

Today we have heard of acts of horror that defy comprehension. Stunned and outraged at the time by the mindless attack on a group of innocent young girls, our despair has only deepened as the full extent of these barbaric attacks has emerged in court today. Wounds have re-opened; outrage and anger have been re-kindled; we have been truly and thoroughly sickened by the stories we have heard. Such reactions are only eclipsed by our admiration for those who have shared their stories of bravery and resolve, though they remain physically and emotionally scarred by this despicable act of violence.

There are no words that can fully express our sense of outrage, no action that can ever put right the dreadful wrongs that have been inflicted. Every sinew within us longs to find a way to undo this horror, to bring comfort and restitution to those families whose lives have been so mindlessly and needlessly devastated – but there are no words, no actions, no legal interventions that can ever fully repair the ruthless damage that has been done.

But we have already seen the disturbing consequences of allowing such frustrations and anger to overflow into further violence and retribution. Such emotions are understandable, but we must not allow our inability to right this wrong to incite actions or protests that have no place in the wake of what has taken place.

Though it might feel hugely inadequate, ours is now the task of holding the survivors and bereaved in our hearts and our prayers. It is to channel our understandable anger into acts of goodness and to do whatever we can to bring healing and restoration across the community of Southport.

*Gracious God,
You hear those who cry out from the depths of despair;
Your heart is no less broken than ours,
When precious lives as so cruelly stolen and damaged.
You understand our anguish and outrage,
And are ready to listen
As we make such feelings known.*

*Re-ignite our belief that goodness can prevail,
Help us not to be consumed by anger,
But rather to find the determination
In the wake of such atrocities,
To work together to make our world better.*

*Bring healing we pray
To those who will forever bear the scars of this attack.
Bind up those who are broken;
Bring comfort to those who mourn;
And peace to those whose hearts are troubled. AMEN*

Phil Jump – 23rd January 2025

