



## **Annual Report 2019/20**



**Promoting equality and diversity,**

***Registered Charity Number: 1088411***

***Company Number: 4198889***



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Welcome to our Annual Report for 2019/20. This year is my second as Chair and it has proved to be one of highs and lows as none other before. We began the year full of energy and excitement as we celebrated 50 years of work in Loughborough and Charnwood and have ended it during the Covid 19 pandemic and all that entails.

Many of the events we were involved in fell foul of some very unseasonal weather. The annual Picnic in the Park had to be cancelled due to high winds, but we were able to attend the Fete on the Green held in the grounds of the Parish Church. We were thrilled to have a presence at the 2019 Mela in August, which despite the frequent downpours, proved a wonderful occasion as always.

Such occasions prove a wonderful opportunity to spread the word about Equality Action and we are always privileged to meet so many interested people and one such event resulted in us finding a new Trustee. If you feel that you would like to be more involved then do not hesitate to contact our Executive Officer whose details are to be found elsewhere in the report.

## Chair's report



As I already mentioned this was our 50th year and as part of our marking such an occasion we launched our 'Celebrating 50 Years of Service' book (copies are still available from our Nottingham Road office).

This was only possible through the professional work and help of Charnwood Arts, specifically Natalie Chabaud and the late Kevin Ryan. Kevin's untimely death was certainly one of the lows of the year. He will be greatly missed, not just for his interest in our work, but more broadly his commitment to the Borough, to peace and justice issues and to the arts. On behalf of all of us who are deeply indebted to Kevin and miss his cheerfulness and beautiful personality, may I offer condolences to Kev's family and friends?

Our day to day work has continued throughout the year in addition to the specific projects funded by the Big Lottery, updates of which you will find elsewhere in the report.

We are as always indebted to our incredible staff and I want to give thanks here to our case workers, Chayara Chowdhury, Amina Wadud, Kazi Mashud and Mehraj Alamgir. Thanks also go to Minara Rahman and Yesmin Choudhury who continue to run the projects and Mina Galliara, our invaluable administrator. No thanks could possibly go without mentioning our Executive Officer, Varsha Parmar, who continues to provide us with her professional, informed and friendly management skills.

I also would like to offer my personal appreciation to all of our trustees and members for their support and a variety of skills without which my role of Chair would prove impossible.

As the New Year began we were excited to welcome Andrew Moffatt MBE as the speaker for our 2020 Annual Lecture. Andrew addressed the topic of 'No outsiders: developing an inclusive educational ethos'. Little did we then realise that only a few weeks later, schools would close as part of the response to counter the spread of the virus.

During this period of lockdown we decided to close our offices and where possible for staff to work from home, all the while observing

the various regulations whilst being mindful of our clients' needs. As restrictions eased, we have re-opened in a limited way after a careful risk assessment was carried out. Thanks to various funds that have become available to help charities and small businesses, we have purchased protective screens and signs to ensure the safety of our staff and when possible clients.

Our latest project is 'Beyond Lockdown Loughborough East'. With funding from the National Lottery Community Fund we have secured a six month post for someone to explore the knock on effect of the lockdown and the virus in the eastern part of the borough. After interviewing a number of impressive candidates we are pleased to announce that Harvinder Poonian was appointed to undertake this work on our behalf. We look forward to reporting back on her work in due course.

Let us hope that an effective vaccine will be available soon, but in the meantime Equality Action will continue to serve the people of Loughborough and Charnwood as we seek a fairer more equitable society.

I commend this report to you and trust you may find it informative and helpful.

***David Featonby (Chair)***

## Our 50 years publication

Last year we celebrated 50 years of Equality Action (1969 - 2019) and launched a publication during the year. This was widely distributed postal as well as electronically. We urge you to read it, if you would like a copy please contact the office or you can find it on our website. <https://www.equalityaction.org.uk/store/documents/50-years-of-Equality-Action.pdf>



Photography courtesy of Kathleen Jackson

Design by Natalie Chabaud - Charnwood Arts

# Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to be able to present our annual accounts for 2019/20 which show we are in a reasonably favourable position and we can say that we are a 'going concern' for the upcoming year 2020/21.

Perhaps more importantly than that, the rest of our Annual Report shows ample proof of the various services we have been able to deliver. As I have said many times over the years our key achievement is not about '£p' but helping people in as many ways as we can – something we have been able to do for over 50 years!



Like all organisations, large and small, Covid 19 has loomed large over what we have been able to do but, fortunately, so far it has not had too serious an effect on our finances; even though we have had to temporally scale back some of our work. We have been able to keep all of our staff employed; some on furlough some working from home. At the time I am writing this (August 2020) our office is gradually getting back to its normal level of activity.

However, as I again seem to have to say each year, we cannot be complacent about our finances. The next few years are going to be a challenge as we try to find sources of income to maintain our work. I must thank our funders during the past year – Charnwood Borough Council, the National Lottery Community Fund, Helen Jean Cope Trust and the Hastings Community Grants scheme and also our accountants Duncan & Toplis Ltd (preparing the accounts while working from home was exciting for them and us!)

As always, thank you Varsha for all your good humour and help to me during the year.

***Trevor Shaw (Hon Treasurer)***

## Advice Work

We continue to provide casework on benefits, welfare, immigration, housing etc. The range of queries are varied and our clients come from diverse backgrounds. During the year we have seen over 200 clients, some with multiple issues.

From end of March 2020, we had to close our office due to Covid-19. This did not stop our caseworker continuing providing much needed advice and support to our clients. We helped over 50 individuals and families over a three month period to access online services and via telephone conversations.

We are delighted to be bringing staff back in at the start of July and now see clients in the office on a strict appointments basis. We have managed to make our offices Covid-19 safe with generous grants from funders to buy the appropriate safety equipment.





# Positive Minds Project

## Project outcomes:

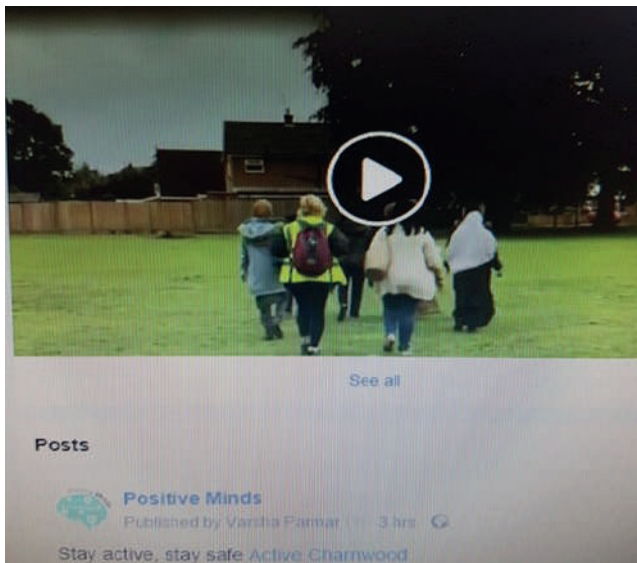
*Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) people are aware of mental health issues and understand the symptoms and take up support (both for people suffering and their carers)*

*BAME women continue to improve their health and take a lead in running health activities, particularly women aged 50+*

*BAME women improve their employment, volunteering and further education opportunities*

## General activities

Following the success of the first year of our Positive Minds project, we had more women joining in with the activities we organised. The swimming sessions have gone from strength to strength in terms of attendance even with the change of venue which potentially could have set us back as it was a huge challenge to find a venue that would allow women only sessions with a qualified female life guard on duty at our specified times. But we managed this!!!!



A video of our walk posted on our social media page Positive Minds

## Positive Minds Project

We started women's only walking groups and identifying that we needed to get some walk leader training. Both the project officers took up walk leader training through Active Charnwood.

The walking group was set up for once a week with local school mums who had dropped their children off to school and joined us in our walking sessions.

The walking route had to be carefully planned out with proper risk assessment and registration of the ladies taking part. These sessions were so successful that once we started and the ladies became comfortable with the routes we had planned for them, they started increasing in their walks by going more regularly. We decided to verbally train a couple of the ladies by equipping them with knowledge of the risk assessment so they can lead the walks themselves, thus ensuring long term sustainability.



Another popular physical exercise was the Bhangra Blaze class. This was booked for an 11 week block booking with a local lady who has become a fitness instructor specialising in the art of Bhangra dancing and fitness.

These sessions were very successful with an average of 15 women attending once a week and benefiting from these sessions.

# Positive Minds Project

Our 2 hour weekly sessions have continued from year 1 where women come and learn English for an hour and do mental and physical wellbeing activities for the second hour. The mental and physical wellbeing activities range from chair based exercise, yoga, mindfulness, crosswords, puzzles, colouring session, sewing and knitting.



## Positive Minds Project

We have collaborated with another group that provides weekly Chair based exercises and a monthly Yoga session to join our sessions in order to boost the attendance of their session. Some of our ladies are taking a lead in facilitating the sessions. We have a paid instructor who provides an hour session with both yoga and mindfulness.



*"I really enjoyed this, knowing how to think positively whilst resting is such a hard skill because all we do is thinks of negativity in our lives without realising that that's why we are always tired. Negativity drains us mentally and physically!!"*

*Sultana Begum*

# Positive Minds Project

## Time to talk

Time to talk was an event that we held at Fearon hall on 7th February where we had 30 women attend. Brahma Kumaris delivered a session on good mental health and shared techniques in how to attain it.





# Positive Minds Project

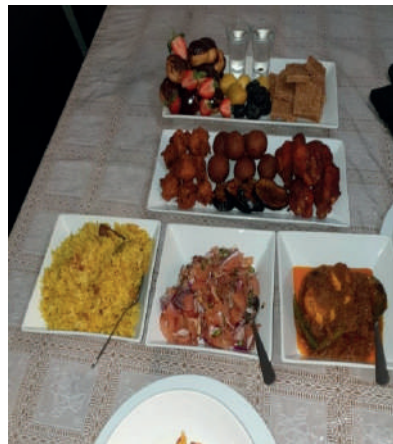
*Shanaz Choudhury is one of our Thursday learning group regulars. She has successfully completed the training course to become a Chair Based exercise leader.*



# Positive Minds Project

## Covid-19

Since the beginning of Covid19 lockdown, we have regularly kept in touch with our beneficiaries via telephones call and WhatsApp messages. Some of them have taken part in small activities with us in sharing food recipes during the Ramadan period that fell in the middle of lockdown. By doing this the ladies felt a sense of belonging and a good way to engage with others during very upsetting and uncertain times. This helped maintain positive mental health, we know the lockdown has seen a rise in negative mental health. Our ladies have expressed that being able to stay in touch with all of us has helped them cope with the lockdown. They felt sharing their cooking ideas helped them stay connected to the outside world.

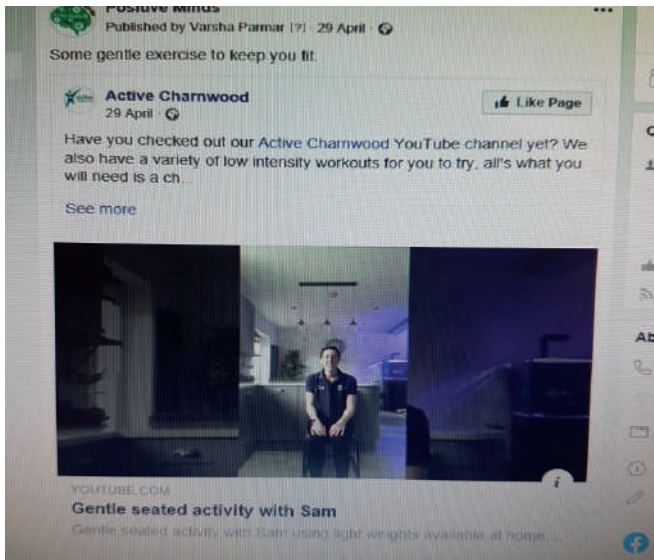


*"Sharing my recipes with people from the group has given me a lot of confidence to show what I can do and maybe I will like to take a lead in a cooking project one day. I feel so happy knowing people like my recipes and pictures of my food"*

*Liza Khan*

## Positive Minds Project

Charnwood Active has been posting regular workout videos on social media which we have been posting on our Positive Minds Facebook page to promote healthy activities during this lockdown period. The vast majority of our beneficiaries have benefited from this and have expressed their excitement at getting back to group activities in the near future.



*I was able to log on and my mother in law who is 85 would see the video on chair based exercise and*

*follow Sam.*

*She loved doing them on a daily basis.*

One of our project workers, Minara Rahman attended a 7 day training course with MHFA England to become an instructor to deliver mental health first aid. This took place during November 2019.

As a requirement of the training, the first two sessions of delivery has to be co-delivered with an experienced instructor in order to be signed off as being qualified. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the co-delivered sessions could not take place yet.

Hopefully as the situation improves we can move forward and aim to train of members of the community to become mental health first aiders.





# Positive Minds Project

## Felting session

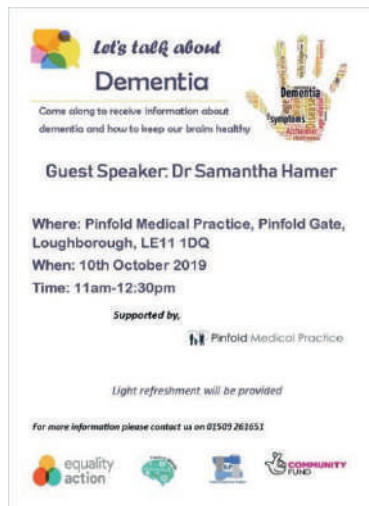


*I loved this activity so much, I will try and teach this to my grandchildren. I have never been able to do anything like this before. It makes me so happy that I can now make things like this. (Anand Mangal group member)*

# Improving Lives Project

## Health & Well-being

Our Dementia Awareness health event held on 10<sup>th</sup> October at Pinfold Gate surgery. This event focussed on local services available, causes and symptoms and support for carers. Local NHS and doctor's surgery facilitated the event. Our guest speaker was Dr Samantha Hamer and attendees found the information very useful.



*Quote from an attendee "I hadn't realised how much support is available for people suffering from dementia and for their carers".*

A key issue that was highlighted from this session was that a lot of the attendees who were from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic background struggled to understand all the talk, especially the terminology. Going forward we have identified speakers who can deliver the talk in appropriate community languages for our beneficiaries. This is not always possible; however we are working with health professionals to get more health related sessions delivered in community languages.

# Improving Lives Project

## Swimming sessions

We continued our men only swimming sessions at DeLisle College. We had 10 men who brought their sons regularly to the sessions. The sessions are proving very positive for inter-generational bonding and helps strengthen father/son relationships. Due to Covid – 19, the swimming session finished in March 2020.



*Quote from one of the young attendees  
“I really look forward to going swimming with my dad and  
spending time with him”.*

### Some statistics during the year:

- 10 –15 men are swimming regularly
- 12 men have joined local gyms in the last year
- 15 men play badminton regularly at the leisure centre
- 12 men attended 1-2-1 ICT
- 9 men have done 1-2-1 driving theory and 4 have passed
- 5 have obtained their provisional license and started to take driving lessons
- 14 men have attended Pre-ESOL 1-2-1 English sessions
- 40 men took part in our football tournament and most play locally on a weekly basis with new teams they have met through our tournaments
- 5 men have taken up online CV/interview sessions.

# Improving Lives Project

## Annual Football Tournament

7 A-side football tournament took place on 29th September 2019 at Loughborough College (our thanks to the college for the free use of the pitches). There are 6 teams from different ages, cultures and backgrounds have participated. Many families came to support the players and the deputy Mayor of Charnwood, Cllr David Snartt, presented the trophies.



Article courtesy of Loughborough Echo.

# Improving Lives Project

## One2One Sessions

12 Men attended 1-2-1 ICT, 9 driving theory and 4 Pre-ESOL basic English sessions since July 2020. They have better computer skills and understanding of internet safety. They can now use emails, create Word documents, use comparison sites for cheaper utilities and more importantly how to use video calls for keeping in touch with their family in these social distancing times.



During the lockdown period, we have regularly communicated with the beneficiaries and continued assisting them with their learning, updating them on recent changes in theory test questionnaire via WhatsApp group. Feedback from them informed us that they really appreciated having this contact and activity to help them through the lockdown. It gave them something to look forward to and helped with their mental well-being.

*Feedback from one of the learners: "I feel so good that I have passed my driving theory, I have applied for my provisional license and saved up for driving lessons. It will be very good for me to be able to drive a car so I can help my family get places and I can look for a job even if it a bit far, I will be able to get there in my car".*



# Improving Lives Project

## Hate Crime Awareness

During Hate Crime Awareness Week (14-19<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019), two separate events were held on Community Safety and Hate Crime awareness matter. One of these events was held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at Fearon Hall, Loughborough. Charnwood Borough Council's Community Safety team and Local Police had supported these events. 20 Men from BAME background have directly benefitted from the events.



*Stall in Loughborough Market Place on Thursday 17th October, where members of the public were given information on reporting and support available.*

# Improving Lives Project

## Annual Trip

Our annual trip took place on 20th August, to Stratford upon Avon, William Shakespeare's birth place. 35 men and women enjoyed learning about the history of the town, sightseeing and spending quality time with others.

Most of the people had never been to Stratford upon Avon, it helped them understand British heritage and culture; overall it was a good intercultural and intergenerational event.



The visit to Stratford upon Avon, William Shakespeare's birth place was again a very good opportunity to bring men and women together not only to explore heritage sites in Stratford upon Avon but also to spend quality time together with their local community members. It was not only cross-cultural and intergenerational trip but also helped with the segregation that often happens in some communities where the men and women do not mix.

*Mrs S "It was lovely spending time at Stratford Upon Avon, learning about Shakespeare and spending time with other people on the trip".*

# Improving Lives Project

## Improving Lives Café

We have continued running our café at Fearon Hall until March 2020 when the lockdown came into place. Around 15 men attend, where they discuss issues relevant to health and well-being, skills development and community cohesion. They take part in non-traditional games such as carom, chess, and Ludo.

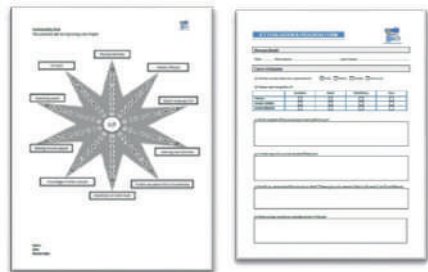


## Partition Project

With support from Loughborough University's Partition Project, 3 cookery sessions were organised to acknowledge the heritage, history and memories from the India partition in 1947, 15 men took part in this and were interviewed by academics from the Loughborough University about their memories of the partition.

## Capturing impact

It very positive seeing our beneficiaries getting involved in community events like Loughborough Mela, initiatives with Charnwood Museum, Loughborough University. But now they are keen to get involved and thoroughly enjoying themselves. We map their journey with us from when they started engaging with our project and see the increase in confidence, skills etc.



We use tools like the wheel of confidence, questionnaires to capture impact.



# Improving Lives Project

## Charnwood Museum: Do you see what I see campaign

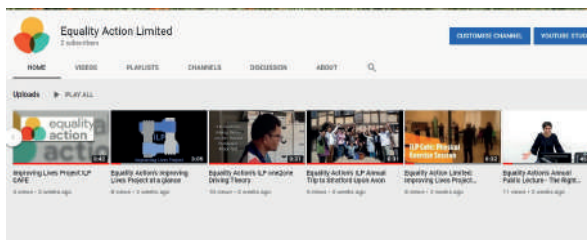
Leicestershire Museum Services held 2 workshops held during the summer of 2019 at Charnwood Museum with 20 local BAME men participating.



## Publicity, Network and Social Media

15 men have joined Facebook during the year and we now have a What's App group with 30 plus men on it. This method is used to keep them updated with project activities including our swimming sessions, football tournaments etc. This is helping the men form new friendships and keep in touch with each other. We now have a You Tube Channel for the organisation. Find us on You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCICQSSu9hYcWngmVdD8LOgg>



# Improving Lives Project

## Challenges due to Covid-19

Due to Covid-19, all of our activities stopped on 23rd March 2020. However we had many beneficiaries who contacted us via telephone and Whats App messages with issues they were facing. A lot of the men who spoke little or no English were very confused about the Government's guidance and not sure what they could and couldn't do.

The support they need included:

*Giving lifts to medical appointments.*

*Advising on healthy living.*

*Advising on COVID- 19 Guidance.*

*Providing interpretation services in Bengali, Gujarati & Punjabi.*

*Providing prescription collection services.*

*Providing training on IT to access services*

*Starting a new dedicated helpline in Charnwood in Gujarati, Bengali and Punjabi.*

*Linking and signposting to others who are providing help.*

Due to cultural sensitivity and stigma, we are still struggling to raise awareness of issues such as domestic violence, gambling, substance misuse. In many cases, these issues are considered as an acceptable lifestyle and people ignore the negative impact they can have on their families.

Over the years, the project has continued engaging with the men and gaining their trust so that through some of the activities, we are able to raise awareness in a non-judgemental manner and highlight what support is available as well as the negative impacts.

We would like to thank the National Community Lottery Fund for the grant that has enabled us to work with men from BAME background and help address some of the issues they face. Our thanks also to our Line Manager and the board of trustees who have helped us in achieving our targets.

**Kazi Mashud**

**Mehraj Alamgir (Project Officers)**

# Beyond Lockdown Project

As we started to come out of lockdown, we realised that a lot of people, especially those most vulnerable in our communities would be facing challenges and issues they would need help with.

We applied to the National Community Lottery Fund and were successful in securing a 6months fixed term project “Beyond Lockdown”. The aim of the project is to identify the needs of the Loughborough East post lockdown, support residents and sign posting them to the appropriate mainstream services. Where necessary the project officer will hand hold – provide language support, attend any meetings with client and provide any other relevant support required.

The project started in August and already the officer, Harvinder has reached out to a number of organisations including the Bridge, John Storer Charnwood, Falcon Centre and many more including local community centres.

Working in close partnership with the above organisations, we will be reaching out to people to help them access services and activities that will help with their well-being as well as dealing with issues they face. Please contact the office if you need any help.

## Do you need any HELP or ADVICE?

*"Hi, I am Harvinder and I am here to support the area during the post lockdown period."*

You can give me a call:  
**07835426042**  
Or email me at:  
**harvinder@equalityaction.org.uk**



Can't find the correct support? Give me a call then we can work together to get you the correct services.

- Don't understand the Coronavirus or the guidelines?
- Feel worried or stressed?
- Struggling with your finances?
- Needing support at home?
- Looking to see what services are out there to help?
- Interested to know what's going on in the area?

 **equality action**

**Beyond Lockdown**  
Loughborough East

**Harvinder Poonian (Project Officer)**

# Public Lecture 2019

## **“No Outsiders: developing an inclusive educational ethos”.**

Our annual Public Lecture was held in partnership with Loughborough University on 17th February 2020.

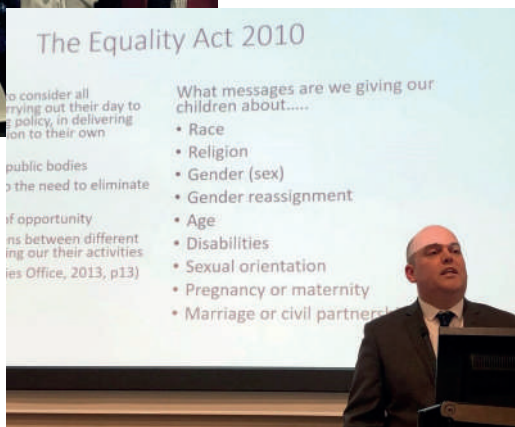
Our guest speaker was Andrew Moffat, MBE, Assistant Head Teacher at Parkfield Community School in Birmingham.

No Outsiders’ is a whole school ethos preparing children for life in modern Britain. The ethos teaches children from age four upwards that we are all different in our school but everyone is welcome, no one is left out, no one is an outsider. Using the Equality Act 2010 as a foundation, the approach uses picture books as stimulus to explore diversity and difference and relate to the world outside the school gate. In 2017 Andrew was awarded an MBE for services to Equality and Diversity in Education.



Picture:

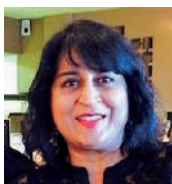
Andrew Moffat with Varsha Parmar (Executive Officer), Lisa Vine one of our trustees and David Featonby, our Chair.



## Board of Trustees



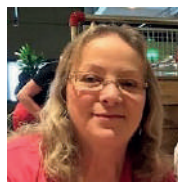
David Featonby



Abida Akram



Trevor Shaw



Linda Foukes



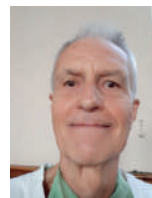
Charles Dobbin



Emily Keightley



Lisa Vine



Anthony Payne



Alea Bint Hanif



Jill Vincent

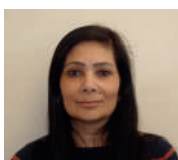


Deepak Karia



Peter Lewis

## Staff



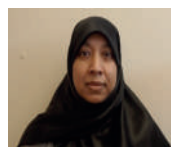
Varsha Parmar



Kazi Mashud



Mehraj Alamgir



Chayara Chowdhury



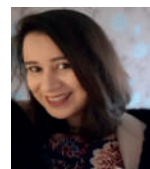
Amina Wadud



Minara Rahman



Yesmin Chowdhury



Harvinder Poonian

# Membership

## Membership 2019/2020

**Hon. President** The Mayor of Charnwood

**Hon. Solicitor** Mr D Pagett-Wright (Moss Solicitors)

**Hon. Treasurer** Mr T Shaw

### Individual Members

A Akram	Y Ali	A Bava	J Capleton	J R Catt	A Clark
V Clark	S Cramer	C Dobbin	D Featonby	A Gimpel	A Gimpel
R Gupta	A Hanif	M Jones	E Keightley	D Lewis	P Lewis
J Miah	N Morgan	B Newton	J O'Brien	T Shaw	I V Silva
S M Velado	J Vincent	L Vine			

### Organisations

<b>All Saints with Holy Trinity</b>	W Dalrymple	
<b>Brahma Kumari</b>	M Sisodia	N Steel
<b>Bridge</b>	P Snape	P Davey
<b>Charnwood Arts</b>	K Ryan	
<b>Charnwood Borough Council</b>	T Parton	P Ranson
	J Tassell	S Maynard-Smith
<b>Geeta Bhawan</b>	R Chhabra	
<b>John Storer Charnwood</b>	S Leong	S Frost
<b>Limehurst Academy</b>	J Mellor	
<b>L'boro Baptist Church</b>	S Cramer	
<b>L'boro Churches Partnership</b>	D Beale	T Payne
<b>L'boro College</b>	J Doherty	
<b>L'boro Labour Party</b>	M Draycott	J Vincent
<b>L'boro Council of Faiths</b>	N Steele	
<b>L'boro United Reformed Church</b>	D Beale	T Payne
<b>Rosebery St Peter's C C</b>	D Bentley	L Foukes

We would like to thank all our members, staff, volunteers, service users, funders and partners for the on-going support of our work.



# Our contact details



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We would like to thank all our funders for the generous grants that enable us to continue with our work

