



THE ARCHBISHOP
OF YORK

The Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell revealed that his wife has forced him to buy a new pair of Dr. Martens shoes for King Charles’

Coronation during a first official visit to York College and University Centre.

Introducing himself as the College’s “neighbour” who lives down the road in “the big, fancy pad”, Archbishop Stephen shared the amusing anecdote as he delivered an “Aspiration” talk and participated in a Q&A session in the Lecture Theatre at the Sim Balk Lane campus.

And no topic was off limits with the Archbishop giving full and frank answers to a wide-ranging host of challenging student questions, encompassing sensitive subjects such as the Ukraine war, the monarchy, reformation of the House of Lords, female bishops and homosexuality.

But there were plenty of light-hearted stories to enjoy too, as the Archbishop told of how his wife Rebecca reprimanded him on the sorry state of his footwear ahead of the historic Royal event he will be attending on Saturday, May 6 in Westminster Abbey.

“I normally only buy a new pair of Dr. Martens every five years,” he informed staff and students. “But my wife spotted a big hole in one and said ‘There’s no way you are going to a coronation in those shoes!’”

Archbishop Stephen spoke and answered questions for one hour in the Lecture Theatre and even posed for selfies with students afterwards.

During the talk, he expressed his belief that the only aspiration everybody should hold is to be the “very best version of themselves” and that we should all give “the gift of affirmation” to people and accept that “being you is good enough” in a modern age where we are “bombarded” with consumer advice on what will make us happy.

The Archbishop had earlier enjoyed a tour of the College, conducted by three students who have been invited on a tour of Bishopthorpe Palace in return.

He also answered questions from a classroom of A Level students who are members of local churches and visited the College’s Stonemasonry Workshop, where he chatted at length with tutor Paul Hill and Apprenticeship students, including Geraint Pounder, who has been working on York Minster’s South Quire Aisle Restoration Project during a two-week block release.

Archbishop Stephen went on to discuss how, in his role as a House of Lords peer, he is lobbying support for the Online Safety Bill with the hope

of “making the world a safer place”, in particular for young people, whilst also working to improve the provision of equipment and teaching skills for art subjects in education, being very passionate about enabling more people to explore the arts.

Commenting on his visit, the Archbishop said: "I had a wonderful time at York College. I spoke with many young people about aspiration: their aspirations for themselves, but also our aspirations for the world.

"It was hugely refreshing and encouraging to hear them share hopes and desires. I had some fascinating conversations and was asked some challenging questions. York College is in good heart!"

Ingrid Kellock, York College and University Centre Director of Student Experience, said: “Archbishop Stephen’s visit was a wonderful occasion for us and proved extremely popular with our students, who enjoyed the opportunity to put questions to him on a whole manner of topics and really appreciated his full and frank answers.”



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