

Charnwood Racial Equality Council

Annual Report 2006 - 2007



Work towards eliminating racial discrimination

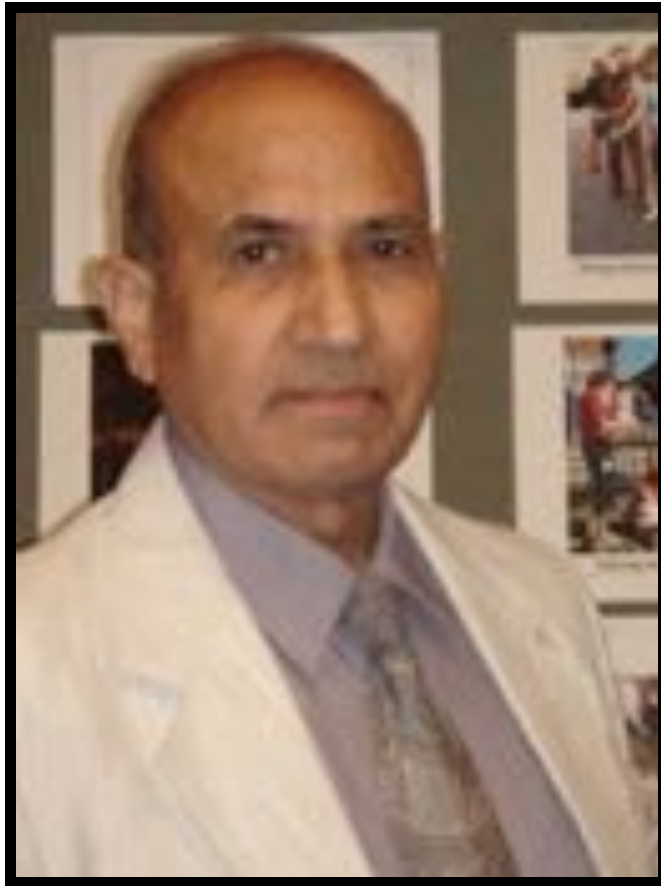
Campaign for equality and opportunity

Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups



LOTTERY FUNDED





*We would like to pay a tribute to
Mr Gulzari Lal Bobal (Tony)*

*For his commitment and support
to the committee, members and staff of
the Charnwood Racial Equality Council
for over 25 years.*

He will be sadly missed by all.

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Charnwood Borough Council
Southfield Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire. LE11 2TX
Ask for: Peter E. Legg – Mayoral Officer
Direct Line: 01509 634602
Email: mayor@charnwood.gov.uk

Dear Friends

I was pleased to find out at the beginning of my Mayoral year that I was to become involved with the Charnwood Racial Equality Council, and even more pleased to be given this opportunity to make a contribution to the Annual Report.

During my year I have been amazed by all the great work that I have been privileged to have been made aware of. I now believe that Charnwood must lead the rest of the country in promoting racial equality. Much of the work done is very hands-on, and not just ideas or suggestions. I have been involved in many activities myself during my year of office and found over this period that it has been a great learning curve for me for which I thank the Charnwood Racial Equality Council. I am sure that the work done so far can only grow in the future, due to the great determination shown by the members of the Council. The work that I have seen for myself has greatly impressed me and will remain not only in my memory, but form part of the several books of our memories being produced by my wife Maureen, the Mayoress.

I thank you all very sincerely for the work and effort you are putting in to creating a harmonious Borough, rich in culture, and pleasing to be part of.

Regards

Councillor Ken Pacey
Mayor of Charnwood 2006/7

Officers & Trustees Reports

CHAIR'S REPORT

This *Annual Report* shows we've fulfilled promises made last year to consolidate and also grasp the opportunities for innovation. We've achieved this with a fresh confidence, sense of purpose and a coherent strategy. Charnwood Racial Equality Council now has a public identity, not within the local Charnwood community alone, but across the East Midlands, and even within a number of European organisations. We've been able not only to respond and serve, but to offer leadership. I'm grateful to all with whom I've worked so closely, and from whom I have learned much. As I said last year: "It's not the number of stars we receive for our organisation. It's the number of lives we change." There are many lives we've touched in 2006-07. Together we *have* made a difference.



The wide range of work we've done is presented here in detail. Equally important is the companion publication, our *Business Plan*. It demanded considerable thought and debate. We've had to be realistic but positive. The *Annual Report* accounts for twelve months' activity. The *Business Plan* shares with members our vision, aims and objectives which can be so easily obscured by the pressure of handling the work our clients bring, and our perennial struggle for funding and support.

I thank all Trustees and every member of our Staff for their collective teamwork. The Board consists of colleagues from a wide range of backgrounds, with strengths which complement each other. They've offered professional expertise and collective wisdom which make this organisation as a whole greater than any one individual. We're served by staff who as always continue to work with dedication and skill in an office where funding is always in question. Despite such instability they wholeheartedly embrace opportunities for professional development in a fluid and increasingly international environment.

Charnwood Racial Equality Council strives to ensure we can live in a tolerant, civilised community, where all citizens enjoy their full legal and human rights. We celebrate those things which unite us - our shared fellowship and humanity.

As William Morris wrote: '**Fellowship is life. Lack of fellowship is death.**' We can all unite around those words.

Cllr Peter Lewis CC

TREASURER'S REPORT

Over the years as Treasurer I have been used to working with the Finance and General Purposes Committee but this year this changed. Now we have a Finance & Property Committee.

This has been a change for the good as far as I'm concerned because sometimes the "general purposes" swamped the "finance" side of things.

Now we can concentrate on things and include looking after our Nottingham Road building.

A couple of years ago we had to re-mortgage to raise funds to meet unforeseen problems and switch to an interest only mortgage. I'm pleased to say we have now swapped back to a repayment basis within our every day budget. However, the amount we owe on the mortgage is considerably less than the market value.

My thanks to Loughborough Building Society for their help and support with this. For those who can see into the future we will have cleared the debt by 2020!

We are bursting at the seams in our current home so we have started to explore other premises.

Securing funding for delivering our services is not easy and is very time consuming. We have been able to get funding for 2007/8 for all our projects but not, unfortunately, to provide for a much needed Director.

As always my thanks go to our auditor – Marsh and Moss, and to Varsha Parmar for doing the day to day financial work so well.

Trevor Shaw
Treasurer



COMPANY SECRETARY'S REPORT

CREC has continued to make some astounding progress in providing service to the people of Charnwood. The Employment Rights Project, Racial Harassment Project with its brief for Community Cohesion, Immigration and Welfare Advice, and a small project to support people with learning disabilities mean that the office is often packed to bursting point.



The Board of Trustees has been forged into a working team with a great deal of trust between its members. After a period of getting to grips with the inner workings of our organisation we are working better together than ever before. To demonstrate this we are re-writing and taking full ownership of our Business Plan which we hope will be a model of good guidance for ourselves as well as a document to inspire our funders and prospective funders.

Both trustees and staff have made some amazing explorations into Europe working with people concerned for equalities in places as far apart as Spain and Kazakhstan. We are constantly discovering how much we have to share with each other. There is good practice in many countries other than our own as well as opportunities for doing more. This work also gives us the opportunity to work with young people who will take on the work of building equality in the future.

We take this opportunity to thank our funders and partners without whom racial equality in Charnwood would be put to a severe test. In particular we thank the Borough of Charnwood and Leicestershire County Council, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Big Lottery.

We have complied with the regulations of Company House and the Charity Commission, filing our annual returns in good time to them both.

Anthony Gimpel

CONGRATULATIONS

To:

Shen Wei, on receiving the University's highest award for best student, the Sir Robert Martin Prize, July 2006

Runa Chowdhury, on her marriage in March 2007

Jewel Miah on being elected to the Borough Council, and Peter Lewis on his re-election, May 2007

County Councillor Mike Jones on being appointed Chair of Leicestershire County Council May 2007, and Cllr Joe Tormey on becoming Mayor of Charnwood, May 2007.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' REPORT

A firm foundation

This has been a year of fulfilment. We've carried out what we promised to do. Firm foundations have been laid down. The *Business Plan*, begun in embryo through last year's capacity building with Neil Lambert, Director of Voluntary Action Charnwood, is now further developed through Advice UK, with Staff and Trustee Away Days in September 2006 and February 2007, and finally comes together through a Task Group, chaired by one of our newest Trustees, Anne Williams from Loughborough College. This takes us firmly into 2007-08 with a coherent agenda, based upon a realistic assessment. It offers an in-depth presentation about who and what we are, in the belief we have a professional organisation, which can deliver, and which fully merits support in funding and grants.

We have secured *Commission for Racial Equality* funding for one more year (2007-08). We have on-going funding from *Leicestershire County Council*, with our Service Agreement extended for another year, up to March 2008. We must thank Julian Harrison, a Trustee and Senior Policy Officer at County Council, for his advice and the publicity through his networks to our activities. *Leicestershire Learning Disability Partnership* is funding a full-time Link Worker, supporting BME people with learning disabilities, now based in our office until March 2008.

Support from *Charnwood Borough Council* continues. We enjoy even closer working relationships, and are consulted over the development of Charnwood Borough Council strategies. Of significance is the contribution we made to the Borough's *Black & Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2007-2010*. Thanks are due to Richard Chester, Director for Change Management and Dr Sarah Cromie, Equalities Officer for the Borough Council, for their guidance over partnership developments. Last September Hiron Miah left our office to work for the Borough Council (later to be co-opted as a Trustee in January 2007). In his place we welcomed Amar Bashir as Racial Harassment Officer. In April 2007 we entered into agreement with the Borough that Amar would be seconded to work on part secondment with the Council. These partnerships are of mutual benefit for all concerned. We warmly welcome them.

Working in Charnwood

Our roots lie in Charnwood. In 2006 we instigated and administered the revival of the *Mela* on 3rd September in Southfields Park, in partnership with the Borough Council, AstraZeneca, 3M/Echo, Oak FM, Nottingham East Midlands Airport, Loughborough Town Hall and other voluntary organisations. It was a huge success and welcomed by many local communities. The next *Mela* is in September 2007. However this can only be done with the support of the many, not the few. So often, when novelty wears off, people are reluctant to volunteer. We hope more people will come forward. If not, the demands made upon those few may be unsustainable. In a similar spirit of celebration, we have formed a new group, *Communities Together* to explore ways in which a wide range of organisations across Charnwood can present a imaginative and positive approach to working together and mutual capacity building.

Our other community involvement, shown in this Report, includes working with the *Loughborough Council of Faiths*, with the Development Worker based in CREC Office, and *Charnwood Refugees & Asylum Seekers Forum*, supported from CREC Office.

In February/March 2008 there are plans for a group of interested people to bring the *Anne Frank Exhibition* to the Loughborough Town Hall. CREC is offering its support. We look forward to the opportunities this gives to explore issues of racism, xenophobia, and conflicts of faith with many groups in the area through creative work, debates and studies which engage not only with the past, but the present and the future.

In November 2006 our first meeting took place with the *Chamber of Trade & Commerce*. We joined local businesses representatives for a meal at the Mugul-E-Shahi Restaurant, in the hope of building closer contacts. These link with the work of our Employment Rights Project, and establishing constructive relationships and useful opportunities.

We've greatly valued working with Kevin Ryan and *Charnwood Arts*. That organisation is famous far beyond Loughborough for the pioneering work Kevin has initiated on community cohesion, and social and equalities issues, and we've been able draw on Kevin's arts expertise for our international training programmes.

Currently we are active participants in a bid to BIG Lottery Community Buildings Fund, submitted April 2007, for new premises to replace John Storer House. We have joined forces with *Voluntary Action Charnwood*, *John Storer House Foundation*, *Citizens Advice Bureau*, and *Charnwood Borough Council*.

Beyond Charnwood

Another significant enterprise has been the development of youth work and training in the European context. Our first *Youth Conference* was held in August 2006, with young people from nine European countries. (A picture of the participants is on the cover of this Report) Our second is to be held in May 2007. These were at the initiative of Trustee Shen Wei, who set up our *European Task Group*. Considerable funding was made available through British Council Connect Youth Fund. We would like to thank Ramada Hotel for the facilities they provided in support. The other side of this initiative is that we can now send our staff, with funding provided, to training seminars in Europe, along with young people or leaders from other local or regional organisations. The issues discussed range beyond race to gender, faith, sexualities, and disabilities. Moreover, many clients now come from the newer countries to join the European Union. Through attending these training seminars, our understanding of issues about migrating labour and movements throughout Europe has deepened. There's potential for future youth involvement by students and professional staff as part of personal development. It has required hours of organisation, but is greatly appreciated.

Loughborough is an international community. There are so many bright young students here from around the world. We enjoy an amazing mixture of different cultures, over and beyond our own local BME communities. Our first *Public Lecture*, given in October by Karen Chouhan, was on the Loughborough University campus and very well attended. We are grateful to Vice Chancellor Professor Shirley Pearce and the University for acting as host.

This marks the start of working even closer with the campus community, which also includes staff and students from Loughborough College. It is anticipated that a second Public Lecture will be in October 2007. Our latest university initiative is to *encourage wider participation in university* by our people from BEM communities. This is for both 18 year olds, and mature people who might wish to study. We are setting up informal sessions to give advice on applications and procedures. This will begin in this summer.

Three important challenges ahead.

The first is how we respond to the Government's new *Commission for Equalities & Human Rights* (CEHR) when they wind down the CRE in the autumn. We've been briefed on the implications by Dr Mohammed Aslam, Regional Manager of *Vivitas*. We look to the possibility of networking with other equalities organisations within Charnwood. Progress has been slow in getting that wider discussion. In the next few months decisions must to be made on how we meet these new demands. They have a bearing on resources and funding. At present our daily CREC work covers more than racial issues. But it does not cover the full diversity of equalities the Government envisages. Could we do more? Should we do more? We will have to decide.

The second is we still do not have a Director. That requires substantial and secure funding. Trustees have led the way this year, and worked well to provide leadership. More things have got done than simply talked about! Daphne Beale has been Managing Trustee, with responsibility for handling the day to day issues of employment and the running of the office. We're fortunate to be able to call upon her experience. That is a luxury which cannot be taken for granted. Perhaps this decision must await the outcome of the previous question.

The third is the growing activity of the *British National Party*. There are many reasons for the BNP electoral appeal to disgruntled voters – who are fed up with not getting what they think they should have, or think established parties ignore 'ordinary people'. There are always the suspicions of the 'unknown in our midst' by people threatened by difference. But here is how one BNP Charnwood candidate put it: "We are killing our beautiful countryside to build new homes for the arrivals which flood into the recently opened immigration centre." Gross propaganda is difficult to counter, as it plays on fears people want to believe. If we get caught in battles of words in the media, we provide publicity.

What we *must* do is ensure they always have political opposition in elections. If we are careless, we will sleepwalk into not noticing vacancies uncontested – as can happen in Parish Council elections. We must make democracy work. Our parties must offer voters a choice. If they fail to do so, the only alternative will be the BNP. We must not be lazy, and take either democracy or the peoples' vote for granted.

Remember – together we can and do make a difference.

Cllr. Peter Lewis CC on behalf of the Trustees

*Membership
and
Committee
Reports*

COMMITTEES 2006/2007

Officers

Chair	Cllr P Lewis
Vice Chair	Mr G L Bobal
Treasurer	Mr T Shaw
Company Secretary	Mr A Gimpel

Trustees

Cllr P Lewis	Mr G L Bobal	Mr T Shaw
Mr A Gimpel	Mr M A Shahid	Mrs D Beale
Mr W Shen	Mr R Jalota	Mr J Miah
Mrs V Watts	Mr J Harrison	Ms A Williams

Co-opted Trustee/Directors

Mrs U Solanki	Mr J Miah	Mrs P Chowdhury
Mr T Payne		

Finance & Property Committee

Cllr P Lewis	Mr G L Bobal	Mr T Shaw
Mr J Miah	Mr W Shen	

Personnel Committee

Mr G L Bobal (Chair)	Mrs K Jackson	Mrs D Beale
Mr A Gimpel	Ms A Williams	Mr R Jalota

Marketing, Publicity and PR Group

Cllr P Lewis (Chair)	Mr W Shen	Mr J Miah
Mrs P Pinder	Mrs U Solanki	Mr A Bava

Development Group

Mr P Lewis	Mr T Shaw	Mrs D Beale
Mr H Miah	Mr J Miah	

CREC Staff

Varsha Parmar	Co-ordinator
Kazi Mashud	Welfare Benefits/Immigration Officer
Amar Bashir	Racial Harassment Officer
Runa Chowdhury	Employment Rights Officer (Employment Rights Project)
Nzinga Wenham-Beckford	Assistant Employment Caseworker
Neeta Popat	Employment Rights Project Administrator
Khadijah Chowdhury	Link Worker - Learning Disability Partnership

LIST OF MEMBERS 2006/2007

Hon President

The Mayor of Charnwood

Hon Vice President

Dr A Strachan

Hon Solicitor

Mr I Nicholson

Hon Treasurer

Mr T Shaw

Individual Members list

Mr G Ali	Cllr A Bava
Mr G Bobal	Mr R Chander
Mrs A Gimpel	Mr A Gimpel
Mr J Harrison	Mrs M Hopewell
Mrs K Jackson	Cllr P Lewis
Mr G Liddar	Ms M Mahmoud
Mr V Margaras	Mr J Miah
Mrs N Morgan	Mrs B Newton
Mr S G Patel	Mrs P Pinder
Mr T Priestley	Mr R Reed
Mr M Shahid	Mr T Shaw
Mr W Shen	Mr P Singh
Dr A Strachan	Mrs J Vincent
Mrs V Watts	Mr P Yeo

Organisations

<i>Age Concern Leicestershire</i>	T Young	
<i>Bangladesh Social Association</i>	N Chowdhury	
<i>Bridge Housing</i>	S Smith	J Gaskin
<i>Charnwood Borough Council</i>	A Bava D Green	S Brown P Lewis
<i>Charnwood Bangladeshi Society</i>	A Shahid	MTA Chowdhury
<i>Charnwood CVS</i>	S Frost	N Lambert
<i>Churches Together in Loughborough</i>	D Beale	A Speight
<i>Fearon Hall</i>	J Tormey	
<i>Geeta Bhawan</i>	R Jalota	
<i>Leics Teachers Association</i>	G Gay	
<i>Limehurst High School</i>	S Coneron	R Das
<i>L'boro Baptist Church</i>	S Cramer	M Spreight
<i>L'boro College</i>	J Spavin	A Williams
<i>L'boro Council of Faiths</i>	F Catling	P Reynolds
<i>L'boro & District RHCG</i>	L Shaw	H Miah
<i>L'boro Islamic Cultural Assoc</i>	G Ali	
<i>L'boro Labour Party</i>	J Tormey	
<i>L'boro United Reformed Church</i>	D Beale	A Payne
<i>Rendell Primary School</i>	H Coleman	
<i>Shree Ram Krishna Centre (project)</i>	N Valand	
<i>St Peter's Community Centre</i>	D Bentley	
<i>Thurmaston Jagruti Group</i>	K Sharma	S Valand
<i>Turning Point</i>	B De Silva	
<i>Victim Support</i>	K Small	I Thurlby

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee is responsible for seeing that the Charnwood Racial Equality Council

- Recruits and manages the right people to work as staff and volunteers to the benefit of the organisation and its users
- Values its staff and volunteers and the contribution they make towards achieving the organisation's aims
- Supports staff and volunteers in gaining appropriate skills and knowledge to meet their responsibilities.

Once again we would like to thank all the Trustees, Staff members and volunteers who have made it possible to keep such high standards in our work and service to the community. We pay tribute to Mr Bobal for his dedication to the work and welfare of our staff and send our condolences to his wife on her loss. We shall miss his wisdom greatly.

During the year we were sorry to lose Hiron Miah, our Racial Harassment Officer, who is now working for Charnwood Borough Council. We have not lost him totally though as his new post involves liaising with voluntary organisations and we have co-opted him as a Trustee. We then had the job of recruiting a new Officer and we were glad to welcome Amar Bashir to join our staff team in October 2006.

We were also glad when the County Learning Disability Partnership invited us to work with them in employing a worker to cover our local area. Khadijah Chowdhury started working with us in January 2007 and this had added a new aspect to our work.

We are concerned for Neeta Popat, Admin Assistant for the Employment Rights Project who has been off sick for some time with a badly damaged wrist and we wish her well. We have been delighted to welcome Sabiha Chowdhury to help with the admin work for a few hours a week.

We have also supported placement students from Burleigh and Rawlins Community Colleges.

We still have the Bangladeshi Ekota Project staff working from our office 2 days a week and with new appointments there is pressure on our desk space in the office. The Trustees are looking at how to deal with this concern.

We have continued to do annual appraisals with each member of staff to look at how they are finding their work, what training needs they have and to look for advice from them about the running of the CREC.

Our concern is not just for staff but also for our Trustees so we have asked everyone to keep records of training and experience they have so that we are all better equipped for our role and can create a good working team.

Thank you to all our members who give us encouragement in our work.

Daphne Beale
Personnel Committee Member

DEVELOPMENT GROUP REPORT

The aims of the group are to ensure the CREC

- ◆ Provides free impartial advice with appropriately qualified personnel
- ◆ Recognises and values its users and includes them in assessing our services
- ◆ Identifies equalities and rights issues and addresses them through relevant agencies and empowering local communities.

The group reports to the Trustees on specific issues.

We have been concerned with the moves towards including more equalities in our work so as to fit with the work of the new Commission for Equalities and Human Rights (CEHR). We have been closely involved in the conversations bringing together different groups serving the local community in particular equalities issues.

To involve our users in our strategic planning we are inviting them to respond to questionnaires or to meet with us to express their views on our service.

We are also updating our computer based case management system to generate more useful statistics to help us assess our present performance and our needs for the future.

MARKETING, PR AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Charnwood Racial Equality Council is to promote understanding and knowledge of our differing communities here in this area, and especially by strengthening our resolve to eliminate discrimination on racial grounds from within Charnwood, and promoting harmony and cohesion.

We have a website which shows how we intend to do this, but your help will make the task more effective.

Go to www.charnwoodrec.org for enrolment forms, both for yourself as an Individual Member and for your Organisation. Your group will need to choose a Voting Member, representing them as Affiliated Members; there will be a small Membership Fee to pay. Call into the CREC office at 66 Nottingham Road for a set of the same Enrolment forms, or phone 01509 / 261651 to get help.

We have this year introduced a third section which you may join – called “Friends of Charnwood Racial Equality Council”, for those interested but not able to be more fully involved in the issues which concern us – perhaps youngsters (though as some parents will know, they CAN keep the rest of us on our toes!) The fee to join “Friends of CREC” will be £3 per year. This is new to us, too – it may well develop into quite a powerful lobby.

This will give contact with a whole set of new friends, giving many opportunities for valuable links, and for service to all our communities . Welcome!!

Patricia Pinder

Workers Reports and Statistics

WELFARE BENEFITS AND IMMIGRATION OFFICER'S REPORT

1. Introduction:

This report focuses on the main activities and achievements of the Welfare Benefits and Immigration Officer (WBIO) at the Charnwood Racial Equality Council (CREC) for the period starting from April 2006 to March 2007.

The WBIO has continued to successfully assist clients to deal with their Welfare Benefits, Health & Hospital and Immigration matters. This service is now fully established in Charnwood and people of all ages regularly visit the CREC office.

2. Contacts, meetings and Liaison:

To enhance better services for clients, the caseworker established and maintained regular contacts, meeting and liaison with various statutory and non-statutory organisations. The name of the following contacts and meetings with the organisations are given as an example:

- Pension Service
- Women's Aid Loughborough
- Child Benefit Centre
- HM Inland Revenue
- Charnwood Health Forum
- Primary Health Care Trust
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Leicestershire Social Services Department
- Loughborough Job Centre Plus
- Bangladesh Social Association
- Shree Ram Krishna Centre
- Charnwood Asylum Seekers Forum
- Turning Point
- Immigration Advisory Service, Leicester
- Home Office – Border and Immigration Agency
- OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner)
- Housing Benefits Working Group – Bridge Housing

3. Campaigns and Publicity:

In order to inform the members of the community in Charnwood as well as other voluntary and statutory organisations about the continuation of the welfare benefits casework, letters were sent to relevant organisations. Up to date information on various issues has been published in the CREC's newsletters and on the CREC's website. A brief report is also produced for the Board of Trustees meeting at the CREC.

4. Proposal to Leicestershire Social Care Services:

As the current commissioning agreement was going to end in March 2007, the Welfare Benefits Officer had drafted a proposal to Leicestershire Social Care Services for future of CREC's Advice work. Prioritised areas of work will be to:

- Signpost and support people to access benefits and welfare advice and advocacy services.
- Arrange critical appointments e.g. Social Care and Community Care assessments, hospital, Leicestershire County council, Charnwood Borough council etc.
- Advise and provide practical assistance on immigration matters for people who are in need.

Following submission of the proposal, Leicestershire County Council have agreed to continue it is funding until end of March 2008 while a commissioning agreement for longer period is being processed.

5. Charnwood Borough Council's BME housing strategy:

To deliver improved access to good quality affordable homes and related services for the people of Charnwood and to support a sustainable and balanced community the WBIO has been through a series of consultations with the Director of Housing and other staff at the Charnwood Borough Council. The consultation held mainly on the issue of ensuring in the strategy to have better access by the BME community in Charnwood.

6. Clients and Service Users:

The ethnic background of our service users is changing. Although the majority of service users are from South-Asian origin there is a significant number of service users from other backgrounds such as European, Eastern European, Middle Eastern who are going to be settled in Charnwood. The statistics at the end of this report show that, in the year 2006 – 2007 there were 110 clients from other European Ethnic backgrounds who have received our services.

7. Immigration and Welfare Benefits Casework:

7.1 Currently the WBIO is providing Welfare Benefits and Immigration Advice services to clients face to face and by telephone and corresponds on their behalf with various agencies such as Charnwood Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council and Adult and Social Care Services, Department of Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, Pension Service, Inland Revenue for Child Benefits and Tax Credits,

7.2 The services provided range from making phone calls to filling up various forms, writing letters, maintaining up-to-date case records and filing systems and continuously reviewing casework.

7.3 The WBIO is also providing advice, support, guidance and consultation involving and affecting ethnic minority communities in the Borough of Charnwood including some development work.

7.4 Advice and Casework is well established and it is going steadily. On average 5 clients visit CREC office on every working day and get help and support with their queries. The number of clients we have dealt with in the year 2006 – 2007 is 1152 whereas in 2005 – 2006 the number was 1184. This is based on a single client coming to the office, most with various queries, and shows a sustainable established number of service users at the CREC. The number of clients receiving services goes down when the WBIO is on leave or on training as there is no coverage available. The statistics for the services are given in Tables at the end of this report.

8. OISC Audit, Training and Conference:

8.1 In order to continue the Immigration Advice service, the WBIO has successfully completed the written assessment test for Audit purposes and has achieved competence Level 2 in Immigration Advice. The assessment is set out by the Office of the Immigration Commissioner (OISC) which is the regulatory agency of all Immigration Advice matters.

8.2 The WBIO has attended a day conference in London arranged by the OISC. The Conference focussed mainly on the issue of introducing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points for all OISC regulated advisors. The CPD will be essential from this year and advisors can obtain it through training and attending conferences.

8.3 The WBIO has also attended a series of free training courses on immigration matters i.e., Family Migration, Nationality, Professional conduct in Immigration Advice, EU Law and Presenting Immigration Appeals etc. Training programmes have been provided free by the OISC.

9. Future of Advice and Casework:

9.1 Welfare Benefits law has gradually become more and more complicated over time and we have witnessed the introduction of a new set of complex rules such as the right to reside rules governing how European nationals can be entitled for welfare benefits. As a result we have some success of decisions made by Department of Work and Pension and Charnwood Borough Council's Benefit Service.

9.2 At present the CREC has Quality Mark – General help level from Community Legal Services in providing welfare rights advice work. But, according to the statistics, the number of queries relating to welfare benefits are on the increase. There is a significant number of clients who have complex circumstances and they are in need of a specialist level of support to deal with their welfare benefits claim, especially for review and appeal cases for Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and Pension Credit etc.

9.3 It would be highly beneficial to clients and service users if the current Advice and Casework is developed up to specialist level through appropriate training and meeting other requirements set out by the Community Legal Service.

10. Acknowledgements:

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the team, both paid and volunteers, members of the Board of Trustees at the Charnwood Racial Equality Council, particularly to Peter Lewis - the Chair, Daphne Beale – the Managing Trustee and Trevor Shaw – the Treasurer for their management and direction of the casework. Also thanks to Ranjana Kacchela – the Commissioning Officer at Leicestershire County Council's Adult and Social Care Services for her support. Finally, thanks to Varsha Parmar the CREC Co-ordinator for giving administrative support.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations:

The Welfare Benefits system and Immigration and Nationality matters are very complex and daunting to the average service users. It is essential, if service users and clients are to receive their Welfare Benefits entitlements and they receive appropriate Immigration advice, that the work of the WBIO continues to be recognised and valued by our funding bodies.

Statistics show that the Casework is now firmly established in the community and clients from various ethnic backgrounds are directly benefiting from its services.

12. Recommendations:

12.1 That a part-time Caseworker's post be made available to assist the WBIO to cover the caseload while the WBIO is on training or on leave and to input information into the existing case management system.

12.2 That we have an ongoing commitment from the funding bodies.

Kazi Mashud
Welfare Rights and Immigration Officer.

WELFARE BENEFITS/IMMIGRATION CASEWORK STATISTICS

Nature of cases/queries	Total
Welfare Benefits	530
Housing and Accommodation	387
Immigration and Nationality	188
Social Services Support	56
Training/Education Support	35
Employment Support	1
Miscellaneous Support	238
Total Queries	1435

Ethnicity Breakdown	Total
White	9
British	34
Indian	360
Bangladeshi	418
Pakistani	30
Chinese	30
Caribbean	27
African	36
Other European	110
Other Asian Background	12
Other Ethnic Background	57
Not Stated	29
Total Number of Service Users	1152

Gender Breakdown	Total
Male	707
Female	445

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OFFICER'S REPORT

Since our last report for 2005, we have commenced the 4th year of the project following the success of securing further funding from the Big Lottery under the extension Bid. On receipt of the funds, the project was re launched on 26th May 2006 which was very successful. Amongst the guest arrivals we were fortunate to have the chair from the Chamber of Commerce and Andy Reed, local MP supporting the project and wishing it success.



Progress

During this year of the project we have had the most staggering number of clients who we have supported and dealt with. Our target for the year was to support 45 cases. However we have supported 96 cases and dealt with 260 enquiries, many of which stemmed from the cases we have supported. Amongst the cases supported, a certain number of cases rolled over from the previous year as the legal transition of certain cases can take up to 6-18 months before any results are seen. As specified in our extension bid to the big lottery, we identified ways of developing the project, which we have mainly achieved successfully this year. One of the conditions of the funding provided by the Big Lottery was that the grant would be tapered and therefore other means had to be considered to make up the shortfall for the future of the project. In order to achieve this target, we were to work with employers, promoting better policies and practices.

Working with Employers/Tapered Grant

As stated above, one of the outputs of the project was to provide a wider service than limiting the service to just individuals. Therefore we decided to work with employers by selling an employers pack with updated information on employment law and better policies and practices in the workplace. Unfortunately the packs could not be completed this year as the number of cases has been extraordinary and the project was not able to deal with the demand for both, considering the limited human resources available. We therefore sell the packs and raise any shortfall towards the tapered grant. Although we were unable to sell the packs, the project worked with a company in the name of Peninsula business which also provide legal assistance on employment law. Together we organised several free employers seminar which will continue for the duration of the project.

Although this was a free service to employers, a percentage of the sign up fee is contributed towards the our project from any clients Peninsula attract through these seminars. So far the seminars have been successful and through this, the project has secured £2,700 which has been contributed towards the tapered grant.

Networking with Partnership Organisations

Since last year we have continued to work with the same organisations, working closely to promote our service and through their contacts publicising the Employment Rights Project. We have also created a better working relationship with Job Centre Plus. Job Centre Plus could not accommodate the project by allowing the project to run a drop in surgery from their office; however a referral system has been agreed whereby the clients are now sent to the project to seek advice on any potential matters concerning their legal status under employment law. Prior to this, Job Centre Plus were making referrals to ACAS and therefore not many people were aware of the project. As a result of this referral system, we have seen an increase of clients.

Amongst the partnership organisations, we have also worked with Loughborough Library who provide the project with a drop in surgery facility. We are also working with lindependent Advice Group, Loughborough University and Loughborough College. On a couple of occasions now, we have provided Loughborough College with free consultation and advice on recruitment procedure and redundancy. This has proved to be very successful and therefore a consultancy service will be another means to raise further funding towards the tapered grant. This will be publicised further for the forthcoming years of the project.

Since last year, we have also been working with the Chamber of Commerce and they are now on our mailing list and are kept up to date on any developments with the project. Since the commencement of the project, we have been networking with the Employment Law Group And Representative (ELGAR) and we are continuing to do so. This is a group set up to provide advice and assistance to advisors in the voluntary sector on legal issues concerning employment law. The networking continues and the project benefits from this provision put in place in the midlands. Due to the uncertainty of further funding last year, we were unable to widen the scope of the project. However this year, the project has deemed to exceed the number of targets we had set out to meet, and we have had an overall success. This has both benefited individuals but also has demonstrated the good work that we maintain here at the CREC through the services we are providing.

Publicity

This year the project has taken a turn in an opposite direction to last year. As part of the outputs we were to publicise the project through the local papers, however due to the number of demands that we have had from clients, we decided not to pursue this as we would not have been able to deal properly with all cases if the caseload exceeded our ability to provide quality service. However other forms of publicity took place and this has been through the drop in surgery at the Loughborough Library, which publicises the project on their local news board, and also Job centre Plus. The CREC newsletter also provided publicity and the good working relationship we have with partner organisations. The CREC website which is well established and regularly updated has also been another means of publicity which has attracted a lot of attention. Finally many have accessed the project through word of mouth.

Drop-In Surgery

A regular drop-in surgery at the local library on a weekly basis has taken place. The aim of the drop in surgery has been to reach to the communities that are not aware of the project and to make it more accessible for those that cannot come to the office.

Case Management System

The case management system has experienced some difficulties this year, however it will be implemented for the forthcoming years of the project as the weaknesses in the computer system have been identified and are now in the process of being rectified. The case management system has a potential of providing a better client data filing system, making it easier to file cases and making each case file more efficient and productive. It also provides better security with client confidentiality.

Future of the project

A part time assistant caseworker joined the REC this year and together with the Employment Rights Officer preparation for the employers' seminar and producing the information pack for the employers has progressed. Unfortunately the employers pack has yet to be completed and therefore will be completed in the new year of the project. To promote the employers pack, the project will launch the pack and further publicity will take place. The employers' seminars will continue to take place as the seminars will help the project raise the shortfall towards the tapered grant

This project year we have had a large intake of clients which has proved to be very difficult considering the lack of human resources that has been available to the project. In the new project year, the project will need to reconsider the targets set. This way the project will be able to focus on providing a better and quality service to a manageable number of cases.

The new assistant has gradually developed new skills, however training will be identified to improve her skills to provide a better service to our clients. A consultancy and one to one service will also be available in the new project year to small and medium businesses. This will help towards the tapered grant. Through this we hope to achieve better policies and practices in the workplace. This would reduce the number of cases against companies in the Borough of Charnwood.

Summary

As stated in the last year, we hope to continue to provide this valuable service to disadvantaged groups and hope that this project will be incorporated into the core part of the CREC service. We aim to continue providing this beneficial service to the people of Charnwood and hope for more successful cases and an increase of service users.

Runa Chowdhury
Employment Rights Officer

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS PROJECT STATISTICS

Type of query	White	Gujarati	Punjabi	Bengali	Black	Others	Total in the Year
Race Discrimination	3	19	7	15	17	18	79
Sex Discrimination	7		12	10		4	33
Disability Discrimination	5	4	2		3	4	18
Religious Discrimination				2			2
Harassment	6	4	12	13	6		41
Victimisation		4					4
Unfair Treatment	5	6	6	14	3	6	40
Unlawful Deduction of wages	6	8	3	11	5	5	38
Unfair Dismissal	15		2	13	3	5	38
Maternity	3						3
Paternity							
Redundancy	2	6		2			10
Breach of Contract		5		1	3		9
Other issues of contracts	10	8			2	4	24
Age						1	1
Sick	2	4				2	8
Telephone enquiries	2						2
Total	66	68	44	81	42	49	350
Clients Supported	22	25	6	12	10	15	90
Clients Enquiries	44	43	38	69	32	34	260

RACIAL HARASSMENT/COMMUNITY COHESION OFFICER'S REPORT

Introduction

This report has been produced to highlight some of the work that the Racial Harassment/Community Cohesion Officer has undertaken in the past 12 months. The report is a compilation of the work of both Hiron Miah (Previous Officer) and Amar Bashir (Current Officer) for the 2006/07 Commission for Racial Equality Getting Results funding programme.

Hate Incident Monitoring Project

The Hate Incident Monitoring Project is an expansion of the Common Monitoring Project. The purpose of the original project was to collect information on racist incidents throughout the county. The new project now monitors incidents on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion / belief, sexual orientation and age. The definition used by the project is:

any incident where you or someone else has been targeted because they or you are believed to be different, or any incident you believe was motivated by: age, disability, gender identity, race, religion / belief or sexual orientation

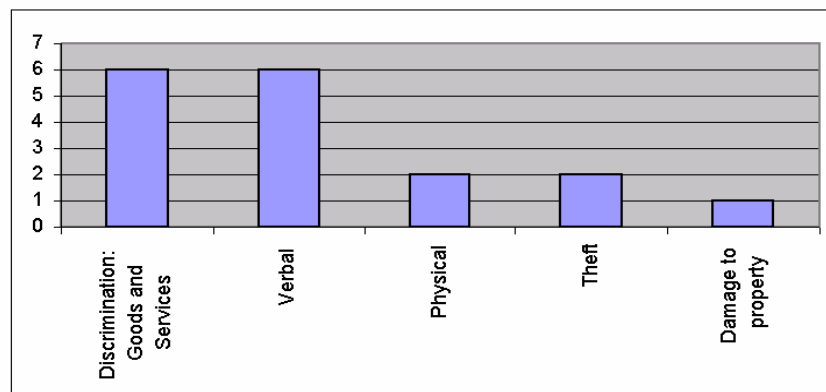
The CREC felt it important to work with the new project even though it went beyond the scope of the CREC's work. We believe that any prejudice or hate has the potential to increase community tensions, which if unchecked can result in large-scale violence and civil unrest.

The project is in its early stages however the CREC has made a commitment to work with the project and help it develop further.

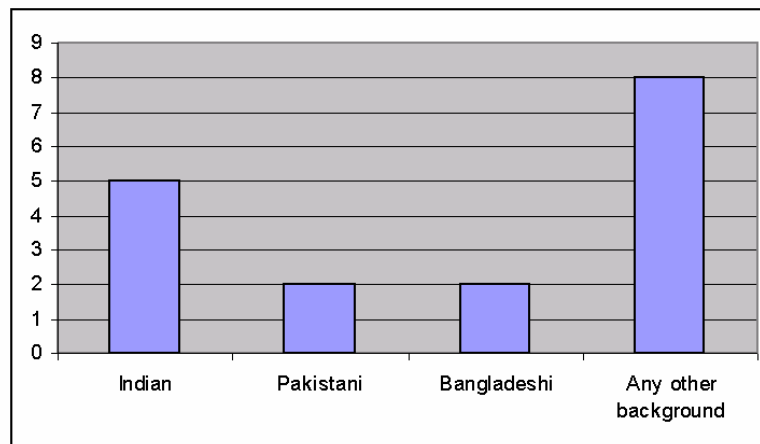
Caseworker Support

The project has provided caseworker support for 17 individuals in the past 12 months. The types of incidents have been wide ranging from cases of verbal and physical abuse to complaints about the police and discrimination in the area of goods and services. Often clients' come to the project as a last resort or if they have lack of confidence in the agencies dealing with their complaints. We are victim centred and will always work within the agreed action plan set out at the initial interview with the client.

Types of Incidents



Ethnicity of Victims



*Using CRE guidelines of recording ethnicity

Case Study one

A family was receiving racial harassment from their next door neighbour. The victims were private tenants as were the perpetrators. The harassment had been going on for the past 6 months before the victim came to the REC. Due to lack of evidence the police could not prosecute.

The tenant wanted to move from the premise as he feared for his young family. Unfortunately there was a clause within the tenancy that meant he would face a large fine if he abandoned the tenancy early.

We collected all the possible evidence from the various agencies and researched how he could end the tenancy without a fine. We also gave the tenant a letter of support outlining the case to the landlord. The tenant went to the landlord with this information and he was given permission to move.

The tenants have moved to a different property and are living free from harassment.

Case Study Two

A tenant had been racially abused by his neighbour. The harassment included verbal abuse at his door step and excessively loud music being played late at time which meant that his infant child could not sleep.

He came to the REC after contacting other agencies. With the involvement of the victim we created an action plan to work towards. The outcome the victim wanted was for the harassment to stop. We worked with him to collate evidence such as diary sheets, crime reference numbers and witness statements.

We presented this to the housing officer in the case, which meant that they could present a stronger case for action.

Since presenting the information to the housing officer the harassment has stopped. In accordance with the wishes of the victim we have agreed to monitor the situation and if any more incidents occur in the future we will re-open the case file and ensure that further action is taken. The family are now living free from harassment or distress.

Partnership working

It was felt necessary that all victims of a racist incident should be aware of the services of the project. Due to strict data protection guidelines we cannot have victims details passed onto to us or make contact with them unless they specifically mention it to the reporting agencies.

We worked with the police to overcome this problem by creating a letter outlining the services of the project that would go to the victim when the police make their contact. The letter is de-personalised and at no time are the victim's details disclosed to us.

We were receiving reports of racists incidents from Victim Support via the referral form. The forms were anonymised so we could not get in touch with the victim to see if he/she required any help. To overcome this we provide a staff training session to 15 members of staff at the agencies so that even if the victim did not require their details to be passed on the staff were still equipped with the information to provide support for the victim.

The racial harassment project has always wanted to be pro-active and prevent racist incidents occurring by creating community cohesion. Working in partnership with the Loughborough Council of Faiths the project helped in the Feast of faiths Event on the 21st November at John Storer House. Approximately 100 people attended the event with a number of young people from different faiths sharing with the audience "what their faith meant to them".

In partnership with a local Muslim group (Voices) the project provided support during the Israel and Lebanon war to provide some clarification on behalf of the Muslims. The event was well attended with around 100 attendees. The main part of the event was to give opportunities to non-Muslims to ask questions which might be considered sensitive. The attendees consisted of large number of non-muslims who said they found the event to be a very good public relations exercise and very informative.

Due to concerns of violence and anti-social behaviour at Burleigh Community College a Safer Schools Partnership was set up to bring agencies together to work towards a restorative approach to tackling the above. The project has already made a commitment to the group by providing training during the beginning of the new school year to young people who have been identified as being at high risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour. The group has replaced the Burleigh action group

Overall we are constantly working with partner agencies from the statutory, voluntary and community sector to increase community cohesion in our area.

Racial Harassment Contact Group

The Racial Harassment Contact Group is a well recognised forum in the Borough to discuss matters of racial harassment and racist incidents. It was been established for over 10 years and has a wide range of agencies that provide input into the group.

As there is no appointed co-ordinator for the group each member takes a pro-active role so that the group can move forward.

Connecting Communities Group

After the ethnic minority forum disbanded it created a vacuum in the Borough. It was felt that a new group should be created to discuss the positive aspects of diversity in Charnwood.

The group allows community members to highlight events that they are hosting or are aware that celebrate diversity. Due to the increase awareness of the events it is hoped that more people will attend from a wider background of people and so working towards community cohesion.

Racist and Religious Incidents Review Panel (RRIRP)

The Racist and Religious Incidents Review Panel is a group of voluntary, statutory and community individuals who provide constructive criticisms to the police on how they have investigated racist and religious incidents. It also allows individuals to inform the police of how they have been successful.

The racial harassment officer attends these meeting on a regular basis.

Police Advisory Group on Racist Incidents (PAGRI)

The group allows community members to provide input into Leicestershire police so that the local BME communities can have confidence in the police service. The racial harassment co-ordinator attends these meeting on a regular basis.

Future Plans

The Racial Harassment Project successfully put a bid into the Getting Results funding stream from the CRE. This allows the project to carry on its work for the next 12 months.

The project also recognises that the establishment of the new CEHR will affect the work of all agencies involved in the equality agenda. We are currently at the planning stage to make the racial harassment project into a hate crime project. This would mean that we would provide caseworker support for all victims of hate.

Amar Bashir
Racial Harassment Officer

MELA 2006

One of the biggest accomplishments of the project was the Loughborough Mela 2006. A large portion of the work for the event was done by my predecessor Hiron Miah and Varsha Parmar alongside the Loughborough Mela Council members and volunteers on the day. The theme of the Mela was **“People in Harmony”**. The event took place on the 3rd September 2006 and was attended by over 3000 people.

A review of the event was done by Susan Newcombe a freelance journalist below:

“Sikh performers danced traditional Punjabi stories, the Asian Divas dazzled the crowd and the Narton Group performed Bollywood choreography.

Irish country dancers joined them, Hindi pop singer Shubra wowed the audience and a Tetsudo team demonstrated the skill of the arts based karate discipline.

Vice chair of Leicestershire County Council Councillor Mike Jones said he would give this year’s Meal eight out of 10. “I think it had over 3,000 participants over the day,” said Councillor Jones. “The weather held up and there was a lovely atmosphere,” he added.

Limehurst High School’s steel band put in a robust session early on and rap and poetry delighted many of the punters with performances by Leicester Rappers and Burleigh Community College’s Lucky C.

The town hall entertained by puppet shows with snake charming and traditional Mela marionettes and the Italian Loughborough Dante Alighieri society estimated 400 visitors to its stand.

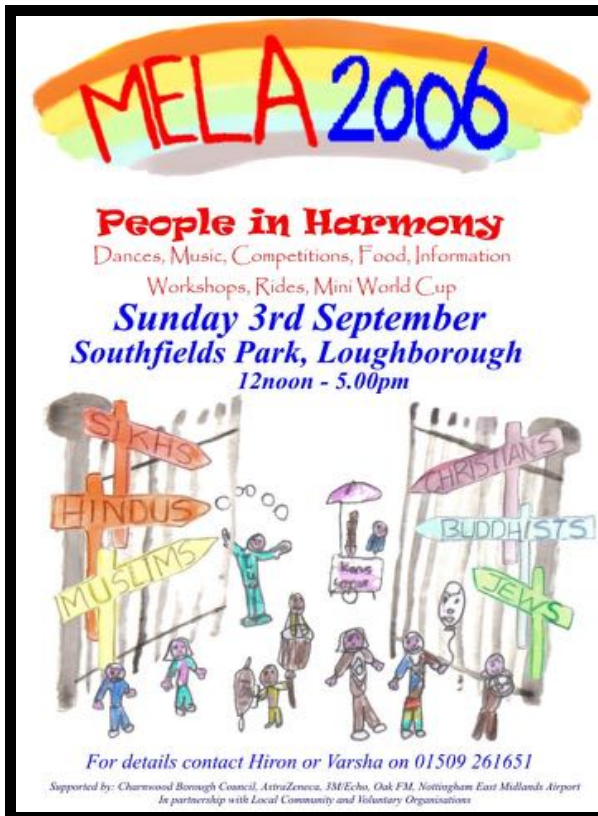
Backing for the event, which did not take place the year before, was received from local firms Astra Zeneca, 3M, Nottingham East Midlands airport and community and voluntary groups.

Festival-goer Raj Pandya said it was a fantastic event after this year’s Leicester Mela and Afro Caribbean carnival were cancelled.

“There are four generations here from all communities. It’s nice Loughborough has taken the initiative,” said Mr Pandya.”

We would like to thank everyone involved in the Mela for making it a great day.

Amar Bashir
On behalf of the Mela Council.



*General
Meeting &
Other
Partnership
work*

FIRST ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

HOODIES, HIJABS, ANORAKS AND EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES Given by KAREN CHOUHAN

The Lecture held on 26 October 2006 was attended by more than 150 people in the Cope Auditorium, Loughborough University. Guest Speaker, Karen Chouhan, formerly of the 1990 Trust, delivered a very thought provoking presentation.

Councillor Peter Lewis, Chair of CREC thanked the University for its support: *"This is a co-operative Town & Gown venture. Living and working side by side, we've unique opportunities for gaining global perspectives on key issues like these. We are most grateful for the very positive response shown by Professor Shirley Pearce, the Vice Chancellor to working with CREC We look to mobilise our young people in the fight against racism, xenophobia, prejudice and fear. In this we work with others from across Europe. This Lecture is part of that ambitious programme."*

The audience heard the speaker address the contemporary issues of race in Britain through the metaphor of clothing, which can be seen as symbolic of paranoia about hidden identities. She said, *"Currently we have a confusing conceptual analysis. On the one hand we are told to value diversity and that the UK does, but on the other that multi-culturalism is failing and that it is not good to be too diverse so we should move somehow to British values."*

She went on to explore the proliferation of policies and working groups, commissions, targets, toolkits, race equality schemes and performance indicators as asked if they have a reasonable hope of delivering race equality? She questioned whether the current discourses on cohesion, integration, diversity and multiculturalism are in reality flawed and actually reinforced institutional racism. Would the forthcoming Commission on Equalities and Human Rights and the newly announced Commission on Integration and Cohesion do anything to really help? What are the anti racist movements doing?

The Lecture was followed by discussion about peoples' hopes and strategies for the way forward in which the audience played a lively and interested part.

The Lecture is published as a booklet. To obtain a copy, please contact Varsha Parmar on (01509) 261651 or email to: crec@btconnect.com

‘All Different, All Equal’ from Loughborough to Strasbourg

European and International Youth Exchange at CREC

Being a university town, Loughborough and Charnwood are home to many young people, studying, working and living here. These young people represent the future of Charnwood and are one of the key agents for promoting racial equality and a harmonious community.

Youth is a top priority for CREC. We are keen to encourage young peoples' active participation and work with them towards mutual understanding, respect and cohesion among the multi-ethnic communities in this university town, Charnwood Borough and Leicestershire. We want to provide opportunities for international exposure and empower young people to develop their own concept of democratic citizenship.

To further those aims, CREC has successfully implemented a number of European youth projects, under the European Communities' YOUTH Programme (hereafter, YOUTH Programme) and Council of Europe's *‘All Different, All Equal’ European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation*, in addition to the *Youth Internship Programme* to enable local young people to gain practical work experiences with us. Since CREC's official representation at the *European Youth Centre* in Strasbourg in 2005, many of our young people have had the opportunity to attend a variety of international events across the EU, from Istanbul to Moscow, from Poland to Hungary.

We are particularly concerned with the rights and welfare of minority youth and foreign students. Therefore, an international Youth Training Course, *Youth for Racial Equality*, was organised at Loughborough's Ramada Hotel in August 2006. This was funded by the YOUTH Programme, via *British Council Connect Youth*. Twenty youth workers from across Europe participated, to discuss how young people can be involved to fight against racial discrimination across Europe.



We delivered an intensive training session, including contributions from Charnwood and Leicestershire Councils, Minorities of Europe (MoE), Charnwood Arts, Voluntary Action Charnwood, Loughborough and Reading Universities, as well as a keynote address by Ms Joy Warmington of B:RAP, Birmingham. The formal programme was then well balanced by a number of social activities such as multi-faith tour in Loughborough with Daphne Beale, a multicultural field visit to Leicester (and the National Space Centre), as well as a Mayoral reception at Loughborough Town Hall.



The success of the Training Course gave us more confidence in European youth activities. It made us recognize the importance of broadening young peoples' horizons about different countries and cultures, not only here in the UK but in mainland Europe and beyond. We now offer many opportunities to take part in a wide range of projects, like Youth Exchange, Training Course and Contact Making Seminars, under the framework of the YOUTH Programme and Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sports. This past year, many young people took advantage of these opportunities to travel abroad to participate in different youth activities, as listed:

Youth Exchange - Youth exchange brings together groups of young people from different backgrounds from several countries, providing them with an opportunity to meet, discuss and confront various themes, whilst learning about each other's countries and cultures. Youth from Charnwood have taken part in youth exchanges in Turkey, Germany and Poland:

August 2006 – *Youth Against Racism*, Ankara and Istanbul, Turkey (3 youths + CREC Employment Rights Officer)

December 2006 – *European Young Family Encounter*, Magdeburg, Germany (2 young families and two youth individuals)

February 2007 – *Cultural Cocktail*, Zakopane, Poland (6 Loughborough College students + 2 College staff); an earlier feasibility and preparation visit in Poland was attended by a CREC Trustee.



We also sent representatives to Training Courses and Contact Making Seminars, which provide training tools and networking opportunities for international cooperation in the youth field, aimed at developing projects related to the YOUTH programme objectives. These events are not limited to the participant's age. Therefore we sent representatives, and staff more professionally experienced from our own Officers and other local partners in Loughborough:

August 2006 – *Come, Come, Whatever you are 'the unification of philosophies on the way to EU'*, Istanbul, Turkey (by a CREC volunteer)

September 2006 – *Sport as a tool in work with disadvantaged youth*, Tatra Mountains, Poland (by one member of Charnwood Arts staff)

November 2006 – *UNITED Network Diversity Conference* in Neuchâtel, Switzerland (by a local youth representative)

January 2007 – *Fighting racism and xenophobia in Europe – Unilaterally or Bilaterally*, Paris, France (by CREC Chair and a Trustee)

April 2007 – *UNITED Network UNITED against INTOLERANCE*, Madrid, Spain (by a member of CREC staff)

May 2007 – *Let's Do It Together* (contact making seminar), Elazig, Turkey (two youth representatives from Loughborough University)

May 2007 – *Together Forever* (contact making seminar), Zakopane, Poland (two local youth representatives)

In addition to these YOUTH programme activities, we also participated in a number Council of Europe's major international events:

October 2006 – *All Different, All Equal, Diversity Youth Forum*, European Youth Centre, Budapest, Hungary (CREC Trustee)

November 2006 – Minorities of Europe / Council of Europe seminar on *Human Trafficking in Europe*, Budapest, Hungary (by an associate of CREC)

November 2006 – International Seminar '*Russia-Europe / Europe-Russia: the Role of Youth Organisations*', Moscow, Russian Federation (by a CREC volunteer)

CREC was also selected by the British Youth Council to attend a European Minorities Youth Event in Copenhagen, organised by the Danish and Dutch National Youth Councils, in September 2006. A study visit to Brussels was also made in April 2007 to strengthen the contacts with various EU institutions such as the Directorate Generals of Employment & Youth.

Our own second International Training Course on *Mainstreaming Intercultural Learning in Youth Work*, funded also by the YOUTH Programme, took place at the end of May in Loughborough. We brought together over 25 youth workers from European Union countries, together with Eastern European and Caucasus countries, from as far as Azerbaijan and Russian Federation. Yet again, this was held at Ramada Hotel in Loughborough, and we should acknowledge the generous in-kind sponsorship of the Ramada Hotel for both this and last years' conferences. Based on the success of these European activities, a *EuroTask Group* was set up, which manages our international youth programme, with representatives from inside and outside CREC, some of them are young people who benefited from previous youth activities. This Task Group coordinates and evaluates different youth projects and reports directly to the Board of Trustees.

This year, 2007, is the '*European Year of Equal Opportunities for All*', and 2008 is designated as the '*European Year of Intercultural Dialogue*'. Both are part of a concerted effort to promote equality and non-discrimination in the EU. The European Year is the centrepiece of a framework strategy which is designed to ensure discrimination is effectively tackled, diversity celebrated and equal opportunities for all promoted. CREC have developed a robust and effective network for youth cooperation with *British Council Connect Youth*, *European Commission / Council of Europe*, *British Youth Council*, *Minorities of Europe*, *UNITED Network Against Racism* and other European NGOs and local organisations. We will continue our international work, offering more young people and those who work with them the unique opportunity to share expertise, and experiences on the European level. This work can be seen on our information display at the CREC Office so that the public can see what we do.

Finally, I must say thank you for the support of my fellow Trustees, CREC members and our many partner organisations. We fight discrimination and inequalities wherever and whenever it is found, here or in Europe. These programmes ensure we do it together, and learn from each other to create a most just world in which to grow.

Wei SHEN

Trustee / Co-ordinator of Euro Task Group (International Youth Exchange)

EAST MIDLANDS RACIAL EQUALITY CONSORTIUM ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2006/2007

Officers meetings

During the year officers of EMREC met on five occasions and discussed the following issues:

Gypsies and Travellers Research in the region
Equality Needs in the East Midlands
RECs and Regional impact
Commission for Equality and Human Rights
Local Authority and Peer Review Work
Capacity Building for Executive members and staff of RECs
Publicity of EMREC amongst Government Office East Midlands (GOEM), East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA), East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) and Local Government East Midlands (LGEM)
CRE Getting Results Application 2007/08
Far Right Activities
Budgets and Finances
Conference 23rd September 2006

Meetings attended and Partnerships in the Region

Government Office East Midlands
East Midlands Development Agency
East Midlands Regional Assembly
ESF Regional Monitoring Committee
Local Government East Midlands
East Midlands Reducing Re-Offending Partnership Board
Consultation on ESF future funding and priorities

Conferences and Seminars

1. A study into Partnership working with Racial Equality Councils in the region - "*Time Place and Spirit Let's Play Safe*". This report was presented to delegates from RECs at a conference held on 23rd September 2006 at Holiday Inn, Leicester. The study looked at how Regional priorities in developing regeneration, social enterprise and community cohesion involves the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities across the East Midlands, Peterborough and Cambridge. The work was funded from a grant by Lloyds TSB Foundation for which EMREC is very grateful. The full Report is available on the Website of CREC and Vivitas resourcing www.vivitas.co.uk

2. Gypsies and Travellers Research

A small grant was secured from CRE to carry out a Study into Gypsy and Traveller Communities in the East Midlands, Peterborough and Cambridge. The aim of the study was to examine the level of discrimination and disadvantage suffered by Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller Communities across the region. The study was conducted by Vivitas Resourcing. *Facing the Future?* Report was presented to delegates at a seminar held in Government Office East Midlands on 2nd March 2007. The report is available on the website of Vivitas.

Grants

EMREC has secured grants from CRE East Midlands Hub, Government Office East Midlands and LGEM to carry out the work in the following areas:

Strategic Partnerships supporting CEHR
Peer Review Work Local Authorities
Mainstreaming Equalities workshops

EMREC has also secured CRE Getting Results Grant 2007/08 to reduce the impact and influence of the Far Right on Communities in the East Midlands, including Peterborough and Cambridge. This work will commence in very near future.

AGM April 2007

The following officers were elected:

Peter Lewis— Chair

Trevor Shaw—Treasurer

Varsha Parmar—Secretary

Thanks

EMREC would like to thank Jay Vyas, Trevor Shaw, members of the officers group, Milton Crosdale, Mohammed Aslam of Vivitas and the various RECs for their support in achieving the activities during the year.

Amu Devani
EMREC Associate member

BANGLADESHI EKOTA PROJECT

The CREC is one of the partners involved in the project alongside the Bangladesh Social Association (BSA), Charnwood Bangladeshi Society (CBS) and Loughborough Islamic Cultural Association (LICA).

The main aims are:

- ◆ To provide information and advice on basic welfare rights and immigration
- ◆ To liaise with other agencies on behalf of individual clients
- ◆ To liaise with the Bangladeshi community and help to negotiate with agencies about their services to the Bangladeshi community
- ◆ To maintain good links between the organisations involved with the management of the projects.

This year has been a period of uncertainty due to our Commissioning Agreement with Leicestershire County Council (Social Care Services) being due for renewal. There was a suggestion that there would be major changes in the new agreement but in the end the agreement was extended for a further year without change. Changes may be brought into effect in 2008 so we await developments.

Our Outreach Worker post was due to end on 31 March 2007 but due to the good offices of our Social Services link person, Ranjana Kachhela, we were eventually told in mid April that that post too would be continued. This has been a very valuable post for those unable to visit the offices.

Another proposed change is that we divide the work and resources between the BSA and CREC (the two major contributors to the project) and so eliminate the necessity for the Project committee to meet to manage the affairs of the work. It is hoped that when this happens the four organisations involved will continue to work together for the good of the Bangladeshi community in Loughborough. The important thing is that the service to the community continues.

Our thanks to those committee members who have given their time during the year and particularly to our staff Chayara Chowdhury, Amina Wadud and Alea Sayed who have loyally continued to serve the community so professionally despite all the uncertainties the year has held.

CHARNWOOD REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS FORUM

This Forum was formed six years ago and aims to seek to ensure services to refugees and asylum seekers are co-ordinated and of good quality and to share information between the agencies involved. We have continued to meet quarterly and to receive updates from our member organisations on the issues affecting asylum seekers and refugees and the work they are doing. In between we receive updates via email.

This year the work has been serviced by the CREC and Varsha Parmar has been the administrator and contact person.

The numbers of Asylum Seekers in Charnwood is not large but their needs can still be great.

One major issue during the year was the opening of a regional reporting centre for asylum seekers in Loughborough. There were many exaggerated stories about how Loughborough was going to be inundated with asylum seekers and the early official publicity was not as helpful as it could have been. Once it became clear that clients would only arrive to register and then return home the publicity ceased. Many members of the Forum visited the Reporting Centre to see the operation in process and the concerns were more about the distances people had to travel and how their concerns were met.

Other concerns have been

- ♦ the use of immigration as a party political issue especially with the local elections being in May 2007,
- ♦ the continued effects of the 'terrorism' legislation on asylum seekers
- ♦ the way asylum seekers can be left destitute if their appeal for asylum is turned down but they cannot return to their own countries because of the danger to their lives.

Generally, those living in Charnwood who arrived to seek asylum are received positively and many have now settled in the area and contribute to the local economy. The excellent young asylum seekers and refugees youth club, 'Dreamers', continues to thrive and won an Echo New Year award for the support they provide each other and the excellent job they do in helping others understand what it is like to be an asylum seeker. We understand that they are currently making a film of their experiences and we will ensure members are contacted when this is released.

Daphne Beale/Debbie Green

LOUGHBOROUGH COUNCIL OF FAITHS

Feast of Faiths

Loughborough Council of Faiths, together with Voluntary Action Charnwood and the Mayor's office organized a 2nd Feast of Faiths in November 2006 where around 100 people attended a social get together with food and a light quiz to get people mingling.

The theme for the evening was focused around young people from the various faiths and brief talks were given by several young members on what faith meant to them. The evening was a huge success with more than 40 young members from the various faiths.



Local Faiths come Faith2Faith

Performers from seven local faiths entertained the Mayor and Mayoress of Charnwood and an audience of 200 at Loughborough's Town Hall in March 2007 with drama, music and dance celebrating the area's religious diversity.

The event, Faith2Faith, organised by the Loughborough Council of Faiths, was hailed as a great success by Chairman Mark Graham.

Faith2Faith was a fantastic celebration of diversity, with people from a wide variety of different traditions and backgrounds coming together to share insights from their diverse spiritual heritage.

Faith2Faith was supported by Charnwood Borough Council and the Home Office's Faith Capacity Building Fund and included performances by members of the Brahma Kumaris, Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and Druid communities.

The event had a local theme with a scene set in the East Midlands Airport used to link individual performances by the faith groups.

Each faith group presented something which gave the audience a flavour of their religion. From devotional songs, music and dance to drama with a message, Faith2Faith was a flight across the landscape of religious traditions represented here in Loughborough.

Our thanks to Graham North of the GRAIN theatre group who directed this event.

Press and Media

PRESS & MEDIA

Visiting MP has praise for equality council

ALAN DAVIES MP, Minister of State for Trade and Industry, visited the offices of Charnwood Rural Equality Council and met a number of personnel staff and trustees.

He said: "I'm very impressed with the professional service your staff and trustees are providing the people of Charnwood. There's such a positive atmosphere here."

Mr Davies discussed issues of rural development with Helen Mann, and the Employment Rights Advisor with Rona Chowdhury.

He expressed particular interest in the Youth Agency, funded by the Department for Communities, to be built next to the Loughborough and the Leicestershire and Rutland Councils.

The council has been recognised by several media outlets, who praised the Council for its commitment.

"We were delighted to respond to his request to visit," said Council Chairman Grahame Lewis.

"From our perspective, we look the opportunity to make clear our support for previous statements made by the Conservative Party on issues of race and integration."

"We welcome the Minister's visit. It's a very positive sign. We're delighted to see the Minister's visit. It's a very positive sign. We're delighted to see the Minister's visit. It's a very positive sign."

"That we will continue to work with the Minister to ensure that we are all different, all equal."

CREC to hold lecture

CHARNWOOD RURAL Equality Council has arranged to hold a lecture on the topic of 'All Different All Equal' on Thursday 18th October.

The lecture will be held at the Council's offices, 100, Leicestershire Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 1JG.

Cost: £10.00. Tickets: £10.00. Tickets: £10.00.

New case worker

The Employment Rights Project, based at Charnwood Rural Equality Council, Loughborough, has announced the appointment of its assistant employment rights adviser, Patsy Wright.

Following the loss of a staff member, the project is pleased to have a new staff member.

The workers are able to help with consultation and representation of staff in disputes, employment tribunals, and appeals to the Employment Tribunal.

added the centre - which is open to the public through the collection of clothing which has been donated by the public. The centre is open to the public through the collection of clothing which has been donated by the public.

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Don't suffer in silence

CHARNWOOD Rural Equality Council is looking for a new project to help it encourage victims to speak out and not suffer in silence.

Victims of hate incidents are being urged to report them to the new Hate Incident Monitoring Project, set up by Leicestershire County Council with partner agencies across the county.

Hate incidents

This new initiative has a wider remit than the previous Hate Incident Monitoring Project. In 2005 nearly 600 hate incidents were reported to the project.

Hate incidents could be physical, verbal or written abuse. They take many forms but are essentially about someone being targeted because they are believed to be different, because of age, disability, gender identity, race, religion / belief or sexual orientation.

Hate incidents can be reported online at www.leics.gov.uk/report-hate or for more information call the Hate Incident Monitoring Project on 0115 950000.

Competent award

CHARNWOOD Rural Equality Council has announced that Karl Woodard, its welfare, housing and immigration officer, has successfully completed level 2, Immigration Advice Competence awarded last by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).

OISC, an independent public body, is responsible for ensuring all immigration advisers have the requirements of good practice. A spokesman for the council said: "We are delighted to confirm the council's immigration adviser work."

The council is open to the public through the collection of clothing which has been donated by the public.

* Committed to 'changing lives' is council's message

"All different, all equal - yet together we make a difference." That was the theme of the annual report to the Charnwood Rural Equality Council when it held its annual meeting at Loughborough Town Hall.

More than 50 members attended, some representing organisations from across the county of Leicestershire.

In his annual report from the trustees, the chairman, Grahame Lewis, thanked

trustees, members and staff for their work throughout a very successful year.

"We're a team at CREC," he said. "We're a partnership between all involved in the work. It's not the number of staff we have for our organisation. It's the number of lives we change."

Future plans for 2006/07 include an International Youth and Racism Conference in August, support for the Mole, a major public lecture with

Loughborough University in October, the formation of a Young Leicestershire People's Group in the autumn.

Details of these together with the full annual report can be found on the website, newly established in January 2006.

www.charnwood.org. Anyone wishing to join can contact Grahame Lewis on 01509 241001 or email info@charnwood.org or www.charnwood.org.

* Council to hold AGM

CHARNWOOD Rural Equality Council is holding its annual meeting at Loughborough Town Hall on Monday (7.30pm).

Guest speaker will be Dr Sue Ellery, director of public health. Call 01509 241001.

Echo Friday
"All Different"

Echo 30/10/06

Photographs/articles courtesy of Loughborough Echo and Leicester Mercury

Accounts & Management Report

British Army

THE BRITISH ARMY

THE CAREER OF A LIFETIME

What do you think is important from a career? Good prospects? A competitive salary? The opportunity to gain qualifications? Travel? Status? What if we told you that there is one career that encompasses all this and much more – the British Army?

Strong Career Path

Education plays an important role in Army life and we are fully committed in helping all our recruits further their qualifications and skills, and build a strong career path, which will help them in their civilian career later on in life. The opportunities really are endless – from studying for an NVQ or HND to a degree.

Welbeck 6th Form College at Woodhouse just outside of Loughborough is one of the top 6th Form colleges in the country. It has an outstanding academic reputation and state of the art facilities. It gives young men and women who are looking for a career as an engineering or technical officer in the Army a first class start.

Perhaps a medical career with a difference is what you are after? From physiologist to pharmacist, dentist to radiographer – medical roles in the Army are many, varied and vital, and all have direct equivalents in the civilian health sector. Medical and dental students can be paid £14000 for the last three years of their education on our Officer Cadetship scheme.

There are over 100 very different jobs on offer in the Army, all with top class training. Contact your local Careers Office in Leicester on 0116 2543232 to find out more.

Make a Difference

If you thought that a career in the Army is all about front line combat, think again. Soldiers participate in numerous peacekeeping missions across the world and help to make a difference in the countries they visit, implementing peace agreements and delivering life-saving humanitarian aid. They also undertake extensive reconstruction work, encourage refugees to return to their homes and help with community projects such as re-decorating schools and building roads.

What's more, the Army welcomes applications from young men and women no matter what their marital status, race, ethnic origin or religious belief. No account is taken of sexual orientation or social background in considering applications.

Lieutenant Colonel David Hollas, MBE, is responsible for Army recruitment across the East Midlands. He comments: "The varied and diverse backgrounds of our men and women ensure that our Army continues to be the best in the world. In 2005 we were awarded the Business Community's Race for Opportunity scheme – for the fifth consecutive year. Our ongoing work in the area of diversity is gradually being widely recognised and we firmly believe our strength lies in both the diversity and unity of our personnel.

For more information on a career with the British Army please contact...Armed Forces Careers Office, St George's House, 6 St George's Way, Leicester LE1 1SH or telephone 0116 2543232



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Company No. 4198889

Registered Charity No. 1088411

***WE ARE GRATEFUL TO
THE BRITISH ARMY***



ARMY
BE THE BEST
REGULAR & TERRITORIAL