



All Different All Equal

Annual Report 2012/13

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*

Cover Design by Klara Jochim



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8th May 2013

To whom it may concern,

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood

I and my Consort, Harold, have been pleased to support the events organised by Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood during the past year.

I know how busy the group is throughout the Borough. The extension to the Nottingham Road office will be especially welcome as your work continues to increase. Your work is very necessary and much appreciated.

I wish you well for the future

Yours sincerely

Diane Wise

Councillor Diane Wise.



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Telephone: 01509 263151 Email: information@charnwood.gov.uk

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Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

Chair	Debbie Green
Vice chair	Jill Vincent
Treasurer	Trevor Shaw
Company secretary	Peter Lewis

TRUSTEES

Linda Shaw	Tony Payne	Pauline Joyce
Steve Phipps	Nilesh Shukla	

CO-OPTED TRUSTEES

Manuel Alonso	Justin O'Brien	Rumana Khan
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FINANCE & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Steve Phipps	Trevor Shaw	Jewel Miah
Pauline Joyce		

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Debbie Green	Trevor Shaw	Manuel Alonso
Tony Payne	Justin O'Brien	

MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PR SUB GROUP

Peter Lewis	Linda Shaw	Jill Vincent
Patricia Pinder		

BUSINESS PLANNING GROUP

Jill Vincent	Pauline Joyce	Steve Phipps
Trevor Shaw	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
Minara Rahman	Chances for All Project Officer
Tahmena Gul	Chances for All Project Officer
Nadja Rein	Youth Project Co-ordinator
Lesley Ansari	Training and Development Officer (HIAP)
Tony Kelly	Hate Incident Officer

Chair's Report

Once again I would like to thank all of our staff and trustees for all their hard work and commitments to HR&EC.

Because of our limit on the number of consecutive years a trustee can be elected, we frequently have to thank and (temporarily I hope) say goodbye to trustees who have made a valuable contribution.



This year, Tony Payne has completed his 6 years as a trustee. Tony has always been a reliable and insightful member whose commitment to the staff has been immense. I hope Tony will come back as a trustee in the future.

We are lucky our new trustees have brought new skills and we continue to have a very strong board. However, we welcome any members who are interested in becoming co-opted trustees or join a working group. Please speak to Varsha Parmar, our Development Officer, if you would like to get more information on how you can get involved.

I would like to thank Tony Kelly and Lesley Ansari, our Hate Incident Action Project staff for delivering the project and making a positive difference to their clients.

We have also welcomed Klara Jochim whose temporary post has been funded by Vodafone Just Giving Charity. Her enthusiasm and knowledge of human rights is already having an impact locally and inspiring us. We have also welcomed Tahmena Gul who has joined us on our new Chances For All Project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Reaching Communities programme. Tahmena is working alongside Minara Rahman on this project, who is also our Outreach worker on our advice work.

Despite uncertainties about future funding, we are in a good place with our extended building, links with statutory and non statutory agencies, skilled staff and trustees, and willingness to adapt to the needs of our community. We would like to thank all our funders for the valuable grants that we receive to carry on with our work.

So thank you all for your support in helping us continue to be a successful and relevant service to the people of Charnwood.

Debbie Green
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.

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. Induction and training of a high standard is provided for Trustees.

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.

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.

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

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 on-going coverage of our work.

Finance & Property Committee Report

We started 2012/2013 with a great deal of uncertainty. There were concerns that we would have insufficient funding to cover all of our expenditure; indeed, our budget showed a deficit of £9k for the year.

At one point Leicestershire County Council funding for casework was due to end in September 2012 due to their changing their commissioning strategy. Subsequently we learnt that the funding for that service should continue till June 2013 and more recently we have learnt that this funding will continue until March 2013. Similar uncertainties and shifting timescales has affected our other traditional core funding from Charnwood Borough Council.

Even so, as the year progressed, the financial situation remained manageable. However, the uncertainties about future sources of funding continue to be a major source of concern and hinders coherent planning of future services or activity.

In response, we are seeking to broaden our approach to generating income and Voluntary Action Leicestershire have supported this through training on commissioning and procurement. HREC is now proactively considering contracting opportunities, new income streams, social enterprise opportunities, charging policies and new services and projects that make it less reliant on local authority funding. For instance, HREC secured a two year partnership contract with The Race Equality Centre Leicester and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) Centre Leicester for a service promoting engagement and representation across BME, Faith and LGB&T communities on behalf of Leicestershire County Council.

Building on the good work of the Hate Incident Action Project, the Equality & Human Rights Commission agreed to continue that funding into year 3 and the project ended in December 2012.

The South Asian Women's Project, funded by Lloyds TSB Foundation for 2 years, came to an end in July 2012. HR&EC applied to the Big Lottery, Reaching Communities Programme for a 5 year project building on this work and this was successful enabling continuation of this key development initiative.

Improvements to the building – part of the Big Lottery Funding has enabled us to extend our building to give us confidential meeting space and disabled toilet facilities.

We have secured £9.5k from the Henry Smith Trust towards our core funding. Also we have upgraded our IT and telecommunications system from a grant from Awards For All.

Finance & Property monitors the budget, future plans and deals with property related issues. Pauline Joyce, a trustee and member of the group, has taken on the role of Health & Safety Officer, and we have a new and fully updated H&S policy. She has a practical approach and undertakes to solve basic maintenance issues in and around the premises.

Going forward there are significant challenges and opportunities with regard to the funding position. This will require the organisation to continue to be proactive and flexible in the way it approaches funding issues and meets the needs of communities and service users. It will also need to consider new ways of working and service delivery. This is reflected in our new business plan which has been developed in light of a strategic review undertaken in late 2012/early 2013.

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

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.

Steve Phipps
Chair of F&P

Personnel Committee Report

This has been a very busy year for the Personnel Committee as we have been reviewing personal policies and strengthening existing structures.

Thanks to the skills and expertise of our new members we have been able to have a fresh look at human resources matters and, we hope, have clearer accountability and procedures that will benefit staff and funders.

We are also looking at combining the appraisals and mentor roles, to bring a stronger link between staff and trustees with more regular meetings to support staff. This will ensure trustees can respond to any issues or needs. Alongside this we are devising a whistle blowing policy for staff as this is generally recognised as good practice.

Thanks to all the members for their hard work and insights this year and, as ever, to our wonderful hard working staff.

Deb Green
Chair of Personnel.

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
Company Secretary

Marketing Publicity & Public Relations Committee

On our Marketing, Publicity & PR committee there are 3 external members elected at the AGM and several members from the Board of Trustees. This last year the elected members at the AGM were Patricia Pinder and Peter Lewis with one space that was not filled. Linda Shaw and Jill Vincent, 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 delivered 3 more youth conferences, two in Georgia and one in the UK funded by the British Council. We are very proud of our track record and the benefits these conferences bring to the young people involved. 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.

Other events include an end of project conference for our Hate Incident Action Project with Sylvia Lancaster, mother of Sophie Lancaster as our guest speaker. The conference highlighted the success of the project and other key speakers from partner agencies informed participants of the support available post the project ending.

Our Annual Public Lecture held in April 2013, was held at Loughborough University by invitation of the Vice Chancellor, where the guest speaker, Professor Ted Cantle CBE, from the Institute of Community Cohesion, (ICoCo), Coventry University and he gave a talk on ***“Multiculturalism is at its end - now is the era of interculturalism!”***

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 2012/2013

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

A Akram	A Bava
J Capleton	J R Catt
H Clegg	A Gimpel
A Gimpel	J Harrison
M Hopewell	R Jalota
M Jenkinson	M Jones
P Joyce	R Kershaw
P Lewis	J Miah
N Morgan	B Newton
J O'Brien	S G Patel
S Phipps	P Pinder
T Priestly	T Shaw
N Shukla	V Silva
P Singh	A Smith
S M Velado	J Vincent

Organisations

All Saints with Holy Trinity	P Pinder	D Green
Ashmount School	D Deacon	D Thomas
Bangladesh Social Association	H Miah	
Brahma Kumari	M Sisodia	N Steel
Burleigh Community College	C Horsfall	
Bridge	P Snape	
Charnwood Arts	K Ryan	R Abrahams
Charnwood Borough Council	J Capleton	G Gay
	D Green	P Lewis
Fearon Hall	Z Weatherly	
Geeta Bhawan	R Chhabra	
Leics Adult Learning Service	V Watts	
L'borough Baptist Church	S Cramer	
L'borough Churches Partnership	D Beale	T Payne
L'borough College	A William	A Bullock
L'borough Constituency Labour Party	M Draycott	
L'borough Council of Faiths	M Graham	F Catling
L'boro & District Hate Incident Group	L Shaw	
L'boro United Reformed Church	D Beale	T Payne
Loughborough University	Rev S Richardson	
Loughborough Youth Affairs	A Lake	
Rawlins Community College	C Ore	H Fern
Rosebery St Peter's C C	D Bentley	L Shaw
RNIB	J Murray	
Swaminarayan BAPS Sanstha	C Panchmatia	
Thurmaston Jagruti Group	S Valand	K Sharma
Voluntary Action Charnwood	N Lambert	S Leong

Welfare Rights and Immigration

April 2012 to 2013

The demand of our Welfare Rights and Immigration Advice service has grown bigger than ever and shows no signs of going down as a result of the effects of the economic situation and the poor standards of decision making on the part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Welfare Rights and Immigration Officer (WRIO) carry large caseloads and work to high standards in accordance with the CLS Quality Mark standards for the advice sector.

Liaison, Contacts and Meetings:

To enhance appropriate services for our service users, the Welfare Rights & Immigration Officer (WRIO) has maintained regular contacts, meetings and liaison with various statutory and non-statutory organisations. Below is a list of some of these contacts:

- The Bridge
- Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau
- Charnwood Health & Well being Forum
- Leicestershire Working Together
- Loughborough Mela
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Leicestershire Adult & Social Care Department
- Loughborough Job Centre Plus
- Bangladesh Social Association
- Shree Ram Krishna Centre
- Charnwood Asylum Seekers Forum
- Advice UK
- Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
- Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
- SOFA

Leicestershire County Council's Audit:

We have successfully undergone an external audit from the Leicestershire County Council in October 2012. Relevant policies and procedures have been updated. The next audit may take place in June 2014.

CPD for OISC:

The WRIO has successfully completed the Continuous Professional Development hours for 2012 – 2013. This is a regulatory requirement to continue Immigration and Nationality advice work set out by Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. The CPD courses contain both core and non-core modules designed in conjunction with Open University.

JCWI Training on Immigration Matters:

During the period from April 2012 to March 2013 the caseworker attended training sessions on Family Migration. The training sessions were held in London and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants provided it at cost price.

Issues covered by the JCWI training sessions were:

Marriage and partnership

Earnings and employment of spouses, civil and other partners and dependants

Exemptions

Entering the family route through 'in-country' switching

Advice & Casework:

The WRIO is providing Welfare Rights and Immigration Advice services to service users face to face and by telephone, and corresponds on their behalf with various agencies such as Charnwood Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council and Social Services Department, Department of Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, Pension Service, HM Inland Revenue & Customs for Child Benefits and Tax Credits.

Welfare Benefits and Immigration Advice and Service Users:

The trend of our service users is changing. Although higher numbers of service users are still from South-Asian origin, there are a significant number of service users from other areas such as European, Eastern European, Middle Eastern background who are settling in Charnwood. Statistics shows that there are 237 service users who are from White British and EEA national backgrounds which represent almost 16% of all service users in the year 2012 – 2013.

The table below shows the number of cases and queries we have dealt with in the year 2012 – 2013

Types of cases/queries	Total
Welfare Benefits	636
Housing and Accommodation	376
Immigration and Nationality	125
Social Services Support	136
Training/Education Support	41
Miscellaneous Support	295
Total Cases/Queries	1609

Gender Breakdown	Total
Male	891
Female	586
Total No of Service Users	1477

Ethnicity	No of clients
White British	91
Other European	146
Indian	479
Pakistani	35
Bangladeshi	409
Other Asian	38
Caribbean	34
African	65
Chinese	62
Other Ethnic	75
Not Stated	43
Total	1477

Kazi Mashud

Welfare Rights/Immigration Officer.

Bangladeshi Community Project

There are two part time Liaison Officers, Amina Wadud and Chayara Chowdhury. These officers divide their time between the HR&EC and Bangladesh Social Association offices. The officers provide services on immigration and welfare rights, as well as liaising with statutory and voluntary organisations on behalf of clients.

Chayara Chowdhury has seen a gradual increase in the number of clients being seen since her return to work after her maternity leave. Chayara Chowdhury and Amina Wadud have noticed that the majority of the female clients seen are reluctant to see male workers as they feel much more comfortable discussing their issues on Welfare Benefits, Immigration matters or other personal matters with a female worker. Therefore it is vital that we need to be aware of their wishes and address their needs. The service is very vital and important for the community especially for vulnerable females, and elderly in the community.

The Liaison Officers have helped a large number of clients with understanding the new Bedroom Tax as well as Council Tax benefit. A lot of our clients feel that the system is quite unfair as they were housed by the local authority in the first place. The houses they live in with the number of bedrooms given was allocated by the local authority. Clients in private rented accommodation were also affected by the new changes. The rule of this new bedroom tax is if you live in a 3 bedroom property instead of 2 bedroom property according to the age of their children your housing benefit will be reduced. The elderly and disabled have been very hard hit by this new legislation.

The Liaison Officers have also noticed an increase in the number of the clients applying for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Attendance Allowance (AA) this year. A high number of these applications have been refused. However, some of these clients, who were eligible before, have been finding this cut very difficult to cope with hence compromising on the quality of life.

Also DLA renewal forms, especially for children under the age of 16, have become very tedious to fill and complicated compared with the forms in previous years. In addition we have noticed more home visit arrangements being made for Disability Living Allowance, to check on the mobility and care needs of clients, compared with before.

A lot of clients who were previously eligible for incapacity benefit, now known as employment support allowance (ESA), are being shifted onto the new system of ESA. We have found the majority of the clients under the new system are not being allowed the benefit. This pushes them to apply for Jobseeker's Allowance when they are clearly in no state to work. Often we have to appeal the ESA decision, which can take up to 18 months to get a decision. The change to the benefit system has had a huge impact on the time we spend with clients, heavily increasing our work.

People sometimes come to us with one query and, because they trust us, will bring up other concerns, which we can then help them with. This can make the time we spend with them longer but is extremely valuable to them.

Officers have attended a number of courses, especially on Immigration. As the law is changing all the time therefore we need to ensure that both of the officers are up to date with the changes. Both Amina and Chayara have completed their Office for the Immigration service Commissioner (OISC), Continued Professional Development (CPD) for 2012 as this is mandatory. This allows the Liaison Officers to give Immigration advice at the level at which they are registered with the OISC body, Amine Wadud at Level 1, Chayara Chowdhury at Level 2.

We feel that the service is vital especially for vulnerable women, and the elderly in the community who are very dependent on the service. English is the second or third language of a huge number of our clients, therefore accessing services is very difficult for these people and, due to social deprivation, a lot of clients do not have access to the Internet. Most service providers are investing a lot on the Internet and expecting people to contact them via this medium. Funding should be made available so that the officers are able to attend training to enhance their knowledge, which is vital when providing services to clients. Specialist knowledge is invaluable. We appreciate the continued support from the voluntary and statutory organisations and from our funders and recommend that it continue for the foreseeable future.

Case Study 1

Mr B came to the UK to re-settle after political unrest in his country of origin. We helped Mr B sort out his finances, applied for pension credit, housing and council tax credit.

Case Study 2

Mrs J had been privately renting and due to the new bedroom tax has been forced to move out her three-bedroom house into a two bedroom house with her two children. She was faced a lot of difficulties. The estate agents promised a lot of repairs but at the time of the new tenancy she found that half the agreed repairs were not done. She was asked to pay more upfront as her deposit to cover these costs. English is not Mrs J's first language so there was a lot of confusion. With the help of our mediation with the estate agents all of Mrs J's concerns were resolved.

Case Study 3

Mrs M had received her indefinite to leave to remain in the UK. A year on from receiving her visa Mrs M wanted to apply to become a British citizen. After receiving inaccurate advice from one advisor Mrs M came to us and we helped her get naturalised and later get a British passport.

Chayara Chowdhury & Amina Wadud
Liaison Officers

Statistics for work done at both HR&EC and BSA

Liaison Workers statistics

Immigration /Nationality	401
Employment / Education	138
Welfare Benefits	1108
Housing	921
Others	517
Total	3085

Age Group	Male	Female
Under 18	2	4
18-64	1005	1324
65-74	71	35
75-84	10	0
Total	1088	1363

Ethnicity	Male	Female
African	2	8
Punjabi	9	6
Other Mixed	33	21
Indian	166	192
Bangladeshi	701	984
Chinese	11	16
Other	179	150
Total	1101	1377

Disability	Male	Female
Mental health	70	13
Physical	185	229
Learning	2	0
Total	257	242

Outreach statistics

Immigration /Nationality	0
Employment / Education	7
Welfare Benefits	320
Housing	213
Others	227
Total	767

Age Group	Male	Female
Under 18	0	0
18-64	147	272
65-74	52	73
75-84	27	14
Total	226	359

Ethnicity	Male	Female
African	0	0
Punjabi	0	0
Other Mixed	4	
Indian	32	47
Bangladeshi	184	311
Chinese	0	0
Other	4	1
Total	222	358

Disability	Male	Female
Mental health	26	14
Physical	71	62
Learning	3	
Total	100	76

Outreach Work

The outreach service is being regularly accessed by more and more people and the clients are finding this service very helpful and supportive for them.

This year, there have been huge changes made to the welfare benefits system which is impacting on our workload.

We have found that some application forms have been redesigned and some are quite complicated. Certain benefits are changing including council tax benefit and the introduction of bedroom tax for claimants on housing benefit. A lot of clients who used to receive Income Support have now been moved to Employments Support Allowance. This requires them filling in lengthy and detailed medical questionnaires about their health which, on the basis of the form, a decision will be made about their entitlement to the benefit. There is also very noticeable reduction on people who are successful in claiming Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance although they are genuinely suffering and in the past would have received it without any problems.

Case study 1

Mr U is in his 70s and has various health problems. He struggles with his mobility and needs constant help with his personal care. We made him aware of the various services available for him through social services. Following an assessment, his case was referred to an occupational therapist for some alterations to be made around the house. Unfortunately the waiting time was very long, however, once they got in touch they were able to help with some adaptations around the house. This has made it easier for Mr U to lead a more independent Life.

Case Study 2

Mrs A couldn't keep up her utility bills and got in debt with her energy suppliers. As a result of this, a prepayment metre was installed and the debt was recovered by a fixed amount being deducted each week from the top-up. During the cold weather, it was very difficult for Mrs A to keep her house warm as there wasn't enough left on the meter after the deductions were made and the increase in energy prices were an added pressure on the household budget. I helped Mrs A to apply for a grant through the British gas energy trust fund. Luckily, she qualified for the grant which cleared all her debts leaving her in a better financial position.

Minara Rahman
Outreach Officer

Hate Incident Action Project

Introduction

The Project was intended as a three year project, and was launched in 2010 with funding from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The aims of the project were 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 project employed two full time staff, a Hate Incident Officer and a Training Officer.

Hate Incident Reporting Centres

One of the key elements of the Project has been to increase the number of accessible Hate Incident Reporting Centres in Charnwood. In the final year we enrolled five new Registered Social Landlords as reporting centres to add to the previously established ones.

During Phase 3 we have therefore increased the number of reporting centres in Charnwood 49. A full list of reporting centres can be viewed on our website: www.humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org

The success of reporting centres can again be demonstrated by reference to the number of incidents reported. All but two of the twenty incidents recorded by the Project during Phase 3 have been reported through Hate Incident Reporting Centres. A breakdown is shown in the next section, under 'Hate Incident Reporting'.

Hate Incident Reporting

Incidents recorded by the Project are subsequently reported to Leicestershire County Council's Hate Incident Monitoring Project (HIMP) which takes incident reports from all areas of the county.

For the year 2012/13 to date (31/01/2013), 20 Charnwood incidents have been recorded by the project suggesting a potential slight rise over 2010/11 if projected to the Year End, and still significantly higher than the incidents captured by the Leicester County Council's Hate Incident Monitoring Project in previous years.

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11*	2011/12	2012/13*
No. of Incidents	18	6	12	26	21	21

*Year HIAP commenced

**As at 31/01/13

During Phase 3 the types of hate incident reported according to the various hate categories show that racially motivated incidents still predominate, however, proportionately there has been a significant increase in reported disablist incidents. The proportion of reported homophobic incidents has also increased when compared with the previous two Phases although numbers are still low. In consideration of the source of the reporting (see below table) we believe that the increased reporting of non-racially motivated incidents is due to the approach taken by the Project in raising awareness of and encouraging hate incident reporting across all diversity strands.

There has been an increase this Phase in the proportion of harassment cases partly due to the repeat victimisation of a victim who came to the attention of the Project during Phase 2. Essentially the greater proportion of harassment incidents have consisted of verbal abuse as their main feature.

In the tables below we have provided a simple analysis of 2012/13 reported incidents using our own Project data, as at 31/01/13.

Incident types according to hate category/diversity strand:

Hate category	No. of Incidents
Race	12
Religion	1
Disability	7
Homophobia	2
Age	0
Gender	0

Incident offence types:

Inc./offence type	No. of Incidents
Harassment	9
Verbal abuse	6
Intimidation	1
Assault	2
Offensive material	1
Damage	2

NB: Incidents can be recorded for multiple reasons, so the total number of incident types by hate category/diversity strand may exceed the number of incidents.

NB: Incidents often contain multiple offence types. In such cases the most serious offence/incident type has been used for recording purposes.

Source of Reported Incidents:

Hate Incident Reporting Centre	No. of incidents reported
Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood	5
Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing	4
Charnwood Borough Council	3
Mountfields Centre	1
Raglan Housing	2
Glebe House	1
Mario Tinenti Centre	1
Loughborough University	1
HIMP LCC	1
Total by HIRC's	19
Loughborough Echo	1
ASB Roadshow	1
Total Incidents	21

Trends, Hot Spots, and Repeat Victimisation

Several of the Project's clients to have received the support of the Hate Incident Officer reside in the Loughborough Ashby Ward and Thurmaston area. These areas have been problematic in terms of anti-social behaviour generally, however, the authorities have responded to reduce offending and provide additional reassurance to the victims affected. The Hate Incident Officer has also liaised with key workers and had involvement with the Charnwood Borough Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Joint Action Group.

Whilst there has been an increase during Phase 3 in regard to reported disablist incidents, this is likely due to raised awareness of the Project and increased awareness and opportunities for reporting rather than an increase in attacks on disabled people. The types of disability have been split between those with a mobility disability (3 victims) and those with a learning disability (2 victims). No issues have arisen during Phase 3 in regard to far right activity.

Awareness Raising

To improve understanding of hate issues, why it is important to report hate, and to inform how and where hate incidents can be reported, we have again run or supported a variety of events and awareness sessions at various venues across the Borough. We have also had published various awareness raising articles within local press, newsletters, and sent out mail-shots.

Supporting Hate Incident Victims

The Project has been successful in helping 16 victims during Phase 3. We have continued to work closely with our partners to help achieve positive outcomes for all of our clients.

The Hate Incident Action Project Focus Group

The Project's focus group, which provided input from service users, has come to a natural end due to the ending of the Project. However, its key members have been invited onto the long established Hate Incident Action Group (HIAG).

Information Sharing

We have continued to share information with our partners at strategic and operational levels in accordance with legal requirements in the interests of our clients and to help reduce crime and disorder. The Hate Incident Action Group has continued to make use of the Information Sharing Agreement and the attendees list confidentiality statement.

Partnership Working

We continued to work very closely with officers of Leicestershire Constabulary, Charnwood Anti-Social Behaviour Joint Action Group, Leicestershire County Council Hate Incident Monitoring Project, all the reporting centres and our local partners.

Hate Incident Action Group

The Project continued to support the Hate Incident Action Group (HIAG), providing administrative support, advice, and information.

It was agreed that once this project ends, the HIAG, which has been steered by the Project these past 2 - 3 years, should be subsumed into the Borough Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Joint Action Group (JAG) as a working sub-group. The JAG is a multi-agency group which meets monthly to consider action in regard to high risk victims, locations, hot-spots etc. The new sub-group will be able to look at initiatives, campaigns and promotional work. This will allow continuity of the HIAG but in a more proactive sense, and also provide governance.

This will enhance the role and status of the HIAG and help ensure that hate issues continue to be properly addressed post Project, at operational and strategic levels through mainstreaming.

Independent evaluation

An independent evaluation of the Project in its entirety has been carried out by Voluntary Action Leicestershire as part of the Phase 3 Outputs.

The Executive Summary states:

"The findings of the report are that the project has been broadly successful as all output targets have been met and contributed to the funder prescribed outcomes. Feedback from project officers and service users regarding the delivery of the project was good, adding further weight to the assertion of success throughout the piece of work. This report has made recommendations to improve project delivery for Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood in the future. Primarily these centre on project sustainability and balancing multi-faceted provision appropriately."

The future

To ensure a measure of continuity and sustainability at the end of the Project the following arrangements are in place:

Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRC's) – these will come under the umbrella of the Leicestershire County Council Hate Incident Monitoring Project (LCC HIMP). New posters, leaflets and a revised HIRC staff guidance are being distributed.

Hate Incident Reporting – this will continue as before through the LCC HIMP, using the on-line or hard copy Report Hate form. If the incident is a crime the victim should also be encouraged by HIRC's to contact the police. If the incident is not a crime, e.g. anti-social behaviour, then the victim should also be encouraged to contact the Charnwood Borough Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

Victim Support – Incidents reported to the LCC HIMP will, where identified on the form, be referred to Victim Support by the HIMP Co-ordinator. At the time of concluding this report however we are aware there is some doubt as to the long term continuity of this arrangement due to financial reasons.

The Project has devised new Charnwood specific public information leaflets intended to inform victims of the action they can take in approaching service providers, and what solutions tend to be available. The leaflets have been made available to Hate Incident Reporting Centres and are available on the HR&EC website.

End of project conference

A high profile conference was held in January to showcase the work of the project over the last 3 years and share information and support available from all the partners. In particular we are extremely grateful to Sylvia Lancaster of the Sophie Lancaster Foundation who was the guest speaker at this conference.



Speakers - Kate Dawe, Sylvia Lancaster, Darren Goddard, Stacy, Debbie Green (Chair of HR&EC) and Lesley Ansari (project officer). — at [John Storer House](#).

Tony Kelly & Lesley Ansari
Hate Incident Action Project Officers

Chances for All Project

How the project came about

The South Asian Women's Project (SAWP), funded by Lloyds TSB foundation for 2 years from 2009, helped support women and their children into education, becoming active in the community as well as in other issues.

Various tools were used to understand what was needed for South Asian women in the community. Through events, activities, group work and local partnership work there was a better understanding as to what issues needed to be addressed. There was a high demand to gain knowledge and access to services/ support available, and to gain self-esteem, confidence and self-efficacy. There was also a lack of opportunities for South Asian women to get into exercise activities or training programmes. In addition to this there were third party issues that also directly affected South Asian women due to family impact, eg gambling problems, high alcohol consumption and illegal drug intake.

SAWP made differences in the community helping women get into more leading roles in schools, training and social inclusion. The women took part in things that they have never been involved in before, such as being part of Loughborough in Bloom. This has been one of the successful outcomes as the women involved received national recognition for their work.

The project demonstrated how successful and useful it can be to the community. Although the funding was only for 2 years it was clear we needed to extend this project further. This is how the "Chances for all," project was presented. The project stems from the foundation of SAWP and progresses into further work with the South Asian community.

Chances For All

The project aims to empower women from South Asian communities in deprived wards of Loughborough. Our aim is that they should be reaching their highest potential by empowering them to learn about the opportunities that are available to them and playing active roles in the community.

Facing issues in all areas of life e.g. home life, being a wife, a parent, or tackling depression, isolation, anxiety, stress, we aim to help women make good decisions for themselves and their families. Making any lifestyle changes is always difficult but the support of two local community development project officers will ensure help and support to the South Asian community.

Funding

We have been successful in securing funding from the Big Lottery Fund to fund the Chances For All Project for the next five years. We also managed to secure funding for disabled chair access, disabled toilet and a private confidential room for community development project officers to meet local partners and local community members in the HREC office.

Launch

The Chances for All project was launched Monday 25th March at Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood (HR&EC). The day was planned as a drop in coffee morning for local organisations and community members to come and visit the office and get a better understanding about the project as well as other services that are available at HR&EC.

The launch was a successful day bringing in community members from Saathi group, Shakti as well as BSA group. In addition to local organisations the Mayor of Charnwood, the Transition Group and Loughborough Echo were present and were asking local community members their views about the project. Chances for All had their own questionnaire asking the local community about the local issues faced in Loughborough and their vision about what they would like to see from our Chances for All group. It was successful in terms of advising community members about the project and new proposals we have planned.



Official opening by The Mayor of Charnwood, Cllr Diane Wise, Minara Rahman (Project Officer), Sean Tizzard (The Big Lottery Fund Grant Officer), Tahmena Khilji (Project Officer) and Cllr Peter Lewis, Chairman of Leics County Council and HR&EC Company Secretary

Community Engagement

Much of the project officer's role consists of community engagement, local partnership working and meeting new local organisations to find out what is available to community members in Loughborough. Since January we have done a great deal of local cohesion partnership work with the local community and helping local organisations in their objectives in addition to local agencies being on board helping with our project.

Community engagement in Loughborough has helped identify key target groups that are already established and set up in the community. Working alongside these BME groups has helped us outline and prioritise local issues that need to be addressed.

Setting up Chances For All group

At the beginning of the project a lot of background research work was done into the communities that lived in Loughborough with pockets of deprivation. This illustrated local issues that were faced by the BME communities. Looking at these issues we understood the direction our project (Chances For All) needed to be steered into thus empowering South Asian women into more knowledge and awareness about their communities and building their confidence to succeed in challenging roles. Through local partnership cohesion work and meeting local community organisations we met groups that fit in with our remit of South Asian communities and we were able to set up groups to fit in with the Chances For All project outline.

Our first group was set up in April at the Shree Ram Krishna Centre. The group has included a mixture of South Asian women from the Bangladeshi community as well as the Indian community and meet every **Monday from 1pm to 3pm** except Bank holidays and school holidays.

We are currently working with them through textile designs and other creative activities which allows the project officers to help build the women's confidence and gives us a better understanding by listening to what they want.

Due to high demand and growing interest from the women in the community, we have managed to obtain further funding from the Open University funds to continue supporting them with the Loughborough in Bloom work.

Current plans

We are currently working with different projects in Loughborough. The Transition Group in Loughborough in partnership will work with the project to educate South Asian women on gardening skills, growing vegetables, sustainable energy. The women have a hands-on role working directly with the community allotment group learning new skills and sharing their own.

In addition we are working alongside the MINA project to help coordinate a health event for the summer which will include inviting local partners and help the community learn about healthy living.

Plans for the future: To get the women involved in events like Race for life, Loughborough in Bloom; creating a directory of local service providers for them to access; building on the attendance at the Chances for All group; holding workshops on raising awareness of relevant topics/issues, getting them more involved in local partnerships and cohesion work; and encouraging them to take a lead.

We would like to thank the Big Lottery Fund for giving us this grant to carry out this valuable work.

Minara Rahman & Tahmena Gul
Project officers.

International Youth Training Courses

Conflict transformation in divided societies, June 2012, Georgia

Discover the Power to Act - Be the Change 2-8 August 2012 Radmoor Centre, Loughborough College

International training course 'Be the Change - Conflict Transformation for Young People' was held on 2-8 August 2012 and took place at the Radmoor Centre in Loughborough, United Kingdom. The course gathered 32 representatives coming from eight different countries: United Kingdom, Croatia, Turkey, Italy, Romania, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Greece.

In the 7 days of the project, participants gained new skills and competences in a number of topics such as:

- conflict – what it is and how we see it,
- conflict mapping, and typologies of conflict,
- conflict transformation as well as the relevance of these to youth work

The sessions themselves were based upon the materials developed during the previous similar courses as well as resources put together by

Berghof Conflict Research (<http://www.berghof-conflictresearch.org/en/>)

and the Council of Europe

(http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Resources/Publications/Publications_en.asp)

The activities prepared reflected directly the previously set objectives, namely to:

- organise a training course for youth workers and youth leaders
- mainstream conflict transformation skills in youth work
- equip course participants with conflict transformation competences
- promote youth participation and European citizenship as tools in fostering conflict management
- share and exchange good practice in conflict transformation among youth workers
- multiply the outcomes of the course in eight European countries
- develop new YiA projects for young people (Youth Exchanges, Youth Initiatives) tackling conflict issues.

During the course a number of non-formal education methods were employed, including small group work, creative presentations, simulation exercises and community theatre methods, etc. Additionally, the learning experiences were further enhanced by the visits organised to the local youth and community centres that deal with conflicts and their transformation on daily basis.

Partnership Building Activity Project - Rural Youth in Action – September, Moldova

The PBA "Rural Youth in Action" addressed the topic of youth work in rural areas. It became a platform for youth organizations, which gathered so as to initiate youth projects, promote activities done in rural locations and create international projects for cooperation by rural youth organizations. The project explored rural reality and benefits brought by international projects for rural young people and their communities. The specifics of rural youth work were discussed and explored while at the same time ideas were put into action by creating new projects and partnerships. The Youth in Action programme was presented together with objectives, priorities and actions that can help sustain youth initiatives, for instance, the Eastern Partnership Window was highlighted as a possibility for all youth organisation to get their ideas implemented.

The PBA was implemented in Cosnita, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, between 17- 24 September 2012, and involved 10 organizations coming from Programme Countries and EECA region.

Intergenerational IT, 2-8 January 2013, Fearon Hall and Radmoor Centre, Loughborough College

The Partnership Building event "Intergeneration IT" brought together younger and older people from 10 countries: UK, Italy, Turkey, Poland, Bulgaria, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Georgia.





The event promoted intergenerational dialogue and learning through the medium of new media. Participants worked together to understand intergenerational issues and shared experiences, thus developing new skills and techniques that can help promote intergenerational understanding.

There were opportunities to develop understanding and skills in using social media to strengthen dialogue and develop future partnership projects. The event also brought older and younger people together to develop joint Youth in Action and online projects of mutual interest and so explore the differences and similarities of interest between the generations and across cultural groups.

The project was aimed at youth workers and leaders and older people (50 years plus) from participant communities. The outcomes were that participants identified and developed ideas for partnership projects that promote intergenerational understanding using the knowledge and skills obtained from the event and wanted to and that they carry on with those projects after the event finished. These new creative initiatives were on issues of mutual concern in their communities.

On the next page we have given details for our forthcoming conferences and would like to ask anyone interested in getting involved please contact me on nadja_rein@yahoo.de

Nadja Rein
Conference Co-ordinator.

2013 projects

COMPASS – training course

26 July – 2 August 2013 Fearon Hall, Loughborough, UK

“Compass” is an Eastern Partnership Youth Window training course (Action 3.1) based on the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Education Youth Programme. The project aims at increasing the competences of youth leaders, youth workers and educators in the field of Human Rights Education through non-formal education.

The project’s objectives include training participants in using the “Compass” Manual for HRE, reflecting on HRE practice in youth work, mainstreaming HRE in youth work and developing future HRE-related projects in partner promoter countries.

This seven-day project will involve 32 participants from four EU and four Eastern Partnership countries (four participants per country): Estonia, Bulgaria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Poland, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and the UK. It will be held in Loughborough, Leicestershire, in July- August (26.7-2.8) 2013.

Migration, Integration and Inclusion Policies in Europe – Seminar

19-26 July 2013 Radmoor Centre, Loughborough College, UK

This Youth in Action – Action 4.3 seminar will focus on the consequences of migration and reflect on the practice of migrant integration and inclusion in European countries. The main aim of the project is to share best practice in tackling migration, integration and inclusion in youth work. The project’s objectives include: sharing project and programme experience, exchanging tools and methods in addressing migration, integration and inclusion in youth work, learning about migration and integration work done by third sector organisations in Leicestershire, developing participants’ competences in delivering youth work projects on migration, integration and inclusion and development of future YiA projects. The seminar will be held in Loughborough in July 2013 and will involve 30 participants from 10 European countries.

Rural and Women Entrepreneurship – Partnership Building Activity

1-8 August 2013 - venue to be confirmed

The PBA “Rural and Women Entrepreneurship” aims to empower rural and women entrepreneurship by offering a space for skills development in the domain, sharing of good experiences and setting up pilot projects and partnerships among different organizations coming from rural areas. Participants will get familiar with European rural reality and will explore the similarities and differences of participating countryside and deprived areas. They will share the social problems of their community, and will find out how other countries are dealing with them in particular using the concept of social entrepreneurship. The project is coming together to mobilize the potential productivity of rural people, especially of women, who can contribute to economic growth and globalization. Women's role, productivity and equality will be explored in the context of entrepreneurship and employment.

The PBA will inform participants about the possibilities offered by the Youth in Action programme and other European institutions supporting youth initiatives, and the involvement and development of rural youngsters. The project will run between 1-8 August 2013 in Loughborough, UK as a result of co-operation among 10 organizations from Programme Countries (UK, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Greece, Romania, Estonia, Norway, Hungary and Poland).

Raising awareness of human rights

Vodafone World of Difference 2012 UK Programme

Klára Joáchim is working with HR&EC on a four-month placement funded by the Vodafone World of Difference Foundation. Her academic background is in International Human Rights Law, having graduated with a Masters of Laws from the University of Leicester in July 2012. The focus of the placement is expanding upon the charity's core work of raising awareness of human rights both: a) internally, amongst our staff and trustees, and b) externally, including clients and specific target groups such as local asylum youth/refugee groups.

Action Plan

Phase One

During the four-month placement we have devised an action plan (with the assistance of the trustees) consisting of a multi-pronged approach to raising the awareness of human rights in the Charnwood area. It is anticipated that the initial work (phase one) will inform our future strategy (phase two).

Phase one is already underway and includes:

Social Media – increasing our social media profile is integral to this work as we want to reach a wider audience, particularly from the younger age groups. We have set-up a Twitter account and will further utilise our existing website and Facebook profile.

Quantitative Data – We have compiled two versions of a questionnaire entitled 'Public Perception of Human Rights' – one for the general public and one for staff/trustees/members. The data will pinpoint areas where there is perhaps a gap in knowledge or awareness, allowing us to focus on delivering relevant information/topics.

Please go to the HR&EC website and download the document from our publications section.

Staff/Trustees Workshops – it is important that everyone involved with HR&EC is empowered to use human rights language and tools. A staff workshop will be delivered to introduce the core concepts and implementation of human rights.

Interactive Youth workshops – we are currently in the process of engaging with partnership organisations to deliver human rights workshops to asylum youth groups in the Charnwood area. Constructive dialogue with partner organisations and local communities are key actions.

Publications – a periodic newsletter entitled 'Human Rights around Us' will be distributed in soft and hard copy to staff, trustees, members and clients. Additionally, we will produce simplified fact sheets of relevant legislation, e.g. the Human Rights Act, and prepare HR&EC's response to relevant changes in government policy.

Phase Two

The feedback from the initial staff and youth workshops will enable us to focus on the human rights issues people are most concerned or affected by. Follow-up workshops will then be arranged to address nominated topics.

Seminar Series – All of the work outlined in phase one will inform a series of public seminars to be delivered in August/September 2013. We are networking with partner organisations such as BACA and Paragon Law to help deliver topics/forums from a victim-orientated perspective as well as a legislative one.

Funding

JustTextGiving by Vodafone – we have created a text code in order to receive individual donations with the option of Gift-aiding them. Any funds we receive will go towards our core activities, including promoting human rights. We launched our text code at the public lecture 2013. Future publicity events will include Loughborough Mela and the AGM in addition to social networking activity.

Our code is 'HREC13'. Donations are simple, text '**HREC13**' £2 / £5/ £10 (with your chosen amount) to **70070**.

A B Charitable Trust – we are applying for an ABCT grant to support our long-term work in this area. The top threshold of the grant is £7,500; however, there is a potential for larger grants on a regular basis for charities working under the umbrella of Human Rights to support priority individuals, including refugees and asylum seekers.

Klára Joáchim



Public Lecture

Interculturalism: “Being human unites us.”

The Annual Public Lecture this year held on 18th April was presented by Professor Ted Cantle CBE. The founding father of community cohesion after the Cantle Report on the race riots of 2001, Ted Cantle led a Government Panel on cohesion for 5 years before setting up the Institute for Community Cohesion at Coventry University, where he is currently the Executive Chair.

He is also the Associate Director of the Local Government Improvement & Development Agency, and a Visiting Professor in the Nottingham University Business School. In 2005/08 he published *Community Cohesion – a New Framework*. Unquestionably a major figure in the national debate about multiculturalism – and one who spent a number of years working locally in Leicester.

Last year he re-assessed previous policies in a new book – which this formed the basis of the lecture: *Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion & Diversity (2012)*.

Speaking to a large audience in the Sir Robert Martin Theatre, by kind invitation of Loughborough University, Professor Cantle argued multiculturalism had been right for its time – the 1960s and 70s – but as societies have become more globalised and diverse, a new framework – ‘interculturalism’ – is needed to guide the way we live together.

“We need to be able to talk about race and diversity in a new way. Interculturalism is more readily accepted at a popular level and associated with more positive language. It represents a break with the tired old identity politics which young people are already rejecting – the huge growth in mixed racial/heritage relationships is testimony to this.

There is a well of untapped desire to dispense with past language and fears about difference, and to recognise the world is made up of just one human race. Younger people – particularly those who have grown up in diverse areas - reject such ideas.”

In the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, he saw examples of ‘accidental interculturalism’, where athletes, irrespective of background and identity, were supported. “The unity of Team GB and of sport in general allowed a common identity to sit alongside nationality and heritage.”

In contrast with the negativity associated with previous debates, arguments on the rights and wrongs of immigration, the vying for attention by various identity groups, this new approach was positive, a progressive attempt that recognised all aspects of diversity in an ever changing environment, seeking to create a fairer society, and adopting a modern conception of difference which better fitted an increasingly globalised world.”

Peter Lewis, County Council Chairman, was invited to chair the lecture and subsequent discussion. Summing up, he said:

“We need to avoid simply defensive or fearful responses. It takes courage to address these matters with honesty and with the tolerance befitting a civilised society. Must we not be thinking afresh about how we can build a more common and shared life in our towns and cities, and stress our differences and minority identities a little less? That is why tonight’s Lecture has been both challenging and hugely relevant for us all.”

The Lecture was also attended by the new High Sheriff of Leicestershire, Ms Sally Bowie, on one of her first official engagements, and by Coun. Sandy Forrest, Deputy Mayor of Charnwood.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Loughborough University for continuing to host these lectures for us each year and in particular to Alison Barlow for her efficiency in arranging them.

Copies of the lecture can be obtained from HREC Office or on www.humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org



Trevor Shaw (Treasurer), Prof Ted Cattle, Mrs Sally Bowie, The High Sheriff of Leicestershire, Cllr Peter Lewis, Chairman of Leics County Council and Debbie Green (Chair of HR&EC).

Loughborough Mela 2013 **“Communities Together”**



This year's Mela is set to take place on Sunday 18th August in Loughborough Town Centre.

Loughborough Mela is an exciting partnership event between Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood, Charnwood Arts, Voluntary Action Charnwood, with involvement from local community groups, other agencies and dedicated individuals. The events are financially supported by Charnwood Borough Council with sponsors from local voluntary and statutory bodies, including Loughborough University.

The events showcase different cultures and give the audience a flavour of the rich and diverse communities in Charnwood. In addition, there are 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.

Quoting Mike Jones, a local community member and key player for the Melas,”

“Loughborough Mela is now established as the town's largest annual multi-cultural event and it was great to see so many people of different faiths, cultures and backgrounds working together and thoroughly enjoying themselves. The sheer variety of acts and the way that those attending broadly reflected the population as a whole, were a constant reminder of the richness of our local community.

Our thanks are due to everyone who contributed, whether as a performer or volunteer, especially our Mela Co-ordinator for the second year, Leylah Bhamra, without whom it could not have been so successful”.

Quoting Neil Lambert, Chair of the Mela Group,

“As chair of the organising committee, it has been a pleasure to bring active partners together and make the Mela a success! However, we would really like to hand control over direct to local communities and groups to ensure future sustainability.

If you would like to get involved, volunteer or wish to have a stall at this year's mela please contact Leylah Bhamra, the co-ordinator on loughboroughmela@gmail.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, local authorities
- 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
- 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.

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