
The Hassockfield protests are continuing. You can find out more by going to [No To Hassockfield](#) –. If you cannot attend in person, perhaps you could join in prayer from home. There is an online version of the vigil on the Diocesan website which can be found [here](#). You can download the most recent booklet with the prayers and readings that are used [here](#).

On the **1st Sunday of every Month at 3pm** a vigil takes place at the site as an opportunity for multiple faiths and religious groups to come together in opposition. On the **3rd Saturday of every Month at 12pm** a demonstration takes place at the site with the aim of showing solidarity with the women detained



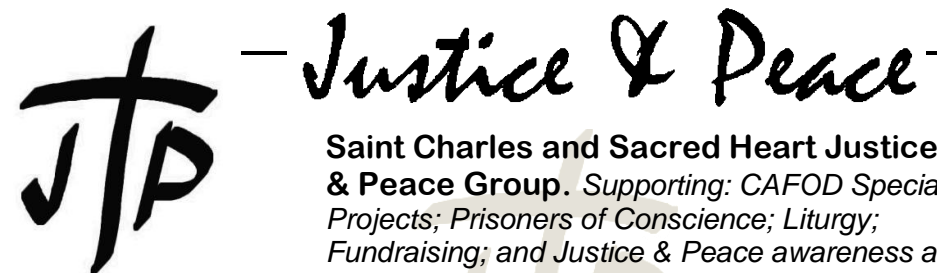
The **DIOCESAN REFUGEE PROJECT** [Justice & Peace Refugee Project - Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle \(diocesehn.org.uk\)](#) is always in need of help. Food donations can be left in the church porch. The full list of items that are needed is available [here](#). Azad Hazan, who manages the project, issues [regular reports](#) on the progress on the project webpage. A leaflet detailing the work of the project can be found [here](#).

National Justice and Peace Conference 2025

The National Justice and Peace Network Conference will take place this year at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, between the 25th and 27th July, 2025. Forms need to be completed by 15th May 2025, with a £75 deposit per person. If you would like to book a place, you can do so by going to [NJPN Conference 2025 – Bookings now open | National Justice & Peace Network](#)

Future events

- The Justice and Peace Group AGM will be held at St Charles on Tuesday April 8th at 7 pm.
- The Jo Cox event at St Charles will be held on the weekend of 5/6th July.
- The April Soup lunch will be on 06/04/2025.



NEWSLETTER

March: 2025

Saint Charles and Sacred Heart Justice & Peace Group. Supporting: CAFOD Special Projects; Prisoners of Conscience; Liturgy; Fundraising; and Justice & Peace awareness at home & abroad. For further information: Tel 07427837813 or visit the parish websites at www.stcharlesgosforth.org.uk
or
[Sacred Heart RC Parish, North Gosforth \(sacredheartng.org.uk\)](http://Sacred Heart RC Parish, North Gosforth (sacredheartng.org.uk))

Refuges and Asylum Seekers in the UK

In recent years, the issue of illegal immigration into the UK has received a great deal of attention. In particular, the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers in small boats coming across the English channel has excited much comment and hostility, with words like “invasion” being widely used in certain elements of the press and amongst some commentators/politicians. It is worth perhaps taking a look at some of the figures.

- In 2024, just over a hundred thousand people claimed asylum in the UK. Approximately 32% of those were small boat arrivals. The great majority of asylum seekers do not arrive by boat.
- In 2023, about half the applications for asylum which were assessed were successful. This was down considerably on the figure of 61% in the previous year.
- In the year 2023, asylum seekers accounted for 7% of all migration into the UK.
- In terms of the number of asylum applications per head of population, the UK ranks 20th highest in Europe.

More information on this issue is published by the [International Rescue Committee](#).

Diocesan Justice and Peace AGM 2025

The annual AGM was held on 8 February 2025, at St Mary's Cathedral. The theme was: Living in Hope, Working for Peace. The minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#). Two of the key points of the day were:

- The key to reduce and eventually eradicating violence lies in bringing members of the groups in conflict together to promote dialogue, tolerance, reconciliation and finally peace. This can be achieved by humanise 'the other', breaking down stereotypes and encouraging respectful engagement, honesty and, importantly, truth telling.
- Despite some helpful local initiatives, there is not a lot to be cheerful about with regard to the environment. Amongst the more alarming statistics were that: the rapid rise in atmospheric carbon content continues, it is now 420 ppm; of [16 environmental tipping points](#), currently none will be avoided if our current fossil fuel use continues unchanged; and the UK has only [50% of biodiversity](#) it had at the beginning of the industrial revolution.

Listening from the heart

Listening from the Heart is a programme devised by the Parents Circle, an organisation, founded in 1995, which brings together Israelis and Palestinians who have been bereaved in the course of the conflict. Having made their own journey to reconciliation and a commitment to working together for a just peace, they go in pairs to share their stories in schools, colleges, communities and faith groups in order to convince people that another way is possible. More details can be found [here](#).

Divesting from fossil fuels

NJPN and eight Catholic religious orders are among the 70 Christian organisations joining a call for the big five UK high-street banks to end their financing of new fossil fuels. In the largest action yet calling for change from UK high street banks on their fossil fuel financing, Christian organisations raised concerns over the \$556 billion that Barclays, HSBC, Santander, NatWest and Lloyds have provided to the fossil fuel industry since the Paris Climate Agreement.

They highlighted that the expansion of oil and gas is incompatible with limiting global heating to 1.5° C, according to the UN and International Energy Agency. The statement was co-authored by Laudato Si' Movement, Just Money Movement, Make My Money Matter, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Christian Climate Action (CCA) and Bank Better, with support from the World Council of Churches (WCC). Catholic religious orders signing the statement include the Religious of the Assumption (English Territory), Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, Columbans in Britain, Columban Sisters, Daughters of the Holy Spirit, Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, Congregation of Our Lady, Canonesses of St Augustine (UK) and the English Province of the Union of Presentation Sisters.

For more information on how to divest from fossil fuel companies and switch to an ethical bank as a Catholic diocese, religious order or as an individual, visit the Laudato Si' Movement website: laudatosimovement.org/where-is-your-treasure

Cutting overseas aid

Aid agencies are warning of the dire consequences of the Prime Minister's recent announcement that the government is planning to cut international aid spending from next year. [Christine Allen, Director and CEO of Cafod \(Catholic Agency for Overseas Development\)](#) said: "The decision by the British government to reduce ODA from 0.5% to 0.3% means that in some of the most vulnerable places on earth, more people will die and many more will lose their livelihoods. Coming so soon after the USAID freeze, this is another lifeline being pulled away from those in desperate need".

The cuts have also been condemned by Bishop Stephen Wright, chair of CAFOD. CAFOD has a mechanism to enable you to contact your MP to let them know you oppose these cuts, and that it's more critical than ever that the UK supports the world's most vulnerable communities. Visit the CAFOD site to [contact your MP](#).



The bookstall at St Charles is ongoing - bring and buy and your donations will help 6 homeless charities.