcome Mr Javid and key stakeholders and welcomes the new suicide prevention strategy.

“Government has recognised its own responsibility to prioritise suicide prevention and support for those who need it. Like the Secretary of State, POPYRUS refuses to be silent. Sajid Javid’s brave speech is a game-changer. It must now be matched with a brave, ambitious action plan which impels all parties, all government departments, all communities and every citizen to play their part,” added Ged Flynn.

POPYRUS is eager to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to contribute to the current consultation on mental health. The charity is particularly keen to hear the views of young people. The deadline is 11.45pm on 7 July 2022: <https://consultations.dhsc.gov.uk/623ac367ea9bcd4c024d6df9>

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/praise-as-health-secretary-breaks-the-silence-around-suicide/>

SAJID JAVID TELLS OF HEARTACHE OVER BROTHER'S SUICIDE

Andrew Gregory, Health editor the *Guardian* 26 June 2022

Sajid Javid has urged men to speak out about their mental health as he spoke publicly for the first time about the loss of his brother, who took his own life. The health secretary said he still wonders if he could have acted to prevent his brother's death, and spoke of his "deeply personal" mission to prevent suicides. Javid's brother, Tariq, 51, took his own life in July 2018. "We learned afterwards that he had a physical health problem that he hadn't told anyone about," Javid said. "And if we had just known, if he had talked to us, perhaps we could have done something," he added. "Maybe I could have made a difference. And I guess I will never know the answer to that."

Suicide is the biggest cause of death in men under 50 and about three-quarters of deaths by suicide every year are of men. Javid said that despite greater awareness in some communities there remained "a stigma around talking about mental health issues", adding: "And we have to get the message out that it doesn't matter what culture we come from. All of us at some time of our lives can have a mental health challenge and there is nothing wrong with that. The most important thing is to tell someone, to speak to others and to seek help."

Losing his brother changed the way Javid interacts with friends and family, he told the *Sunday Times*. "I make sure I make time for people and ask them how they are feeling." Javid said he became worried during the pandemic when "a close family friend" developed severe mental health problems. "Although he didn't use the word suicidal, I was worried about the signs I was seeing and I absolutely insisted that he got mental health support. At first he was very reluctant but eventually he did and now he is in a much better place and I am not sure I would have done that before this tragedy happened to my family."

Javid, 52, added: "I am blessed with four wonderful children – three who are young adults now – and I talk to them much more now about their feelings. Of course there are mental health professionals, but there is a role for all of us in this. If there is anyone thinking about what they can do to help, the number one thing is to talk to your loved ones and your friends and ask them how they are feeling. But don't just ask them the question in a way that they will nod along to – ask them how they are really feeling and take your time."

Speaking at the London headquarters of the suicide prevention charity Papyrus on Friday, Javid said a refreshed suicide prevention plan was being developed, as well as better services for bereaved families and research to understand the causes of suicide. "We must treat suicides with the same urgency that we treat any other major killer," he said. "I'm determined to make a difference on this issue, and one of the ways we'll do this is by publishing a new 10-year suicide prevention plan. This is something that is deeply personal to me – there are too many families that are left incomplete, and too much potential has gone unfulfilled."

The long-term plan for suicide prevention is seeking views from the public, but only 19% of respondents so far have been male, according to the Department of Health and Social Care.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/26/sajid-javid-tells-of-heartache-over-brothers-suicide>

- In the UK and Ireland, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123, or email jo@samaritans.org or jo@samaritans.ie.
- Papyrus can be contacted on 0800 068 4141, or text 07860 039967, or email pat@papyrus-uk.org

GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER HISTORY MONTH 2022

Every June since 2008, people from across the UK have celebrated Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM). Through celebration, education and raising awareness, GRTHM helps to tackle prejudice, challenge myths and to amplify the voices of Gypsies, Roma and travellers in wider society. GRTHM celebrates the diverse ways in which the Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities add to the vibrancy of life in the UK and recognises the varied contributions these communities have made to British society, both historically and today.

This year, the theme for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month is What makes a home? which highlights the diversity of experiences lived by Gypsy, Roma and traveller people throughout history and today. **Find out more here:** <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/gypsy-roma-traveller-history-month/what-makes-a-home-fft-theme-for-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-history-month-2022/>

Gypsies, Roma and travellers are the largest ethnic minority community in Europe with over 12 million people across the EU and some 300,000 in the UK. GRTHM started in 2001 and, with endorsement from Parliament in 2007, went national in 2008 and is now celebrated throughout the UK each June. The aim of GRTHM is to share the history, culture and language of Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities, as well as other travelling communities, including showmen and boaters. It also aims to heighten the confidence and awareness of Gypsy, Roma and traveller people, as well as celebrate their cultural heritage.

Find out more here: <https://travellermovement.org.uk/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-history-and-culture>

Source: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/news/2022/06/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-history-month-2022>

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM) has taken place in June every year since 2008 to celebrate and elevate the voices of the people of these communities, and challenge and smash the stigmas which have oppressed them for centuries. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are commonly grouped together under the umbrella of 'GRT', but this actually represents diverse groups of different communities, who share similar characteristics and values: the importance of home and family, adopting a nomadic lifestyle, a tendency to be self-employed, and experiences of disadvantage. Romany Gypsies have been in Britain since the 1500s, the name derived from people originally believing that they came from Egypt, however it has been found that this group migrated from northern India. There are several different GRT communities in the UK, including, but not limited to: Gypsies, Roma, Irish Travellers, Scottish Travellers, and Welsh Travellers. Each of these groups are classed as ethnic minorities, and each have their own unique languages.

History of experiencing prejudice, hate and violence

For centuries, GRT communities have faced stigma, hate and prejudice, which is reinforced by the treatment by law, police and the media. What is still in living memory for some, but is rarely spoken of, is the mass genocide of an estimated 500,000 Roma and Sinti people during the Holocaust. Although there is greater awareness of this today, there is still very little recognition for the victims and survivors of these atrocities. We know that horrifying events like these can leave transgenerational trauma amongst families and communities, and the effects of which can still be felt decades later.

Suicide

Data shows that in Ireland, people from the Traveller communities are six times more likely to die by suicide, compared to the general population. As it stands, there is no distinguished data collected for deaths by suicide in Gypsy and Traveller communities in England, Scotland and Wales, however it is estimated to be of a similar figure. This therefore means that there are no specific government strategies in place to reduce suicides in GRT communities in the UK. In a recent study (GATE Herts, 2020), data was collected following 131 suicides or suicide attempts within a five-year time frame. It was found that 90% of those who died by, or attempted suicide in this time had previously experienced a hate incident. Community respondents said hate incidents included social media abuse (87%), bullying of family members (78%) and racial hatred following media reports (82%). It's important to remember that "correlation does not equal causation". i.e. although we see a significant relationship between those in GRT communities receiving hate, and them dying by or attempting suicide, it cannot be said that this is the single causing factor. At POPYRUS, we are well aware that suicide is complex, and that the contributing factors to this are often many, and may build up over a large period of time. However, it was found that respondents to the survey have "stressed the corrosive effect on mental health and wellbeing of being subject to hate speech and discrimination," therefore it is important that this is something that is addressed.

Barriers to services

Many of those from GRT communities have reported experiencing fear or distrust of authorities impacted by a collective experience and memory of the prejudices experienced from them. Often GRT people find barriers to registering with a GP due to not having a fixed address, but also due to the overt racism and prejudice that they often experience.

Some people from GRT communities report that stigma towards the idea of mental health within their communities, is also a barrier. As for groups of people which have historically faced great hostility and hardship, an attitude of 'stoicism' is often endorsed. For many, they may not have the access to the education to challenge their own misconceptions of the term. Therefore, this can be a barrier to both reaching out for support, but also to have the knowledge of what support options are available. Often people from GRT communities will access A&E for medical support instead of accessing a GP, as people have reported that there feel less stigma and prejudice in their treatment. For example, not being questioned about their address. There are, however, downsides to this meaning that this is not always the best use of A&E resources, and that this is not ongoing, long-term support, meaning that there may be little continuity of care. This also means that people often only access healthcare at a point of crisis. As we know, early intervention plays a vital role in the recovery of mental ill health.

What can we do to inspire change?

Social change can be slow and take time. With the age of social media, while it has its pros and cons, can offer a powerful platform to oppressed communities to voice their lived experiences. On a governmental level, changes need to take place to improve the access that people of GRT backgrounds have to essential healthcare and education, to allow early intervention and better management of mental health and thoughts of suicide. There is ongoing research from UK charity Friends Families Travellers of the impact of suicide in these communities in England, Wales and Scotland. Hopefully, these findings can offer rationale for specific suicide prevention strategy in these communities. On an organisational level, companies have a duty of care to review whether their policies are inclusive towards their staff or their consumers. They can also invest in company-wide training to educate their staff, and promote a safe place for people of GRT backgrounds. On an individual level, we can expand our knowledge and awareness of lived experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, and advocate for people of these communities to uphold their rights. Remember – if you're unsure, it's okay to ask!

<https://travellermovement.org.uk/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-history-month>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/10/hate-targeted-at-gypsy-traveller-and-roma-linked-to-rise-in-suicides-report>

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/grt-history-month/>

THE UK'S RAMSHACKLE APPROACH TO DEFENCE SPENDING IS DOING LITTLE TO ENCOURAGE A SAFER WORLD

Joseph Kelly 1 July 2022

Over the past few weeks I've been in Liverpool quite a lot, and a late night stop off on the way home at the Macdonalds in Birkenhead has become something of a shameful habit. Sitting under the big yellow M in the car park you can't help but be drawn to the imposing silhouette of the mighty Cammell Laird shipyard just over the road. Like most industrial ports, shipbuilding isn't what it once was in Birkenhead, but the Laird yard is still a 24 hour cacophony of metallic noise and is lit up every night like a Christmas tree.

If you look hard enough through the twilight you can see the great grey profile of HMS Daring, a billion-pound state of the art Class 45 Royal Navy warship that is currently having its power and propulsion systems replaced in a multi-million pound refit that won't be completed until late next year. HMS Daring had been languishing in Portsmouth naval base since 2017, and is just the latest of the six state of the art Class 45 ships that have needed a complete rebuild after it was discovered that vessels were unable to function properly in warmer climates and were so noisy that they could be detected by submarines 100 miles away. The fixes weren't minor – but have involved replacing the ships existing two diesel generators with three, as the ships' gas turbines experienced problems delivering enough power to engines in warmer waters.

Alongside the dry-docking of our flagship navy vessels, an internal government document leaked last summer revealed that we also have major problems with our army's new fleet of armoured vehicles. The flagship £5.5bn Ajax Armoured Vehicle programme – which the Army describes it as a "core capability" and key to its modernisation – has collapsed into disarray after fundamental faults were admitted with the vehicles. Crews had complained of temporary hearing loss and joint pain due to excessive vibration and the heavily armoured vehicles are unable to drive over even the most modest of obstacles. Defence analysts think it is unlikely that the problems can be resolved and the vehicles are now unlikely to ever enter service. The debacle has echoes of the RAF's BEA Systems Nimrod MRA4 – the planned Maritime Patrol Aircraft was riddled with faults and was scrapped in 2010 at a cost of £4bn, without a single aircraft entering service. With a major hole in its air defence systems, the Ministry of Defence was forced to run to Boeing USA to procure nine P8 Poseidons at a cost to the UK taxpayer of £3bn.

These are just a few examples of the extraordinary incompetence and profligate spending habits of governments when it comes to defence equipment. One might have assumed that when it comes to weaponry that is vital to protect our borders – and indeed our troops who use this equipment – the greatest diligence and expertise would be applied. Sadly, the whole area of military spending has been so saturated with incentives, profits and political rhetoric that the odd multi-billion pound foul-up hardly gets noticed. Governments are also very well aware that the public is far less likely to cry outrage over incompetent military spending than they would be if a few billion pounds were flushed down the drain in the course of a hospital or school project.

Knowing this, it was no surprise that UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson put on his best Winston Churchill scowl and stiffened his jaw last night as he took to the podium to deliver his post-Nato summit news conference in Madrid.

After what had been a bumpy few days on the subject of defence spending and support for the Ukraine war effort, Mr Johnson boasted proudly that the UK will be spending: "2.5% of GDP on defence by the end of the decade". In epic Churchillian style the PM blustered that the "cost of freedom" is "always worth paying". Last year the UK spent £42.4bn on defence (a £2.5bn increase on the previous year) and the "cost of freedom" proposed by Mr Johnson over the next eight years is likely to be an additional £55bn of taxpayer's money. For comparison the running of the NHS across 2021/22 is likely to be £136.1bn, so it's not surprising that it's often argued that defence spending is not a major tax burden, though some basic competence with contracts would improve this even further...

The world is now facing the prospect of a long and incredibly costly conflict that is going to cripple global economic recovery, and an increasing number of proxy combatants are descending into the most dangerous kind of rhetoric imaginable, far worse and flaky in many ways than the dark old days of the first Cold War.

Last week Pope Francis gave a lengthy and revealing interview to the Jesuit Review *La Civiltà Cattolica*, in which he spoke very candidly about his thoughts on Putin's war. "We have to get away from the common mindset of "Little Red Riding Hood": Little Red Riding Hood was good and the wolf was the bad guy," said Francis. "Here there are no metaphysical good guys and bad guys." His Holiness was at pains to point out that the world's media was in danger of portraying the conflict purely in terms of good vs evil, right vs wrong. "But the danger is that we only see this, which is monstrous, and miss the whole drama that is unfolding behind this war, which was perhaps somehow either provoked or not-prevented," said Francis. "I also note the interest in testing and selling weapons. It is very sad, but at the end of the day that is what is at stake".

The Pope also reminded journalists that other wars are raging – northern Nigeria, northern Congo, Myanmar and the Rohingya "and nobody cares". "The world is at war," the Pope said. "A few years ago, it occurred to me to say that we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Today, for me, World War III has been declared," said Francis.

"This is something that should give us pause for thought. What is happening to humanity that has had three world wars in a century? I experienced the first war through the memory of my grandfather on the Piave River. Then the second and now the third. And this is bad for humanity, a calamity. You have to think that in a century there have been three world wars, with all the arms trade behind it!"

...the (NATO) photo-ops and press statements have just underscored the increasing disconnect between a small group of rich liberal democracies and the rest of the world.

The increasing shift towards painting global politics as a conflict between free nations and "authoritarian regimes" (China and Russia were mentioned specifically in this context) is only serving to harden difference, rather than the desperately urgent need to be building dialogue and reconciliation.

The fact that we are now having to throw good money after bad in an attempt to rebuild our dismembered military defence capability – when this would be far better spent on urgent home issues – will also send out very unhelpful messages to those convinced the West is intent on global domination. A meaningful and equally public commitment to promoting global peace strategies, human dignity and dialogue between all nations would do a great deal more to diffuse our increasingly unstable world.

Joseph Kelly is a Catholic writer and publisher, and is founder of www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk

REVIEW: 'THE NEED TO GROW'

Ellen Teague 29 June 2022: 'The Need To Grow' is a documentary about sustainable food. It asks: Did you know that leading researchers tell us we're losing topsoil so fast, we're on course to run out of farmable soil in just 60 years? It suggests that, "at this rate, we'll run out of food in the next couple of generations." But, the documentary offers hope too. 'The Need To Grow' captures the roots of agricultural problems in the United States, particularly the unsustainable path of industrial agriculture. Yet, it suggests we can feed the world without destroying the planet. And it is pushing the message so strongly that it has made viewing of the documentary available online.

The film focuses on three main characters: eight-year old Girl Scout, Alicia Serratos; a regenerative urban farmer, Erik Cutter; and inventor, Michael Smith. Serratos leads a petition for non-GMO girl scout cookies, that is biscuits without genetically modified organisms; Cutter seeks to grow food in a resource-efficient manner; Smith's Green Power House invention functions as a closed-loop energy generator that sequesters carbon, grows algae, and produces a nutrient-rich, organic soil vitalizer.

'The Need to Grow' suggests we should all be localising and diversifying the food system via regenerative agriculture, in which soil health becomes a top priority. "We cannot feed the world from dead soil" and "food these days is lacking in nutrients" are among the comments.

Solutions presented in the film include using gardens to grow food, seed saving, composting, biochar, and more. We are urged to move towards accessing natural, non-GMO, unprocessed foods to improve health, energy, and prevent disease. This will mean an end to the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers. There is concern about food waste, particularly that which is put in landfill rather than a compost pile. "Our soil is starving for organic matter and yet much organic matter is not composted." And, clearly, healthy food, water, soil, and air is in the interests of all creatures.

Well, not all humans it seems. "Food security is at risk for greater profit," sums up the tension with big agribusiness which pushes the industrial model, including GMOs and chemical inputs, "that kill just about everything except the crop". And I found it surprising that the Girls Scouts took four years to take up young Alicia's campaign. International Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva had supported it much earlier, telling Alicia that "I do not despair ever... I save seeds."

It niggles me that the film doesn't truly acknowledge those who have been making these points for many years, particularly in the global south. After years of campaigning by small-scale farmers' organisations such as La Via Campesina, in 2018 the United Nations issued a declaration of rights for small-scale food producers. They hope this will be an important step to help protect small farmers and help to keep foods biodiverse and nutritious. In 2010, the National Justice and Peace Conference heard Vandana Shiva and eco-theologian Fr Sean McDonagh make these points at its annual conference in the UK, where the theme was, 'Our daily bread - food security, people and planet.' The Soil Association ran a stall at that conference.

However, the film is a contribution towards sustainable food production. It is clear that more and more people are actively looking to make choices that are better for them and for the planet. Consumers want to know how food is grown and cooked, championing the importance of well-sourced ingredients. As the documentary says, access to safe, nutritious food is a basic human right for us and for future generations.

**A free screening is available online at: <https://grow.foodrevolution.org/>
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45002>**

OFFICIAL LOGO OF JUBILEE 2025 UNVEILED

Source: Vatican News 28 June 2022: The official Logo of the upcoming Jubilee due to be held in 2025 has been unveiled. The Logo was unveiled at a Vatican press conference on Tuesday evening. The Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, now contained within the new Dicastery for Evangelization, was entrusted with coordinating the Holy See's preparations for the Holy Year 2025 with the motto: '*Pilgrims of Hope.*'

The former Council's President, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, explained that their Dicastery launched a competition, open to all, for the Logo's creation. A total of 294 entries were received from 213 cities and 48 different countries, with participants ranged in age from 6 to 83. "In fact, many hand-drawn designs were received from children from all over the world, and it was really moving to go through these drawings which were the fruit of imagination and simple faith," Archbishop Fisichella said. During the judging, the works were identified only by a number so that the author remained anonymous. On June 11, Archbishop Fisichella submitted the three final projects to Pope Francis to select the winner. "After looking at the projects several times and expressing his preference, the project of Giacomo Travisani was chosen," Archbishop Fisichella said.



Giacomo Travisani, reflected on what motivated his submission. He said how he had imagined all people moving forward together, able to push ahead "thanks to the wind of Hope that is the Cross of Christ and Christ himself." The Logo shows four stylized figures to indicate all of humanity from the four corners of the earth. They each embrace one another, indicating the solidarity and brotherhood that must unite peoples. The first figure is clinging to the Cross. The underlying waves are choppy to indicate that the pilgrimage of life is not always on calm waters.

Because often personal circumstances and world events call for a greater sense of hope, a description of the Logo says, the lower part of the Cross is elongated turning into an anchor, which dominates the movement of the waves. The image shows how the pilgrim's journey is not individual, but rather communal, with the signs of a growing dynamism that moves more and more toward the Cross. "The Cross is not static," Fisichella said, "but dynamic, bending toward and meeting humanity as if not to leave it alone, but rather offering the certainty of its presence and the reassurance of hope." The Jubilee 2025 Motto, *Peregrinantes in Spem* is also clearly visible in the colour green.

Archbishop Fisichella reflected on Jubilees and why the upcoming one is significant. "Every Holy Year in the history of the Church," he said, "has taken on its full meaning when it is placed within the historical context that humanity is experiencing at that time and particularly when it is able to read the signs of anxiety and unrest combined with people's perceived expectations.

"The vulnerability experienced in recent years, together with the fear of the violence of wars," he continued, "only makes the human condition more paradoxical: on the one hand, to feel the overwhelming power of technology which determines their days; on the other hand, to feel uncertain and confused about their future. This has given rise to the urgency to live the upcoming Jubilee in the light of hope." In this context, Archbishop Fisichella said, "*Pilgrims of Hope*" was chosen for the Jubilee's theme. "It expresses the need to make sense of the present so that it can be preparatory for a real thrust into the future in order to embrace and respond to the various challenges that arise from time to time."

In a recent letter addressed to Archbishop Fisichella, Pope Francis noted that "the Jubilee has always been an event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church." He recalled that ever since the year 1300, which marked the first Holy Year, "God's holy and faithful people has experienced this celebration as a special gift of grace, characterized by the forgiveness of sins and in particular by the indulgence, which is a full expression of the mercy of God." In the Church, a Jubilee, or Holy Year, is a great religious event. A Jubilee is "ordinary" if it falls after the customary 25-year period, and "extraordinary" when it is proclaimed by for some outstanding event. The last ordinary Jubilee took place in the year 2000 during the pontificate of Pope St John Paul II. In 2015, Pope Francis proclaimed an Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

After the summer, Archbishop Fisichella noted, the official Jubilee website and related app will be available. "Both will be tools to help pilgrims participate fully in the proposed events, facilitating the spiritual and cultural experience of the city of Rome. In fact, in addition to the important Pilgrim's Charter, the Jubilee portal will contain news, historical notes, practical information, services and multimedia tools, in ten languages available to the pilgrim and easily accessible for people with disabilities."

The Dicastery is already envisioning major events, and highlighted that special attention will be given to the following categories: "Families, Children, Youth, Movements and Associations, Elderly, Grandparents, Disabled, Sports, Sick and Health Care, Universities, World of Work, Choirs and Choruses, Confraternities, Priests, Consecrated Persons, Eastern Catholics, Catechists, the Poor, Prisoners, and many others..." A calendar will be ready by the end of the year so as to allow adequate organisational time for pilgrims and related agencies. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/44999>

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES UPDATE TO ENGLISH MUSIC PLAN FOR EDUCATION

27 June 2022

The long awaited updated National Plan for Music Education has revealed the UK Government's ambition of ensuring that children in England receive at least one hour of music curriculum teaching per week in school time.

The 88-page document titled, 'The Power of Music to Change Lives' builds on the first National Plan for Music which was published in 2011, with the executive summary stating that it recognises that, "more needs to be done to support teachers, leaders, schools, trusts and Music Hubs to deliver the best for children and young people."

In the ministerial foreword, Minister for School Standards, Robin Walker MP and Minister for the Arts, Lord Parkinson stated: "Excellent music education opens opportunities, but it is not simply a means to an end: it is also an end in itself. It gives children and young people an opportunity to express themselves, to explore their creativity, to work hard at something, persevere and shine. These experiences and achievements stay with them and shape their lives. That is why music is an essential part of a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. It must not be the preserve of the privileged few. Music should be planned and taught as robustly as any other foundation curriculum subject, as exemplified in the Model Music Curriculum we published last year."

The ambition of the plan has been broadly welcomed, although the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) stated that they would look at its claims closely. ISM Chief Executive Deborah Annetts stated: "The ISM will take time to review the document forensically and listen to the views of teachers. However, on first reading there looks to be much we can welcome and that our members will be pleased to see included within it. The plan states that music should be a key part of the school curriculum, which is something that we are very pleased with. We believe that the plan would be improved if music teachers, parents and other experts had the opportunity to feed in their views on the contents of the plan through official consultation."

Meanwhile, Chris Cobb, chief executive of ABRSM, added: "The new plan clearly recognises the challenges and opportunities facing music education while reflecting trends and priorities that everyone in the sector knows to be important. It's encouraging to see a real commitment to inclusion, progression and sustainability, from early years to higher education, something that chimes with our own ambition to enable more people to experience the joy of music by getting involved and finding a personal pathway to making progress."

Key announcements:

- All children and young people receive at least one hour per week of 'high quality' curriculum music.
- All music educators work in partnership, with children and young people's needs and interests at their heart.
- All children and young people with musical interests and talents have the opportunity to progress, including professionally.
- Pupils will be given the chance to learn a musical instrument, with new funding worth £25 million for schools to purchase musical instruments and equipment available.
- 79 million will be made available every year until 2025 for the Music Hubs programme
- Every school will be expected to have a designated music lead or head of department
- Every school should write and publish a 'Music Development Plan', including information on how music is staffed and funded.

Source: <https://4barsrest.com/news/54056/government-announces-update-to-english-music-plan-for-education>

The plan sets out how this vision will be achieved by 2030, emphasising the importance of partnerships between education settings, music hubs, music organisations working with young people and the music industry. It builds on the model music curriculum - SEE <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-music-in-schools> and the original national plan for music education, published in 2011.

Read more here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-power-of-music-to-change-lives-a-national-plan-for-music-education> Published 25 June 2022

Commenting to Classic FM, The Chief executive of UK Music, Jamie Njoku-Goodwin welcomed the refreshed plan's investment commitment saying, "Continued investment in music education is vital if we want to unlock the huge creative potential of young people and level up opportunities across the country. Music is a national asset that contributes billions to the economy, improves our health and wellbeing and boosts our global reputation – and that all relies on a strong talent pipeline. A thorough musical education also brings huge benefits to children, whatever they go on to do in later life, and it is in our national interest to have a musically literate society."

Source: <https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/national-plan-music-education-2022/>

NEW REPORT CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNISE THE “POWER OF MUSIC” IN HEALTHCARE

Andy Malt 20 April 2022: A new report has been launched by UK Music and Music For Dementia which touts music as a “miracle medicine” in various healthcare settings. Called ‘The Power Of Music’, the report calls on the UK government to do more to support healthcare providers, businesses and individuals in using music to improve the lives of people living with dementia, depression and other debilitating conditions. The report makes four key recommendations, calling on the UK government to:

- Appoint a Power Of Music Commissioner to oversee work in the area of music and health, including setting up a new government taskforce.
- Launch a major public awareness campaign on how music can improve health.
- Provide better training for frontline workers on the role of music in healthcare.
- Provide funding to make music more available to all.

“The pandemic has shown us how we urgently need to reimagine health and social care in the UK”, says Music For Dementia Campaign Director Grace Meadows. “Music has a critical role to play in this and while we’re committed to making this happen, we can’t do this alone. We need leadership, public engagement and funding at the very least, including the appointment of a Power Of Music Commissioner who will turn our recommendations into action. One of our biggest challenges is that many people still don’t fully appreciate the power of music, but we could begin to change that within a year”, she goes on. “We’re calling upon the government and leaders in the fields of health, care, music, charity and philanthropy to work together to ensure the greater use of music in social prescribing and make it a key tool in public health strategies. As a country we can change the lived experience of millions living with dementia and wider health issues”, she concludes. “We can do it quickly, simply and we can do it now for a relatively small investment. It just needs commitment and a determination to work together. Let’s do it”.

UK Music Chief Executive Jamie Njoku-Goodwin adds: “Every day, more and more evidence emerges about the extraordinary health benefits of music and its potency as a non-pharmacological intervention. Whether it is in improving wellbeing and quality of life, boosting mental health or supporting dementia care, music has an incredible power to improve people’s lives. When used correctly, music can be a miracle medicine – and while there are thousands of people across the country who have seen this first-hand, there are millions more who have yet to enjoy its benefits. With bold leadership, cross-sector collaborations and a joined-up approach, we can harness the extraordinary power of music and ensure that everyone in our country can have access to the huge benefits music can bring”.

Although not making any real commitments just yet, the UK government’s Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries has nevertheless welcomed the report, saying: “Music can be a powerful tool. It is clear to me that more should be done to understand the social value of music, and the unique opportunities it presents to alleviate long-term and chronic conditions, including learning disabilities, depression and dementia. I look forward to working with the creative and health sectors to harness the power of music and boost its untapped potential to support health and wellbeing”.

Universal Music UK has also welcomed the report and – as well as hosting its launch – is also backing a new online information platform about the use of music in health and care. **Read the full report here:** <https://www.ukmusic.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Power-of-Music-Report-Final-Pages.pdf>

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-power-of-music-to-change-lives-a-national-plan-for-music>

UNIVERSAL MUSIC PARTNERS ON MUSIC APP FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DEMENTIA

Chris Cooke 13 June 2022: Universal Music last week announced a partnership with music wellness technology firm Music Health. The deal sees the former provide its catalogue to an app developed by the latter called Vera, which is described as “an intuitive music intervention tool designed for the care of people affected by dementia”. The alliance follows Universal UK’s recent backing of a new online platform that provides information about the use of music in healthcare. That was announced alongside ‘The Power Of Music’, the recent report from UK Music and Music For Dementia that championed the use of music to improve the lives of people living with dementia, depression and other debilitating conditions. <https://completemusicupdate.com/article/new-report-calls-on-government-to-recognise-the-power-of-music-in-healthcare/>

Music Health says that its Vera app “analyses the age of the dementia affected person, where they grew up, and how they react to certain music. It uses these criteria to autonomously curate the right songs at the right times to effectively manage the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. Vera curates songs from UMG’s unrivalled catalogue, the world’s largest, most diverse and culturally rich collection of blues, classical, country, folk, jazz, pop, R&B, reggae, rock n roll, soul and soundtracks”.

As the Universal/Vera partnership was announced, Grace Meadows from Music For Dementia noted that the app responds to research that was referenced in the ‘Power Of Music’ report. She said: “Research shows that music is much more impactful for people living with dementia when it holds meaning and is associated with moments from someone’s life. In our report, which sets out how we can be harnessing the power of music more to support health and wellbeing, we emphasised the need for a personalised approach to embedding music in health and social care, and the Vera app helps carers to do that”.

Commenting on the partnership from Universal's side, Michael Nash, EVP of Digital Strategy at the major, added: "From rigorous workouts to peaceful meditation to restorative sleep cycles, music is deeply integrated into numerous innovations promoting health and wellbeing. Now, scientists are finding that music is also a powerful tool for helping those suffering from the effects of dementia and memory loss", he went on. "At UMG, we are working with a wide range of companies to develop therapeutical applications of music and we're proud to partner with Music Health on Vera to help improve the lives of so many around the world".

<https://completemusicupdate.com/article/universal-music-partners-on-music-app-for-people-affected-by-dementia/>

PHILIP PULLMAN LEADS OUTCRY AFTER SHEFFIELD HALLAM WITHDRAWS ENGLISH LIT DEGREE

Sally Weale Education correspondent, the *Guardian* 27 June 2022

The award-winning author Philip Pullman has said the study of literature "should not be a luxury for a wealthy minority of spoilt and privileged aesthetes" after it emerged that Sheffield Hallam University is to pull its English literature degree from next year. He was one of a number of writers to raise concerns about the university's decision to stop teaching the standalone degree and incorporate it instead into a broad-based English degree, a year after the University of Cumbria took similar action.

A Sheffield Hallam spokesperson confirmed that English literature was among a small number of its courses that were being either suspended or closed, largely due to lack of demand. They said the changes would not involve job losses. Pullman told the *Guardian*: "The study of literature should not be a luxury for a wealthy minority of spoilt and privileged aesthetes, but a spring of precious truth and life that every one of us is entitled to."

A number of universities have made cuts to arts and humanities provision after a government crackdown on what ministers regard as "low-value" courses. Under proposed new rules under consultation, universities could face penalties if fewer than 75% of undergraduates complete their courses and fewer than 60% are in professional jobs or studying for a further degree within 15 months of graduating. About 70% of graduates of Sheffield Hallam's English literature degree gain graduate jobs.

Pullman said: "Without literature, without music and art and dance and drama, people young and old alike will perish of mental and emotional and imaginative starvation. We really do have a government of barbarians."

The vice-chancellor of Sheffield Hallam, Chris Husbands, cautioned against conflating the changes at his university with a broader national concern about the government's attitude to the arts and humanities, saying: "We distract from the debate on the importance of the arts if we don't review and re-energise our humanities offerings."

James Graham, the writer of the critically acclaimed TV series *Sherwood*, who did a drama degree at Hull, saw the move as part of a trend, with arts and creative subjects slowly disappearing not just from higher education but from primary and secondary schools as well. "It's just deeply depressing that one of the great British success stories of the last few years – the arts and entertainment industry – is going to be systemically weakened and diminished because it is being eradicated from education in the UK," he said.

Sarah Perry, the bestselling author of *Melmoth* and *The Essex Serpent*, said: "I suspect this is only the latest symptom in the disease creeping across education at all levels, in which learning has been stripped of everything but the most utilitarian aims, designed to form minds into nothing but cogs in the capitalist machine. It's dismal and dehumanising, and I'm afraid its effects will be far-reaching."

Sarah Hall, an author and professor of practice at the University of Cumbria, said: "It's awful, absolutely awful. I wish it wasn't happening." She said the loss of English literature BA courses was difficult, but at Cumbria the university offered progressive specialist alternatives. "There are different ways of responding to change and old university and education models sometimes benefit from refreshing."

In recent years universities have seen a slump in applications for humanities courses. According to the universities admissions service, Ucas, acceptances for English studies, including English literature, decreased from 9,480 in 2012 to 6,435 in 2021. Sheffield Hallam said arts and humanities remained a vital part of the university and added that from 2023 it would be offering English literature as part of a broad-based English degree, taking in language, literature and creative writing.

Jo Grady, the general secretary of the University and College Union (UCU), said: "The decision by Sheffield Hallam to shut down its English literature course is as shocking as it is depressing, but seems part of a wider agenda being forced on universities by the government against the arts and humanities." Michelle Donelan, the minister for higher and further education, said the government recognised that all subjects, including the arts and humanities, can lead to positive student outcomes. But she added: "Courses that do not lead students on to work or further study fail both the students who pour their time and effort in, and the taxpayer, who picks up a substantial portion of the cost." <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/jun/27/sheffield-hallam-university-suspends-low-value-english-literature-degree>

ANTHONY HOROWITZ SOUNDS WARNING OVER LOSS OF SHEFFIELD HALLAM ENGLISH LITERATURE DEGREE

Best-selling writer Anthony Horowitz has warned universities scrapping English Literature are the “first stirrings of a very cold wind from the Government”.

Chris Burn 29 June 2022

The award-winning author of the Alex Rider series has written to The Times after it was announced Sheffield Hallam University was dropping its English Literature degree next year while the University of Roehampton, where Horowitz is an associate professor, is making more than 60 redundancies in its arts and humanities department.

The University of Huddersfield and De Montfort University are also planning similar cuts to their arts and humanities. It comes as the Government plans to financially penalise universities for degree courses where less than 60 per cent of graduates go on to professional employment within 15 months of graduating.

Mr Horowitz, who studied English Literature at the University of York, warned the study of English Literature could only end up being for the “privileged elite”.

It follows similar criticism by playwright James Graham, who said the drama degree he did at Hull University would have been cancelled under the current system - meaning he would not have gone on to create hits such as acclaimed BBC One series *Sherwood*.

Mr Horowitz said: “Economics do not seem to be behind a positively inhumane attack on almost half of the Roehampton University academics — 226 men and women — who have been informed that they are “at risk” of redundancy and must reapply for positions in competition with each other.

“In recent years English literature at Roehampton has outscored the majority of Russell Group universities, according to National Student Survey results, and its graduate salaries are in the top eight across the country.

“Most students at Roehampton are drawn from the local area and constitute working-class and ethnically diverse young people. When they return in September they will find many of their lecturers, supervisors and academic guidance tutors gone, and their own opportunities blighted.

“James Graham has rightly drawn attention to the same issue at Sheffield Hallam. These are the first stirrings of a very cold wind blowing from the government. Are we really going to be comfortable in a society which has decided that subjects that promote critical thinking and the beauty of language and literature, and which have helped to develop the careers of writers such as Graham and myself, should in the future be reserved only for a privileged elite?”

A spokeswoman for the University of Roehampton said: “Like many UK universities, we are seeing student demand evolving, with some subject areas attracting great demand, and we are also facing financial challenges due to a range of factors. We are proposing changes to rebalance our resources and achieve our vision of providing an excellent student experience and delivering successful graduate outcomes in a sustainable way. This will involve making some difficult and challenging decisions. We will continue to deliver our English literature BA.”

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/anthony-horowitz-sounds-warning-over-loss-of-sheffield-hallam-english-literature-degree-3749482>

Anne O'Connor writes: When I studied English Literature at University the course examined the key great works from every period, starting with Beowulf, Chaucer and Shakespeare right up to the present day. Plenty of reading and not for the faint-hearted! Fortunately, I loved, and still love, to immerse myself in novels, drama and poetry. Regular readers of this bulletin will often find a poem which can say more in a few words than a lengthy article on a topic (see p.4 of this edition). A literature degree is not simply a study of authors, playwrights and poets from bygone ages – it lifts our spirits and speaks to our souls. How desperately sad, then, to see that some Universities are dropping the teaching of English Literature from their syllabus. The argument that it doesn't lead into 'good jobs' and, by implication, is of no practical value is a fallacy. A well-taught English degree can lead into many diverse careers. But more than that, it opens up new vistas as we travel in the company of the writer on a wonderful adventure into unknown territory. The richness of poetry, the thrill of drama and the sharing of ideas inspires us to question and challenge. It fosters cogent thinking and a confidence in one's ability to express a point of view.

During lockdown home-schooling I witnessed at first-hand the dumbing down of creative experience for our children: the set answers provided by teachers for the students to copy into their exercise books, no time given to formulate opinions or develop original thinking, the over-emphasis on grammar and structure that distracts from the sheer enjoyment of reading.

LIVERPOOL: KEY NEW ROLE FOR FCJ SISTER

Source: CoR 1 July 2022: The Archdiocese of Liverpool has appointed Sr Lynne Baron, FCJ, as Archbishop Malcolm McMahon's delegate for Catholic social action. Sr Lynne will be a key member of the new Archbishop's Advisory Body and will ensure that the voice of a woman will be heard as the Archbishop makes important decisions. The appointment comes almost 12 months after the archdiocese met for the Synod 2020 (20 June 2021). Since then, the pastoral plan has been written, promulgated and implementation is ongoing. A key call from the Synod was to renew our Church by reaching out, by being welcoming and inclusive. The Pastoral Plan called for a new role to "place at the forefront of life of the Church inclusivity, justice and peace, the poor, marginalised and the environment, recognising that concern for the environment is a core dimension of our evangelising mission in the world."

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP, said: "I truly believe that Sr Lynne is the best person to help develop this important area of our life as a Church and to guide us as we implement the direction set by the Synod. The Synod clearly called us to reach out to those who feel on the edges of both Church and society and it is clear to me that only if we look outward will we renew ourselves."

Sr Lynne said: "I am delighted to be able to take up this appointment as Archbishop's Delegate and to contribute to the mission of the Archdiocese in this new way as the Church seeks to include the voice of women in its decision-making bodies. My area of responsibility, Catholic social action, is far reaching in these challenging times, but the archdiocese and its people have a strong history of social action, welcome and inclusion. I am excited to further enable this work to flourish, to ensure it is rooted in Catholic social teaching, and that it remains a significant aspect of the archdiocesan agenda." Sr Lynne's appointment is the first step in changing the governance structures of the Archdiocese. The Synod called for the voice of women to be heard and acknowledged - this appointment shows the commitment to what was asked.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45010>

TATE LIVERPOOL EXHIBITION: JMW TURNER WITH LAMIN FOFANA: DARK WATERS

27 SEPTEMBER 2022 – 4 JUNE 2023

Experience the power of the sea through paintings, sketches and an immersive sound environment.

Take a fresh look at JMW Turner in new exhibition *Dark Waters*. For the first time, Turner's work will be presented within an immersive sound environment created by artist and musician, Lamin Fofana.

Although creating work centuries apart, both artists convey the power and politics of the ocean and explore its relationship to capitalism and colonialism. Turner's paintings focus on the dangers of the waters around the British coast and Fofana's sound work looks across the Atlantic.

Tate Liverpool's location on the waterfront, combined with Liverpool's maritime history, provides the perfect context for us to consider Turner afresh. The exhibition features some of Turner's most celebrated seascapes alongside his sketchbooks and works on paper.

Lamin Fofana translates the writing of pioneering black authors into sound. Fofana's work explores questions of movement, migration, alienation and belonging.

TATE LIVERPOOL Royal Albert Dock Liverpool L3 4BB

27 September 2022 – 4 June 2023 Currently booking to 31 December 2022 (Advance booking recommended)

This ticket includes access to the collection

Members enjoy free entry – no need to book, just turn up with your card.

PRICING

£10 / Free for Members

£5 for Tate Collective. 16–25? Sign up and log in to book

Staff and students at University of Liverpool, Liverpool Hope University and City of Liverpool College get free entry.

Use your university email address to create a free account then book your tickets online.

Up to four children aged under 16 go free per parent or guardian

Book Tickets: <https://shop.tate.org.uk/ticket/date?cgid=8117>

CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY NEW PUBLICATION *DIGNITY, AGENCY, POWER*

Poverty robs people of their dignity, agency and power. Church Action on Poverty and its partners work to build a movement in which people and communities can reclaim those essential aspects of life. This anthology of stories, prayers, reflections and liturgy is published to coincide with the organisation's 40th anniversary and to inspire continuing work towards those ends.

£14.99 from Wild Goose Publications: <https://www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power/>

Or download the book for £9.99: <https://www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power-downloadable-book/>

DIARY

JULY

5 Church Action on Poverty 40th Anniversary Service 7pm live-streamed from Iona Abbey. Free event - register at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/church-action-on-poverty-40th-anniversary-service-tickets-352507357997>

The service will use prayers and other materials drawn from 'Dignity, Agency, Power', the new anthology published by Wild Goose Publications to mark our 40th anniversary. You can order a copy at <https://www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power/>

6 Safe Passage Welcome Call - activist Phoebe has written a blog on the Safe Passage website about the demonstration she organised in Cornwall in May against the Government's Nationality and Borders Bill. She makes the point that refugees need action, and if you are interested in taking part, join their Welcome Call on Wednesday 6th July at 6pm on Zoom. More details through Phoebe's blog here:

<https://www.safepassage.org.uk/news/2022/6/21/campaigning-in-cornwall>

9 Hope in the Dark: Climate breakdown, reparations and a just transition Global Justice Now's 2022 national gathering, organised in collaboration with Jubilee for Climate – open to all. 1pm - 6pm, at Sheffield Hallam University. Click here to book your place: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hope-in-the-dark-tickets-327217314797?aff=odeimcmalchimp&mc_cid=5041067fe3&mc_eid=f8258d0ef5

10 Sea Sunday The war in Ukraine is once again highlighting the importance of seafarers to the world economy. Stella Maris is providing practical and pastoral support to seafarers and fishers in the UK and around the world, including those affected by the war in Ukraine. www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate Resources: www.stellamaris.org.uk/seasunday

19 Chester World Development Forum meeting at The Unity Centre, 7pm. CWDF members Linda & Stewart Shuttleworth will give us an update on their ongoing work in Uganda to improve mental health services in this large developing country.

22-24 44th Annual Justice and Peace Conference at the Hayes Centre Swanwick.

'HOPE! A VERB WITH ITS SLEEVES ROLLED UP'



After months of sadness and uncertainty the NJPN Conference aims to inspire us to look for signs of hope in our communities and in our wider world. Our hope is that, following the Conference we will all return to our communities with enthusiasm and increased commitment to work for a more just and peaceful world for all God's creation. We will consider, how, as activists and people of faith, we might support those in most need and enable them to envisage a more hopeful future. Over the weekend we will be identifying hopeful possibilities in our world. We will listen to inspiring keynote speakers, take part in interactive workshops as well as in liturgical celebrations. There will be time to relax, enjoy meeting friends old and new. The peaceful atmosphere of the surroundings will provide a space for reflection and enjoyment. Andy Flannagan, from Christians in Politics, will be speaking on Saturday, and they believe that 'Decisions are made by those who show up.'

Will you show up and be a part of a group of people who want to make a difference? More details, and booking here: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/> We look forward to meeting you there!

As a sign of Hope in Our Future NJPN is encouraged that the following Faith Organisations have agreed to partner together to present this Conference: NJPN, Christians Aware, Stella Maris, ACTA and The Joint Public Issues Team.

- **Season of Creation** 2022 September 01 to October 04. The 2022 celebration guide *Listen to the Voice of Creation* for the Season of Creation has just been launched at: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>
- **Read The Spring issue of MouthPeace** the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Mouthpeace-Spring-22..pdf>
- **Read NJPN's weekly column** online on Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com or find articles be uploaded onto our website at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk
- Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resources for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles.
- **Sign up** for regular news and information from NJPN including a **new fortnightly e-bulletin with a comprehensive round-up of current events, campaigns, e-petitions and resources** (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues for NJPN North West) at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org or admin@justice-and-peace.org 020 7901 4864

The views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of NJPN