



HRCEC

All Different All Equal

Annual Report 2010/11

Working towards eliminating discrimination



Campaigning for equality of opportunity



**Promoting good relations between all persons
in the Borough of Charnwood in the County of
Leicestershire**

Registered Charity Number: 1088411

Company Number: 4198889

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The Office of the Mayor
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Email: mayor@charnwood.gov.uk
My ref: Civic10
Your ref: HR&EC Annual Report

It has been a great pleasure for the Mayoress and myself to attend some of the many events organised by Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood over the last year. Having been a member of HR&EC for many years, this has been a particularly interesting organisation for me to work with during my year as Mayor of Charnwood.

It is impressive and pleasing to see just how busy your group is throughout the Borough. We recognise the need for services such as yours to continue to help people from different countries and faiths, as well as those who are for whatever reason marginalised, to settle and integrate into society. I am sure that your work greatly mitigates the difficulties they face and it is for this reason you have my appreciation and admiration.

I wish you well for the future and hope that you continue to do splendid work for the Borough of Charnwood. I also look forward to working with you when I return to my ordinary life with close engagement with the work of Voluntary Action Charnwood/John Storer House and also Charnwood Arts. I have no doubt that all our efforts will be needed.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Jill Vincent
The Mayor of Charnwood



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

Chair	Daphne Beale
Vice chair (joint)	Val Watts & Anne Williams
Treasurer	Trevor Shaw
Company secretary	Peter Lewis

TRUSTEES

Anne Williams	Amrat Bava	Linda Shaw
Trevor Shaw	Daphne Beale	Jewel Miah
Val Watts	John Capleton	Dave Thomas
Tony Payne		

CO-OPTED TRUSTEES

Darren Naylor	Debbie Green	Abdus Shahid
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FINANCE & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

John Capleton	Daphne Beale	Trevor Shaw
Jewel Miah		

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Daphne Beale	Dave Thomas	Amrat Bava
Val Watts	Trevor Shaw	Tony Payne

MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PR SUB GROUP

Peter Lewis	Patricia Pinder	Linda Shaw
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BUSINESS PLANNING GROUP

Anne Williams	Trevor Shaw	Daphne Beale
John Capleton	Staff	

STAFF

Varsha Parmar	Development Officer/Co-ordinator
Kazi Mashud	Welfare Benefits & Immigration Officer
Chayara Chowdhury	Bangladeshi Liaison Officer
Amina Wadud	Bangladeshi Liaison Officer
Minara Rahman	Bangladeshi Outreach Officer
Nadja Rein	Youth Project Co-ordinator
Lesley Ansari	Training and Development Officer (HIAP)
Justin O'Brien	Hate Incident Officer (left end of Sep 2010)
Tony Kelly	Hate Incident Officer

Chair's Report

The past year has been one of challenges and achievements. We began the year unsure what the newly elected coalition government would do, particularly regarding the public and voluntary sectors. As we have now seen there have been drastic cuts to many local authorities and even charities. We are therefore extremely glad that, due to the commitment of our staff, we secured the second year of funding for our Hate Incident Action Project. Charnwood Borough Council have so far honoured their tapered grants for this year and Leicestershire County Council are going on funding us for the coming year. Next year we may have to alert our dedicated staff to the possibility of cuts in their hours. We go on working in hope that this will not happen.



We have tried to make our work known to our various funders and during the year we also invited our MP, Nicky Morgan, and some of our Borough Council Officers to meet with us to get an update on our work. This was well received and we would like to thank Nicky for giving of her time.

Despite the uncertain economic climate we have continued to look ahead to see how we can respond to the needs of our community and to make applications for bids where appropriate. Details of this work will be found in our Business Plan (published separately). We have also worked hard to achieve at least level one in all 12 standards of the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO). This is not only good to get our management in order but is recognised by funders as an indicator of a well run organisation. Among other things we are looking to strengthen the human rights side of our work so that we can also use this to help our clients as they take their place in our society.

As this is my final year as a Trustee of HR&EC I would like to thank the staff who, over the years, have made our organisation well respected throughout the Borough. Thanks also to the Trustees I have worked with, particularly this year my Vice chairs Anne Williams and Val Watts. I must also thank Trevor Shaw for his work not only as Treasurer but also for his work on updating policies, helping with and casting a critical eye over our applications for funding and our Business Plan, and being our Equality Representative to make sure we comply with our Quality Mark responsibilities.

Over the many years I have been associated with our organisation there have been many dedicated staff, trustees and members so to all of them I say thank you. To those of you who are currently members I say thank you but I also want to encourage you to go on giving your time and energy to keeping all the work that we do as high profile as possible so that everyone appreciates its value, and to keep your own commitment whatever setbacks there are on the way.

Daphne Beale
Chair

Trustees Report

HR&EC is a Company Limited by Guarantee and the Trustees are the Directors of the Company. The Trustees have a legal liability to ensure that HR&EC complies with Companies House rules. As a Charity HR&EC is also responsible to the Charity Commission.

Tasks of Trustees

- Promoting good relations throughout the Borough
- Keeping staff and trustees well trained
- Managing supportively staff and volunteers
- Keeping our finances in good order
- Keeping our buildings fit for purpose
- Keeping policies up to date and in tune with latest legislation
- Ensuring our business plan reflects our strategic direction and is SMART
- Ensuring future sustainability
- Monitoring and evaluating our work

Widening our membership to reflect our work.

The Trustees are volunteers who give their time, energy and expertise to serve the aims of the HR&EC. One of our tasks is to ensure we have a good balance of committed people to maintain the work and reputation of the organisation and we are always on the look out for others to share in this task. Do let us know if you feel able to help in this way. Induction and training for Trustees of a high standard is provided.

The Board have continued to meet 6 weekly with short and well focused agendas. We have used our committees to do the detailed work but the Board of Trustees is the final decision making body.

As a CLS and OISC accredited organisation we are subject to audit from time to time and this has helped us to keep our policies and procedures up to date with the latest requirements. In passing our latest audit we found where there were gaps and were able to fill them. We consider our Business Plan to be a working document and so have spent time ensuring it matches our practical aspirations.

In the past year we have held 2 General Meetings, 3 youth conferences and held a well attended public lecture The Right Reverend Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester on "Some more equal than others?" Equality, faith and the established Church in England today".

We have also produced regular newsletters to enable our members and the people of Charnwood to keep up to date and involved with our work. Details of these activities are included later in this report. We also have a concern for our young people and have continued to offer conferences in Loughborough and other European venues, including Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. In all these we work in partnership with other appropriate organisations.

Because of our good record on delivery of outputs relating to their Strategic Plans we have been enabled to continue our service agreements with Leicestershire County Council until 30 September 2011 and Charnwood Borough Council on their tapered grant. Our thanks to Ranjana Kachhela at Leicestershire County Council and Tom Kiernan and Michael Hopkins at Charnwood Borough Council for their continuing support.

Our future sustainability is important and in the present economic climate we need to be sure we are aware of the new trends in public service but also willing to challenge both local and national government when necessary.

We are still awaiting the result of our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, done jointly with Charnwood Arts, to capture the history of the local communities and our work over the last 40 years in exhibition and book form.

We continue our work with volunteers and placement students from local schools and colleges and in the past year have supported over 10 students and currently have 4 volunteers with us on various projects.

Finally we would like to thank all our funders for the valuable grants that help us provide the services we do to the communities and the press, particularly, Andy Rush at the Echo for their ongoing coverage of our work.

Daphne Beale

On behalf of the Board of Trustees



Board of Trustees Meeting



Finance & Property Committee Report

I'm pleased that once again our annual accounts show a clean bill of health and our auditor found no problems with them.

It's interesting to look back at what I wrote in this report 12 months ago: "*in the current economic climate I have a sneaking suspicion the next 12 months or so could be interesting.*" Well, in 2010/11 we had sufficient money to maintain all of our services but last year's comment still applies.

In 2011/12 some of our projects will come to an end and we will be applying for funding for new projects. In September 2012 we will have to tender for the services we supply to Leicestershire County Council. The work that Trustees and staff have done to improve the way we deliver our services should stand us in good stead with all of this.

During the year we improved our financial budgeting and reporting system so we can keep a tighter grip on things. We must keep up this good work. My thanks go to John Capleton for his valuable help with this.

As with other committees, we used PQASSO to review our functions and were able to make several improvements. An example was looking at all of our insurance cover where we updated our building sum insured and tightened up the liability cover for Trustees.

My sincere thanks go to the staff of our accountants/auditors at Marsh & Moss Ltd for their friendly and professional services and also to Varsha Parmar for her skills with the day to day accounting.

Trevor Shaw
Treasurer

Company Secretary's Report

As always we have complied with all the regulations of the Companies House and Charity Commission by filing in the annual return in good time.

We as an organisation would like our current work to go from strength to strength and appeal to all individuals and organisations to help and support us in our work.

If you are interested please contact the office to see how you could be involved. We are particularly seeking to engage with groups and individuals from all the equality strands.

Peter Lewis

Personnel Committee Report

The committee is responsible for seeing that the Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood:

- 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.

The committee meets regularly to ensure its responsibilities are fulfilled and it reports to each Board meeting. Once again we would like to thank all the trustees, staff members and volunteers who have enabled us to keep such high standards in our work and service to the community.

Staff and trustees had their annual induction in September which is a valuable exercise for all.

Members of the Personnel Committee have continued annual appraisals for staff and made sure they have adequate training for their work and professional development. They also attend, or have feedback from, the regular staff meetings. We continue to review our policies in the light of professional expertise and are working towards Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO) Level 1 in Standards 5 and 6.

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

Daphne Beale
Chair of Personnel.

Business Plan Committee

This committee looks at the ever changing needs of the local communities and our work so that this can be reflected in our business plan which is a live working document. The information is monitored, evaluated and updated to be presented at our Annual General Meeting each year. This enables us to identify the gaps in service and look for funding sources to deliver the service. It also gives our funders and partners a clear picture of our structure, our achievements, a community needs analysis and our plans for the future. The Business Plan group continues to look at capacity for delivery both in terms of space and human resources.

Our 2011-2012 business plan highlights the need for increased work on equalities and human rights legislation, empowering and engaging with women and promoting our work in rural areas of Charnwood.

Daphne Beale

Marketing Publicity & Public Relations Committee

Our Marketing, Publicity & PR committee consists of 3 elected members at the AGM and members from the Board of Trustees. This last year the elected members at the AGM were Patricia Pinder and Apple Sharpe with one space that was not filled. Linda Shaw and I were the Trustees on this group. On behalf of HR&EC, I would like to express our thanks to them all for their support throughout the year.

The group has been very active in identifying ways of raising awareness of issues of concern to the local communities and in line with our expanding remit to work on all equalities, bringing issues faced by particular groups to the attention of agencies, members and individuals.

In the last year we had our usual coffee morning in December which is always a great opportunity for our members to drop in for a coffee and a chance to meet others and the staff. We also invited Nicky Morgan MP who was accompanied by Cllr Paul Harley, Cabinet Lead Member for External Relations, Charnwood Borough Council, to visit our offices and they had an opportunity to talk to staff and trustees about the work we do (see page 34 for more information).

We also jointly held an event to celebrate International Women's Day (see page 24) with the Loughborough College and Charnwood Borough Council which was well attended and the theme was Active Living.

Our Annual Public Lecture (see page 35) in May 2011, was held at Loughborough University by invitation of the Vice Chancellor, where the guest speaker, The author of 'The Spirit Level', Richard Wilkinson, Emeritus Professor of Social Epidemiology gave a very interesting talk on **"Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better"**

This group is also responsible for the Membership of HR&EC and we are constantly looking at ways of broadening our membership, particularly in light of our widening remit on all the equalities. All applications for new members go to this group for recommendation to the Trustees. We also continue to work on PQASSO standards that are relevant to this group.

We would like to thank the local press, particularly Loughborough Echo, for the regular coverage we receive on our work. We are always seeking to recruit new members and welcome applications for either individual members or organisations to affiliate.

We also have spaces for co-options to our Board of Trustees and several sub groups, so if anyone is interested in our work and wishes to get involved, please visit our website on www.humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org or ring the office on (01509) 261651.

Peter Lewis CC
Chair of MP&PR

Membership

Hon President

The Mayor of Charnwood

Hon Vice President

Dr A Strachan

Hon Solicitor

Mr D Pagett-Wright (Moss Solicitors)

Hon Treasurer

Mr T Shaw

Individual Members

Mr A Bava	Mr J Capleton
Mr J R Catt	V Clarke
Ms H Clegg	Mr A Gimpel
Mrs A Gimpel	Mr J Harrison
Mrs M Hopewell	R Jalota
M Jenkins	Mr M Jones
Mrs P Joyce	Mr P Lewis
Ms S Meredith Velado	Mr J Miah
Mrs N Morgan	Mr D Naylor
Mr S G Patel	Mr S Phipps
Ms R Pickersgill	Mrs P Pinder
Mr T Priestly	Ms A Shahid
Mr M A Shahid	Mr T Shaw
Mr P Singh	Dr A Strachan
Mrs S M Velado	Dr J Vincent
Mr P Yeo	

Organisations

All Saints with Holy Trinity	P Pinder	V Clark
Ashmount School	D Deacon	D Thomas
Bangladesh Social Association	S A Choudhury	A Muhit
Burleigh Community College	C Horsfall	
Bridge	P Nicholls	
Charnwood Arts	K Ryan	R Abrahams
Charnwood Borough Council	J Capleton	G Gay
	D Green	P Lewis
Connexions Loughborough	E Rolfe	
Fearon Hall	Z Weatherly	
Geeta Bhawan	H Rana	K Passi
Leics Adult Learning Service	V Watts	
Leicestershire Libraries	L Bowell	
Leicestershire Teachers Association	G Gay	
Limehurst High School	S Coneran	R Das
Loughborough Baptist Church	S Cramer	M Speight
Loughborough Churches Partnership	D Beale	T Payne
Loughborough College	A William	J Spavin
Loughborough Council of Faiths	M Graham	F Catling
L'boro & District Hate Incident Group	L Shaw	D Bentley
L'boro & District Victim Support	K Small	I Thurlby
L'boro United Reformed Church	D Beale	T Payne
Loughborough University	Rev S Richardson	
Loughborough Youth Affairs	A Lake	
Rawlins Community College	C Orr	T Walker
Rendell Primary School	H Coleman	
Rosebury St Peter's C C	D Bentley	L Shaw
Swaminarayan BAPS Sanstha	R Limbachia	
Thurmaston Jagruti Group	S Valand	K Sharma
Trinity Methodist Church		
Turning Point	P Callanan	
Voluntary Action Charnwood	N Lambert	S Leong
Youth Shelter	J Fele	

Welfare Rights and Immigration

1. Introduction

My main areas of work include:

- Providing advice, information, support and guidance on welfare benefits, housing, health & hospital to service users and assisting with correspondence on their behalf.
- Referring service users who require specialist or additional support to various agencies.
- Undertaking immigration and nationality casework up to Level 2 set by the Office of The Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).
- Liaising with local statutory and non-statutory organisations in response to the needs of service users.

I assist service users in completing necessary forms, writing letters and making phone calls to other agencies on behalf of service users. I encourage them to do as much as they can for themselves. I also make referrals to appropriate agencies when necessary and often receive referrals from other organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Job Centre plus, Charnwood Borough Council, Bridge Housing, Bangladesh Social Association, Shree Ram Krishna Centre, etc.

2. Meetings, Contacts and Liaison

To enhance services for clients, we have established and maintained regular contacts, meetings and liaison with various statutory and non-statutory organisations. Below is a list of some of these contacts.

- BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities), UK
- Advice UK
- Community Legal Service – Quality Mark
- Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
- Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
- Immigration Advisory Service
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Leicestershire Working Together
- Review and Appraisal meeting with HREC Personnel members
- Board of Trustees Meeting
- Charnwood Health and Wellbeing Forum
- The Pension Service
- HM Customs and Revenue
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Leicestershire Adult and Community Department
- The Bridge Housing Advice
- Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau
- Loughborough Job Centre Plus
- Bangladesh Social Association
- Shree Ram Krishna Centre
- Charnwood Asylum Seekers Forum

3. OISC – CPD

We have successfully completed the Continued Professional Development (CPD) hours for 2010 – 2011 which is a regulatory requirement to continue Immigration and Nationality advice work set out by OISC. The CPD courses contain both core and non-core modules designed in conjunction with the Open University.

4. Service Users

Our service users are mainly from Charnwood in Leicestershire and their ethnic backgrounds are quite wide and diverse. Since the organisation changed its remit to Human Rights and Equalities it has made a significant change to the service users in terms of their ethnicity and the kind of query they come up with. Currently we have service users from White British, EU, African, Afro-Caribbean, Asylum Seekers and Refugees, Asian and Chinese background. We still have a large number of service users from the Bangladeshi and Indian (Gujarati and Punjabi) communities who have been settled in Charnwood since late 1960.

We also quite often receive calls from other counties in the UK, and even from abroad, for advice and guidance on various issues.

5. Support of Welfare Benefits and Casework

Providing advice, information, support and casework is now fully established in Charnwood and people of all ages regularly visit the Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood (HR&EC).

Because of the current economic and employment situation the casework and the number of queries are increasing. An average of 10/12 clients visit the HR&EC office on every working day and get help and support with their queries. The number of queries we have dealt with in the year 2010 – 2011 is 1649 whereas in 2009 – 2010 the number was 1499. This is based on a single client coming to the office with various queries (see figures in casework statistics on next page).

There is a significant number of clients who have complex circumstances and are in need of a specialist level of support to deal with their welfare benefits claim. This is especially true for review and appeal cases for Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Pension Credit etc.

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

If this valuable work is to continue and to meet the needs of the community it needs ongoing funding support.

Kazi Mashud
Welfare Rights/Immigration Officer.

Welfare Rights & Immigration Casework Statistics

Advice, Information & Support queries

Nature of cases/queries	Total	Service Users	
Employment & Training	205		
Housing and Accommodation	459		
Welfare Benefits	612		
Social Services Support	97		
Education Support	63		
Miscellaneous Support	213		
Total Cases/Queries	1649		
		Gender Breakdown	Total
		Male	763
		Female	487
		Total Number of Service Users	1250

Comments and feedback from service users:

"My sincere thanks for your support and guidance. Because of this my benefits and community care assessment has been sorted. Without your help it would not be possible."

Mrs UD, 74 years old.

"Thank you very much for your help to sort out my immigration matter – there was no one available to support me but with your help my matter has been resolved and I have received permanent residence in the UK."

Mr J P, 62 years old.

"I would like to say a sincere thank you to you for your advice, support and guidance to deal with matrimonial matter. I was in a desperate situation and without your support; I would not know where to go..."

Mrs P B, 34 years old (Domestic Violence matter)

"Thank you for your information, advice and guidance so that I can get Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit while I am working in Loughborough."

Mr MM, 40 years old EEA National.

Bangladeshi Community Project

This project has two part time officers, Amina Wadud and Chayara Chowdhury. Their hours are divided equally between HREC and the Bangladesh Social Association. The officers provide services on immigration and welfare rights, liaising with statutory and voluntary services on behalf of clients.

Our primary users are from the Bangladeshi community; however we are seeing an increasing number of clients from Europe and Arabia. Over the years we have seen our clients becoming more independent, but there are still clients who need these services to continue. Some factors of dependency are: age, ill health, mobility, language barriers, victims of domestic violence and matrimonial problems. Due to an increase in domestic violence and changes in immigration we have seen an increase in women service users seeking advice from women workers.

Officers have attended numerous courses, especially on immigration and nationality. The law is changing all the time and we need to ensure that both the officers are up to date with these changes. OISC, the regulating body for immigration and nationality, are now monitoring the advice workers through CPD (Continuing Professional Development), which is done on-line. Chayara Chowdhury is qualified at Level 2 and Amina Wadud at Level 1.

Recommendation

Continued support from voluntary and statutory organisations and funding to continue for the foreseeable future. We feel that the Bangladeshi Community has grown from strength to strength but there are still vulnerable people in the community who still require assistance with welfare benefits, housing and immigration. Also with the influx of European and Arabian clients further highlights the need for this specialist service.

Training is a big part of work, hence funding should be available for further development of the workers in order to provide up to date and accurate information.

Liaison Officers case studies

Mrs B, was exempt from paying national insurance. An exemption certificate was issued to her in 2005, however in the tax year 2009-2010 her employer deducted national insurance from her pay. We wrote to the Inland Revenue on her behalf and the money was refunded.

Mrs R has 5 children; over the past 6 months her health has deteriorated. Her GP referred her to a specialist, and she has undergone several tests. However her health has not improved and she is still under investigation. Mrs R has been offered a further appointment with the specialist but it was to be three months later, we liased with her GP and the health service to bring the appointment forward. She has been diagnosed with a condition and is now having the recommended medication.

Mrs S is living in rented accommodation; she receives housing benefit, which helps her with her rent payments. Recently she moved to Leicester to be closer to the hospitals as she has a very sick child. But she was in rent arrears from the previous property. We helped her sort out her arrears and she was awarded full housing benefit, allowing her to pay her rent. Mrs S was extremely happy with the service she received from us as being single parent she had limited income.

Mr C is here in the U.K on a spouse visa. His visa expired and we helped him make a new application. While the application was being processed his employer stopped his employment, because they were under the impression that he was no longer allowed to work in the U.K. We helped Mr C write a letter to the home office to confirm his employment status. The Home Office wrote to his employer. Now Mr C is back at work and his new visa has arrived.

Chayara Chowdhury
Amina Wadud
Liaison Officers

Statistics for work done at both HR&EC and BSA

Immigration /Nationality	370
Employment / Education	79
Welfare Benefits	786
Housing	614
Others	463
Total	2312

Ethnicity		
	Male	Female
Bengali	605	859
Gujarati	148	162
Punjabi	32	5
Other	196	156
Total	981	1182

Age Group		
	Male	Female
Under 18	3	6
18-24	81	159
25-34	217	268
35-44	243	232
45-59	174	231
60+	263	286
Total	981	1182

Disability		
	Male	Female
	249	224

Bangladeshi Community Project Outreach Work

Since starting this job in 2008, my client list has increased by almost 3 times. This service has become very popular and well known in the community and the demand for the service is very high. I often find myself unable to meet everyone immediately and this requires me to plan my time more efficiently. It is promising to see that clients are not put off by this and appreciate the service is being well used.

After the general election last year we faced concerns in the community about the cut backs which were proposed and this required me to reassure people, especially pensioners, that the cut backs would not take effect immediately and that hopefully they would not be affected too much.

Unfortunately soon after the elections it was noticed that Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance claims were not being awarded to any of the claims I made for clients. This trend continued for a few months but later on in the year and earlier this year we have seen more claims awarded. There has also been a problem in making new claims with Warm Front. Due to shortage in funding new applications were rejected until further notice, leaving people to seek alternative funding to replace boilers etc. On the whole, as we are all aware, there are various changes being made in the welfare benefits system which are having a great impact on our work.

Case study 1

Mrs B moved to Loughborough 3 years ago with her husband and children as her husband had a lot of family living here. Unfortunately her marriage broke down leading to separation. I helped Mrs B to claim the relevant benefits to support herself and her children and referred her to CAB who helped her to clear huge debts left by her husband.

I also helped her through a divorce. Mrs B has no other family in Loughborough but she said that although it is difficult to live in the same town as her husband after a divorce, she will continue to live here as she values the service provided by our organisation very much and these services may not be available in other towns if she was to move. Knowing this is available here she feels it has given her the confidence to become independent and move forward.

Case study 2

Mr A has a disability and received high rate Disability Living Allowance for mobility and low rate for care. Recently Mr A's care needs increased and he required constant care from his wife. They applied for carers allowance several times but were told they are not entitled to it.

A friend referred them to me and I had to explain to the family the reason for this is that you need to receive either middle or high rate for care to qualify. I made an application to increase the rate and fortunately this was awarded. Now Mrs A receives carer's allowance. The family are very grateful for this and now use the service regularly.

Case study 3

Mrs G is 80 years old and lives alone. She regularly uses the outreach service. I have helped her to successfully claim attendance allowance and receive direct payments to pay for services. I also helped her to apply for a renovation grant from the council to improve her property. Recently she was getting constant reminders to purchase a TV licence but Mrs G has had no TV in the house for many years, as she could not afford the licence.

I contacted TV Licence and informed them that Mrs G is over 75 Therefore the licence should be free I also managed to make her aware of the free switch over scheme for digital TV as I have done with other members in the community who would be eligible. This has now been arranged to be installed and Mrs G was donated an old TV from one of her neighbours!

Minara Rahman
Outreach Officer

Outreach work statistics

Immigration/Nationality	0
Employment/Education	9
Welfare Benefits	188
Housing	170
Personal	206
Total	573

Ethnicity	Female	Male
Bengali	239	156
Gujarati	25	19
Other	0	2
Total	264	177

Age Group	Female	Male
Under 18	0	0
18 – 64	194	84
65 – 74	34	34
75—84	36	38
85+	0	21
Total	216	121

Hate Incident Action Project

2010/11 was the first year of the Hate Incident Action Project (HIAP) which is funded by the Equality & Human Rights Commission, and has Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire Constabulary as partners. The aims of the project are to:

- give support, advice and guidance to victims of hate incidents across all the equality strands
- provide awareness raising to groups, agencies, schools etc to increase understanding of hate incidents and how to report them
- re-visit existing Reporting Centres and establish new ones that are easily accessible
- provide training to Reporting Centre staff

The target for 2010/11 was to support 15 victims during the first year and we are pleased to report that the number of referrals has been 33 and so it really does show that there is a need for this kind of service. The breakdown of referrals is as follows:

Diversity strand:	
Age	2
Disability	8
Gender/gender identity	0
Race	18
Religion/belief	1
Sexual orientation	2
Other actual or perceived difference	2
Total	33

Incident type:	
Verbal abuse/comment	14
Threats/intimidation	1
Physical assault	6
Harassment	10
Other	2
Total	33

NB – In regard to diversity strand and incident type it is often the case that an incident comprises more than one of the above categories. In such cases, the category which appears to be the prime motivating factor, or the most serious incident type, is used.

Some positive case outcomes have included:

Three families who were subjected to racist abuse and harassment by unknown youths in the areas in which they were living. It was not possible to identify or take action against the perpetrators, however by liaising with housing providers we were able to help the families achieve housing transfers.

A European family who were physically attacked by neighbours and in fear of further incidents. Due to intervention of the project the matter was brought to the attention of the police and the perpetrators arrested.

A male who was subjected to homophobic comments in his work place which forced him to leave his job. We were able to follow up on police enquiries in regard to threats made, and give advice in regard to discrimination at work. The victim is now taking legal action against his former employer and a man has been arrested for threatening behaviour.

A teacher subjected to persistent racial abuse by students, who was not getting the necessary support from management. Project staff raised the issue with the school, the situation has since improved, and a group has been established within the school to address future issues.

Working in partnership with local authorities and housing providers we have also been able to help resolve some neighbour disputes which have involved a perceived element of hatred or prejudice leading to lower level anti-social behaviour. With some victims there have been complicating personal factors where we have been able to signpost or refer to organisations more suited to assist with their particular needs. It has been a very busy area for us and we expect to be just as busy over the next 12 months, particularly as more people become aware of the project.

We have visited the existing Reporting Centres to ensure that staff understand the process of reporting an incident and how they can refer a victim to us. Also, twenty new Reporting Centres have been set-up around the Borough in easily accessible venues which include Shah Jalal Centre, Loughborough Mosque, Shree Ram Krishna Centre, RNIB College, the Community flats on Warwick Way and Peel Drive, Moira Centre, Youth Shelter, and Birstall Parish Council. A full list is available on the HREC web-site. We have been extremely encouraged at the positive way in which groups and organisations have responded to the idea of becoming a Reporting Centre, and we hope that this will continue in 2011/12.

For people to report incidents they need to know about the project, and so we have run awareness sessions for various community groups around Charnwood to explain how to report an incident and the information and support victims can receive. During January we focussed on informing young people, with the 'Don't Wait Report Hate' initiative, being part of the ongoing Leicestershire 'Stop and Tell' campaign. One school attended was Shepshed High School where, over three days, approximately 500 students were given a presentation on hate incidents and the effect they have on victims, as well as where to go for help.



Stuart Montgomery, subject leader for Humanities at the school, commented:
"I do think it useful to remind young people of how devastating bullying can be, particularly where there is an element based upon hatred, prejudice or discrimination. I think that campaigns like this can add greatly to young people's confidence to confront bullying by reporting it. Staff felt that the presentations were very useful and I know that some teachers used it as a talking point in tutor time."

One of the most important aspects of the project is sharing information with other agencies around hate incidents and how we can work together to offer support to victims, and to encourage people to come forward to report incidents. We do this via the Hate Incident Action Group which has an increased its membership to 29 over the last year. It is not expected that all members attend every meeting, only if they wish to contribute.

For the forthcoming year, the project will seek to build upon its success so far, by improving our communication and information share, continuing to provide support to victims, providing awareness raising sessions, and setting up more Reporting Centres especially in the villages of Charnwood.

Tony Kelly
Hate Incident Officer

Lesley Ansari
Training & Development Officer

South Asian Women's Project

Training Programmes and Information Events

First Aid Training

12 women attended a basic first aid training course over a period of three weeks. They successfully completed the course and received a certificate for this. The women found this a valuable piece of training that could be used in everyday life and also favourable for them when applying for jobs.

IT Classes

This was a very basic introduction to computers for first time users held over a period of 4 weeks. The women who attended gained a lot of confidence and realized the ease of using a computer and the Internet. The topics included in the course were safeguarding children and using social networks e.g. Face book.

Food hygiene

After the success of the course last year, we were able to offer level 2 on request from the women. This was arranged in partnership with John Storer House. 10 Women received certificates on completion of the course.

Educational Fair

This took place at the Shree Ram Krishna Centre on 11th January 2011. There were stalls from Voluntary Action Leicestershire, Loughborough College, Loughborough University, In Training, Adult Learning and South Asian Women's Project. The event was aimed at providing information, opportunities and possibilities for women to improve their personal and professional development. 20 women attended and many showed interest in enrolling on a course to improve their Maths and English in order to educate themselves further also to support their own children.

Health Fair

Last year health fair organized by the project had a tremendous success. Women, mostly from ESOL classes, requested the event again this year. Colleagues from Loughborough College approached us with an offer to work together to organise a similar event. Hence we delivered an event in partnership on May 5th 2011, which the College plans to take forward next year. This is great news as our project will be finished this July and there will be a continuation of the events like this.

Interfaith and Intercultural work

Ramadan

In order to bring people from different faiths backgrounds together and encourage interfaith dialogue we identified several Muslim women who agreed to host women from another community for a day during Ramadan. It was agreed that the programmes of the day would be designed individually once we had volunteers and assessed their individual situations. The possibility to spend a day with a Muslim family was widely advertised among communities in Loughborough and on intranet of local government organizations, but unfortunately there were no takers.

Pilgrimage of Prayer

This is a traditional event to celebrate One World Week, which was organized by Loughborough Council of Faiths. Both development workers visited existing groups of women and invited women to put their prayers for peace together on the day. There was high enthusiasm about the event, however due to poor weather conditions many people could not participate.

Feast of Faiths

Loughborough Council of Faiths organizes this event annually. The event was celebrated in November 2010 and was attended by people from different backgrounds including women from south Asian background and involved everyone to take part in a quiz based on religion.

Eid

The Bangladesh Social Association in partnership with the South Asian women organized an event to celebrate Eid-UI-Adha. The event brought together people from three religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam – who talked about Abraham/Ibrahim's role in their religions.

Outcome: It was rewarding to see women discussing the role of the saint who they considered only as the saint from their religion.

Celebration of the International Women's Day

This event was organised at Radmoor Centre, Loughborough College, on Saturday, March 12 2011. 79 women from different cultural background and generations who attended the event were given the chance to try out new things ranging from a catwalk, beauty pampering sessions, different food, aerobics, smoothie and sandwich making competitions and other entertainments.

Information stalls inspired women with new ideas about active living. Some of women expressed their opinion about what they, as women of Loughborough want to see happening in Loughborough. Also the provision of a crèche ensured women could join in most of the activities during the event. This event was organised in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council, Loughborough College and Radmoor Centre.

W o m e n
enjoying some
l a u g h t e r
therapy at
International
Women's Day
Event at the
R a d m o o r
C e n t r e ,
Loughborough
College.



Loughborough in Bloom

Loughborough in Bloom is a campaign, which was started by the local newspaper and supported by local government, businesses and communities to make Loughborough a better and brighter place to live. Last year we supported some women who wanted to brighten their front gardens. When doing that we were challenged by the women who do not have front gardens. Hence we explored the possibilities of what could be done in a street of terraced houses with a narrow pavement which eliminated the possibility of using planters in front of the houses.

With generous support from the coordinator of the Loughborough in Bloom, *Greenleaf PHS*, the *G and S Services*, the communities and partnership team by *Charnwood Borough Council* and some local individuals the project brought more than 20 individuals together who decided to make their terraced street and their Mosque blooming with colours for which they have planted hanging baskets and flower beds and entered It's Your Neighbourhood Competition by East Midlands in Bloom.



Local women getting involved in Loughborough in Bloom

Meeting with the local MP in the House of Parliament and visit of the Westminster Abbey

In February our local female MP Nicky Morgan invited women involved in the SAWP to visit the houses of Parliament. We arranged a trip to London for this visit and also arranged a visit to Westminster Abbey. 33 Women attended this trip and found it very interesting. The question discussed was how women can successfully combine their personal and professional lives based on the example of the MP and some local role models.

Partnership work

Work with Schools

It was identified that in the world where Internet plays such a tremendous role in our lives it is important for mothers being able to monitor their children's activities online as it is also associated with the level of risk for the young people. Thus the organised courses for women which explored the basics of computing and Internet Safety equipped some women from the communities with the knowledge and signs they have to look for to ensure their children are safe when working with the computer and Internet.

We had met with the representative of the Limehurst High School and identified that the parents from all communities do work with the school on a sufficient level and the school has a special dedicated person to work with parents from Asian background. As for the primary schools we were trying for a year to establish the needed support for the parents as it had been done a year before but due to the funding cuts the initiative has failed.

Loughborough Environmental Women's Network (LEWN)

This project is organised by Charnwood Borough Council and involves women from all backgrounds in the community helping them to educate themselves about various environmental issues e.g. Global warming, energy saving, recycling, greener living etc. We had several South Asian women from the community who attended the field trips and workshops with a view to making changes in their own communities.



The first field trip took place on March 10th, 2011, at the Eco House in Leicester and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Partnership work with the Bangladesh Social Association

We worked together helping to organise the citizenship course, which had been very popular with women from the Bangladeshi community and a Health Event during Ramadan, which provided a platform for people from the Muslim community to get a health check and information on health services available for them.

Loughborough College and ESOL classes

A number of events were organized because it was requested by the students of the ESOL classes. Close partnership work with the college and Radmoor Centre ensured the events, such as International Women's Day celebration, a Health Fair and Educational Fair which were beneficial for the students and members of the communities, especially those from South Asian Background.

Engagement with other women's groups

Ummaymah

Mothers and toddlers group has been supported in various topics . We also helped to secure their funding.

Tea & Talk group

Held at Shree Ram Krishna Centre where women were engaged in different projects and actively participated in some of them. We put the group in contact with various projects such as LEWN, Active Together team and Access to Nature from the Borough Council and the Remembering Research project by Loughborough University.

Agrani Women's Group

Helped to secure their funding and provided further funding possibilities. Invited them to several events and projects organized by or with the help of the SAWP.

Sport Classes for Muslim Women

This is held at the Fearon Hall Community Centre. We informed and invited women to a number of events and projects.

Nadja Rein and Minara Rahman
SAWP Development Officers

We would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the South Asian Women's Project and all our local women to thank the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, particularly Gary Beharrel for the generous 2 year grant and all the support for this project.

We recommend this work with women carries forward as we strongly believe women have a very positive and valuable role to play in the whole of society.



Lloyds TSB | Foundation for England and Wales

Prevent Project

The Prevent Project is to deliver specific outputs on the Government's Prevent Agenda on behalf of Charnwood Borough Council. The project itself focuses on working with Muslim women in the Loughborough community and raising awareness on the Prevent agenda. The aims of this project are positive and forward thinking where we are helping women in all walks of life to take full advantage of their abilities, skills and talents. We hope to empower Muslim women in the community to become role models who can, in turn, inspire others. Throughout 2010 & 2011 we have successfully delivered workshops on issues affecting women.

Workshop on the single narrative and some of the causes of radicalisation

This workshop was carried out in November and was well attended by grassroots women of Loughborough.

Workshops and interactive discussion have been used to deliver the following:

- Provide an understanding and awareness of violent extremism ideology.
- Develop the necessary skills to identify and support credible mainstream voices.

This has made the women aware of different types of extremism that exist. It allowed them to build trust with other agencies and establishments, e.g the police, so that they know who to approach if an issue arises and got rid of the rhetoric of "them" and "us" scenario. It also gave them a safe platform to ask questions and gain information around extremism.

Internet Awareness Session

The Internet session was a very successful event and was put on:

- To raise awareness and enhance the women's IT skills and knowledge of the Internet and what their children maybe accessing.
- To deliver interactive workshops on Internet safety & awareness especially on the Preventing Violent Extremism material

Many women did not know the risks of the Internet. We discussed how the Internet could also be used as a vehicle to radicalise young Muslims.

Inspirational-Muslim Women Past, Present & Future

Over 70 people attended this event held on 24th January at Rosebery St Peter's Community Centre.

The aim of the Event was to:

- To raise the Muslim Women awareness in order to enable them to come forward and have their voice heard.
- To raise awareness on issues relating to Muslim women.
- To discover the role Models for young Muslim Women.
- To gain recognition and privilege within the Muslim community
- To provide motivation, support and encouragement for Muslim Women
- To bring forward the achievements and developments of Muslim Women.

The event heard from three prominent Muslim women in the U.K on the achievements, role models, and successes of Muslim women from the past and present. There was also a striking display on Muslim Women and their accomplishments provided by the Muslim Women's Network UK titled "Big Sister".

The speakers were:

Shaista Gohir who is the Executive Director of Muslim Women's Network UK as well as the founder and Director of Muslim Voice UK. She was awarded the MBE honour in the Queen's birthday honours list in 2008. In 2009, Shaista was included in the Muslim Women Power list, which named the most influential Muslim women in Britain and won the Asian Woman of Achievement award.

Sughra Ahmed who is a Research Fellow in the Policy Research Centre of the Islamic Foundation

Dr Samaya Farooq has completed her PhD thesis at the University of Warwick looking at Muslim women's lives, identities and experiences.

The event was opened by the Mayor of Charnwood, Cllr Jill Vincent, there was a presentation from the Hate Incident Action Project raising awareness of hate crime and incidents and the impact it has on victims and families, and Nicky Morgan, MP talked about the importance of women's role in families, society and the difference they can make by getting involved in whatever capacity they can from school governors to councillors. She pointed out that in this current year we have women in many key positions including MP, Mayor of Charnwood, Rector, Pro-Vice Chancellor and the chair of HREC.



Rumena Chowdhury (Prevent Project Officer), Hiron Miah (CBC), Mayor of Charnwood Cllr Jill Vincent, Val Watts (HR&EC Vice Chair), Sumaiya Mulla (participant), Nicky Morgan MP, Cllr Peter Lewis and Shaista Gohir (one of the speakers)

Val Watts, Joint Vice Chair of HR&EC thanked Rumena Choudhury, Project Officer for organising the event, which was funded by Charnwood Borough Council. Val said "this event has helped us to be more aware of the immense contribution made in the past and in the present by Muslim women, both across the world and in this country. We need to make sure that the support networks are put in place so that local Muslim women are encouraged to make a valuable contribution to our communities and achieve their potential. Hopefully this conference will be the start"

Educational Fair

This was held to continue the dialogue with the Muslim women within the community and inform them of the existing opportunities for further education or career options.

Parliament Trip

During February we made a trip to London with the local Women, to show Muslim women's achievement in the political arena and to give an opportunity for the Muslim women to see first hand how the parliament functions and to broaden their knowledge in politics.

International Women's Day

This was held at Loughborough College and was designed to encourage women to look at keep fit and sports for their own benefit and for their family and to use the opportunity to take on a more active role in society.

Wrap Training/ Watch Over DVD For Women

The aim of the event was for women in the community to have an understanding of the Prevent Agenda, the role they can play within it, and some of the skills to help recognise those potentially vulnerable to radicalisation. There was a talk from a female Police Officer about the work around the Government's Prevent Agenda and what is happening at a local level.

This was followed by a very hard hitting video showing the issues facing all communities and highlighting the vulnerability of people, especially young people from all backgrounds and how they can be led astray. It also showed the positive aspects and importance of community engagements and making sure there is dialogue between people to help tackle problems.

The event was very well attended by local women and raised some very interesting discussion points.

Future work with Muslim Women

We have seen that while many Muslim women are active and effective contributors in their schools, universities, workplaces and homes others do not have the same opportunities to shine.

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood are keen to support local Muslim women to set up a forum which will help them get more involved in local issues and be a voice to be heard. They will encourage teamwork, teach skills and build confidence. We hope to do this through innovative projects that encourage all to take part and help to build a productive network of friends. Their involvement in their own future will be essential and inspirational to others.

International Youth Training Courses

Organizing of a Youth Exchange – a Starter Pack

This seven day training course funded by the British Council, Youth in Action Programme, took place in Kobuleti, Georgia from 25th June to 2nd July 2010.

Thirty youth workers and youth leaders from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Austria, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania and United Kingdom met together to explore the Youth in Action Programme and learn how to organise a successful youth exchange focusing on partnership work with Eastern European and Caucasus countries.

Different forms of non formal education enabled the participants not only to receive a theoretical knowledge but also to try their hand at developing project ideas, action plans for the developed project ideas, preliminary programmes, etc. However, before that they were to think of the aims and objectives of their own organisations and their partner organisations, discuss and research the issues young people have in different countries, and learn to work together in a international group.

As a result five projects for future youth exchanges were developed and are to be applied for in different Programme Countries for Youth in Action 3.1 - Youth Exchange between Programme Countries and Partner Countries from Eastern European and Caucasus countries.



Working in small groups.
Team building exercise on the
first day of the project

Meal in a traditional Georgian
restaurant where participants
tasted local dishes and drinks
as well as learning to dance
with local dancers.



Conflict Resolution through Building Intercultural Dialogue

This seven days training course took place in Summy, Ukraine from 8-15th June 2010. The training course aimed at the promotion of peaceful conflict resolution, while engaging in an international dialogue. Globalization and global conflicts are a part of everyday life. We brought 30 youth leaders from 9 different countries and cultures together, and that helped to increase their awareness of conflict, and helped them think of and develop paths towards resolution. Those youth leaders represented their countries and communities, and we believe they are now able work with their local communities fostering the understanding of conflict resolution.

In the course (with plenary sessions, discussions, workshops, creativity sessions, intercultural & interactive exercises and using other non-formal education methods) youth leaders explored the significant role of youth participation in different peace building activities, and reflected their own role in a wider society.

Overall satisfaction with the Training Course

Participants' comments:

- my expectations came true
- Information that I received I will use in my job
- I am very satisfied
- I expect that I use this knowledge in my work
- It was just beyond my expectations
- It was very interesting
- I am absolutely satisfied with the programme, I met new nice people, improved my knowledge, acquired new skills
- I received much new information on the issue and learned new methods of presenting information



UK presentation on the Inter Cultural Night. The group performed a sing along song (Beatles "Yesterday") and told participants about some aspects of their culture and played English pop song JLS "Everybody in Love".

They also presented traditional snacks.

Imagination also played a great role in the Live Action Role-Play (LARP) workshop. To connect the workshop to the topic, the trainer set the game during World War II.

The participants were to play representatives of several countries, who had to try to find some kind of agreement because of a cataclysm that was threatening them all, and in the middle of the war zombies appeared in Europe. After the briefing when the plot and characters were presented, a very intense session took place, during which every person tried to solve the problem and at the same time gain something. The participants had a chance to see a difficult conflict from the inside and experience it themselves.

Coffee Morning



Cllr Peter Lewis (Company Secretary),
Varsha Parmar (Development Officer)
Mayor of Charnwood, Cllr Jill Vincent, Linda Shaw (Trustee),
Minara Rahman (SAWP Officer/Outreach Officer)
and Cllr Jewel Miah (Trustee)
Displaying certificates for contribution to Equality & Diversity



The Mayor chatting to one of our volunteers, Bhumika Chauhan

MP visits HR&EC

The staff and Trustees were pleased to welcome our MP Nicky Morgan to the Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood office together with Cllr Paul Harley and Cllr Peter Lewis on Friday 10th December.

The visit came about from an invitation from HR&EC to Nicky Morgan to visit the offices to see the human face of the work done. Staff talked to Nicky about the various projects run by the organisation and the value and benefits to the various communities in Charnwood. They also gave her a picture of how their work helps the individuals who come into the office and those visited by our Outreach Officer.

The organisation is keen to work with partner agencies, groups and individuals across the Borough on all the equality strands: age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Daphne Beale, Chair of HR&EC, said 'This was a good opportunity to show Nicky Morgan more about our work, how it impacts on the community and how much benefit we can give to our service users. We want to engage with groups and individuals in the whole of the Borough of Charnwood and the more people understand what we can do, the better we can serve the community.'

For more information about our work on Hate Crime, Welfare Rights & Immigration, activities with women particularly from the South Asian background, campaigning, please contact us.



Nicky Morgan MP talking to Minara Rahman, South Asian Women's Project worker.

Staff, trustees with Nicky Morgan MP and Cllr Paul Harley.



Public Lecture

“Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better”

HR&EC's 4th Annual Public Lecture was held on 25th May 2011 at the Robert Martin Hall, Loughborough University. The guest speaker, Richard Wilkinson, Emeritus Professor of Social Epidemiology and author of 'The Spirit Level' delivered an excellent lecture on "Why more equal societies almost always do better"

Richard Wilkinson has played a formative role in international research and his work has been published in 10 languages. He studied economic history at the London School of Economics before training in epidemiology and is Professor Emeritus at the University of Nottingham Medical School and Honorary Professor at University College London.

Quoting some reviews:

'What might be the most important book of the year' - John Grace, Guardian.

'This is a book with a big idea, big enough to change political thinking' - Sunday Times.



Peter Lewis, Company Secretary of HR&EC said, *"The changes and tensions in our society today make this Annual Public Lecture of relevance to us all.*

Fundamental questions and suggested answers are seriously being explored by both Government and Opposition, and there is nothing more fundamental than debating what we mean by 'equality' in a democratic society. Such issues are also central to fleshing out those words - 'Big Society'."

There was an excellent attendance of over 80 people and the talk was enjoyed by everyone.

We would like to thank the Vice Chancellor and Loughborough University for their kind support and invitation to the campus.



Pre-Lecture Reception kindly hosted by the Loughborough

If you want a copy of a paper by Richard Wilkinson, "What difference does inequality make?" you can download it under our publications section or contact the office for a hard copy.



Cllr Peter Lewis, Company Secretary of HR&EC,
Richard Wilkinson, Emeritus Professor of Social Epidemiology,
Trevor Shaw, Treasurer for HR&EC, Daphne Beale, Chair of HR&EC

Loughborough Mela 2010 “Communities Together”



This year's Mela took place on Sunday 27th June for the second time in Loughborough Town Centre.

Loughborough Mela 2010 was an exciting partnership event between Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood, Charnwood Arts, Voluntary Action Charnwood, with involvement from local community groups, including the Bangladesh Social Association, Fearon Hall, Shree Ram Krishna Centre and other agencies and individuals. The event was financially supported by Charnwood Borough Council and the Loughborough Town Centre Partnership, who also gave a generous contribution to support local artists and performers,

The event showcased different cultures and gave the audience a flavour of the rich and diverse communities in Charnwood. In addition, there were fairground rides, food and specialist market stalls and the usual friendly relaxed and harmonious atmosphere.

Whilst the core of the Mela remains a celebration of Asian culture, entertainment included a wide variety of music and dancing from across the world, the main underlying theme of the Mela, that of encouraging people from different nationalities & cultures to work together in bringing communities together, was clearly achieved.

Varsha Parmar, one of the Mela organisers said *"It was wonderful seeing the different communities come together to enjoy and celebrate the event. The range of people this event brought together, not just in terms of different cultures, but also the different ages and backgrounds was tremendous. Holding the event in the middle of town centre made it more inclusive to the general members of public who come into the town centre and who may not have otherwise attended the event."*



Photographs courtesy of
Kevin Ryan (Charnwood Arts)

Kevin Ryan of Charnwood Arts said *"I would like to thank the many performers both amateurs and professionals who made the event such an entertaining afternoon. The quality of their performances was extraordinary. The brilliant sunshine made it one of Loughborough's brightest event this year."*

Quoting Mike Jones, one of the Mela volunteers, *"The way that the performers, organisers and the public gelled together was a model of cohesion"*.

The Mela committee would like to thank all the volunteers who helped throughout the day to ensure the event ran smoothly, and especially to Simone MacLaine-Freeman, the co-ordinator for all her hard work and efforts in putting together this highly successful event.

The Mela committee commissioned a research on whether communities and groups in Charnwood found this event worthwhile and with an aim to get more local people involved.

The find report is available on our website on www.humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org under the publications link (news related).



LOUGHBOROUGH
Communities Together
MELA 2011
SUNDAY
31 ST JULY
TOWN CENTRE
12NOON - 5.00PM
Music, Dance
and fun for all
For more information
please contact
01509 821035
melaadmin@btconnect.com

Supported by:

ARIS HR EC Charnwood voluntary action charnwood

Loughborough Mela 2011 is due to take place on Sunday 31 July 2011 from 10am to 5pm in the town centre and we are again urging people to get involved. For more information or a booking form please contact the Co-ordinator on (01509) 261651 or 821035 or email to: melaadmin@btconnect.com

Other work

Loughborough Council of Faiths (LCoF)

We continue to work very closely with the Loughborough Council of Faiths especially under our brief for working with religion and belief.

Loughborough Council of Faiths was formed in 1996 to create a forum in which different faith communities could meet and work in the interests of the whole community. The Council is not bound by one faith but within it people of different faiths seek high spiritual values together: peace, harmony and a spirit of unity are at the top of our agenda.

Mission Statement

- To show that people of different faiths can share peace.
- To challenge all people of faith to adopt values of respect, tolerance and co-operation.
- To allow people of different faiths to identify common areas of concern and action.
- To point to the significance of faith-issues and spirituality for today's society.

Loughborough Council of Faiths:

- provides a body for consultation e.g. ambulance, resilience, mayoralty, LAs
- promotes harmony and cohesion through increased religious/faith understanding between the faith communities
- enables representatives to go back to their communities to pass on information and take matters for discussion e.g. in consultation exercises with Local Authorities and agencies
- encourages individuals and communities to bridge and link e.g. to have the confidence to meet and work with others.
- forms strong links across communities to enable peaceful responses in times of crisis (e.g. following the London bombing)
- promotes good relations across communities by holding events that encourage those of all faiths and none to meet together and learn respect for each other.

Charnwood Refugees and Asylum Seekers Forum

We carry on supporting, and are part of the multi forum of agencies working with refugees and asylum seekers. Issues and concerns are shared at the meetings and we invite people from agencies to respond to any issues raised. In the last year we have had talks on related issues including health, presentations from the Hate Incident Action Project and on the Government's Prevent Agenda.

East Midlands Racial Equality Consortium (EMREC)

Trustees and staff have continued their involvement with the work of EMREC during the year.

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