

# Cutting Edge

*The Annual Newsletter of the Anglican Chaplaincy and friends  
at The University of Sheffield*



**Issue No. 67 (2022-23)**



# BNBR | Life Centre

Belief, No Belief and Religious



## Contact details

The Chaplaincy Centre has been renamed the Belief, No Belief and Religious (BNBR) Life Centre; or BNBR Life Centre for short. This change, made in the summer of 2022, is a result of a listening exercise across our University which found that ‘chaplaincy’ is not widely understood. Indeed ‘chaplaincy’ does not translate well into International English, which is used by students from overseas.

Our hours during university teaching periods are:  
9.30am – 5.00pm, Monday – Thursday; 9.30am – 2.00pm, Friday

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# Welcome

Due to changes in staffing we did miss sending out a Cutting Edge in recent times, but we hope this will catch you up with a very positive period of development; including the significant contribution made by Sabine Tenge-Heslop as the self-supporting Anglican Chaplain from September 2021 to Easter 2023; and we are very grateful Sabine continues now as an associate Anglican chaplain as back-up and moral support to our service and witness. Sabine has made a substantial contribution, and some of this she writes about here, so do read on for her contributions on pages 4-11.

We also celebrated during this period Rob Barnett's transition from being employed as support worker to become the Centre's assistant, directly employed by the university as Anglican Chaplaincy funds have diminished, with the wider financial challenges for many parishes needing to take new precedence for our long time supporters, the Sheffield Church Burgesses Trust.

I write, in my continuing Coordinating Chaplain role, within which I can give a certain amount of time to regular chaplain duties and responsibilities, including presiding at communions, providing Christian pastoral care, spiritual accompaniment and assisting with significant services that take place, and also more widely in the deanery and diocese participating in relevant activities including helping to co-host the annual lecture, being a vocations advisor and sharing in the activity of the environmental working group. I have also, more widely been involved with WATCH (Women and the Church) and the International Association of Chaplains in Higher Education (IACHE), and it was a career and life highlight to assist as conference facilitator, alongside many team members, in hosting the IACHE 2022 conference, here at Sheffield—you can read more about this in our magazine on page 12.

*Jeremy Clines, University Coordinating Chaplain*

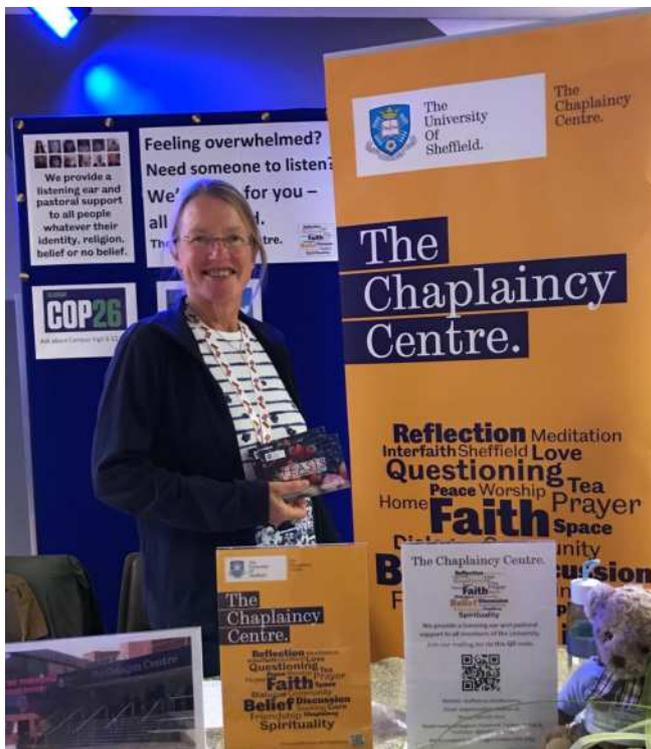
## Front cover image

Students participating in the first of many Peak District walks led by Sabine Tenge-Heslop while Anglican Chaplain. By enjoying the beauty of the Peak District, so close to Sheffield, numerous students have gained the mental and physical benefits of a countryside walk with Sabine. This particular walk, on Bamford Edge, took place the day after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Two of the students pictured are Russian. While the group agreed to avoid talk of global events, this walk provided a tonic to all those who took part. As you may recognise, the body of water in the background is Ladybower Reservoir.

## Associate Anglican Chaplain's report by Revd Sabine Tenge-Heslop

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My first year at the chaplaincy felt like stepping out in faith, because everything was new to me: the chaplaincy work, the city, the wider area, the people. I even had to rent a flat, since my husband and I live in a village in County Durham, which is too far away for a daily commute. However, thanks to the fantastic chaplaincy team, I soon settled in, and I loved the job from the start. The beginning of the new university year 2021/22 was a very special time for the chaplaincy, at long last returning in person to the Octagon Centre after the Covid lockdowns: the service of my licencing by Bishop Pete was combined with a celebratory service of the re-opening of the chaplaincy rooms in the Octagon Centre, which was a very lovely and encouraging event.



When university life returned physically to campus in September 2021, the buzz of Orientation and Intro weeks made for busy days. The idea of running a COP26 Vigil had already formed in my head, so at the Activities Fair (our stall is pictured, left), I was trying to speak with as many student society members as possible to start building up a network, which was quite exciting, even if the success was limited (life is about learning). My first year had quite a bit of trial-and-error elements: some of the previously successful chaplaincy events like the Mindfulness Walks and the Wednesday Brunch seemed to be less attractive, so I experimented with other ways of being accessible as a chaplain. Together with a mature theology

student on placement, I ran craft activities in the Students' Union building; and after several private reconnaissance walks, I was able to offer Peak District walks (*see pages 8-11: Chaplaincy Outdoors*).

Thoroughly rewarding were the really deep one-to-one conversations, where I could draw from my life experience, and my faith. I even had the privilege of accompanying a student on her faith journey, and prepared her for her baptism at Easter in Sheffield Cathedral. The celebration of the weekly Eucharist provided a good grounding for our work as Christians in the chaplaincy.

The most profound experience was running grief groups (separate groups for students and staff). It was such a privilege to be entrusted with these deeply personal and heart-breaking stories, and to facilitate this valuable and life-giving peer-to-peer support. Other highlights of the year were the Service of Thanksgiving in memory of those who have given their bodies for Medical Education, and the University Carol Service.

And the biggest highlight at the end of the year in June 2022 was the International Association of Chaplaincy in Higher Education conference! I really enjoyed being part of the helpers team, whizzing around in one of the Zoes (electric cars owned by the university), and also taking part in some of the sessions. I also took some delegates for a Peak District walk on Stanage Edge (pictured below) during an afternoon for trips and activities. This conference was truly a life-event! The input, the encounters, the networking – all mind-blowingly fruitful, and so unique. Thank you, Jeremy, for making it happen!



The year 2022/2023 started with our new name Belief, No Belief, and Religious Life Centre; in short BNBR Life Centre, which hopefully better communicates what we are all about: being there in love and care for everybody at the university. This required new posters and signs, so I was glad that I could contribute quite a few photos from successful events of the previous year. We had many conversations to explain the new name, but the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and people generally said that it is much clearer now what the centre is about.

I felt we were much better prepared for Orientation and Intro weeks than the previous year, when the chaplaincy was just coming out of the Covid

## Associate Anglican Chaplain's report by Revd Sabine Tenge-Heslop

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restrictions. This time, we ran a stall every day on campus (outside our entrance), which led to many interactions with arriving students, and to about 170 sign-ups for our newsletter. One day during induction week, we even managed to run three stalls at the same time (outside the Octagon Centre, in the Students' Union and in the Diamond building)!



We started a couple of new events, fortnightly on Wednesday evenings: Mocktails & board games (pictured, left) and a new Inclusive, Ecumenical and Affirming Christian Service at St. George's Church, by the Diamond building (pictured on page 7). Both proved relatively successful in the first semester and never had to be cancelled, despite generally low numbers. While the Mocktails eventually fizzled out in the second semester, the new inclusive service had thrived in a modest way: a very dedicated small group met regularly, and very much enjoyed the fellowship. We were engaging with scripture on a deeper level, and the service was very much valued as a safer space to voice concerns and doubts. The service developed into a service for seekers, which offered a wonderful opportunity for us Anglican chaplains to support young people on their journey.

Surprisingly, less successful in 2022/23 were the Peak District walks and the cathedral city trips, to which we got many sign-ups, but few actual show-ups. We heard from other event organisers (e.g. at the Students' Union), that 2022/23 seemed especially challenging in terms of student disengagement, so it looks like a widespread phenomenon. I've had conversations with others about it, but it remains a bit of a mystery to us all. Maybe just a *blip*?

In October 2022 we led two online workshops titled 'Spirituality in Healthcare' for trainee nurses. Also, I presented in person the BNBR Life Centre at a postgraduate information event. All events were well attended, and good examples of working more closely with other departments.

In November 2022 we had two major events: the COP27 Campus Vigil (*see Chaplaincy Outdoors on page 8*) and Interfaith Week. The two main events at Interfaith Week were an Interfaith Panel discussion in the Octagon Centre, and an Interfaith Market Place in the Students' Union. Both saw wonderful contributions by chaplains, faith advisors, and some student societies, but also experienced low numbers, as did the Tandem Learning scheme.

Absolute highlights for the BNBR Life Centre were the Medical Education Thanksgiving Service in November, and the Carol Service in December. Both were very well attended, and at both I had the privilege to give the address. This was a very fulfilling experience for me, as were quite a few pastoral one-to-one meetings during both semesters.



Another very positive and ongoing development is our increasing dialogue and interaction with the Students' Union sabbatical officers. We ran two very fruitful Deep Talk events with some of them, with more to come.

On a private note: I found the weekly commute from Durham increasingly challenging, because it's very time consuming and quite exhausting. I had planned to leave by the end of June 2023, but in the middle of January, my husband Bill was diagnosed with cancer. I needed to be at his side, therefore I had to pull out of quite a few commitments. Nevertheless, I managed to run a student grief group in May, took part in a Deep Talk session with some of the sabbatical officers, and had a number of farewell meetings with some of the students I was very close to in the last two years.

When I realised that it remained a challenge for the centre to find a new self-supporting Anglican Associate Chaplain, I volunteered to stay on as an emergency back-up, e.g. in case a female Christian chaplain was needed. Therefore, I kept my University credentials and my diocesan licence for now, but I will not be available anymore for regular activities, especially not in person.

## Chaplaincy Outdoors by Revd Sabine Tenge-Heslop

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A lot of our chaplaincy work necessarily happens indoors, and we are truly thankful to the university for the provision of our rooms, without which we could not function. Since the pandemic, people seem to be less likely these days to drop in for a chat. That's why, early on in my first year, I started exploring ways of doing chaplaincy out of doors. The events described below all led to many chance encounters, which would never have happened if we hadn't ventured out there.

**COP26 Vigil** — read our vigil e-zine with this QR code:



Jeremy and I have both been climate activists most of our lives, and when the COP26 summit in Glasgow happened, we were determined to make it visible on campus. That is how the idea of a campus vigil developed. So we ran a vigil alongside the summit, from 1-12 November 2021, under the concourse in front of the Students' Union building. We wanted to provide a safe space for discus-

sion and encounter, and give room to express hope as well as climate grief. With the support of two committed landscaping students, we made two big eye-catching banners, provided green ribbons and pens for personal messages and created an e-zine. So there we were, at least one of the team, on each weekday from 12noon to about 1:30, praying, smiling and waiting. And things happened: quite a few people gave us a smile or a thumbs-up, and some people started talking to us about their fears and concerns, their hopes and dreams. There were many intense encounters and fruitful conversations. Messages of hope were written on green ribbons and tied to places around us, and while these floated in the wind, we felt very connected to the global community, raising their voices in lament and prayer during this crucial time. A very deep moment of prayer and encounter was created during an additional candle-light vigil one evening. In these moments, I felt on holy ground, and I thought this is what chaplaincy is really about: creating safe spaces for being human together.

*Sabine continues...*

It was clear to us that the COP Vigil would be worth repeating, so we ran a COP27 vigil in November 2022, with similar success.

### **Peace Vigil**

In February 2022, when the horrifying news of the invasion of Ukraine struck, we instantly reacted by running a Peace Vigil on campus, to provide an accessible and safe space for encounters. Until June 2022, on each workday in semester time, one of us was out there on campus during lunchtime, raising awareness, being a praying presence, answering questions about our work, and providing a compassionate ear.

### **Seasonal Events**

Another regular outdoor activity is the Ash Wednesday ashing (pictured, right). It always leads to many puzzled looks, but also to tentative encounters. Some Christian students know all about it, and welcome the unexpected opportunity to receive their ash cross, while others are curiously watching from afar. Certainly food for thought!



### **Peak District Walks**

In order to bring people together to create community, and a safe space for building friendships, I started offering a monthly walk in the Peak District. Walking is one of the best ways to improve one's physical, mental and spiritual health, and it is free (apart from a ticket for public transport). Everybody enjoyed these walks very much - the great outdoors never disappointed. The comradeship on a walk develops quickly: stories and pictures from our respective cultures are shared and we all learn a lot from each other. The Peak District features quite a few interesting places of historical and spiritual significance, so I told the

## **Chaplaincy Outdoors by Revd Sabine Tenge-Heslop**

the students about Neolithic stone circles, churches, and grand halls on the way. Certainly something to be continued.

### **Day Trip to Lincoln**

On a gloriously sunny day, a group of twelve international students went with Rob and me by train to Lincoln. As soon as we started walking towards the cathedral, we were surrounded by fantastic historical sights: we crossed over High Bridge, which is the oldest bridge in the UK that still has buildings on it, walked through the 16th century Stonebow, and climbed up the fittingly named Steep Hill with its picturesque houses and quirky little shops.

The stunningly beautiful Cathedral was the absolute highlight, and we spent quite a bit of time there: after the really interesting tour at



ground level, we had a nice lunch in the cafe, before we climbed up narrow staircases for the exciting roof tour. The views over the city were breathtaking, and a great many photographs were taken. Everybody enjoyed it thoroughly, and one student summarised it for all: “This feels like a holiday - I very much needed this time out!”

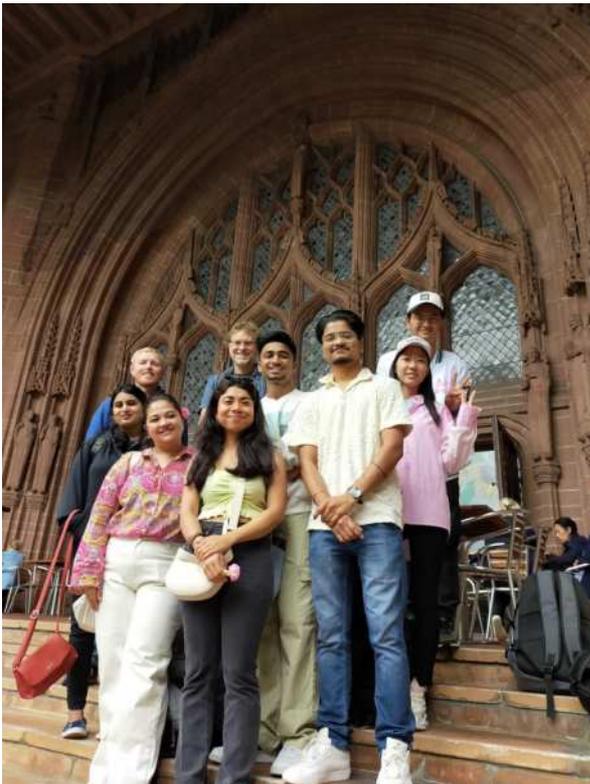
### **Two-day excursion to Liverpool**

This was the glorious finale to my regular time at the BNBR Life Centre. At the beginning of July 2023, Jeremy, Rob and I took a group of overseas students by train to Liverpool. We spent a really interesting time in the World Museum and the Walker Art Gallery, each person at his or her own speed. It was nice to bump into one other occasionally, and share the discoveries we had made. I was most impressed by the

*Sabine continues...*

iron shackles in one of the exhibition rooms with the finest classic art: it was a stark reminder that this fine art had may have been purchased with the profits of the slave trade.

After an enjoyable walk through the vibrant city centre, we arrived at the Waterfront. Some went to explore the Museum of Liverpool, others to the Maritime Museum, or to Tate Liverpool. So much to experience and see – mind-blowing indeed! Finally, we met up again at the Pier Head, and embarked on a commuter ferry across the Mersey. Everybody was very impressed by the views: all those grand buildings from past and present merge



beautifully into a stunning skyline. Back at the docks, we enjoyed a walk along the Royal Albert Dock, taking in works of art and history on the way. Our destination was the Duke Street Industrial Food Court, where we enjoyed a fantastic meal. Finally we made our way to Liverpool Hope University, where we spent a comfortable night at some nice modern student accommodation.

After an excellent breakfast, we took the bus to the Anglican Cathedral, but found it closed due to a graduation event. Undeterred, we walked around it, and enjoyed hot drinks at the café. While we sat in the café, trying to peep through the windows, the door suddenly opened, and we were lucky enough to be let in by one of the cathedral vergers. He gave us the chance to have a quick look around during the short changeover break. We all marvelled at the grandeur and size of the place (the photo above shows just a small part)!

Then we walked to the Catholic Cathedral, which is so totally different in design and layout. It was holy ground, and despite the fact that none of the students was a Christian, we all could not help but be struck by it. I had some really good deep conversations about the symbols and works of religious art that the students spotted. Truly a trip to remember!

## IACHE Conference by Jeremy Clines

### Sheffield hosted the International Association of Chaplains in Higher Education (IACHE) Conference, in June 2022

*250 people came to our university to be involved in an international chaplaincy conference in the summer of 2022. It was six days of activities, 70 attendees helped with workshop and session inputs, we had 10 keynote speakers representing diverse religion and belief perspectives, and such an event had only happened once before in Europe (14 years previously).*

Every four years the International Association of Chaplains in Higher Education has a conference, and I proposed the sixth quadrennial to take place in the north of England to make it affordable and accessible to many from Europe and further afield, but also to increase the diversity of religions and beliefs represented,



since we have high levels of volunteers and differently funded chaplaincy staff in UK institutions at a rate not comparable to many other nations outside of the USA. After a long search for a suitable venue Sheffield became the chosen location; we had to wait two years due to the pandemic emergencies before the conference took place.

The Sheffield welcome was emphasised via trips to local

religion and belief communities and also to regional venues including the National Holocaust Memorial and Museum in north Nottinghamshire, Kelham Island / Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, Sheffield's Football history, the National Mining Museum, Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the Peak District.

Special guests included Rabbi Harvey Belovski and our own Vice-President for Education, Mary Vincent. Spiritual practices began each day according to diverse belief practices, and a tour of the Anglican cathedral and an opportunity to attend a specially enhanced evensong also occurred.

Feedback on the event has been overwhelmingly positive, and it was a privilege for Rob, Sabine and me to all have played such a large part in helping alongside other team members: Kathryn Fey-Beatson, our Business Operations Co-ordinator; Ameena Blake, the new Muslim chaplain; Joel Bindanda, the Pentecostal chaplain; and Sahar Koobar, the Baha'i faith advisor.

### **Rob Barnett's reflections on his changing role**

Thinking back to 2020-21, when Covid-19 forced our work to be done remotely from home, it has been a joy to work regularly on campus over the last two and a half academic years.

For this reason 2021-22 was particularly special: there was an extra buzz around campus at the start and largely throughout. This was enhanced by events like the COP26 Vigil and the International Association of Chaplaincy in Higher Education (IACHE) conference.

It was a huge blessing to have a fantastic Anglican Chaplain in Sabine during 2021-23, joining Jeremy and me as Christian members of the core team. As a trio, and often in conjunction with other colleagues, the way we have been able to interact with students and staff has been a breath of fresh air for me.



For example, when Sabine and Jeremy dreamt up the COP26 Vigil, I helped in the following ways: enabling and taking part in planning meetings involving students and staff; facilitating the making of signs and banners (the Stitch Society helped at short notice!); participating in the vigil; creating an e-zine (an online magazine) about it; and promoting all these aspects on mailings and social media.

Another way I have worked well with Sabine is by jointly organising and leading day trips to cathedral cities. We went twice to Lincoln and once to York (pictured above)! She had the excellent idea of taking the tower tour at Lincoln Cathedral where a guide led us along ancient passageways and spiral staircases, going up into the rafters and safely onto part

## Rob Barnett's reflections

of the roof. All the way the guide gave a fascinating history. We did a similar thing at York Minster. There was also time to explore both beautiful and historic cities.

Something else Sabine and I have worked on together is administering grants for Christian residential experiences (with Jeremy and treasurer Nigel Russell-Sewell always on hand for advice). This funding is available thanks to the generosity of the Sir Henry Stephenson Endowment Trust. We typically award around 25 grants per academic year, ranging from £40 for one night away to £160 for four or more nights. This can be to attend a scheduled event, like the Christian Medical Fellowship's student conference, or to go on a pilgrimage as an individual.

Using the same funding, I have led two retreats to the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield, West Yorkshire. Taking five or six students for one or two nights (including in August 2023, pictured below), we experienced the life



of the monastery; including attending varied services in the stunning chapel and sharing meals with the brothers. It was great to spend time at a slower pace with the students, whose understanding of Christianity ranged from deep to virtually non-existent. The same funding also enabled the day trips to Lincoln and York,

mentioned above, and the two-day trip to Liverpool, which Sabine has described.

At the IACHE conference, while busily helping in many ways (logistics, communications and technology among them) I was hugely inspired by meeting chaplains of many beliefs and several other support workers. A particular highlight was leading a Sheffield history of football tour for a small group of delegates. Sheffield has a strong claim to being the home of football!

*Rob continues...*

Shortly after the conference, I was delighted to hear confirmation that arrangements were in place for my role to become permanent by transferring it from the Anglican Chaplaincy Trust to the University. I am hugely grateful to the Trust for their employment and care, which has hopefully set me on a career path in university chaplaincy! My role continues to be about community building, now with the title of Student Experience, Diversity, and Inclusion (SEDI) Assistant. It's still 2.5 days a week, which I'm very happy with.

SEDI is the staff team that we as a team amalgamated with when changing our name from Chaplaincy Centre to Belief, No Belief and Religious (BNBR) Life Centre. Although the wider SEDI team works with various student groups, we (the BNBR Life Centre) continue to work with both students and staff.

Among the positives of joining SEDI, I have been able to share ideas with and learn from the wider team; and promote the BNBR Life Centre's opportunities and events more



widely. In 2023 my SEDI colleague Jasmine and I continued Sabine's legacy of Peak District walks by leading two trips around Ladybower Reservoir. On the second of those walks, on a sunny September day (pictured left), we took almost 50 students. For many it was a first taste of the Peak District, and hopefully to all it was a

boost to their physical and mental health!

As before, it has been good to mark a few Christian calendar events on campus. I help to run the University Carol Service each December. And on Ash Wednesday in 2022 and 2023 I offered ashing outside the Students' Union along with Sabine, Jeremy and others. All this variety is part of what I particularly enjoy about my role!

# How to support the Anglican Chaplaincy

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*Above: A group of the 250 delegates at the International Association of Chaplains in Higher Education conference in June 2022.*

## **Please pray for our work, both regular events and seasonal/occasional events and groups**

We hold a Communion Service on alternate Wednesdays in semester time, at 1.10pm in the Octagon Centre Quiet Space (room M17). In 2024 we are planning to take two student retreats to the Community of the Resurrection monastery in Mirfield, West Yorkshire.

## **Donations**

Our thanks are due to all those who have made donations to the Anglican Chaplaincy Trust in recent years. Your donations are a great help in resourcing our mission and ministry.

The University of Sheffield is a secular institution—and consequently, the Anglican Chaplaincy Trust, as part of the Belief, No Belief and Religious (BNBR) Life Centre\*, depends on the support, primarily of individual donors, to resource its activities. You might like to make a donation to the Anglican Chaplaincy at the University of Sheffield - or perhaps remember us when your PCC is thinking of missionary and charitable giving. Cheques should be made payable to ‘Anglican Chaplaincy Trust.’

For information about standing orders and Gift Aid, please contact the Treasurer, Nigel Russell-Sewell, via [bnbr-life@shef.ac.uk](mailto:bnbr-life@shef.ac.uk) or 0114 222 8923.

\*as mentioned in these pages, the new name for the Chaplaincy Centre.

