

# Ripples



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of leadership

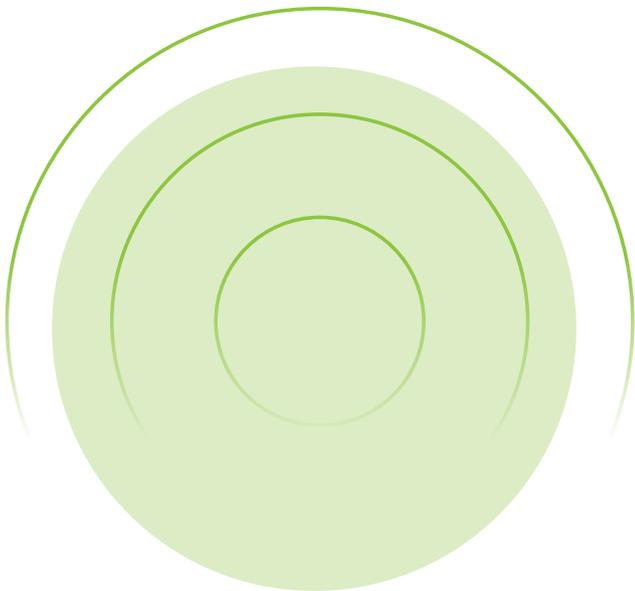
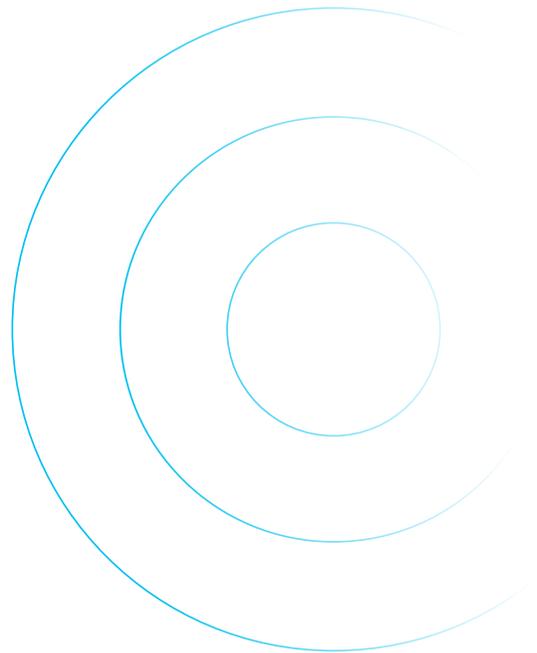
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Magazine  
November 2024



Front cover main image: A Leadership event in Chester

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Welcome

# Time to act

**Caroline Broadhurst invites you to read the stories from leaders in our Network who embody inclusive leadership principles—leaders who challenge assumptions, prioritise equity, and continuously learn through inclusive action.**



**Caroline Broadhurst** Deputy Chief Executive  
The Rank Foundation

# Inclusive leadership strengthens our abilities and potential to succeed

**W**elcome to Rank Ripples. This issue explores a theme that is fundamental to resilient and thriving communities: inclusive leadership.

In an increasingly divided world, with race riots earlier this year and ongoing inflammatory media coverage of world events, it could not be timelier.

Delve into how inclusivity strengthens not only our ability to lead, but our teams' potential to succeed and support the diverse communities we work alongside.

As social sector leaders, we're called to embrace inclusivity not just as a value but as an active practice.

Inclusive leadership means recognising and amplifying diverse perspectives, ensuring that all voices are heard, respected, and able to contribute



**We're called to embrace inclusivity not just as a value but as an active practice.**



in both a safe and meaningful way.

By fostering environments that value empathy, adaptability, and curiosity, we can create pathways for everyone to achieve their potential and inspire others to do the same.

I'm delighted to share insights and stories from leaders in our Network who embody these principles—leaders who challenge assumptions, prioritise equity, and continuously learn through inclusive action.

I know that inclusivity can feel like a risky topic to address. Some of

us fear 'saying the wrong thing' or causing more harm to people who've experienced discrimination, while others who have been marginalised are tired of explaining or reliving their experiences.

So, today, what steps can each of us take towards a more inclusive social sector? Together, let's learn, reflect, and renew our commitment to leadership that uplifts and unites. ●

Feature

# Social benefits of leadership

Abdul Hai OBE has dedicated his entire adult life to championing social justice, advocating for racial equality, celebrating diverse communities, and promoting economic opportunities for all. He brings extensive knowledge and experience from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), local government, and the corporate sector.

**Abdul Hai OBE**, Director of Community Relations and Public Affairs, LabTech





Above: Abdul with Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan

### **What Does Inclusive Leadership Mean to Me?**

To me, inclusive leadership means connecting with people and communities while remaining open to opportunities. It involves uniting individuals around a shared vision whenever possible and making decisions based on data, facts, and lived experiences rather than relying

on instincts or conscious and unconscious biases. Such biases often lead to missed opportunities for meaningful change.

I believe that the essential traits of an inclusive leader include humility, an open mindset, curiosity, adaptability, courage, and empathy. Inclusive leaders inspire, challenge, and lead by example, creating momentum and

bringing people along on the journey for change.

Inclusion goes beyond diversity and equality; equity must also be considered when it is the right course of action. A conducive environment allows individuals and teams to flourish and grow together, fostering autonomy, openness to dissenting opinions, and a sense of fulfilment. >>



**“I believe that the essential traits of an inclusive leader include humility, an open mindest, curiosity, adaptability, courage and empathy.”**

Does Inclusive Leadership Matter? Absolutely. Inclusive leadership matters because it ensures everyone’s knowledge, skills, and experiences are valued, utilised, and embraced. Together, we achieve more than we do individually.

**Inclusive Leadership in action**

When I first learned about the spread of COVID-19 across London and the UK, I realised that my role as a community leader and lead councillor would be essential in supporting local communities and helping to save lives in the London Borough of Camden. It soon became clear that the virus disproportionately impacted

residents from Black, Asian, and other ethnic backgrounds.

In March 2020, my brother tested positive for COVID-19, and my elderly mother exhibited symptoms. I shared the pain that many families across the UK experienced due to the inability to visit loved ones.

COVID-19 exposed deep structural inequalities in the UK. Recognising the need for urgent action, I worked with the Director of Public Health for the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington to establish a working group. We implemented a six-week programme to review the disease’s disproportionate impact on ethnic minority communities. Our goal was

to quickly gather evidence and take immediate action to protect residents while developing a long-term call to action for substantive change. We explored a wide range of issues, including health and employment, and sought to understand the underlying factors better.

In August 2020, we launched the “Building Equal Foundations” report, which presented our findings and outlined a plan of action to tackle racial inequalities in Camden. The report reflects input from councillors, senior officers, health practitioners, schools, young people, and community members. The Local Government Association (LGA) >>

recognised the work as good practice. I chaired a cross-party Race and Equality Working Sub-Group to hold the Council and its partners accountable for implementing the report's recommendations.

In 2017, Camden experienced a surge in knife crime, becoming the highest in London. Deeply concerned by this trend, we believed a

that for some young people, fear of crime and violence has become a daily reality. Our goal was to change that.

In 2018, Camden's Youth Safety Steering Group was established to oversee and deliver the 17 recommendations made in the Youth Safety Taskforce Report. These recommendations aimed to reduce

practitioners. Additionally, the government has pledged £100 million towards the Young Futures programme, designed to tackle knife crime based on the Youth Safety Taskforce model.

Ultimately, inclusive leadership is not about mere words – it is about driving forward the change needed to deliver our desired outcomes. ●

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**“Inclusive leadership matters because it ensures everyone’s knowledge, skills, and experiences are valued, utilised, and embraced.”**

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community-led response was necessary.

I co-chaired the Camden Youth Safety Taskforce (2017-2023) with Keir Starmer, then the local MP, to investigate the causes of youth violence in the borough and develop a coordinated response. We brought together schools, Public Health, businesses, the police, young people, and community groups with the desire to improve youth safety.

We firmly believe that no young person should feel unsafe in their community. However, what became clear to us while leading this work is

youth violence and keep young people safe by adopting a public health approach. By proactively engaging with at-risk youth, collaborating with the police, and providing trauma-informed support in schools, youth clubs, and on the streets, we have delivered significant reductions in knife crime in Camden.

The Mayor of London has invested £3 million across the city to implement the Engage Youth diversion programme developed by the Taskforce. This programme supports young people in police custody through youth workers and health

Feature

# Creating opportunities

Emma Pears explains how she creates opportunities for people to do great things. For Emma, inclusive leadership is about creating an environment where people feel safe to do their best work.

**Emma Pears**, Chief Officer SELFA



It took me a long time to see myself as a leader. Traditional models of leadership weren't really something I identified with: those that told a narrative that people born into strong families of leaders are also destined to be leaders or that leaders are people who outline tasks and goals to their team and tell them how to achieve them.

I see myself more often as an inclusive leader who creates opportunities for people to do great things. It's not about dictating, sending down orders, or micromanaging. It's about creating an environment where people come in and really want to do their best work.

At SELFA Children's Charity, our vision is a community where children and young people are celebrated and know they belong. I feel that if we celebrated each other more as a society, the world would be a better place! That, to me, is what inclusive leadership is all about—celebrating others and creating cultures where people feel safe to be responsible for their actions.

Very rarely do I feel like I need to lead from the front; one of the few times was during the global pandemic in 2020. People were looking to me for answers in a very scary world, and I needed to give them the safety and security that

I was there for them as a leader. Even though I did not have all the answers, I showed that it was OK to be a vulnerable leader who would ensure that we got through those difficult times together.

However, most of the time, I lead from behind and let the SELFA team, our children, and young people get on with it. I honestly believe that is why our team is so strong. When people come into our organisation, they often don't know who the CEO is immediately because we are all celebrated as leaders and trusted to do our jobs. We are here to serve

judge me—they think, "Can I trust this person?"

### **Lived experience leadership**

I also think my lived experience is a really important part of who I am as an inclusive leader. Whether it is as the mother of a child with mental health support needs, the daughter of an alcoholic, or a single mum for nearly a decade, all of these have been great roles in which I've practised the traits of inclusive leadership. It helps me advocate for children and young people who have also faced similar experiences and

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**“Relationships are at the centre of everything I do, so the most important thing I do as a leader is to connect with other people and build a foundation of trust.”**

our children and young people, help amplify their needs, and support them in finding solutions to the issues they face.

Relationships are at the centre of everything I do, so the most important thing I do as a leader is to connect with other people and build a foundation of trust. Before people decide whether they want to put their trust in SELFA, they first decide what they think of me. They

support them to become inclusive leaders within our community.

I still make mistakes pretty much every day! These days, I question my ideas rather than who I am. I am comfortable saying things like, "I'm sorry I didn't see it that way; you've made me change my mind." I try to de-stigmatise failure by stating up front that it's OK to get things wrong, and I use language like, "This is the messy part where learning >>

takes place,” rather than finding blame for “mistakes.”

I admit that I don’t have all the answers, and I ask other people to help me come up with them. By asking open questions, I actively listen to understand rather than respond.

The best legacy I can leave as an inclusive leader is when children and young people exercise authority over themselves and others; developing their leadership skills is at the heart of everything I do. ●

[SELFA website](#)



Emma with two young SELFA clients



Feature

Inclusive leadership is

# essential to social sector

**Jen McKeivitt describes how inclusive leadership is fundamental to the work of social leaders in the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and offers some strategies to achieve it.**

**Jen McKeivitt**, Associate Director, Sunderland and North East, The Rank Foundation



**I**nclusive leadership is fundamental to our work as social leaders in the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. Many of us might believe that inclusivity is part of our ideological make-up, social sector DNA, and *raison d'être*. It is a cornerstone for addressing social inequity and structural inadequacies, building social capital, increasing community resilience and regenerating left-behind communities.

Many of us work hard year in and year out to build inclusive communities, but is it becoming more challenging? Are the issues and needs changing? Might it be argued that what's been happening in some of our communities in terms of racially motivated hate crime and mob violence requires us to pause, reflect and rethink?

Truly inclusive leadership, particularly in communities of place, is arguably even more essential than ever in building cohesive, resilient and sustainable communities. Recognising and combating hate crime, fear, xenophobia and racially motivated hate crimes, such as those seen in many of our communities recently, must be part of that developmental process. Creating welcoming and inclusive environments, as many community anchor organisations have done for decades, provides a

solid platform to help us serve our communities, make informed decisions, and achieve lasting impact.

But as social leaders, should we be doing more? Do we fully understand

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**“Truly inclusive leadership, particularly in communities of place, is arguably even more essential than ever in building cohesive, resilient and sustainable communities.”**

our communities, and are we taking account of demographic changes? What is shifting? Have tensions been building? What can we do to acknowledge a possible increase in fear and distrust? What can we do to remove barriers and build cohesion?

**How can we build inclusive leadership in communities affected by hate crime?**

Some of us may remember the days when there was the odd seasonal 'quiet spell', when we had a chance to pause, reflect, consider environmental, social and economic changes, consult, plan and garner resources to meet new needs. That

luxury seems to be a thing of the past, but, as we did during COVID-19, a strength of the VCSE is our ability to recognise shifting needs and do what's required because we simply should.

Inclusive leadership is crucial in areas that have experienced hate crimes and riots. It fosters unity, trust, and understanding, which is essential for healing and preventing future incidents.

Here are some strategies to consider:

**Create space and empower staff, volunteers and trustees to reflect and question assumptions**

- Foster open dialogue and encourage respectful exchange of thoughts, ideas and understanding.
- Use inclusive language that avoids stereotypes and biases.
- Explore unconscious bias and reaffirm socially equitable value systems.

**Engage those who are marginalised, demonstrate empathy and understanding through**

- Active listening to demonstrate a genuine interest in understanding the >>

experiences and perspectives of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

- Recognise and validate the emotions of those affected by hate crimes/riots.
- Show respect for different cultures, beliefs, and values.
- Promote equity and fairness in policies and practices. For example, build a pipeline of inclusive talent development by empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds

## “Explore unconscious bias and reaffirm socially equitable value systems.”

to develop their skills and take on leadership roles.

### Education and awareness

- Educate the community about hate crimes and their impact. Promote education and peacebuilding initiatives to address underlying causes of conflict.
- Promote tolerance and respect for diversity.



Jen, left, with trustees and Sunderland-based Network members

- Provide training, mentoring and guidance in a supportive, non-judgemental environment.
  - Train individuals to intervene safely when they witness hate crimes or discriminatory behaviour.
  - Actively seek input from marginalised people to shape services and inform decision-making.
  - Reach out to and support all marginalised people.
  - Collaborate and build partnerships with community organisations that work with refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants, faith leaders, and other stakeholders to build bridges and foster unity.
- Rank’s network of leaders can create or rebuild vibrant, resilient, and equitable communities by fostering trust, empowerment, and social infrastructure. ●

### Organise inclusive services and events

- Bring people together from diverse backgrounds and seek their input in planning and delivery

Feature

# Giving a voice to everyone



Aimee believes that inclusive leadership helps a workplace run smoothly and ensures that no matter who you are, what you look like, what your beliefs are, or where you are from, you have equal opportunities within your workplace.

**Aimee Thorpe Mundt**, Community Development and Engagement Assistant, Why Not? Trust

Inclusive leadership helps a workplace to run smoothly and fairly, and in this article, I explore what it means to me.

Inclusive leadership allows people with different life experiences to have a voice and share their valuable opinions. It ensures that no matter who you are, what you look like, what your beliefs are, or where you are from, you have equal opportunities within your workplace.

I work with the Why Not? Trust for care-experienced people. This group often experiences stigma and discrimination for various reasons, including, but not limited to, the idea that they did something wrong and that's why they were in care, that they are troubled or troubled, and that they are broken or unfixable, so not worth the effort.

It is important to note that most people who enter the care system do so through no fault of their own. Inclusive leadership within my workplace brings us all together to work towards the same goal: ensuring that care-experienced parents and students have the support they need to thrive.

### **Inclusive leadership is flexible**

One way we've made the workplace more inclusive is through hybrid working. Most of us work from home

and attend in-person events when required. This ensures everyone has an equal opportunity to a good home and work-life balance, which means everyone can bring their best selves to support the people we work with. Personally, I am experiencing some health issues and undergoing health testing. Workplace flexibility ensures that I can attend appointments. I am not scrambling to make up work hours at random and unsocial hours.

**“Inclusive leadership allows people with different life experiences to have a voice and share their valuable opinions.”**

In turn, this means that I'm as healthy and rested as possible when I'm working instead of feeling more unwell from feeling overworked and tired! This is offered to all staff, and I see its benefits.

### **Inclusive leadership allows all voices to be heard**

As a care-experienced person myself, and the only person on my team to be a part of The Village - a digital community for new parents

and parents-to-be with experience of care - as a Villager (person who is a care-experienced parent) and as a staff member, I need my voice to be heard. Although I am the minority in the room, my direct experience of the care system is valued highly, as my experiences can directly inform the work that we are doing. Within staff meetings, our leadership gives each member of staff time to share what they've been doing and ask for support with anything that's needed.

Within my assigned project, Wee Campus, which supports care experienced students in further and higher education, we allow opportunities for equal participation; I have developed a private Facebook group to allow students to connect, share and support each other. We have a weekly drop-in session online to allow students to come and talk to us, ask questions, get support, or let off some steam.

Fostering this idea of inclusive leadership allows me to participate in my workplace and project this inclusion onto those I work with. Making as many opportunities as possible to allow voices to be heard is what makes The Why Not? Trust operates so smoothly. ●

<https://whynottrust.org>

# Test yourself

By Anonymous

**T**he first step toward becoming an inclusive leader is realising that you're not there yet—and that's okay. Embracing the idea that you still have more to learn puts you on the path to deeper understanding, greater compassion, and true inclusivity.

I decided to write this reflective piece to help you explore what being an inclusive leader really means. In it, I'll share some questions that you can ask yourself to spark growth and help open your heart and mind to becoming a more inclusive leader.

## **Ask yourself: What does inclusivity mean to me?**

Take a moment to reflect on this. What does being inclusive mean in your daily actions? Are you actively making space for people who might not always have a voice? Are you truly listening—not just hearing—but listening, and then making the changes that are needed?

For a long time, I didn't really understand what inclusivity was. I

thought it was just one of those buzzwords we all hear in leadership talks. But it took some real soul-searching to realise that it's much more. It's in every conversation, every action, and it's something I'm still learning about. It's a continuous journey. Once I began to see that, I started to understand how vital it is to everything I do.

## **Ask yourself: Am I open to feedback?**

One of the hardest parts of inclusive leadership is being open to feedback—especially when it's tough to hear. But those moments of discomfort are where the most growth happens. We all have blind spots, and it's the people around us who often see things we can't.

I'm a problem-solver by nature. Whenever there's an issue, I want to jump in and fix it right away. But I've had to learn to step back and really listen to the voices of the people around me, instead of charging in with my own ideas of what the

solution should be. Trust me, it's not easy, and I still catch myself wanting to rush ahead, but I've learned so much by truly listening to feedback, even when it's uncomfortable.

## **Ask yourself: How can I broaden my perspective?**

To lead inclusively, you have to expand your understanding of different cultures, identities, and experiences. No one person has all the answers, and the more we expose ourselves to diverse perspectives, the more inclusive we become.

For me, as a woman of colour, I often focus on supporting people who come from similar backgrounds to mine. I'm passionate about addressing the disadvantages we face, but I've realised that sometimes I get so caught up in that focus that I overlook other experiences. I have to remind myself that true inclusivity means looking beyond what's familiar to me, to the experiences of people from all walks of life. >>

**Ask yourself: Am I creating a safe space for others to thrive?**

Inclusivity isn't just about inviting diverse voices to the table. It's about ensuring those voices feel safe, valued, and free to contribute. As leaders, it's our responsibility to create spaces where people can show up fully, without fear of judgement or exclusion.

This is something I hold so close to my heart. To me, creating a safe space is the most important aspect

of leadership. I've been in rooms where I've felt unheard, where my ideas weren't taken seriously, and it hurt. I don't want anyone else to feel that way in spaces I'm responsible for. I've learned that real change comes from not just listening, but from building people's confidence, so they feel empowered to share their truth.

I hope you take the time to sit with these questions and reflect on your own journey. By acknowledging,

listening, and learning, we can all become more inclusive leaders.

I invite you to commit to just one inclusive practice today. Whether it's seeking feedback from someone who sees things differently or educating yourself on a new perspective, it's these small steps that lead to big changes.

Take a moment to write down your commitment in the box below.

**Write your commitment here**

News

# Fellowship News

**John Hind**, Director of Education  
and Leadership Rank Foundation



## An update on the development and activities of the Rank Fellowship.

### An inclusive Fellowship

Inspired by the dynamic leadership of Lousia Searle (Class of 2003), ably supported by an active and engaged Leadership Team, the Fellowship is forging ahead in its three key areas of work: community, support and inspiration.

In the community strand, we have been delighted to see the growth of the RankNet Fellowship group, which currently stands at 300 members. Further growth is essential if we are to be genuinely inclusive as this relies

on efficient communication with and between Fellows. Amongst other topics, the platform will focus on Fellowship events, including those involving our current School Leadership Award holders. Stories about this summer's Community Action Placements, for example, serve a dual purpose: as reportage but also to jog the memories of older Fellows about their experiences. I wonder how many Fellows shared a similar experience to George's at Essex Boys and Girls Clubs' summer camp in South Wales:

"I am scared of heights and tend to avoid things such as gorge walking. However, the day came



Lousia Searle

when I had to be with the group and make jumps with them into the water. All my group knew I was scared of heights, and on the 3m jump I really questioned why I chose to do this. However, they started chanting >>

‘George’, and I had no choice but to jump into the freezing water. In my opinion, a leader doesn’t have to be the perfect person and do impossible, flashy things that people have a hard time doing – they can instead show that even while they’re scared, under pressure, and inexperienced, they can still do it. A child even called me ‘cool’ afterwards, which was nice.”

Meanwhile, at Able2B, Arun’s experience of working with people with disabilities left him pondering inclusivity in practice:

“I learnt a lot about people living with disabilities, just by speaking to many different clients. I did genuinely feel as though I was at least helping to make a difference.”

September saw a new cohort enter the School Leadership Award programme with our two-day residential at the University of Chester. The programme includes a diverse range of people from both state and independent schools. The programme allowed students to make short videos about current social issues they perceive as significant with the help and guidance of an excellent team from CTVC (the films ranged from racism, to knife crime, to sectarianism and – the largest single group – mental health and well-being issues).

Students also enjoyed a first-rate presentation from Clore Social Leadership on the values that underlie leadership. As ever, the two days were an exercise in inclusivity, with students from across the UK and from widely differing school backgrounds working together to achieve their objectives: one student’s feedback summarises the overall responses:

Making a film together was incredibly fun – I was able to really think about what I valued as a person and how to communicate that to other people!

As new students enter the programme, others leave. August saw members of the Class of 2022 enjoying the ‘Welcome to the Fellowship’ event at Garden Walk.

In previous years this was a purely social event, but this year saw an innovation when Zara Tso (Class of 2010) gave an excellent presentation on internships. As both an intern and now – in her role at the BBC – an awardee of internships, Zara was perfectly placed to produce the kind of presentation the students themselves had requested. In some ways, Zara’s presentation spills over into the support strand of the Fellowship’s work. As does ‘Fellowship Futures’, which this



Zara Tso

year saw a well-informed and engaging presentation by Felix Haynes (Class of 2017) based on his own experiences of navigating the challenging graduate jobs market. A panel of experienced Fellows then led a question-and-answer session and – in another new innovation – shared their sector specific experiences in a networking session after the formal presentations.

Another innovation was a formal mentoring programme, ably led by Leadership Team member Ilayda Bakare (Class of 2012, pictured overleaf). Six Fellows from the Class of 2020 (all undergraduates) completed the programme, with mentees >>



Ilayda Bakare

reporting improvements in their communication skills and understanding of their professional fields. The Leadership Team were impressed by the results and in the coming year are looking to target a different cohort of Fellows – those in the early years of their chosen careers. Some-one well beyond that stage is Sir James Dingemans, High Court Judge and Vice-President of the King's Division, who delivered an insightful and beautifully constructed Learning through Leadership talk in April. As Geoffrey Pelham-Lane (Class of 1978) reported at the time:

“Sir James’ insights into leadership within the judicial system resonated deeply, offering valuable lessons for all attendees, not just aspiring lawyers. From Transactional to Transformational leadership styles, his talk shed light



Sir James Dingemans

on essential aspects of effective leadership applicable across various domains.” Here too is an appropriate moment to thank Geoffrey – one of the first cohort of School Leadership Award holders – for his long and valuable service as part of the Fellows’ Leadership Team.

The final strand of our work is, in some ways, the most exciting. In all of my interactions with Fellows – whether that be individually, through our online meetings or as a result of our efforts to grow the RankNet Fellowship group – two clear messages stand out. First, their gratitude for the support provided by the Foundation, whether through the School Leadership Award or the Time to Shine programme. Secondly, their desire to do something in return



Geoffrey Pelham-Lane

to help both the Foundation and the wider community in which they live. Much of this is evident in the roles they play already, but the **inspiration** strand of our work sees the leadership team making efforts to coordinate this huge reserve of philanthropic commitment to the wider objectives and work of the Foundation. And it is here that RankNet membership is again central, for it is through the platform that we plan to introduce Fellows to the opportunities to ‘pay back’ to the Foundation that supported them and thereby develop a stronger, more inclusive relationship with the wider Foundation.

Do please keep an eye open for future inspirational news! ●



# Ripples



**The Rank Foundation** works in communities across the UK to encourage leaders, develop entrepreneurial mindsets and form strong Networks that improve life.

Founded in 1953 by the flour miller and film maker Arthur Rank, the Foundation is built on his Christian faith, enterprising spirit and commitment to community. During his lifetime, Arthur spotted opportunities to innovate, growing a multi-million pound empire. He remained committed to helping and encouraging others, describing young people as “the seed corn of the future and the leaders of tomorrow”.

Today, the Rank Foundation continues to support the leaders of tomorrow and encourage enterprise for social good.

Our grant programmes focus on:

- Leadership – nurturing purposeful, confident and inspiring leaders who drive positive change.
- Enterprise – developing resilient, impactful organisations that contribute positively to the people and places they serve.
- Community – building on and investing in a community’s strengths.
- Faith – engaging in respectful conversations about faith in all its forms.

At the heart of the Foundation, is our supportive Network of over 1,500 leaders working in communities across the UK.

Together, they learn, share and connect to tackle society’s challenges. We build deep and lasting relationships of support with our Network, going beyond traditional funding to philanthropy based on mutual respect, trust and empathy.

Our thriving Network leads positive change to improve life in the communities they cherish.