

ASHA Center Holds Empowering Youth Event With ZTFE And WZO

The ASHA Center, located in the UK, held yet another empowering youth event last weekend – 14th and 15th October, 2023, which was attended by sixty young Zoroastrians. The occasion was indeed special and created history marking the first-time collaboration between the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) and the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO). Founded by the dynamic and vivacious mentor and visionary - Zerbanoo Gifford, the ASHA center, near Flaxley, is globally recognised as one of the most



vibrant places for young people to be empowered and taught the importance of sustainable living, the arts, and community understanding and action.

Both eminent Zoroastrian organisations – ZTFE and WZO looked to ensure that the youth were able to experience time together, enjoy the beautiful ASHA gardens, forest walks and bathing in St. Anthony's well. Over the weekend, the youth were able to discuss their issues in a safe and responsive environment where everyone would

be heard and respected. The games and listening-exercises built trust and helped culminate into meaningful engagement. It was indeed a lot of fun to be with fellow-Zoroastrians and enjoy numerous activities including a bonfire and dancing led by Dastoor Jimmy Madon.

The thrilled participants shared their ASHA experience as, "Best ever, amazing food!", "outstanding venue and accommodation", and "an incredible place of calm and nature". They delighted in the

early morning yoga with Nayomi Davar and also thanked Mark Gifford and Adrian Locher for being brilliant facilitators. Many wished that it had been longer than a weekend as they had embarked on a journey of making lifelong friends.

For most, the outstanding highlight was when, for the first time ever, eight young priests prayed together in the ASHA auditorium – making the atmosphere divinely magical with the vibrations of our prayers energising so many potential future leaders of the community, leading a Zoroastrian congregation in prayers. The wonders of worshiping together left all feeling calm and very positive about the future.

On the feedback forms, many hoped that the committees of ZTFE and WZO will continue to invest in the welfare and progress of the youth. They wished for the support and funding to work across all divides so they could run an independent youth organisation which would revitalise our community and help bring harmony. In the words of one participant, "There is divinity present at the ASHA Centre that you rarely get a chance to witness in day-to-day life. It is clear that God loves ASHA!"

