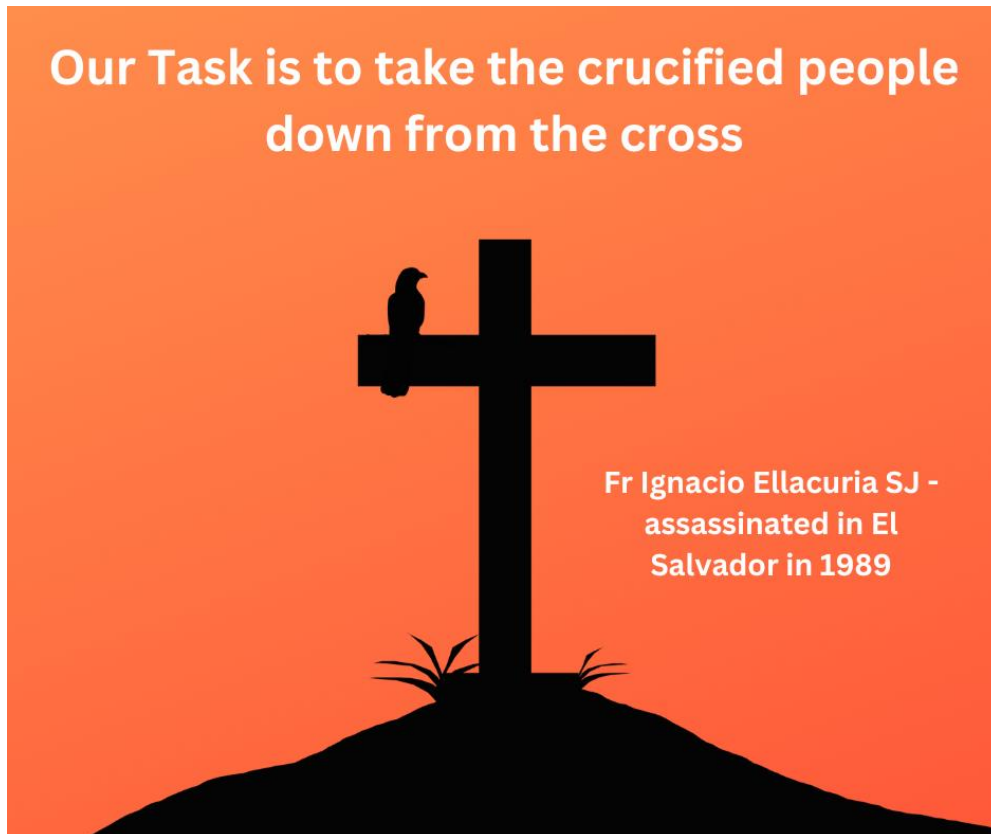




DO SOMETHING POSITIVE - JOIN THE COMMISSION!



We are looking for new people to volunteer to be part of the Leeds Diocese Justice & Peace Commission. Anyone living in the Leeds Diocese who is interested in changing the world could serve as a Commission member! Our activity level is increasing but we can only do more if we have more people helping to devise, organise and manage these activities.

What's involved?

The minimum commitment is to attend the 4 Commission meetings that are held roughly on a quarterly basis each year. Three of these meetings last about one and a half hours and take place during an evening via Zoom. One meeting per year is a long half-day in-person

FIND OUT MORE

If you want more details about how the Commission works or to fill out an online application form then simply follow this link:-

<https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/2023/04/11/11-apr-wanted-new-members-for-the-jp-commission>

meeting to review our priorities and do some future planning.

Usually, but not always, Commission members are also involved in some of the Commission's activities. This might be by being part of one of our action groups or



helping manage a project (the main one at the moment being our SPARK Social Justice project, which is aimed at 18-30 year olds living in the Leeds Diocese). Some people provide expertise through, for example, updating our website or regularly contributing to our newsletter. Some people are part of other organisations and bring that perspective to the Commission meetings.

How do I apply?

Simply go to our website and fill out the online form or follow the link given below. Someone from the Commission will then get in contact and arrange to meet with you informally over a coffee. This allows us to explain in more detail what the Commission does and gives you the opportunity to make sure that it is what you want to do.

2023 ROMERO LECTURE – LISTEN TO OUR PODCAST

The Archbishop Romero Trust organise annually a short lecture tour for a visiting speaker with some connection to El Salvador. This year we were fortunate to have a presentation of this talk in our Diocese. It was organised jointly by the Commission and Leeds Trinity University and held at LTU on March 21st.

Peggy Healy spoke passionately about how we can listen to the voice of the poor today and incorporated her personal experiences of working in El Salvador at the time of the assassination of St Oscar Romero and the 3 Maryknoll sisters and Jean Donovan, who were close friends. Hearing from someone who has witnessed situations on the ground and walked alongside those who have

suffered brings to life what was really happening in El Salvador during the civil war and the events that led to the assassinations.



We recorded the talk so that we could turn it into a podcast. It is now available on our Buzzsprout page.

However, as we only have the free account, it will only be available for 2 months (so, until about the end of June). It is well worth a listen – but don't leave it too long! Use the link below to access the podcast. If you don't like podcasts, then the same link can be used to access a pamphlet of Peggy's talk.

<https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/2023/04/04/30-mar-romero-lecture-2023/>

JOIN THE SPARK COMMUNITY

By Kathy Shaw, SPARK Outreach & Engagement Manager

The Catholic Church has a history of social teaching that goes back centuries impacting on all aspects of our work and family life. In 1892 Pope Leo XIII outlined a just social order in response to a lack of basic employee rights and an increasing tendency towards class warfare. This ongoing tradition teaches us today that every person is valued and has the right to participate and benefit from living in a society that promotes the common good, and the wellbeing of the whole community.



Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is an essential part of our faith; St. Augustine described the common good as one which is not diminished by being shared with others. Our social doctrine sets out the principles of social justice as they appear in the Gospel, it works for change and defines the values we need to live in a just and loving society.



SPARK is a social justice project for young adults from 18 to 30 years and is part of the Leeds Diocese Justice and Peace Commission. We have talked to many young people who have passionate views about the issues of social justice such as Black Lives Matter, homelessness, UK poverty and the climate emergency. They tell us they do not often engage with the institutional Church or connect their faith to the principles of CST.

"Millennials question everything, and maybe that's to our detriment, we think we have all the answers so maybe we think we don't need faith?" male aged 29.

We believe that the measure of every institution can be seen by how it responds to the complex challenges in the world today. This does not make the Church part of any political system; but although we are independent of each other we share a common purpose, to be at the service of the personal and social vocation of humanity.

SPARK aims to establish small groups, online or face to face, to support young adults to define a social justice agenda for action, rooted in CST. Our funding includes payments for the key person or SPARK "Animator" to plan and lead a group, and funds for creative arts professionals to contribute to sessions as required. Training and support is provided, and the opportunity to develop relevant skills which are transferable to the workplace.

Join our on-line community and find us on social media:



@SPARKSocialJus1



@SPARK Social Justice



@sparksocialjustice

For more information, or to get involved, contact Kathy by emailing:

Sparks.jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

By John Battle, Commission Chair

Our human story has always been a story of 'people on the move' as is well reflected in both the history of evolution and the Biblical tradition. Initially people are thought to have emerged from the Rift Valley in Africa some 2 million years ago (though anthropologists today recognise some 15-20 different species of early humans, some arriving in Europe between 1.5 and 1million years ago.).



This migratory story is reflected in the biblical narratives not least as memories of famines and floods that drove Abraham and his descendants from the not always fertile crescent. The impacts of climate changes have long been felt. It is a story of the world on the move and of people regularly being driven out as the Exodus account recognises. St Mathew's account of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt reinforces the reality of the refugee.

By the end of 2022, there were nearly 90 million displaced people on the planet, of whom 27.1 million were recognised internationally as refugees under the United Nations Charter of Refugees (1951). Worldwide today, though most refugees are internally displaced or usually exiled to a neighbouring country, in country-of-origin terms, 13.6 million refugees are from Syria, 8 million from Ukraine, 6 million from Afghanistan, 4 million from Sudan, and 2.7 million from Central Africa Republic. A further 1.2 billion people are estimated to become 'climate refugees' (driven out by floods, droughts, wildfires and natural disasters by 2050).

Is there a hard distinction therefore to be made between a 'deserving refugee' fleeing conflict or climate disaster and what are referred to pejoratively as 'economic migrants'? Both need to survive death by war or the violence of starvation.

Moreover, given that the currently wealthiest countries are responsible for twice as much CO2 emissions than the poorest half of the world there is surely a responsibility on the wealthy to tackle this global divide. Unfortunately, it is the wealthiest countries that are strengthening their borders, building

walls and barbed wire fences to keep people out.

According to UNHCR in November 2022 there were 231,547 refugees in the UK, and 127,421 pending asylum-seeking cases. Refugees still constitute less than 5% of foreign-born nationals and less than 0.6 % of the total UK population despite exaggerated political rhetoric of high numbers "Swamping" or "overwhelming" the country. Notably the UK takes less of a share of refugees than most other wealthy and European countries. It is a fact that numbers crossing the channel on small boats are up on previous years (last year 45,756) and 3,000 so far this year but the real challenge is the lengthy time it is taking to process new arrivals given the Home Office back log of 127,547 cases.



Wikimedia Commons License

Reference to "safe and legal" arrival routes also glosses over the fact that as there are only three approved routes agreed by the government: for those from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Hong Kong. Every other asylum seeker is officially "illegal" but under international laws signed up to (and in some cases drafted by the British Government) grant all arrivals the basic right to apply for asylum. In other words, any present refugee crisis in the UK is one of prompt and efficient processing. Post Covid, hotel chains have



been rented by the Home Office to house arrivals, notably paid for with substantial funds (one third of the annual total) from the overseas aid and development budget; funds now not going on international development.

The recent response of the government has been to introduce a new 'Illegal Migration Bill' following the 40 new measures introduced in 2020. The core new proposal is that the duty to remove all asylum seekers who arrive across the Channel small boats *"will take precedence"* over human rights and modern slavery claims. Furthermore, they may immediately be deported to Rwanda.

In practice, the Bill will also ensure that children and families arriving on small boats will again be detained in immigration centres thus reversing their closure and ban on this practice introduced by the Coalition in 2014 following a major public campaign involving Citizens UK, Churches and faith communities, the Jesuit Refugee Service and community refugee support groups. In 2010 the Conservative Liberal coalition made a commitment to end child detention and in 2014 the Immigration Act banned the detention of unaccompanied children, while their claims are assessed, for more than a 24-hour period. Restrictions were also put on where an unaccompanied child could be detained (eg where their presence was required for immigration purposes or in *"age dispute"* cases determining who are under 18 years).

In December 2022 there were 7,470 unaccompanied children registered by the Home Office (up from 5,157 in September) and most were from Sudan. The Home Office Enforcement Instruction and Guidance spells out the unsuitability of detention for unaccompanied children under 18. The seven

Immigration Removal Centres are therefore ruled out in law. This is now to be revoked. Citizens UK are urging their chapters nationally (made up of local institutions and communities including churches and Diocesan bodies) to press MPs and Peers to vote against this policy back step and to prevent child asylum seeker detention as a priority,

Recently the Catholic Bishops Of England and Wales published 'Love the Stranger: A Catholic Response to Migrants and Refugees', reminding us to *"love the stranger for you were strangers in Egypt"*, setting out 20 guiding ethical principles rooted in *"the innate worth of each human person"*.

"The message", they write *"remains consistent; those arriving from other parts of the world are our brothers and sisters, and we are called to see ourselves in them, for we all share a common humanity"*. Echoing Pope Francis, who stresses *"we must strive to find alternatives to detention"* our Bishops now *"call upon the government to avoid the use of immigration detention, arbitrary expulsion and other practices which violate human dignity"*. At present, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are the legal responsibility of local councils who through their Children's Services must help them, ideally through fostering support.

And the Bishops insist that while recognising that states have a right to control their borders *"such measures cannot be based on economic factors alone, they have obligations to the wider world"*.

Inspiringly they encourage us to always *"look beyond labels and see the person who has left their homeland"* and to remember that every migrant has a name, a face, and a back story that we have an obligation to explore.



DIOCESAN LAY TRUSTEES WANTED

Bishop Marcus is seeking to recruit additional Lay Trustees to join the Board of the Diocese of Leeds Trustee.

"Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others" (1 Peter 4:10).



The Board is hoping to secure the appointment of individuals in this round of recruitment with one or more of the following skillsets:

Catholic Education,
Finance,
Property,
Governance,
Human Resources,
Hospitality,
Communications & Digital Media,
Health & Safety.

Applications close on the **5th May 2023**.

For more information visit the Diocesan website at:

<https://www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/recruitment-of-new-diocesan-lay-trustees/>

Here you will find a Recruitment Pack with more information on the role, and details on how to apply.

CREATIVITY CAROUSEL

By Bronagh Daly, LCI Faith and Creativity Lead

A free once day creative retreat, 'Creativity Carousel', started on Saturday 11th March hosted by Leeds Church Institute at their new office space, 43 The Calls, in the centre of Leeds.



Faith and Creativity Lead, Bronagh Daly, welcomed five attendees at the first event:

"We are situated just behind the Leeds Minster in a beautiful part of the city. It is a perfect central location in a peaceful setting, ideal for a day to join in faith and creativity. The day retreat helps anyone to share the good news of the gospels through watercolour, photography and print making as well as other art forms. You get to try and take home your own artwork. We have a fully accessible and inclusive space that we want to share with faith workers and volunteers from all across the city. This day will help resource churches to embrace creativity as a tool to explore the teachings of Christ."



NEWSLETTER April 2023

Children's Liturgists, a Sunday school volunteer and Street Pastors from across Leeds came together at the creative day retreat. Gail Partington from St Mary's Church in Horsforth reflected on the inaugural retreat:

"I enjoyed the retreat, sharing ideas and an opportunity to take some time to be creative. Meeting people from other churches and faiths was really special. I learned some new techniques to share in our children's liturgy sessions at church."

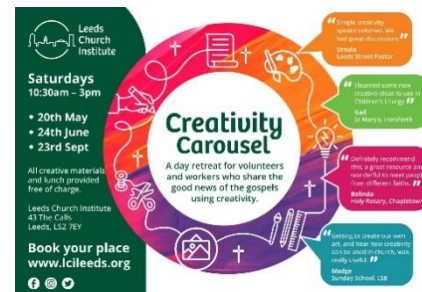
Attendees were welcomed with a session looking at art theory and personal reflections linked to their faith and church traditions. Belinda Connoley from Holy Rosary Church in Harehills said:

"The warm welcome and lots of new ideas from the other group members was lovely, along with learning that we can borrow resources and artwork from Leeds Church Institute will be a great help to our children's liturgy group and whole parish. I would definitely recommend other church volunteers and helpers who share the gospels with young families to attend. It was a great creative retreat."



Madge Henry is a Sunday School helper in LS8, and she heard about the event from her friend Urusla who is a Street Pastor.

"We learned lots of new skills, and had time to reflect on our faith using the gospels, I can see how we can use this with younger families very easily."



If you help share the joy of the gospels in your church, school or faith setting we warmly welcome you to join us on the following Saturday creative retreats; **20th May, 24th June and 23rd September** here at:

Leeds Church Institute, 43 The Calls, Leeds, LS2 7EY.

Booking is essential, click here to [book your place](http://www.lcileeds.org). All creative materials and lunch are provided free of charge.



WOMEN IN BLACK LEEDS & BRADFORD

By Carol Burns, Women in Black Leeds and Joyce Robertshaw Women in Black Bradford

Women in Black (WiB) is a world-wide network of women committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence. As women experiencing these things in different ways in different regions of the world, we support each other's movements. An important focus is challenging the militarist policies of our own governments. We are not an organisation, but a means of communicating and a formula for action.

WiB vigils originated in Jerusalem, Israel in January 1988, in response to the beginning of the first Palestinian Intifada. The message "Stop the Occupation" appeared on the image of a hand signalling "stop".

It's hard to know how many vigils there are today. But an example of the reach is when WiB in Israel/Palestine, as part of a coalition of Women for a Just Peace, called for vigils in June 2001 against the Occupation of Palestinian lands, at least 150 WiB groups across the world responded.

In the UK there are regular vigils in Bradford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Oxford, Portsmouth as well as Leeds.

There are many different ways to stand for justice and to support those denied their human rights.

Solidarity and presence can be powerful ways of non-violent action.

- It's non-religious but can feel very prayerful standing with this silent group of mainly older women.
- Its symbolic -we can't be in Palestine or Ukraine, for example, but we can be in solidarity with the suffering of the people there and highlight the injustices of the conflict and the occupation.
- It's a consistent presence and brings the people of the West Bank into people's minds.
- It's a stand against hopelessness when some people say to us 'oh nothing will change-in the Middle East they are always fighting'.

Leeds Group

A Women in Black group started in Leeds in September 2019 organised by women of faith and no faith.

We stand in silence for an hour wearing black and holding a banner which says End the Occupation with the colours of the Palestinian flag in the background.

The silence is important, it requires discipline from us all, demonstrations and vigils can often be noisy, the world around is noisy, so we stand out, it's unusual and a signal perhaps that sometimes words aren't enough.

We take it in turns to give out leaflets and encourage dialogue with passers by



NEWSLETTER April 2023

It can be a challenge to be patient, not to get angry, to give the other point of view, - to listen to those who engage with us. I've had some special conversations over the years.

Some people are genuinely enquiring I have had a long conversation with a young Christian man trying to understand the conflicting claims to the land of Palestine and an even younger British Jew who seemed to know nothing about the plight of the Palestinians.



Often people give us a thumbs up as they go past, and others take our photograph.

I value this chance to be with other women who care about the same things and to make my small contribution to supporting the Palestinians and to draw attention to the injustice they experience.

Many groups are working on campaigning and education on the issue of Palestinian Rights and some of the women who came to the Women in Black sessions are also involved in other organisations.

Bradford Group

We contacted the Bradford WiB group with the following questions:

1. What does the movement mean to you?
2. What do you find significant about silent vigils?
3. Do you think that the vigils should be done in collaboration with groups who do more forceful campaigning?
4. What do you find empowering about the Women in Black movement?



And these were the responses from members:

"WiB movement is important because it routinely and perennially makes the statement that people oppose war. At all times."





"We all feel that the wearing of black and standing in silence are very important and as said above has a powerful effect. Two women give out leaflets and engage in discussion and answer questions from members of the public and we usually have a positive effect."



"The silent vigil is a very powerful weapon in the protest armoury. It makes the point quietly but with great strength of feeling."

"It's empowering to know it was started by women and is the powerful and persistent voice of women, who are often silenced. It's groups of women opposing war across cultures and around the world."

"I joined Bradford Women in Black to support a national women's protest platform. The silence for me is a powerful approach as I see people walking through the city centre engaging, reading the leaflet and talking to those giving out the leaflets and indicating visual support. It's a regular event which makes me think each time about our subject and silently reflect on my position. It has raised my awareness which I share with others. I like that we decide together through our WhatsApp group without ponderous debate as the monthly vigils enables us to cover a wide range of issues. CND are a great back up for protest information and support. Their history is worth volumes in the world of action. I personally wouldn't want to join with any other more forceful group - I believe there's room for all."

The themes of our vigils this year have been January : peace in Palestine, February: opposition to nuclear weapons, March: the anniversary of Ukraine war, April: against the arms trade. You can see more information and photos on our Facebook page and Twitter. Just search for Bradford Women in



Black. Certainly, anyone is free to join in on any vigil, as long as they keep our protocols.

We have a leaflet on our theme each month, here is the one from March:



Solidarity with Ukraine

At our vigil this month we stand in silence in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and those in Russia campaigning for peace.

We condemn the Russian invasion, and call for an immediate ceasefire and for Russian troops to withdraw.

We call on all world leaders to negotiate a peaceful solution to the present crisis.

We call on the UK government to help those fleeing war in Ukraine and to provide legal routes for refugees in their time of need.

#PeaceInUkraine #RefugeesAreWelcomeHere

Women in Black is a world-wide network of women committed to peace and justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence.

In Bradford we come together at the junction of Bank Street and Hustlergate BD1 1PR on the first Thursday of every month 4.30 - 5.30pm to stand in silence to protest war and injustice across the world and the militarist policies of our own government. All women are welcome to join us.

Wearing black in some cultures signifies mourning, feminist actions dressed in black convert women's traditional passive mourning for the dead in war into a powerful refusal of the logic of war.

To find out more about Palestine and the issues surrounding the Occupation visit to the following websites:

Pax Christi <http://paxchristi.org.uk/>

Friends of Sabeel

<http://www.friendsofsabeel.org.uk/>

There is also a national demonstration on **May 13th** to remember 75 years since the Nakba – (the catastrophe), when 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their land.

<https://www.palestinecampaign.org/event/s/nakba-75-national-protest/>

INTERNATIONAL CONSCIENCIOUS OBJECTORS' DAY MAY 15

The Commission is working in partnership with Pax Christi in the Leeds Diocese and the Leeds Palestinian Film festival to draw attention to International Conscientious Objection Day on 15 May.


Rev Clive Barratt, who has written a book about first world war conscientious objectors in Yorkshire, will provide a short context for the film which follows. After the film we will have the main person featured in it, Atalya, available via Zoom for a Q&A session. The event starts at 6pm with light refreshments and the opportunity to purchase Palestinian goods from a number of stalls. Reserve a place now for this free event! Use this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/objector-tickets-617711681267>

OBJECTOR

Monday 15th May 6pm

Join us for
International Conscientious Objectors Day





Film * Exhibition * Stalls * Speakers * Refreshments

Wheeler Hall LS2 8BE
rear of St. Anne's Cathedral


Chair: John Battle
Chair of the J&P Commission and former Labour minister

Introduction: Clive Barrett
Author of 'Subversive Peacemakers'

Q&A with **Atalya ben-Abba**, who features in 'Objector'



ENTRY FREE
Book on
Eventbrite











DIOCESE OF LEEDS: JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

Web www.leedsjp.org.uk <mailto:jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk>



NEWSLETTER April 2023

EVENTS

 Sun 30th Apr	Day of reflection on Climate Change 10:15am – 4pm @ Norwood Methodist Retreat Centre near Lindleywood Reservoir Day of reflection on a Climate Change / Creation Theology theme. Led by be Linda Jones, Head of Theology Programmes at CAFOD. Free to attend but booking essential – see our website events page to book a place.
 Sat 13th Sun 14 May	Leadership, Faith & Spirituality in the Catholic Curriculum <i>Leeds Trinity University, Brownberrie Lane, Horsforth</i> In today's HE environment, the mission and purpose of the Catholic university can be difficult to define and to understand. That's what this weekend conference is all about. It includes a talk by Commission Chair John Battle & a talk by Commission member Dr Ann Marie Mealey. https://store.leedstrinity.ac.uk/product-catalogue/conferences-events/conferences/leeds-trinity-catholic-conference
 Thu 15th May	Reflecting on International Conscientious Objectors Day 6:30 – 8:30pm @Wheeler Hall, St Anne's Cathedral, Leeds With a showing of the film <i>Objector</i> and an introduction to Conscientious Objection by Rev Clive Barrett
 Thu 22nd May	Catholic Social Teaching: Civilising Economic Life 7pm - 8:30pm @ LTU Online open lecture organised by the office of the Director of Catholic Mission at Leeds Trinity University. This lecture will be given by Prof Philip Booth, Professor of Public Policy at St Mary's Twickenham. To book a place please contact Dr Ann Marie Mealey a.mealey@leedstrinity.ac.uk
 Sat 10th Jun	Great Big Green Week 10 th – 18 th Jun Come together for #GreatBigGreenWeek for all kinds of events: litter picks, climate coffee mornings, film screenings, nature trails, crafting, sports relays and so much more! https://greatbiggreenweek.com/
 Fri 21st Jul To Sun 23 Jul	Sustainability? – Survival or Shutdown 21 st @6:30pm – 23 rd @2pm @ The Hayes Conference Centre 45th National Justice & Peace Network Conference. What is sustainability? It is always a lively event with a combination of keynote speakers and a range of workshops with a good craic around the bar in the evening. Also running during the weekend will be a 'Just Fair' with stalls from many organisations working around sustainability and other social justice issues. It's not a cheap weekend (full cost is £225) though there are low income options as well. Use the button to download the application form. https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-NJPN-conference-WEB-Booking-Form-2023-11-2.pdf

Please forward this email E-News onto anyone else who you think might be interested. Even better, get them to send us their email address so we can add them to our contact database. See our website for details of these and other events which may be of interest.