



## Newsletter - Winter 2025

### Director's Comments:

### Another Busy Year

#### *Dear Friends and Supporters*

It has, as always, been a busy summer and autumn and the newsletter captures some of the stories and events we have been involved in.

The **Come Together Project** supporting people mainly in the Salford area, continues to thrive. Thank you to Fr John Convey who is helping Dave. Fr John is reaching out to the parishes and faith communities in the area to spread the good news. Dave, frequently visits a range of community venues and organisations to help with the essential signposting and practical advice and guidance for local residents on a range of needs (report inside).

Ian has continued to focus on the delivery of Training courses at Loaves and Fishes in Salford, the report speaks for itself.

I have been pleased to again meet with a range of officers and community leaders from across Trafford which included speaking to a Forum in Gorse Hill and at Ageing In Place in Old Trafford. This promoted what we do and explores collaborative opportunities. I joined the TMBC Cultural and Heritage Strategy Working Group and have had several meetings with officers about our contribution with our unique Trafford Park Heritage Project. A report will be released in 2026 and we are hopeful that our work and that of heritage community partners will benefit from the wider recognition. It should bring exciting discussions about "the Village" and the Trafford Park area as well as recognition for our work to preserve and protect the industrial and community Heritage of Trafford Park going forward.

We are starting to plan the reunion and a new exhibition in 2026 about the Church and its unique history as one of the surviving 'Tin Tabernacles' that started in 1901. A brass band led Bishop Cornicelli into the Park for its opening. A unique 125 years of service to the community. In 2026 we want to protect this unique building which is essential in the plans to celebrate the rich heritage of the 'Village', its community and place in local, national and European history! Watch this space.

Thank you so much to the generous response to my appeal in the spring. We raised over £4,500 with some not insignificant efforts from our supporters. The fundraising is continuing. Any help you can give is most welcome. We also received a generous legacy from one of our volunteers. Helen Lentin left in her Will, a gift to support the Centre and its work.

Please also remember in your thoughts and prayers Peter Kneebone, one of our former Training Managers who was highly respected. We were informed of his passing over the summer following a short illness, may he Rest In Peace.

On conference and hire Sarah, alongside Charlene, has provided a great service to some new users. We recently hosted a meeting of Trafford Headteachers, there were over 47 present and Ian recognised a few from his own work in education. We also hosted a film crew - filming another short input for Coronation Street. The scene involves the front of the building; a street scene with some fast car driving.

Congratulations to the Young Christian Workers (YCW) who celebrate 100 years this year. In recent times we have seen, with some small support from the Centre, a fantastic resurgence in this unique leadership building programme with new leaders and large groups of young people planning the way ahead. The YCW also played a part in the formation of the Centre. That's why our Conference Room is known as the 'Cardijn Room'. Monsignor Joseph Cardijn was the founder of the YCW in Laeken in Brussels, first known as the 'Youth Union'.

We still need your prayers and practical help. A number of people have come forward to offer their services to the Centre in a range of ways. We will be holding some volunteer group meetings shortly. We are also still looking for people to serve as Trustees. Contact me if you know anyone who is interested.

I hope you enjoy reading about our work and I look forward to seeing you at one of the events soon.

*With kind regards and thanks as always for your generous support in 2025.*

**Kevin Flanagan**  
 Director

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## St. Antony's News

Ian Beard  
[Training Manager]



## IT COMMUNITY TRAINING

Since January 2024, St. Antony's Centre has been working in partnership with the Loaves and Fishes 'Skills for Life Centre' in Salford to deliver Information Technology (IT) courses in the very heart of the community. The course is aimed at those with no or little experience of using IT in the workplace and focuses on the teaching of Microsoft Office applications such as Word, EXCEL and PowerPoint, with learners working towards a City & Guilds qualification at their own pace. The successful partnership project has engaged 28 local residents from a range of backgrounds, including refugees and those seeking employment, in working towards and achieving IT qualifications at Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2. To date, we have issued over 80 certificates for individual IT units and 21 full qualifications to candidates. There is much research to suggest that community-based training in a local, familiar, inclusive and friendly setting is crucial for some learners and this project is certainly evidence of that. A survey of learners in 2025 and our most recent external quality assurance report suggested that "all learners confirm high levels of satisfaction with both the qualification and the way in which the Centre operates. Particular mention by learners is made of the approachability of staff and the support which they give to learners during their stay on the programme. Without exception, learners would recommend both the qualification and the centre and its staff to others. The high level of satisfaction by learners has been sustained over many years."

We are delighted with the progress and achievements of our IT learners, some of whom started with only basic (mobile phone) digital skills and very few, if any, formal IT skills, particularly in the use of Microsoft Office applications. Many of our learners have not

## St. Antony's

## IT COMMUNITY

only mastered a range of technical concepts (those pesky formulas in EXCEL, for example) and have read pages and pages of instructions but have done so in a language (English) that is not their first or even their second language. We are proud to celebrate the whole group's achievements, resilience (often studying alongside personal challenges in their lives, including homelessness), smiles and humour they bring to the sessions. Their accomplishment and the success of the pilot programme and the evidence we have gathered about its outcomes, led to a successful bid in October 2025 for National Lottery 'Awards for All' funding of £20,000 to enable the Centre to continue the programme during 2026.

## Outreach Projects Dave Flanagan

**Understanding Social Justice:** Social justice is fundamentally about fairness and equality in how society distributes opportunities, resources, and privileges. It recognises that not everyone starts from the same place, and that systemic barriers often prevent people from accessing the support, education, and opportunities they need to thrive. Rather than simply treating everyone the same, social justice seeks to address these by providing targeted support to those who face the greatest challenges.

At its heart, social justice is about dignity, empowerment, and ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate fully in society, regardless of their background, circumstances, or postcode.

### Social Justice In Practice-St. Antony's Centre:

St. Antony's Centre demonstrates what social justice looks like in practice. Through their community-focused work, the Centre embodies key social justice principles: accessibility, empowerment, and addressing systemic barriers.

### Breaking Down Educational Barriers:

The Centre's work in providing entry-level training in Maths, English, and IT addresses a fundamental inequality. Basic literacy, numeracy, and digital skills are no longer optional in modern society—they are essential for accessing employment, managing finances, navigating healthcare, and participating in civic life. Yet many adults lack these foundational skills due to interrupted education, learning difficulties, or simply never having had the opportunity.

By offering accessible training in these areas, St. Antony's Centre removes barriers that prevent people from progressing.

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## Outreach Projects

### Meeting People Where They Are:

Perhaps the most striking aspect of St. Antony's Centre approach is their community outreach service. Rather than expecting people to come to them, the Centre brings support directly into the community through multiple channels:

**Advice sessions at foodbanks** in partnership with Salford Foodbank and the Trussell Trust. There is an understanding that people facing food insecurity often face multiple challenges. By positioning support where people already are, the Centre removes another barrier and provides holistic help during crisis moments.

**Drop-in sessions at local libraries** create accessible, non-stigmatising spaces for people to seek help. Libraries are trusted community spaces, and holding sessions there normalizes seeking assistance.

**Partnership with local faith groups** acknowledges that faith communities often reach people who might not engage with traditional service providers. This partnership approach extends the Centre's reach into diverse communities.

The Centre's Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) service tackles a critical social justice issue: the complexity of navigating modern support systems. Understanding individual rights, completing forms correctly, and accessing available benefits requires knowledge and confidence that many people lack.

By helping people understand their rights and assisting with form filling, the Centre addresses the "administrative burden"—the way complex bureaucracy itself becomes a barrier that excludes vulnerable people from support they're entitled to. Whether it's accessing benefits, housing, debt, energy support or food vouchers, the Centre helps people understand and claim any support or entitlements available to them and support them to move forward

### Economic Justice and Employment:

The Centre's close work with trade unions on employment support connects individual empowerment to collective action—another cornerstone of social justice. Trade unions historically have been vehicles for working people to advocate for fair treatment, decent wages, and safe conditions. By partnering with unions, St. Antony's Centre helps people not just find work, but understand their rights as workers and access direct support in navigating employment issues through quality advice and standing side by side with workers through representations or support with appeals.

### From Survivor to Advocate: Marek's Journey:

Marek, a project support worker at the Centre, was a victim of modern slavery. When Marek needed support, the St. Antony's team provided it. But they didn't stop at crisis intervention—they recognised his potential, his dignity and capabilities. Marek now delivers talks to many communities and organisations about modern slavery and exploitation.

St. Antony's

YCW

Young Christian Workers

## GREAT SIGNS OF HOPE!

The YCW and IMPACT! continues to grow with some 18 groups now flourishing in the North West. Young adults 18-30 from the YCW have been undergoing leadership training with a team taking on national leadership roles.



YCW HQ Garden, Trafford Park

Over the past 18 months, the St John Henry Newman Impact! group in Urmston have worked together to design and create a beautiful garden at the YCW HQ in Trafford Park (formerly Fr Joe's presbytery). Their discussions and reflections on the environment, young people's mental health, and the importance of community, led to this hands-on project, bringing their ideas to life. Working outdoors together has had a positive impact on the young people's mental health, fostering a sense of connection and purpose. The garden has also brought the community closer, with homegrown vegetables used to cook meals for those in need in Urmston. The group is excited to keep growing and expanding their efforts this year, continuing to make a real difference through teamwork and care for the environment.

This July, the event, 'A Day of Hope' brought some 70 YCW and IMPACT! members together to celebrate the theme of the Churches' Jubilee year 'Pilgrims of Hope'. The afternoon included presentations from each group on how they have been beacons of hope personally and as groups, bringing hope to others in their local communities, through action. Discussions took place about the hopes and fears of young people today, what Jesus' life teaches us about hope and what actions can be taken going forward. During Mass we marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the YCW internationally and afterwards, the young people enjoyed a COSTCO cake followed by a fun and competitive scavenger hunt to find biblical themed hidden items!

YCW HQ, St. Antony's House,  
Eleventh St, Trafford Park, M17 1JF  
T: 0161 872 6017  
E: [info@ycwimpact.com](mailto:info@ycwimpact.com)  
Registered Charity Number 306149



YCW Members Celebrating 'A Day of Hope'

St. Antony's

## WE NEED YOU!

Would you like to volunteer to help our charitable works as a Trustee?

St. Antony's Centre Charity and Greater Manchester Industrial Mission (GMIM) Charity are seeking new Trustees to serve at **St Antony's Centre** from December 2025 onwards.

Trustees are responsible for helping to run the Charity and support the strategic direction we take. A Trustee's requirement is to attend 3-4 Trustee (Management Committee) meetings per year for up to 1.5 hours and a commitment to support events during the year, where possible.

Elected Trustees serve for 3 years with a second period of 3 years, if desired, and re-elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Responsibilities are regulated by the Charity Commission who produce excellent guidance and materials on the duty of Trustees [www.charitycommission.org.uk](http://www.charitycommission.org.uk).

If you want to find out more why not let us know. Training and support is given to all new Trustees as well as an opportunity to meet senior staff and other Trustees to discuss the work before making a formal commitment.

We need your ideas, vision, skills and guidance at this vital time. Why not give something back to the communities we serve and people who need our support.

Contact:

**Kevin Flanagan, Director**

for a discussion if you are interested.

Tel: 0161 848 9173

[kflanagan@stantonscentre.org.uk](mailto:kflanagan@stantonscentre.org.uk)

St. Antony's



2026

## HERITAGE STRATEGY

The work of the Centre in preserving and protecting the unique Heritage of the area has been recognised by serving officers of Trafford MBC. Kevin has, during the year, served on a Working Party to advise on the Trafford Heritage and Cultural Strategy.

Senior officers have visited and were very impressed with the exhibition and display on show at the Centre. A visit to the historic Church of St Antony's was also held.

The Trafford Local Studies Unit and St Antony's Centre have agreed to work closely in helping to make the Heritage Centre and its work better known. A piece about the former St. Antony's School featuring the original plans when the Centre was built is a new link on their website.

The Centre hosted the third public consultation on the Strategy in the autumn which included a short walking tour of the Village and Church. Many were excited to discover its rich history. In 2026 we will be arranging more local heritage walks in the area.

The TMBC Heritage Strategy and Report will be announced early in 2026 once the Council has had opportunity to review the findings.

A video of Kevin speaking about local heritage of the area produced by Trafford MBC can be seen on: [Trafford Heritage Strategy – St Antony's Centre](https://www.trafford.gov.uk/heritage-strategy).

# St. Antony's European Meeting Workers Rights & Challenges

The Director was recently invited to speak at the two day 'Kick-Off' Seminar in Belgrade, organised by EZA, the Centre for Workers Questions. The theme was looking at the EU Pillars of Social Rights, Kevin spoke alongside the Secretary for the Communication workers in Spain and the Secretary General of the Union of Free Trade Unions in Montenegro.



He spoke about changes in the UK economy and the proposed new legislation on Workers Rights also the importance of workplaces being a "community of persons" and the challenges of human work in a rapidly developing age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and platform working which can increasingly influence earnings and the way people have to work.

He argued that in a push for greater deregulation, the European model of employment and social rights were essential in the struggle for the dignity of human work and for the security of communities. Insecure work and a lack of enforceable employment rights leads to a dislocation of people from their work and a distrust of the work environment. There was a need for a dialogue at many levels to instil values-led practices in the world of work to protect employees.

St. Antony's Centre is a Member of EZA having served for over 12 years prior to Brexit. Many European countries and groups welcome the insight provided by the UK, in a World of Work increasingly dominated by global and European organisations Eza offers a unique means to share and learn from partners who share similar values. EZA is recognised by the EU as an important consultative body with worker organisations and agencies addressing social justice.

The integrity of human work and the creation of workplaces as "living communities of persons" needs to be at the forefront of the tasks that ahead. Increasing artificial intelligence and the increase of platforms working in creating hidden algorithms that inform pay conditions of work and unseen injustices of workers welfare and security of employment. Speaking of employers responsibilities, the principle of the "Social Mortgage" was still relevant that is the debt, which organisations as employers, owe to the wider community not just those in work.



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## Modern Slavery

During the year Marek, one of the Centre team who we rescued from an exploitative situation in Lancashire some years ago and who has first hand experience of modern slavery has continued to address gatherings of Social workers, Police officers and faith groups, many of whom are attempting to tackle the issue or to raise greater awareness of this across the UK. Over 17,000 cases were reported in 2023 and it is believed this is the tip of the iceberg. Internationally it runs into millions of workers

His unique story throws light on the hidden nature of modern slavery and its consequences for people exploited, often hidden from view and in many instances undocumented or vulnerable to exploitation.

During the year his presentations has taken place at the Lancashire Show, and with the Lancashire Police modern slavery team, recently he spoke at UCLAN with an audience of Social workers, students and lecturers. Further work will be done in 2026,

Marek was employed by the Centre as part of his rehabilitation and is support for him to return to a normal working relationship. He is also on the GMD Disabilities forum and spoke at their Congress with 600 people present telling of his struggle and determination to give back through his public activities the support he has received.

## St. Antony's Trafford Park Heritage

- \* Open Day and Reunion
- \* Talks and Walks

Watching the Centre website for 2026 event details

[www.stantonyscentre.org.uk](http://www.stantonyscentre.org.uk)

Opportunities to come and say 'hello' and share your Trafford Park stories.

For residents, former workers and those interested in our story.

We want your stories about Kelloggs which closes in 2026 and St. Antonys Church / School as we Celebrate 125 years of service.

## HERITAGE SHOP

<https://5fb495-08.myshopify.com/>

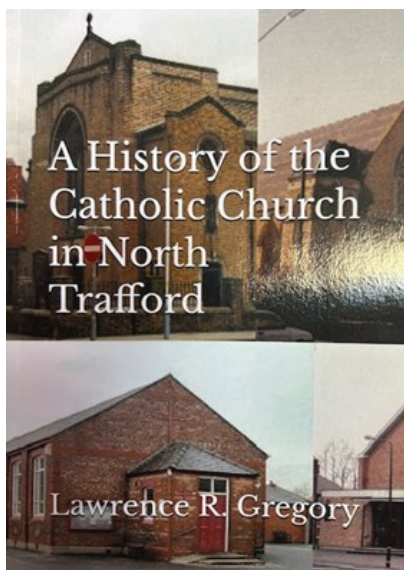
Please also visit the Heritage Shop online. All proceeds support our vital work. Order online and we will post out to you.

Buy your Christmas cards featuring the Trafford Park Hotel! (£6.50 / 5 cards)

### New Book Offer:

A History of the Catholic Church in North Trafford by L.R.Gregory available by post at the reduced price for supporters (RRP £15) now **£10 each**

Postage & Package: **£4.20 1st class or £3.00 2nd class**



## St. Antony's Upcoming Events

**Centre AGM**  
In Person and on Zoom  
Register to get the Zoom link

Wednesday  
28th January 2026

7.00pm

Refreshments 6.00pm  
All welcome.

Please confirm your attendance:

By Email:

[secretary@stantonyscentre.org.uk](mailto:secretary@stantonyscentre.org.uk)

Telephone: 0161 848 9173

## St. Antony's Lottery and Funding Appeal

The Community Weekly Lottery helps support our work. The Christmas blockbuster Super Draw is back. Play Union Lotto and on **Saturday 20th December** one lucky supporter will win **£3,000 Christmas cash bonus!** Get your tickets before the big draw on **Saturday 20th December** to be in with a chance to win! Other prizes in January Draw

The weekly jackpot is **£25,000** and additional special draws take place throughout the year. These offer the opportunity to win **£1,000 +** or a holiday break, equipment or shopping voucher.

We are hoping to raise £2,000 in 2026 from the Lottery.

We are almost 60% there now!  
Please help us reach our target.

**Tickets are £1.00 each**

Scan the QR code below  
or go to the link below

[Support St. Antony's Centre when you play Union Lotto - Union Lotto](#)



## St. Antony's Centre Contact Details

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City & Guilds

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Company no: 9553437