

VincentianConcern

St Vincent de Paul Society (England and Wales)

Charity Registration 1053992 • Company registered in England & Wales 3174679

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A Leap of Faith



Inside this edition

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Walsingham Pilgrimage • India Twinning Visit



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From our National President



Welcome to this summer's Vincentian Concern. We have a packed magazine once again this month, with articles ranging from our SVP Pilgrimage to Walsingham, feedback from the National Meeting last month, to our new shops in York and Leigh-on-Sea.

The National Meeting was a huge success, and I really hope everyone who was there enjoyed it as much as I did. The three days gave everyone time to meet up with old friends and new, and, as I said from the podium, the face to face element of our work shouldn't just sit with visiting our friends and neighbours who need help, but taking time to sit face to face with each other, and share our thoughts, ideas and helpful tips that we've picked up along the way. We had so many amazing speakers – it was particularly special to welcome Jude from India – it really brings the variety and strength of our work to the fore. We loved Yarnfield so much, that we're already planning to go back there next summer, so put the dates in your diary!

I also had the opportunity to meet the new National President for SVP Scotland – Tricia. I was hoping to attend their National Meeting as well, but unfortunately, it's on Saturday 31 August, which happens to be my birthday, so my family have other plans for me then. Maybe next year! We are looking to bring both countries closer together, so watch out for our plans in the future.

The VC this quarter has lots of fabulous articles from all over the country. We have Kate, walking through Shropshire, we have our Vinnie Van driving through Lancaster, Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes celebrating mass at our SVP Pilgrimage in Walsingham, East Anglia, and local mums being helped out in Norwich. As ever, your amazing work across the country fills me with awe and pride. Thank you. We have a moving article from Matthew at DePaul about the work being carried out in Ukraine, and I know many of you joined his session at the National Meeting. Finally we had an overwhelming response to our Social Justice campaign "A Year of Encounter" – read all about it on page 14. The power of what we can do together!

Our camps are well on the way for the summer now, and several of them will have finished. Here in Chelmsford, while we do have our Brentwood Camp, my local conference also has a Family Fun Day, for our children. It is always really well supported by our community, with a fundraising call at Mass for funds, then lots and lots of volunteers come along to paint faces, monitor the bouncy castles, sell ice-cream, and help with the donkey rides. It's a wonderful day, and the children (and their parents) go away very happy at the end of it.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer and send my prayers and thoughts to you all for the wonderful work you are doing across the country.

Elaine Heyworth, National President

Inside this edition

Spirituality	3
Society news	4
Conference spotlight	8
Young Vincentians	10
CSP spotlight	12
Social Justice	14
Fundraising	16
Twinning	18
SVP Retail	20
SVP Housing	21
Governance & Compliance	22
Camps	24
Members' Info	25
CEO's message	26
Obituaries	27
Diary dates	28

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Unwrap the Spirit of Giving

with the SVP Christmas Catalogue

See page 25 for more information



What must be done?

Follow divine providence!

by Father Paul Roche

The question comes up constantly at every level of the Society; personally, at Conference level and nationally at Board meetings. Lots of practical suggestions may be offered in answer to the question.

A decision is called for. In making the decision a lot of factors will have to be considered: resources – do we have the finances needed, do we have the social skill required, are others better placed than SVP to tackle the problem. Good, but there is still one more consideration to be made before taking action – is it in accord with Divine Providence?

Divine Providence

In Catholicism divine providence is the idea that God guides his creation towards perfection, and cares for all people and events in the world. The Catholic Catechism states that divine providence is God's disposition to guide creation towards perfection, and that God protects and governs all that He has made. (CCC.302). Jesus challenges us, his disciples, to abandon ourselves to the providence of our heavenly Father who cares for our smallest needs: "Do not say: What are we going to eat? What are we going to drink? Or what shall we wear? ...Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Set your heart first on the kingdom and justice of God and all these things will be given to you." (Mt.6:31f.).

There are many examples of divine providence in the Bible, for example: God sending the flood Gen.6:5f, Joseph sold by his brothers into slavery Gen.37:12f. The plagues sent by God which eventually resulted in the Hebrew people escaping from their lives of slavery in Egypt. There are lots more examples in the Scriptures, and in the lives of St Vincent and Bl. Frédéric. As a newly ordained priest, Vincent's concern was his own well-being rather than living and acting in accord with divine providence. It took him time to realise that God is the master and he the servant. In 1617, one family in his little parish of Chatillion being struck down with illness, was the moment when divine providence led to the establishment of the first Confraternity of Charity. Something good and wonderful flowing from a family distressed and suffering. The providence of God drawing goodness and life from



something which initially seemed to be far from good. Similarly, the young Frédéric, a keen academic and devout Catholic student in the University of the Sorbonne, was subjected to scorn and taunts because of his church involvement, yet in the providence of God this became the goad which brought a fundamental change in his focus from theory to practice, from discussion to direct service of people suffering poverty. The birth of the Vincent de Paul Society.

Living in harmony with divine providence.

For this concluding section I rely on the example of St Vincent. Reliance on divine providence was really important to Vincent after he had established the Congregation of the Mission (1625) and throughout all his most fruitful years. Some people thought he was over cautious and slow in decision making, for example moving into St Lazare in 1633 – had taken 3 years of refusal and hesitation before agreeing. On the other hand once he was confident that he was following the will of God – Vincent never hesitated and practical difficulties were overcome. From 1648 to the end of his life Vincent sent missionaries to Madagascar. The mission was really difficult. St Vincent sent about 20 priests in six different groups, but only 8 actually set foot in Madagascar. Many drowned or died during the long voyages, and those who did arrive met death in a short time. But Vincent never hesitated, he asked the very best he had, while some complained that the project was wasteful and should be abandoned. Vincent just asked "are we going to abandon God's work for five or six setbacks?"

Vincent's word to us on discovering the will of God. Take care, because some good ideas may not come from God. So, speak with him and ask how you can follow his will. Take advice from wise and dependable persons. "You should have an unshakable trust In His providence, which will never abandon you."



Getting cozy in Chorlton

To bring the community together and give people the opportunity to enjoy a nice meal and socialise, Our Lady and St John's Conference started the Tuesday Cozy Club based in their parish centre.

With the local community regulars, the club has around 50 guests from Old Trafford, Stretford, Flixton, and even Poynton.

Members Sarah O'Neil and Sheila Jones organise the fortnightly afternoon gatherings, make the soup, and shop for bread, sandwich fillers and other essentials.

They are supported by the SVP buddies: volunteers from the parish and wider community who help make the sandwiches, set up the tables, serve the meal, and tidy up at the end. The gathering also hosts a raffle and bingo, bringing lots of laughter and chatter.



The Getting Cozy Conference team

Barbara, a Cozy Club regular, says: "It gets me out of the house. It's dead comfortable."

Donations of £3 are welcome but not mandatory. Daily costs are covered by meal contributions, bingo and raffle collections and other donations.

The only thing that the Cozy Club team insists on is that you don't go home hungry.

Sheffield Member shortlisted for BBC award



Susan Adsakey

Susan Adsakey, President of St Patrick & Catherine's Conference based in Sheffield, has been recognised for her dedication and selflessness towards helping others by becoming a finalist for the Make a Difference: BBC Radio Sheffield Awards.

Susan has supported people in the community in many different ways: supplying food vouchers, giving out clothing, and offering befriending services. Susan and other volunteers at the Conference also offer support via signposting people to other organisations such as the Local Authority and Mental Health Services. She is currently trying to build more partnerships within the local community in order to support more people with a broader range of help.

Susan said: "It's so sad that today people can't afford to eat, and when we issue people with food vouchers, they are so grateful for something so small and this simple act of kindness has made their day."

The Make a Difference: BBC Radio Sheffield Awards celebrates local people who are doing great things for others and making their community a better place to live.

Long Service Awards

St Werburgh & St Laurence Birkenhead have just given out two long service medals and certificates to Members Mike Lowe and George Carroll.

Both men have been dedicated members for many years visiting parishioners, keeping in touch during Covid and even helping parishioners move home.

Presenting the medal and certificate to Mike Lowe is President Iona Watterson (both photographed with Fr Ray Burke).

The second long service medal was awarded to George Carroll (right) who unfortunately was quite poorly in hospital and sadly passed away last month (23 July). A wonderful Vincentian whose faith and dedication to the society was exceptional.



Mike Lowe receiving his award

Centenary and still going strong

On Saturday 25 May St Patrick's Conference, Huddersfield celebrated the centenary of its aggregation – actual date 26 May – with a Mass for the Sick at 12 noon.

Around 60 members and beneficiaries attended the Mass, which was celebrated with their sister Conference at their church of Our Lady of Lourdes. After the Mass seven new members were commissioned for St Patrick's Conference by the PP Canon Martin Kelly.



Fundraising Family milestone

Following in his mother's and grandfather's footsteps, Joe Winetroube is aiming to raise £500 for St Vincent's Newcastle to support their work in the community.

Joe's mother, Mary volunteers at St Vincent's Newcastle every Tuesday. Her mother's father the late Tom Thomson was also a Member acting as Chair of the SVP Fundraising Committee and raised the equivalent today of £175,000 for the renovation of Blackfriars. This money enabled the centre to reopen and the resumption of the drop-in kitchen which resumed in January 1994.

Currently studying Sports Business & Broadcasting at UCFB in Manchester, Joe was motivated by his family's fundraising past and wanted to do something of his own for the centre.

Alongside his father Phil (the two pictured together above), Joe will be taking part in the Manchester Half Marathon later this year on October 13. All funds raised through this campaign will go directly to St Vincent's Newcastle to help provide support to local individuals and families in need through food support, clothing, household items and emotional support and advice.

Anyone wishing to donate to Joe's Marathon target can do so by scanning the QR code and donating through the link, or to donate directly to St Vincent's Centre, please send a cheque made out to **SVP St Vincent's, New Bridge Street, Newcastle NE1 2TQ.**





Helping Local Mums

St George's Conference, Norwich launched a baby bank in 2023 – Baby Essentials – and in the past year, they have supported over 21 mothers and their children under the age of 3.

Started as a response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis and its impact on young families, the bank gives mothers practical help by providing them with nappies, clothing, blankets, baby toiletries, wipes, weaning products and vouchers for baby milk. They also provide supermarket vouchers and larger items such as pushchairs or essential furniture where there is a need.

Outreach support

Sadly, some of our mothers have other issues apart from poverty such as relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, child development problems, mental health and English language difficulties. So they signpost these mothers to other organisations.

The Baby Essentials storage unit is located in a parish hall and mothers can arrange a time to visit us and collect



any items which they need using a dedicated mobile number. They also organise a delivery or a short visit to the families' unable to travel.

Donations

The Conference funding for this initiative has come from generous donations within the SVP (Central Council and another Conference) and individual parishioner contributions, as well as donations of clothing and equipment from local families who have seen their posters.

If you wish to know more about how we are running Baby Essentials please contact us by emailing our president at PresidentE060506@svp.org.uk.

Walk through Shrewsbury Diocese

by Kate Birkenhead, Membership Support Officer

This summer I wanted to raise money for our two SVP Summer Camps and two Holiday Homes. So I spent my holiday completing a sponsored walk: walking the length and breadth of Shrewsbury Diocese with my partner Colin.

We started the two week, 221-mile journey in New Brighton on the Wirral and had a fantastic send off from local SVP members. Walking between 15 to 25 miles each day down to Chester, then out east to Stockport, returning to Cheshire and finally down through Shropshire finishing at Ludlow. We stayed in Members' houses and B&Bs along the way. Attended mass in Neston, Barnton, Weaverham and Whitchurch, welcomed by local Conferences.



It was a wonderful and uplifting experience, encouraged by the kindness and generosity of Members. To date we have raised over £4,000. If anyone would like to donate please visit the giving page by scanning the QR code with your phone.



Ukraine Update

by Matthew Carter, Depaul Group CEO

As we've shared previously, the possibility of conscription hangs heavy in the hearts of many men who want only peace, and in the hearts of those who love them.

All men, aged 25-60, can be called to join the military at any time, and our own Fr Vitaliy was no exception. In early May, he was called up to serve as Chaplain to the Ukrainian armed forces and began his training just two weeks later. He has now been deployed to a unit within the air force, but we are blessed to receive regular messages from him. He is happy and well, and there remains a real sense of pride at being able to continue to serve his country.

Vitaliy left big shoes to fill but thankfully, he was able to leave the organisation in the very capable hands of his deputy, Anka, now acting CEO, who has been an integral part of Depaul Ukraine since its earliest days.

Situation Update

Many of you will have seen the distressing images following the devastating air strike on the children's hospital in Kyiv. The sheer brutality of the attack sent shock waves across the world and was part of a broader series of strikes that killed dozens of people that day. The children's hospital is just 500m from Depaul's Kyiv office and can be seen from the office balcony. Thankfully, our team were unharmed, but were left badly shaken.

The situation in villages closer to the border is equally dire. April saw evacuation orders issued for multiple frontline communities with hundreds of people being displaced and some communities becoming re-occupied. As the needs are so great, these frontline communities have become a critical part of Depaul Ukraine's work.

Many people in these communities are already living in abject poverty, so our distribution of food and hygiene supplies remains critical. In the majority of these communities, people who had the means to flee left long ago, so those who remain are predominantly those who were too poor, too frail, or too unwell to leave.



Fr Vitaliy



Image source: www.theguardian.com

Access to no-go areas

Depaul Ukraine has since signed an MOU with the Ministry of Defence which allows Depaul teams to enter no-go areas immediately following an attack or when a village is first liberated. Few if any other agencies are permitted to enter as the situation is so insecure and there is often still unexploded ordnance, but the needs of people are so great that Depaul is allowed to bring food and other essential supplies such as fuel and generators in.

In addition to food and other essential supplies, Depaul has also formed a mobile team to provide clinical psychological support to de-occupied and frontline communities, supporting bereaved families and families of current and ex-combatants. The team includes a child psychologist who holds art therapy sessions with children while their parents receive desperately needed support. The team reached 43 villages in its first six months.

Low threshold shelter experiences unprecedented demand

Despite the scale of our humanitarian programs, Depaul Ukraine's commitment to supporting people experiencing homelessness has been unwavering. Since opening our new low-threshold shelter in Odesa late last year, where being under the influence does not prohibit you from seeking a safe place to stay, over 1,000 people have been given a warm and clean place to sleep.

Looking ahead

Sadly, very little has changed. The war shows no sign of abating, human suffering remains on an epic scale, and resources are more stretched than ever before. It would be easy to get disheartened, but our amazing teams simply carry on, and do what they can to make a difference in the world. This is made possible thanks to you. What's also unchanged, therefore, is our unwavering gratitude for your continued support and solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Thank you.



Bishop Alan sees God's presence at Walsingham Pilgrimage

by Andrew Eldred Willey

The Chapel of Reconciliation was full to overflowing at the National SVP Pilgrimage for the Sick, which took place at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham on Sunday 7 July.

Some 800 pilgrims had made the journey to Walsingham, and many stood outside with umbrellas in the rain to participate in the opening Mass, beyond railings which were hung with balloons to mark the 180th anniversary of the founding of the SVP.

Some had come from far beyond the Diocese of East Anglia, where the shrine is situated. There was representation from Northampton Diocese and even a coach load which had come up from London. The pilgrims were seeking both the consolation of Our Lady's presence at Walsingham and the power coming from the Sacrament of Healing, which was celebrated later in the afternoon.

Presiding at the Mass was Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes of East Anglia, assisted by Fr Peter Wygnanski, Private Secretary to Bishop Peter Collins. Fr Anthony Asomugha, Chaplain to the SVP Central Council of East Anglia, was also at the altar.



In his homily Bishop Alan spoke about the 'Apostolate of Love' which belonged to members of the SVP.

He reflected firstly on the Gospel of the day, the story of Jesus returning to Nazareth to meet astonishment and then rejection. "Today's Gospel suggests that familiarity can be a great obstacle to faith," he said.

He then drew out this idea to explore how we can easily miss God's presence among the poor and suffering. "There can be a refusal to see God in the homeless, the marginalised, the migrant," he commented.

Moving to the second reading, he echoed what St Paul wrote about his thorn in the flesh, and how he was happy to make his weakness his special strength. "St Paul discovered that even sickness, infirmities and weakness can become an encounter with God."

Turning his attention to the sick who had come on pilgrimage, the bishop said that "we must more and more recognise Jesus in the ordinary," even the ordinariness of life with infirmity.

Before the anointing with oil in the sacrament, the bishop and priests present held up their arms in silence over the congregation, invoking God's blessing. The special grace of Walsingham, the joy of the Annunciation, rewarded the sick and their helpers who had made the pilgrimage.



SVP Vinnie Van – Coming to a town near you?

by Lance Phillpott, Head of Membership

How do you enable the SVP, where there are relatively few Catholic parishes, even fewer conferences, no community support projects and a large rural area to cover, to help those in need? The only solution is to take the SVP on the road and offer its services via a mobile provision.

This is exactly what Lancaster Central Council have done with the acquisition of what is called the Vinnie Van. Recognising the difficulty and viability of establishing a long-term SVP presence in and around the towns and villages of the Lake District, the idea of a mobile support vehicle was born.

Funding for this project was sourced through accessing grants and donations. Secure in the knowledge that the Vinnie Van was financially viable, Jon Cornwall, Director of Membership and Sheen Eastwood, Head of Centre Development, worked together to translate idea into reality. Carrying out research into what such a mobile support vehicle should look like, they identified that a large vehicle, capable of negotiating the hills and roads of Cumbria was required. The result was the purchase of an ex-mobile library vehicle. The next phase was to ensure its road-worthiness and capability to manage the ascents and descents associated with travel around the lakes and surrounding environs. With the vehicle duly checked, SVP branding was applied and preparations were made to take delivery of the Vinnie Van.

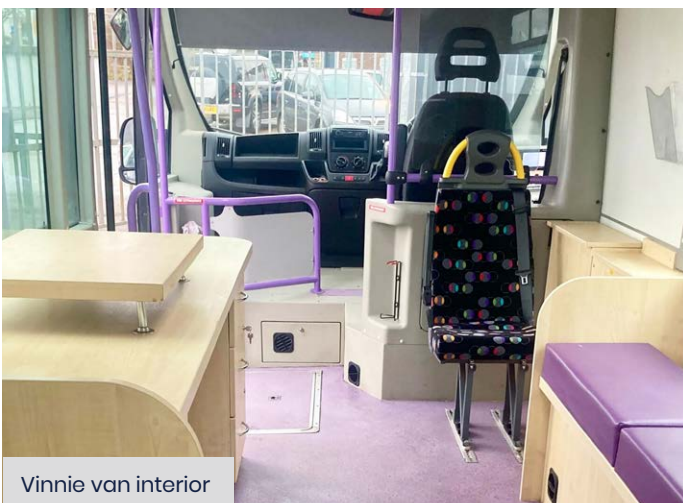


The van was delivered to the SVP centre in Leeds, and first port of call was Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire where it was parked and exhibited at this year's National Meeting. Attending members were able to visit the van and experience its potential as a mobile SVP provision.

The Vinnie Van will initially be operated by volunteers recruited from the membership who will be able to engage face to face with people using the van's facilities. The services will make their way around Cumbria to areas of identified need open and accessible to the community on specific days, at specific times and in specific locations. This will create a sense of regularity enabling the community to take advantage of the mobile facility when 'it pitches up in town'!

The Vinnie Van is kitted out to offer a range of provision to those who visit it. It will offer Wifi access, enabling connection to the internet; it has a food pantry, offering low priced groceries to those in need; it has the facility for making hot drinks and offering seating for people to gather together and chat; it has information to help signpost anyone requiring specialist help to where they might access support; and it offers a warm non-judgmental welcome to anyone stepping on board.

These are exciting times with this innovative approach to serving the community. As one member at the national meeting said: "What a fantastic idea. Taking the SVP out into the community is definitely the way ahead". Watch this space!



Vinnie van interior



Mini Vinnies hit milestone

500 groups in schools and parishes across England and Wales are now supporting their local community thanks to the SVP.



We now have a presence in more than 500 schools and parishes through our 'Mini Vinnie' programme – with Sacred Heart Catholic Primary in Southend being the school that made us hit the mark. Joining Mini Vinnies offers children a great opportunity to learn about leadership, how to help those in need, and learn about their local community from a young age, all whilst giving them a sense of friendship.

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary in Southend-on-Sea were thrilled to find out they were the 500th school to form a Mini Vinnie group. Head Teacher and Vincentian Coordinator Chris Beazeley said: "We are delighted to be joining such a great movement that is aimed at enabling children to live out Gospel values in their communities – and it's amazing to be the 500th.

"The children at Sacred Heart are really looking forward to becoming Mini Vinnies and helping those in need. This is at the heart of our Catholic ethos and it's wonderful to be part of an organisation that has love as its heart."

Celebration gathering in Southwark

More than 400 Young Vincentians – Mini Vinnies and Youth SVP groups – from Arundel & Brighton, Brentwood, Southwark and Westminster dioceses, gathered at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, on 7 June, to celebrate 180 years of the St Vincent de Paul Society in England and Wales.

Archbishop John Wilson started the celebration with Mass and told the young people about another Young Vincentian, Bl Pierre Giorgio Frassati who used to enjoy mountain climbing but was also known for his kindness to those struggling with poverty in his community.



SVP1833 celebrate, serve, and grow at Big Church Festival

by Charlie Bennett, YV Officer

We had an amazing Bank Holiday weekend at Big Church Festival, with the community gathering from across England and Wales; from Universities, Parishes, and other community groups to grow in fellowship, to serve, and to celebrate!

We spent much of the weekend exploring Big Church Festival with Vinnie Bear, having great conversations with people about the role of service at the SVP, and how they could get involved in turning concern into action in their own communities.

The highlight for many was the time spent together playing games, growing in fellowship, and discussing how they are going to take what they learnt from the weekend back to their conferences. Everyone left the Festival buzzing, energised by great conversations had, the worship and time of prayer, as well as another great opportunity to be Vincentian together!

If you interested in joining us at our next event, do get in touch! We would love to welcome you into our Young Adult SVP1833 community!

Email youngvincentians@svp.org.uk.

My Holy Island experience

by Youth SVP member Thomas S, 17 years old

Every summer the SVP host summer camps around the country. We share the experience of a young volunteer in this article.

This summer, I was blessed with the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and go to Holy Island to volunteer with the SVP's Summer Camp. As an active Youth SVP member what I thought would be a simple week of leading activities turned into one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. From 5am walks to the castle, to late night adventures on St Cuthbert's beach, each day brought new adventures, joys, and challenges. Here's a glimpse into my unforgettable week at camp.

Once we had arrived at camp on the coach, we gathered in the dining room, introduced ourselves in front of the kids, and played some team building games. I assumed that the first day would be relatively relaxed to be honest, but no! We jumped straight into our first adventure! We walked to the opposite end of the island to have fun on the beach. There were rockpools, we played football, and (my favourite option) we played in the sand dunes. It was a really lovely experience to get to know the kids a bit on the first day while rolling down dunes and having fun, and I think everyone valued being thrown in at the deep end a bit to kick off the week.



“ Although the summer camp is a week for the children, as a leader, it is a hugely enjoyable week too.”

Each day, the structure was the same, which definitely helped. Breakfast was at a set time, as was lunch, and the evenings always consisted of dinner (tea), a small activity, writing in journals, and a prayerful reflection. One evening, we had this reflection around a campfire and made smores, some nights we had it in the church next door, and sometimes we just had it in the dining room sitting round together. These moments of calm and quiet is, for me, what made the week so special.

During the day, we usually gave the children an option of multiple activities so that they could be in control of their holiday, and it was also valuable for a first-timer like me.

On one of the last afternoons we took a walk down to St Cuthbert's beach. Just off the shore from the beach is St Cuthbert's Island which, like Holy Island itself, you can only get to and from at low tide. Fortunately for us, it was low tide when we made it to Cuthy's beach. The island is only small - there would be no room to build a house on it or anything - and is inhabited by seals.

When we got there, we all sat in a circle looking out to the sea and watching the seals swim past. We just sat in peace and chatted, prayed, talked about our week so far, sung a couple of songs, and just enjoyed being in such a calm environment. This will be my lasting memory.

I have made a camp family for life, and I can't thank the SVP enough for the opportunity.





Newcastle Food Pantry

Support needed to meet growing need

For 180 years the SVP has been supporting local people through our committed conference members and our 11 Community Support Projects (CSP), which need to be self-sustaining and are constantly under pressure to make ends meet.

Huge increases in local demand have put additional pressure on CSPs and we are looking for conferences, district or central councils, who might consider sponsoring a centre, or a project at a centre, to get in touch.

CSPs are always based in the areas of need identified by our members and offer a wide range of support and services, working with some of the most vulnerable members of the community and people who have been marginalised from society.

The centres offer services that meet the needs of the community in which they are based, using local knowledge to shape how and what services are delivered. The one thing that underpins the work at every centre is kindness. People can expect to feel welcome and part of the family when they walk through the doors, regardless of life experience or circumstance.

The centres have always been busy, noisy hubs but the cost-of-living crisis and the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic has seen an overwhelming increase in need. In St Vincent's Newcastle alone, the number of people being supported across April to June has jumped from 4,968 in 2023 to 8,808 in 2024 – an increase of 3,840 people.

Across our CSPs, we provided help for over 170,000 people in 2023/24. That high level of demand is placing additional pressures on budgets and resources and the CSP team is in need of help. If you have a CSP in your area, you may very well already be supporting by volunteering or raising funds. For those of you that were at National Meeting recently, you would have heard Deputy CEO Kate Nightingale outline the work of the centres.

If your conference, district or central council, could consider sponsoring a centre, or a project at a centre, we would love to hear from you. If you would like to find out more, please contact either Kate at katen@svp.org.uk or Head of Centre Development Sheena at sheena@svp.org.uk.



Summer fun at Community Support Projects

The six-week summer holidays can be a long and challenging time for families living on limited budgets. We all know that the cost of living crisis has hit hard and, for some, the cost of food during the holidays has added an additional burden.

The CSP team have offered summer schemes at many of the centres for a number of years, offering food and activities for local families. This year is no different with an even bigger and better offer and at even more of the centres.



The CSP managers are a creative lot and are always looking for new ideas that can offer children wider horizons and try new things that they may not otherwise have a chance to do. Many of the children that come along, describe a day trip out to the seaside or to a local attraction, as their holiday. We like to think that they all have positive memories of the holidays when they return to school.

The adventures this year have been varied: A trip to Butterfly World by some families in Newcastle, a train journey to Carlisle from the Deaf Centre (pictured above), a cinema full of children from Chorley and even a visit to St Vincent's Leeds from Opera North. It's not just the children who have enjoyed summer activities - the extensive activity programme in St Vincent's Brixton has included a Sewing Bee and Drumming sessions for adults and the wellbeing group from St Vincent's Ely Bridge have been out and about on the coastlines of South Wales enjoying the beautiful sunshine.



St Vincent's Ely Bridge



St Vincent's Brixton



St Vincent's Newcastle



St Vincent's Leeds



A Year of Encounter: Celebrating a successful campaign with CAFOD

We are thrilled to celebrate the success of our 'A Year of Encounter' campaign with CAFOD. For the first time, the SVP partnered with CAFOD to help Catholics across the country use their voice ahead of the General Election.

After many months of preparation, we launched our initiative and in only six weeks we helped hundreds of parishes across the country to come together and call politicians to tackle poverty.

Our campaign helped over 250 parishes speak to their MP candidates, join hustings, and urge politicians to prioritise tackling poverty. The response from our members was overwhelming – letters and emails flooded into MP candidates' offices, ensuring our message was heard loud and clear.

Many of our members attended hustings, where they posed challenging questions to candidates, keeping poverty and social justice at the top of the political agenda.

'A Year of Encounter' demonstrated the power of community action and the importance of standing together for a just world. We thank everyone who participated in this campaign and look forward to continuing our work to create a society where everyone can thrive.

Read some of the coverage of our initiative on the Tablet by scanning the QR code on your mobile phone.



Tackling Poverty with the new Government

With a newly elected Government, come opportunities to engage and influence policy.

Since the election of the new Labour Government, our social justice team has been busy contacting all the new Ministers responsible for the areas we campaign on. These include Angela Rayner, Bridget Philipson, Yvette Copper, and Liz Kendall.

We have also written an open letter urging the Government to tackle poverty urgently. Our letter was covered in several papers, including the Catholic Herald. Read it by scanning the QR code below with your phone.

Going forward, we will seek to work with the newly established Child Poverty Unit. The new Unit has been tasked with finding a solution to the growing rate of child poverty. This has grown by 700,000 since 2010.



Work experience week for young people



A joint initiative from the St Vincent de Paul Society (England and Wales) and CAFOD, saw a group of 16 young people come together for a full-packed week of work experience and new adventures, including an overview of our policy work.

The busy but rewarding week gave the group an opportunity to look at all aspects of the respective charities and help them understand the day-to-day functions of how they are run. From Fundraising and Communications to Advocacy, they were given a front-row seat on how the charities operate, giving them an opportunity to see if a job in the charitable sector would be for them.

The week was a great networking opportunity for everyone, offering them the chance to build connections alongside the chance to visit the Capital and gain insightful experience whilst still at university. Aged from 20 to 25 years old, the group came from a range of different universities including Cambridge, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Plymouth and Cardiff.

Due to the incredible feedback and success of this year's work experience, we hope the initiative can be run again in 2025, giving more young people the opportunity to gain experience in the charity sector.

St Vincent's Newcastle on BBC Radio

Our St Vincent's Newcastle centre was featured live on BBC Radio Newcastle.

Jan, from the St Vincent's centre, spoke to BBC Radio about the work of the centre to tackle loneliness through their new 'Golden Years' project. She also spoke about their work to support over 100 children per week with food and entertainment during the school holidays.



Justice & Peace Conference



This year we joined the National Justice and Peace annual conference. This year's theme was 'Just Politics'.

We were invited to deliver a workshop on our Year of Encounter initiative with CAFOD. We delivered our workshop to a packed room of enthusiastic J&P and other supporters and campaigns.



Acts 435



Acts 435 is an online giving platform directed at churches and local charities. It is a free service where “advocates”, who know the genuine needs in their community, post the requests for help onto their website.

Once a request is posted it can be met by one donor, or a number of donors giving what they can towards a small gift that can make a big difference. You can apply for up to £200 per application and have two requests active at once. Through our longstanding partnership with Acts 435, the SVP now have a dedicated page that people can access to show all current SVP applications in one place.

Easy donating

Currently most donations come from outside the Society. However, the SVP's dedicated page now makes this easier for SVP Conferences to donate to other SVP Conferences, where you can see that a request is not being met from general public donations. If your Conference has excess funds, you can help your fellow SVP Conferences who need urgent funding to support their beneficiaries. Please remember that donations outside of the SVP to another charity or someone who is not an SVP beneficiary are generally not allowed. Please use the following link and share with others:

www.acts435.org.uk/needs/network/svp

If your Conference needs funds to help support someone locally, please be encouraged to apply for funds via the Acts 435 platform. It is a fast turnaround for how quickly your application is funded and it is a great way to fundraise. If you require further information, please contact the SVP Membership Fundraising Support Officer: **bethanym@svp.org.uk**.

UPCOMING NEWS

Watch out for more news this autumn, as we launch a new **Membership Fundraising Knowledge Hub course** and **Members Fundraising Pack** to further support your Conference in raising essential funds.



Bethany Moreland

National Members Meeting 2024

Fundraising Reflections

Thank you to everyone who came to the 'Fundraising for your Conference' early bird sessions at this year's National Members Meeting.

The sessions were well attended across all three days, with over 100 people hearing Membership Fundraising Support Officer, Bethany Moreland share her fundraising tips. For members who were unable to attend the National Meeting in person we also hosted a follow up webinar on 11 July 'Raising funds for your Conference', of which a recording is available on the Members Knowledge Hub. To see it scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile phone.



SVP Lottery

Big prizes to be won every week. Funds raised go directly to support the work of the Society.

- **£25,000 first prize**
- **£1,000 second prize**
- **£300 runner-up prizes**

Play from as little as £1 per line per week and choose your own numbers, or even play a lucky dip. Hurry and sign up by scanning the QR code above using the camera on your mobile. For any assistance, please contact Liv Stott at **olivias@svp.org.uk** or call **07593 384429**.



Remember a Charity Week

Remember a Charity Week 9-15 September is a special time to reflect on the causes that matter most to us and consider how to leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

During this week, we encourage you to consider the lasting impact you could make by including a gift in Will and ensure that your kindness lives on through the Society for future generations. If you need support with this, we offer a Free Will writing service, to all our members to help you ensure that all your wishes are honoured.

By leaving a gift in Will, no matter how small, you can help us continue our vital work and make a difference for years to come. Register your interest in the free-will writing service by scanning the QR code using the camera on your mobile phone or contact Legacy Manager, Aisha McCarthy at aisham@svp.org.uk for further information.



SVP Summer Raffle ends soon

Just a reminder that all raffle tickets need to be returned by 9 September.

Conferences will receive 50% of the money raised (net of costs). The Conference who sold the most tickets last year made nearly £500 by selling just over 1,000 tickets!

The raffle will be drawn on 26 September at Vinnie's Cafe, St Vincent's, Allenby House, Bradford at 3pm. Please feel free to join us! For more information, please contact Liv Stott at olivias@svp.org.uk or call **07593 384429**.

National Lottery Funding

Conferences can apply for Awards for All funding, part of the larger National Lottery Community Fund, with grants ranging from £300 up to £20,000 to spend available.

Recent successful applications include funding for Our Lady of Canvey Conference to support a food distribution project across Canvey Island. They received £19,000 to enable them to run their project and purchase a much-needed new van to make remote deliveries to those they support in their local community.

Conference President Tony Roche said: "The grant of £19,000 means that our aging van can be replaced and our service facilities at the food bank can reach more people. Since getting the funding, we have been able to give out 11,700 food parcels from January to June, so the money has been an invaluable help."

To access the fund, Conferences can make applications via SVP Membership Fundraising Support Officer Bethany Moreland. Please email Bethany at bethanym@svp.org.uk.





Brother Jude's visit to SVP England & Wales

At the end of June, the SVP England & Wales invited Brother Jude Mangalraj, SSVP National President of India, who we are twinned with, to join us for one week. This trip was an opportunity for our partnership to develop as we learnt more about each other's SVP activities, challenges, successes, and aims.

As part of this trip, Jude was invited to attend National Meeting and deliver the keynote speech, following the theme of "Past, Present and Future." In his speech, Jude shared with us the long-lasting history of Christianity within India, how the SVP was initially set up there in 1855, and how it has evolved over time to current day. SVP India currently has 65,303 members across 6861 conferences.

The National Meeting also allowed Jude to spend time with over 200 of our members and staff. After National Meeting, Jude travelled to London for a few days where he met more of the staff, visited Romero House, and attended mass at St Boniface in Tooting with the local SVP members. This was a wonderful opportunity for



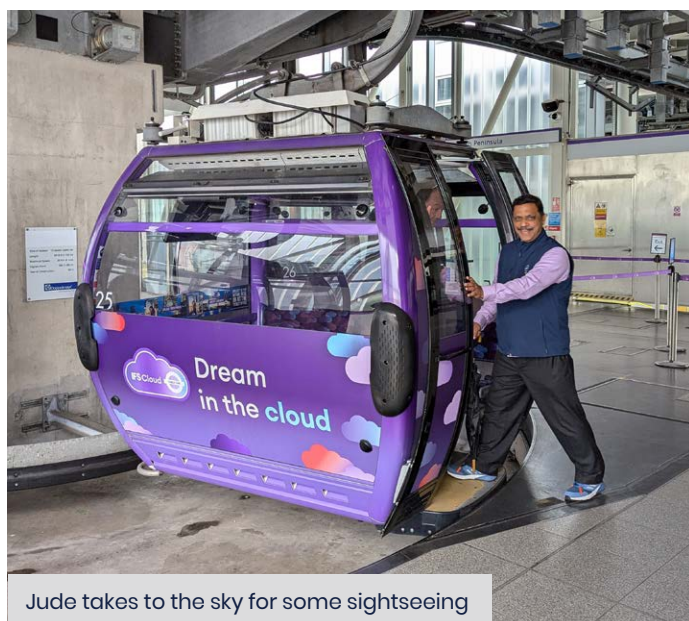
From left to right: Patrick Greenidge - Southwark CC President & Twinning Officer, Jude Mangalraj - SSVP India National President, Paul Montgomery - Westminster CC Twinning Officer

Jude to learn more about the different works of SVP Conferences and we want to thank Patrick Greenidge, Tommy Flynn, and all those involved for making the day such a success.

On Monday 1st July, Jude hosted a member's Q&A webinar in which over 150 members enrolled to attend. In the webinar, Jude answered members questions regarding the new Financial Regulations, the benefits of the new twinning model in place, and the work of the SVP Conferences in India.

Jude also shared SVP India's vision for 2024/2025 which includes:

- Continued and tailored support to Conferences in India, thanks to the E&W Conference Twinning commitment.
- Increasing communication between India and E&W twinned Conferences.
- Increasing the number of students receiving support for fees, materials, transport, etc.
- A focus on development and empowerment projects which result in greater self-sufficiency (such as repeating the Microfinance scheme which proved to be a success across 2023/24).
- Continuing with the success of Conference small projects.



Jude takes to the sky for some sightseeing

After two days of strategy planning with the Twinning team, and meeting with various departments, Jude was guided around London on a sightseeing trip - his first time in the city. Jude also spent an eye-opening day at Southend Support Centre. This trip was an invaluable opportunity to develop the important connection between our SVP Societies.

The need within India remains, and our new funding model provides India with the opportunity to respond in the most effective way. Despite the country's overall economic growth, the disparity in wealth is growing.

An estimated

270 million

people in poverty, 61% of the population lack access to electricity, and children still drop out of school to earn an income.



An estimated 270 million people in poverty, 61% of the population lack access to electricity, and children still drop out of school to earn an income. By providing SVP India with more decision-making powers over how to spend their funds, they can ensure the funds are spent in the most effective way possible. Our strong relationship and transparency in working together ensures good governance and accurate reporting throughout.

We look forward to developing our support within India and thank all Conferences and Members who continue to support Twinning. We also offer thanks to Brother Jude Mangalraj for being so generous with his time and visiting us. If you would like to know more, please contact twinning@svp.org.uk.



Jude giving his keynote speech



Would you like to support a Twinning project?

SVP England & Wales is twinned with 6 countries across the globe; Romania, India, Guyana, Grenada, South Sudan and Sudan. As with England & Wales, the SVP in each country sets up and operates projects, at Conference and Central Council level, which are tailored to the need and to their community.

Examples of previous and current projects include:

- A day trip for 20 isolated elderly individuals (Romania)
- A summer school for at-risk youth (Grenada)
- Providing sewing machines for income generation (India)
- Purchasing school desks for a new classroom (South Sudan)
- Roof maintenance of an SVP care home (Guyana)

If you are interested in supporting a project by making a donation, please get in touch at twinning@svp.org.uk to find out more about our available projects.



A warm welcome to York and Leigh-on-Sea

We are thrilled to announce the opening of two new St Vincent's shops, expanding our need to raise vital funds for the Society and serve those in need across England and Wales.

These shops are not just places to find affordable, high-quality items; they are vibrant community hubs where every purchase directly contributes to our mission of supporting vulnerable individuals and families.

Our new St Vincent's shop in Melrosegate, York is in a bustling part of town. This shop has quickly become a favourite for locals and visitors alike, offering a variety of items that reflect the generous spirit of the York community. Whether you're searching for vintage treasures or contemporary finds, there's something for everyone on the shelves.

Meanwhile, in the charming seaside town of Leigh-on-Sea, our new shop is already making a positive impact. The strong sense of community in Leigh-on-Sea is evident in the warm, welcoming atmosphere of the shop, where unique goods are available to those who need them most.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Volunteers and Donors

These new openings would not have been possible without the incredible support of our volunteers and the generosity of those who donate stock.



St Vincent's Melrosegate, York



St Vincent's Leigh-on-Sea

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of St Vincent's shops, dedicating their time and energy to creating spaces of warmth, kindness, and service. From sorting donations to assisting customers, their contributions are invaluable.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has donated goods. Your donations fill our shelves and allow us to offer a wide range of affordable items, from clothing and books to household goods and furniture. Every donation, no matter how small, makes a significant impact.

Your Support Matters

As we celebrate these new openings, we encourage all Members of the SVP and the broader community to visit and support your local St Vincent's shop. Whether you're looking for a bargain, a unique find, or simply wish to support our mission, your visit makes a difference.

By shopping at or donating to St Vincent's, you are directly supporting our work to alleviate poverty and offer hope to those in need. Every purchase and every donation helps us continue our mission of service. Together, we can ensure that these new shops in York and Leigh-on-Sea thrive and continue to raise funds and be beacons of hope and support.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the values of the SVP. Let's make these new shops a success and continue to serve those in need with the same compassion and commitment that has guided our Society for so many years. Visit, support, and be part of the change.

Norfolk house reopens, expanding family accommodation

Article first published in the Independent Catholic News

The St Vincent de Paul Society Temporary Emergency Accommodation (TEA) Project, first established over five years ago in Cromer and Sheringham on the North Norfolk coast, has now been further expanded to cater for more homeless families, following an increase in the need for emergency family accommodation, which has doubled in this period.

The whole project of three properties now protects up to seven families and more than 20 children at any one time.

More emergency accommodation

Building work on the £110,000 building conversion, to add an additional three fully furnished apartments for use by new families urgently awaiting emergency accommodation, started in February 2024 and was successfully completed, on July 11.

The building extension was officially opened by North Norfolk Conference President Michael McMahon, assisted by SVP Local Housing and Support Manager Debbie-Anne Farrow and with Conference Members, who welcomed representatives from North Norfolk District Council Housing Department and other guests (including Fran Ludden from the newly formed Sacred Heart SVP Conference based at Aylsham) to the blessing ceremony at Bl. Rosalie Rendu House in Cromer this month (August).

Safeguarding families

In the last financial year (April 2023 – April 2024) the TEA Project has safeguarded 12 families (including 33



Children). Some 25 families and 44 single people have moved on from the SVP houses into permanent homes since 2019. The North Norfolk District Council document 'Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 to 2024', adopted in December 2019, clearly established the original need and provision required to help more than 34 families in the area per year who experience or were in danger of direct homelessness, needing immediate emergency temporary accommodation.

Publication of statistics as at December 2023 shows the homeless position has worsened by almost 100% in North Norfolk with 66 households having dependent children formally assessed as being homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Assistance for residents

The Trustees of the St Vincent de Paul Society have shown significant faith and given major support to this Project since 2018. This year, in addition to the significant conversion and renovation building work, TEA now has full time support staff which has enabled much more help to be given to both the standard of accommodation and assistance to the residents.

James Harding, the recently appointed SVP Head of Housing, is currently working on the feasibility of an additional North Norfolk expansion project to acquire two further houses. It is hoped these would be support houses on short term tenancies to which families in emergency accommodation can progress to and ensure they have the right support to permanently resettle. James envisages that the model can then be replicated in a major city environment where the need to respond to the effects of homelessness is even greater.





New Environment and Sustainability Policy

'The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all' (Laudato Si`, 23)

When the Board developed the five-year strategy for the Society in 2023, the question of the environment was very much in everyone's hearts and minds and what we can do to help influence it for future generations.

One of our strategic objectives is "to put our faith & values at the heart of what we do" and so this was developed further to state that we will "have a concern for God's creation in all that we do."

This then led us onto developing a new SVP Environmental and Sustainability policy which was approved by the Trustees in June 2024.

It simply states that the SVP recognises and accepts that concern for the environment is an integral and fundamental part of its Christian responsibility.

It takes inspiration from Catholic social responsibility and the words of Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si`*, 'Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home (13)'.

The policy aims to set out our path in achieving our ambition in our common home. We understand that all our activities relating to the alleviation of poverty and disadvantage have environmental impacts and that we have a role to play in protecting the environment and God's creation.



Bradford Social Enterprise food and clothes bank



St Vincent's Revive Sunderland

“ 'Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So we cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture.' (Laudato Si`, 43)

Our aspirations are to continuously improve sustainability through an ongoing programme to **reduce, reuse or remove** environmentally damaging influences and encourage activities that, where possible, improve or conserve the environment in the following ways:

- Minimising the use of all materials, supplies and energy, and, wherever possible, use renewable or recyclable materials and components.
- Taking the environment and sustainability into account in all service areas including (but not limited to) estates, procurement and management, transport and general service delivery through our shops, offices and support centres.
- Monitoring, assessing, and reporting, on a continuous basis, where practical, the environmental impact of SVP's activities and compliance with our policy.
- Publishing our Environmental & Sustainability Policy and updating the Policy whenever necessary to reflect any positive changes in service delivery and good practice.
- Establishing aspirational key performance indicators (KPIs) that enable us to track and monitor progress towards significantly reduced carbon emissions by 2030.

Waste Management



- 20% reduction in landfill trips by shops/ depots or reduce waste collections
- Ensure ethical Rag partner credentials
- 100% doors closed to avoid heat loss in cold weather

Energy & Water Supply



- Renew utility contracts with greener supplier credentials
- 100% LED refurbishments
- 100% laptops, PCs and lights turned off at night
- 100% efficient boiler replacements in owned properties
- No taps left running
- Boil kettles with minimum water required

Recycled Materials



- 25% increase in recycled products or environmentally friendly products e.g. toilet tissue, recycled paper cups, recycled paper towels, bags for life used, etc.

Travel



- Reduction in annual mileage from 10k to 8k in year 1 (2024-2025)
- Use public transport as a first option unless not practical to do so

Supply Chain



- Review of all supply chains by 2025 to ensure ethical credentials

Biodiversity



- Develop forestry or new wildlife habitats in 30% of owned properties/ projects by 2026
- Develop projects to cultivate crops, plants and agricultural initiatives in 30% of owned properties/ projects by 2026



Environmental and Sustainability Impact Statement

Many funders and grant makers are now asking for Charities responses on this matter, so we now have a "Environmental and Sustainability Impact Statement (ESIS)."

The Board of Trustees are accountable for our Environmental & Sustainability Policy (ESP). The Executive team are responsible for the delivery of the policy and ensuring that our operations and programmes within the Society's strategic aims minimise our environmental footprint. We commit to avoid adverse environmental impacts by:

- ✓ **Setting SVP's environmental and sustainability strategic direction and embedding it into our culture.**
- ✓ **Creating an action plan to further the aims and achieve the benefits of this ESP and updating as necessary.**
- ✓ **Reporting on the ESP and progress annually in SVP's Reports and Accounts, Trustees Annual Report and on SVP's website.**
- ✓ **Communicating to, and encouraging, employees and volunteers to participate in, and contribute to initiatives which continuously improve SVP's environmental and sustainability approach.**
- ✓ **Ensuring SVP policies and practices are continuously updated to reflect the aims of this ESP or comply with any environmental legislative requirements.**
- ✓ **Ensuring SVP Employees and Volunteers are trained and comply with this ESP.**

Pictured: Bradford community garden.



“Love and a caring environment with supportive peers can be life-changing”

by Sarah Barber, Director of Young Vincentians and Youth Service

I met Joseph (not his real name) with his mother and brother in a park a week before we went to camp. It's not typical for us to meet in person, but his mom explained that he sometimes pushes, pinches, swears, and can hurt other children. The national camps committee now requires a Complex Needs form to address everything from medical to emotional needs, and I planned to complete a care plan for Joseph, knowing we might decide we couldn't provide the care he needed.

I learned that Joseph hadn't been allowed on any school trips because the school said they couldn't manage him due to his autism and frequent dysregulation. However, with two experienced male helpers on our camp team, I felt confident we could offer the necessary care, so we invited Joseph and his friend Lucas to join us.

Joseph and Lucas sat on the coach, looking overwhelmed by the rare opportunity to leave their parents and go on this trip. Upon arriving at our accommodation, Joseph had a minor outburst, calling a girl a nasty name. We quickly established some ground rules: this was a kindness camp where everyone was expected to be the best version of themselves. We explained that if anyone made a mistake, they should apologise, and the person receiving the apology should accept it so everyone could move forward and enjoy the camp. Joseph understood and apologised.

The first night, Joseph refused to go to bed and howled that he wanted to go home. We reassured him that he was safe, that we wouldn't keep him against his will, and that we would call his mom first thing in the morning. We also reminded him of the swimming activity he was excited about the next day. By being gentle, patient, and encouraging, we calmed him down. He didn't like the dark, so we placed some LED tealights around his bed. By 2am, exhaustion took over, and he finally slept.

The next morning, Joseph decided to stay. Though initially hesitant to participate in the outdoor activities, with the encouragement of his peers and the volunteers,



he gradually began trying new things. Every small success was celebrated by everyone.

Each evening, we completed journals as part of the bedtime routine. It became clear that Joseph didn't know how to write or even hold a pencil. With the help of his volunteer, they discussed the day's activities, and together, they completed his journal. On the second evening, with guidance, Joseph drew a smiley face. By the third evening, he was writing on his own, joining the dots to write “Wed” (Wednesday) with a huge sense of accomplishment. From that point on, he completed part of the journal each day by himself. His whole demeanour changed – he walked taller, more confidently, with no signs of bad behaviour.

On the last night, we had a party, and my abiding memory of this camp will be of Joseph dancing confidently next to his helper, having an absolute blast. We don't always see such a dramatic impact on every child, but one week with Joseph showed that love, firm boundaries, and a supportive environment can be life-changing. After the camp, his mom messaged me: “It's lovely to see this different side of Joseph. He's so smiley in the pictures and looks so happy. As a family, we've had it tough, but I'm so glad he had this opportunity with you guys.”

Our camps rely on volunteers and donations. Please support by visiting svp.org.uk, click on **Donate Now/Specific Project** and insert **Camps2025** as the name of the project.

Unwrap the Spirit of Giving with the SVP Christmas Catalogue

As the festive season approaches, there's an unmistakable joy in finding the perfect gift for loved ones. This year, the SVP invites you to spread that joy even further with our much-anticipated Christmas Catalogue, launching soon!

Brimming with a stunning selection of advent calendars, eco-friendly and Fairtrade gifts, and 16 inspiring new Christmas card designs. Whether you're looking for a beautifully crafted card, a heartfelt present, or a way to make a meaningful impact, you'll find it here.



And the best part? Every purchase helps fund the vital work of the Society, supporting those in need in our communities.

Consider extending the hand of friendship by giving an Alternative Christmas Gift in the name of a family member or loved one. Your thoughtful donation will enable the SVP to offer support, transform lives, give hope, and restore dignity to those who need it most.

Shopping with us is easy and convenient. Browse and order online, give us a call, send your order by email or post. We are already accepting pre-orders with the first dispatch date being 2 September.

This Christmas, let your gifts do more. By choosing from the SVP Christmas Catalogue, you're not only giving something beautiful but making a real difference. For more information contact the Retail team on **07435 284508** or email **svptrading@svp.org.uk**.



The Mind & Heart of a Vincentian

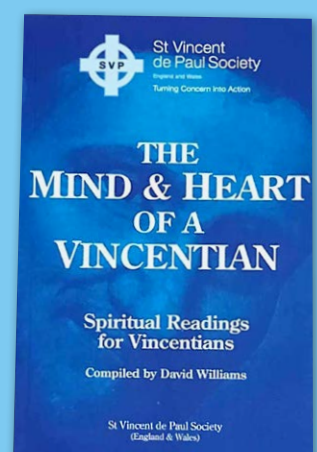
David Williams' much-loved book, *The Mind & Heart of a Vincentian*, has been a cherished guide for Society members worldwide ever since its first publication in 2001. After being out of print for some time, it is now available in a gently revised edition.

David's dedication to Vincentian service began as a 16-year-old in Arnold, Nottingham, and continued for over 60 years, during which time he occupied numerous roles in the Society including Vice-President of the International Council General. The new edition reflects the belief of Frédéric Ozanam and his companions that spiritual development is crucial to the Society's mission.

Before he passed away in March 2020, David had expressed a desire to revise the book for republication. With gratitude to David's family for their support, the revised edition incorporates extensive updates, including insights on environmental stewardship.

The book is now available in the membership shop. Scan the QR code with your phone or visit: **stvincentsshops.com/collections/svp-merch-and-resources**.

**NEW
EDITION
AVAILABLE
NOW!**





A Leap of Faith

Last week I was lucky enough to attend the Brentwood children's camp which takes place at an activity centre on Hornsea island. Nineteen young people aged 10 and 11, most of whom had been nominated by their schools came together to experience a week of camaraderie, fresh air and fun, as well as some new and challenging experiences.

One such activity was the "leap of faith", which involved climbing a very tall (and wobbly) pole, and then leaping off it to try and catch a metal bar suspended some way in front of the pole! The front cover of this magazine features a picture of one of the camp helpers having a go! Not everyone made it to the top of the pole and of those who did, not everyone managed to grab the bar, but every one of our young people had a go and finished the exercise with a sense of pride and achievement.

It struck me that there is much that we do in the SVP which requires a "leap of faith." Whether it is joining the Society in the first place, starting a new project, taking on an Officer role within a Conference or Council for the first time, or responding to need without being quite sure where the funding will come from. Of course, nothing we do should be based on blind faith. You will be pleased to hear that our young people were fully harnessed and

secure but that did not mean that climbing that pole was an undertaking to be taken lightly. It took them out of their comfort zone and there were a lot of "jelly" legs!

As Vincentians we have to move out of our comfort zone from time to time, hopefully secure in the knowledge that we have an infrastructure to support our staff, members and volunteers in all that they do. The story goes that Frédéric Ozanam lost courage on his first visit and walked away from the door where he was to deliver firewood. One of my favourite Shakespeare quote is from Measure for Measure: "our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt." Just think what would have been lost if Frédéric had walked away that day and never come back. Instead, he persisted in his conviction and the Society was born. If you are thinking about a new act of Vincentian service or perhaps volunteering to take up an officer role, take courage and make the leap of faith. It's a lot less scary than jumping off a 25 foot pole!



Elizabeth Palmer, CEO

David Young's Charity

The trustees of the David Young's Charity (DYC) are aware of the work that the Society undertakes at all levels. Some cases need more support than normal and even after District Council and Central Council assistance, there may be a shortfall. As a separate registered charity, we can try to assist any member of the Society who may have fallen on hard times. Any applications for grants must be sent with any other documentation that would prove helpful to the Trustees for consideration.

The reply should be received within 30 days. As a Special Work of the Society, we are able to receive donations from Conferences, Councils and individual members. We are most grateful for those received in the past and it is helpful for administrative purposes to send cheques made out to the David Young's Charity.

The trustees of the SVP have approved support of DYC. For further information, an application form or any guidance please contact:

The Trustees of the David Young's Charity, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7JB.

Visit the David Young's Charity website:

www.davidyoungscharity.co.uk or email **trustees@davidyoungscharity.co.uk**

Registered Charity Number: 238877

CHAS Catholic Housing Aid Society

CHAS (West London) was established in 1965 and the aim of the charity is to assist anyone with a financial housing problem. For instance, the Trustees would consider supporting someone with rent arrears who may be in danger of being evicted. However we are a 'specialised fund' and cannot make grants for more general purposes.

The fund works closely with the St Vincent de Paul Society throughout England and Wales and, where applications are made through the SVP, we would expect the SVP to be committed to the particular case they are submitting with time and appropriate funds.

Consideration is given to the circumstances of each case and the amount of the grant is varied, accordingly.

An application form can be obtained from Andrew Theobald by post (**9 Connaught Road, Sutton SM1 3PJ**) or email (**redtheo@aol.com**).

Please submit the application to Andrew Theobald with as much supporting detail and documentation as possible in order to receive the full consideration of the Trustees.

Registered Charity Number 241225

Remembering those we have lost

With deepest regret, we announce the deaths of the following valued members.

John Anthony Marengi, a Member of St David's Conference, Newport passed away on 29 May 2024. Born on 14 November 1933 in the Welsh mining valley of Abertillery before World War II, his involvement with the SVP started in his youth and continued throughout his life. A commissioned artist and sculptor he lectured for many years as Head of Art at Newport Art College. He pioneered annual trips to Weston Super Mare plus annual Christmas meals for housebound and families in need across Newport: and worked alongside various agencies to accommodate the homeless.

Mr Bernard Drew (1935 - 2024) a very active member of SVP for over 25 years of Padley Martyrs Conference, Chesterfield, recently passed away. He served as President, Treasurer & Secretary in the Chesterfield Conference, as well as being involved with the SVP District & Central Councils for Hallam Diocese. Bernard was the finest example of the Vincentian Spirit - he just got on and did what was needed to help others.

Chris Duke a member of Our Lady Star of the Sea & St Bernards Conference (now Ellesmere Port & Hooton SVP) sadly died in June 2024 aged 90. Chris' involvement with the SVP began in his early 20s in Ireland. Chris moved to Australia in 1966 where he joined the conference of St Mary Magdalens in Elizabeth, South Australia. When returned to the UK, he became a Member, President and District President of Our Lady Star of the Sea instrumental in setting up a used furniture depot, and raising funds to buy a holiday home in North Wales for disadvantaged families.

Kenneth Kilcoyne a Member of the SVP for over 60 years passed away on 17 September. He joined in 1955 in St. Thomas More's parish in Sheffield, but moved to Sacred Heart parish and later St Patrick's parish in Sheffield. His last Conference was based at St Columba's Church in Chester. Ken was a kind and generous man; with his time and his talents, which touched and enriched the lives of so many. Rest in peace.



About the SVP

2024-25 Dates for the diary

Board Meeting

Saturday 21 September 2024 Brixton
Friday 22 November 2024 Leeds
Saturday 25 January 2025 Zoom
Saturday 8 March 2025 Romero House
Friday 20 June 2025 Zoom

AGM

Friday 22 November 2024 (Evening) Leeds

National Council Meeting

Saturday 23 November 2024 Leeds
Saturday 15 February 2025 Zoom
Saturday 17 May 2025 TBC

SVP Christmas Appeal

Wednesday 13 November 2024
- Sunday 12 January 2025

SVP Pilgrimage

Sunday 6 July 2025 Walsingham

National Meeting

Friday 11 - Saturday 12 July 2025



The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) was established in England and Wales in 1844 and is part of a large and thriving Christian voluntary movement dedicated to tackling poverty in all its forms by providing practical assistance to people in need in 153 countries.

Our core value is one of service and we treat each person as a unique individual deserving of dignity and respect. Person-to-person contact is therefore at the heart of our work and spending time with people is our greatest gift. We offer non-judgemental support to anyone in need, regardless of faith, race, gender, sexual orientation, background or circumstances.

Our 860 local groups comprise 8,321 trained volunteer members who visit vulnerable or isolated people and offer them sincere friendship and practical support. We visit people at home, in hospital, care homes, prisons and other settings. In ten areas of the country our work has evolved into vibrant local community support centres which respond to local needs and offer a warm welcome to everyone. Each centre is supported by up to 100+ dedicated volunteers who work alongside a small staff. In all that we do we maintain high standards of governance, oversight and effectiveness and the experience and voices of our members and those we support are central to our planning, service development and social policy work. As society's needs change, our service models also evolve, and we constantly innovate to develop new forms of outreach and volunteer support.

Please pass it on...

Once you have read your copy of the Vincentian Concern, please feel free to pass it on so that others in your local community can learn more about the SVP.

Share your stories

We would like to hear from you, so please share your inspiring stories about the work of your Conference.

The next deadline to submit content for the Vincentian Concern is **30 September 2024**. Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be emailed to Joseph Adjei at **comms@svp.org.uk**. Please include a high resolution image with your article.

Vincentian Concern is an official publication of the St Vincent de Paul Society England and Wales.



**St Vincent
de Paul Society**

England and Wales

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