



Annual (Trustees) Report Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered no. 1184714.

The Centre's sixth official year began in October 2024 through to September 2025, and the following report captures key aspects and developments of this year.

David Shutt Young Peace Ambassadors

We have been delighted by the continuing success of the [Young Peace Ambassadors](#) project which we started in 2022 to help children in primary school address and transform conflict among their peers, becoming ambassadors for peace in their schools, homes and communities. This year we added a 6th school, and yet again, it has been hugely successful. We have been helped once again by funding from [Community Foundation for Calderdale](#) (founded by Lord David Shutt), through the Wilson Fund (a good friend of David Shutt and long-time member of Blackley Baptist Church) for which we are very grateful. Steve Duncan (CEO of CFFC) came to one of the training days and CFFC commissioned a wonderful video of the project, filmed and created by Dean Bycroft.



We are very grateful to the Headteachers and staff of the schools for engaging with us and supporting this project. Heads have commented on the beneficial impact it has had on their schools, and [Cross Lane Primary School](#), [St Patrick's RC Academy](#), [Old Earth, Primary School](#) and [Elland CofE](#) were keen to participate again. They were joined this year by [Holywell Green Primary School](#).

In June 2025, 48 children and 10 staff came to Blackley for the two days of initial training, followed by one day refresher training in September. They were all brilliant, learning and practising the [GLIDE Process](#) for transforming conflict. The children and their families were invited to the Centre Celebration for their commissioning as Peace Ambassadors on 11th October. (Although technically out of the timeframe of this report, we should mention that over 120 people attended.)

[We have now trained 128 children in local schools along with 19 key staff members, impacting 6 schools!](#)

Cross Lane's YPA's were invited to do a presentation at a Hate Crime Conference for Calderdale. The children role played a playground conflict demonstrating the GLIDE Process at a Peace Talk, which wowed the audience, with people saying "We need this," to one another.



Training

The Blackley Centre's '[Paths of Peace – Handling Conflict Well](#)' training had its first delivery in October 2024, followed by another successful running of the course in the Spring 2025. Twenty participants, including HR Officers, Baptist Ministers, Regional Ministers, an Anglican priest and Cathedral Dean as well as other people in church leadership positions, have explored how to handle conflict and disagreement well, learning processes and practices that promote restoration of relationship and reconciliation. It is a 5 week course beginning and ending with full day, in-

person training at Blackley. Between these 2 days are 3 half-day zoom sessions to facilitate skills practice, accompanied by 4 teaching webinars. We have been delighted with the appreciation voiced by participants, including these comments taken from training evaluations. "Wonderful expertise, clearly and openly communicated!" "Excellent content, and engaging, gifted and experienced teachers" "Super experienced, knowledgeable, friendly and helpful" "This was a real light-bulb moment for me and brought many insights" "I would recommend it to anyone with leadership responsibilities."



We hope that this will continue to be a significant resource for churches of all denominations, to improve the culture in churches which seems increasingly fractured. As the year 2024 - 2025 came to a close we were about to embark on a third course, sponsored by [Southern Counties Baptist Association](#) as they continue to develop a restorative Association, in partnership with The Blackley Centre.

Other training this year has mainly divided between 2 areas, the first being [general conflict awareness](#) type days. These have been delivered to individual churches, to ministers in training at two Baptist Colleges, and as part of three [Regional Associations 'Minsters and Leaders Conferences'](#) or away days. (SCBA; NBA; SWBA.) These continue to be hugely appreciated as well as leading to enquiries about interpersonal mediations or restorative church processes. The second main area of training has been delivering training using [The Gilmore Fraleigh Friendly Style Profiling](#), which has proved very beneficial to leadership teams, and is increasingly being used by dioceses to strengthen working relationships between Training Incumbents and Curates. We also use it as part of our Paths of Peace training, and so this year we have commissioned and facilitated 85 profiles.

[In all, over 300 people have received training from the Blackley Centre \(not including the YPA's and their teachers.\)](#)

[Playing with Peace Parent and Toddler Group](#)

It has been a great delight to both church and Centre that this joint enterprise has recommenced after a long break, and that with the employment of [Michelle Edwards](#) as Joint Play Leader with Jo, the group has gone from strength to strength. Though very small for the first few months it now has a stable attendance and is a very happy and supportive group for both children and their carers, learning the importance of building good relationships from the very beginning.



[Interpersonal Mediations and Group Facilitations.](#)

Over the course of the year the Centre has offered several [Group Facilitations](#) to congregations. These occasionally involve a single meeting, but more often have taken several months of careful and committed working, to improve relationships. In the interest of respecting and honouring confidentiality it is not possible to give details of to whom or even where these have been offered, but in summary these have mainly been for [Baptist, and Anglican leadership teams](#), and [whole congregations](#).

Jo, with Associates, has conducted [Interpersonal Mediations](#) between a variety of people, some connected with the group sessions above with others on unrelated issues. These have included working for mission organisations in Europe and Africa where relationships between colleagues have broken down. Whilst this ordinarily takes place on Zoom due to distance, it did provide an opportunity to mediate in Spain. The weather was lovely but sadly we were working too intensely to benefit!

[1:1 Conflict Coaching Sessions](#) for leaders in have also been offered to individuals. People have found these very helpful, especially when mediation or a restorative practice is not possible. As mentioned last year, it takes a lot of courage for people to engage in this work, and we are very grateful for the trust that these individuals, communities,

and churches, have placed in Joanna and in the Centre. We are also hugely indebted to colleagues [Joshua Askwith](#), [Aglia Barraclough](#), [Holly Bonfield](#) and [Carol-Anne Ryan Palmer](#) who have worked with the Centre on several of these cases. In all, 5 Churches, 2 Mission organisations, plus 24 individuals (around 180 people in all) have been facilitated through restorative processes from The Blackley Centre.

Peace and Quiet Retreat Days

Throughout the year we have continued to offer [Peace and Quiet retreat days](#) on a monthly basis. The pattern of these days has remained pretty constant with participants gathering for a led reflection at the beginning and end of the day, with a menu of activities or options to use in between. These include a guided walk in the beautiful countryside around Blackley with stops for prayer and reflection ([The Blackley Pilgrimage](#)), the use of a [wide range of resources](#) (art supplies, jigsaws, reading matter etc), [1:1 Coaching sessions](#), particularly helpful to people experiencing times of conflict, plus a lovely lunch. The purpose of these days is to provide a place of rest and retreat within the busy-ness of daily life, using the whole site and Centre team to offer some much needed '[Peace and Quiet](#).' It has been lovely to welcome regular attendees as well as one off visitors.



A welcome addition to the site is the Peace bench, purchased through CFFC funds in memory of Lord David Shutt, founding trustee and good friend of the Centre. Lovely to see a church group, relaxing on the peace bench after a pilgrimage walk.



Inter Faith Work

We were delighted to work in partnership with Calderdale Interfaith and the Peace Studies Department of the University of Bradford to host a [Peace Conference](#) for [Inter Faith Week 2024](#). This was a brilliant day with many people participating in workshops, seminars and discussions on different aspect of peace, with an interfaith perspective. It was great to meet students from the Peace Studies department as well as to showcase students from Cross Lane Primary School and Headteacher Mark Sharp in The Blackley Centre session on Young Peace Ambassadors. Andy continued to support interfaith work in Calderdale as part of the [steering group of Calderdale Interfaith](#) participating in all the Inter Faith Week events and he led on gathering Calderdale Faith Leaders for a meeting in June.

Funding and Management

The Centre is funded by charging for some aspects of the work, the giving of its members and by grant funding. We're grateful to new members who joined the Centre during the year and all our existing members and to everyone who has given financially.

The trustees have continued to work with Andy and Jo to find a sustainable way forward. The funding secured for YPAs from CFFC through the Wilson Fund is for five years and we are very grateful to CFFC for the stability this provides. We're also grateful to the Wharfedale Foundation and an anonymous giver for their support in funding Michelle's role as PWP Co-Leader and we've continued to draw on the Community Fund National Lottery grant of £20,000 that was made in 23/24. A similar Community Fund grant made to the Church last year provided for the refurbishment this year of the Prospect Suite toilets, improvements to the entrance and a new office window. We're very grateful for these improvements and for the additional funds provided by the church to provide them. Thanks to Lisa Jagger, our funding consultant who has helped us secure most of these resources. We're again very grateful for our partnership with Blackley Baptist Church and particularly for the support it has given by allowing us to suspend our quarterly contributions when our income has been below budget.

The Centre is run on a day-to-day basis by the Directors, Revd Andy Williams and Revd Joanna Williams (one full time equivalent), assisted by the Centre Manager, Christine Allcock (voluntary) who oversees all use of the centre and manages bookings by external groups which increased significantly this year. We estimate that 1000 people came to the Centre and Church during the year and we thank Chris for all her work. Church volunteer catering teams provided meals and refreshments for a number of groups, including catering for the Inter Faith Peace Conference and we thank them for their great work in providing hospitality. We continue to be grateful to Tim Ingram for his graphic design work, looking after our website and email communications via Mailchimp. Thanks also to Pauline Barnard as a volunteer for banking our cash and cheques.

Trustees

The Centre is overseen by our Trustees. We're very grateful to our Chair, [Revd Mary Taylor](#) for her leadership, to [Rob Quarton](#) for working so hard for us as our Treasurer, and to [Karen Ainsworth](#) for her continued support and energy, as well as acting as our Trustee for Safeguarding. [Guy Hirst](#) continues as a Trustee coming from Blackey Baptist Church, joined by [Jean Whitworth](#) appointed by the church at the beginning of 2025. During Summer 2025 we began conversations with [Revd David Mayne \(Regional Minister Team Leader of Eastern Baptist Association\)](#) following his participation in Paths of Peace Spring course, and we were delighted to co-opt him onto the Trustee Board in September 2025. His appointment will be affirmed at the AGM in March 2026. (Please see the additional profile.)

We are so grateful to all these people for their enthusiastic support and willingness to give their time to the Blackley Centre. Their wisdom and encouragement are invaluable. Thank you.

Networks

An exciting development which has arisen over the course of this year has been a closer relationship with [The Mint House, Oxford](#), leading to the formation of a new network for churches and Christian communities interested or already involved in restorative practice. (The [Churches Restorative Practice Network](#) was launched in November 2025 where Joanna was the keynote speaker.) The Blackley Centre is well represented on the steering group, with both Mary and David being involved alongside Jo.

Andy continues to be a key part of Calderdale Interfaith and carries a high profile on interfaith issues with the Baptist Union (although sadly the Interfaith Working Group has ceased.) The Centre continues to work closely with [Blackley Baptist Church](#), [Bridge Builders Ministries](#), [Reconcilers Together](#), and the [Baptist Union of Great Britain \(BUGB\)](#) and [Yorkshire Baptist Association](#). We are delighted that the closer Partnership relationship with [Southern Counties Baptist Association](#) has developed from initial conversations into a living reality, and are grateful to Revd Clare Hooper and Revd Hayley Young for their enthusiastic support of The Blackley Centre. There are encouraging connections also growing with other regional associations.

It was also great to welcome Pastor Emmanuel from Rwanda. He is hoping to create a centre for reconciliation and healing in Rwanda and wanted to learn from us! With all honesty, we are sure we learnt far more from him. Here he is with us outside the Centre in September 2025.



In summary, we feel that the year 2024 -2025 has been an exciting and encouraging year for The Blackley Centre, although not without its challenges. Many thanks again to all who have supported us and The Blackley Centre during this year, and we look forward to all that is to come.

***Rev Andy Williams and Rev Joanna Williams
on behalf of The Trustees of The Blackley Centre.***