

Equality Action

Coronavirus (Covid-19)

It has been a tragic few months with this virus. Families have seen loved ones dying without being able to comfort them or be with them.

We at Equality Action have followed the Government's guidance and closed the office to the public in March when lockdown commenced.

However, we have not been sitting idly, we have continued to help those most vulnerable in our communities through this difficult period.

We have continued to help clients access services, including benefits, food banks and other relevant support through telephone and online methods.

Our project staff have kept in touch with people to support them with mental health, isolation and depression by talking to them, keeping them positive and where possible ensuring they can access online activities to stay healthy and positive.

Loughborough is blessed with the excellent partnership work that is in place led by Charnwood Borough Council and others key agencies including John Storer Charnwood, The Bridge, Living Without Abuse as well as the local community centres such as Fearon Hall, Bangladesh Social Association to name a few.

We work very closely with them to ensure everyone is able to access all the support that is available.

The killing of George Floyd

We are shocked and horrified by the killing of George Floyd under the knee of an American police officer - an officer of the state, employed to protect citizens, who intentionally inflicted extreme pain and suffering that led to Mr. Floyd's death. The uprising and protests that followed, both in the US and across the world, have brought the issue of race back into sharp relief. George Floyd was suffocated to death because he was black. His killing would be bad enough on its own, yet sadly this appalling incident is but one in a long line of discrimination and murder of Black and other ethnic groups.

We are gravely concerned about the rise of hate and the normalisation of extremist views in the context of populist authoritarianism sweeping the world. Values of equality, respect for human dignity, tolerance, human rights and even the rule of law, are threatened. No nation is immune from this, including our own. We must root out all incidents of systemic racism and discrimination. Such a stance transcends party politics as it is fundamentally a matter of morality.

For example, we note the disproportionate suffering and death from Covid-19 among Black and Asian people. We believe that the UK experience of Covid-19 has made evident the discrimination and disadvantage among these groups. We call out this injustice and ask for a full and open and independent commission to examine the underlying causes of such disparity in the statistics.

Indeed, as an organisation that strives towards inclusiveness and fair deals for all, we have for a long time been concerned how health is tied up with economic wellbeing.

And so we stand in support of those who suffer from discrimination and disadvantage and call for urgent action.

John Stuart Mill, said way back in 1867: "Bad people need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good people should look on and do nothing." This remains as true today as ever it did !

Forthcoming events that will be postponed

In the light of the current situation, we will be postponing our proposed Annual General Meeting which would have taken place on 8th July 2020. We will keep members informed of a new date once we are able to, although we don't see large meetings or gatherings taking place for a long time so it might be a virtual meeting that can be joined. The Loughborough Mela which was going to take place on 9th August will also be cancelled for this year and until we know how future events will take place this is something that will not be happening in the previous format.

Kevin Ryan (Charnwood Arts)

On behalf of all staff, trustees and volunteers we want to express our deepest regret at the passing away of Kevin Ryan, CEO of Charnwood Arts.

We as an organisation have worked with Kevin and Charnwood Arts over many years and have always found Kevin to be a warm, approachable and very generous person. He has always made time for everyone he comes across and gone out of his way to give in the most generous manner.

He will always be a key person when events take place locally including Loughborough Mela, the faith arts pantomimes and Picnic in the Park to name a few. He worked tirelessly for the good of the community and had the friendliest personality with a great sense of humour.

Our recent book to commemorate 50 years of Equality Action in 2019, was realised mainly due to his involvement and Natalie Chabaud's hard work (also works for Charnwood Arts). This is a lasting tribute to his commitment to help others.

Quoting Varsha Parmar, Executive Officer of Equality Action, "I can't imagine events in the future without Kevin being there and taking a lead as always. He will be missed terribly and it's a huge loss to the community both in Loughborough and his global involvement that he is no longer with us".

David Featonby, Chair of Equality Action said, "Sadness is often hard to express in words whilst being deeply felt in the heart. Kev was a gentle, profoundly compassionate, empathetic and highly intelligent and able human being. He has made a contribution to the equity of life which far exceeds his years.

Kevin Ryan Memorial Fund has been set up should anyone wish to contribute:

<https://www.justgiving.com/remember/787429/Kevin-Ryan>

Moving forward

Together with the staff and trustees we are now in the process of seeing how we can resume our services in a safe manner following Government guidelines. In the coming weeks we will be identifying how to safely start our new way of delivering services. We appreciate nothing will be same as before for a long time. Please bear with us as we work through this.

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