

Interfaith Wolverhampton

TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Trustees of Interfaith Wolverhampton (IFW) present their report, which is also the Company's Directors' Report, and financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2020. This Report has been prepared in accordance with the Small Companies Regime for Directors' Reports.

IFW is a registered charity (1114265) incorporated as a company limited by guarantee (3218967).

The registered office is at The WVSC Building, 16 Temple Street, Wolverhampton, WV2 4AN.

Principal Bankers: Cooperative Bank
Independent Examiner: Erik Pearse

Officers and Directors of the Company

The following were the Honorary Officers of the Charity at 31 March 2020

President The Rt Revd Clive Gregory, Bishop of Wolverhampton
Vice Presidents Harun Rashid†
Parveen Brigue†

The following were the Trustees (known as Directors) of the Charity during the year to 31st March 2020:

Chair

Jas Dehar†

Vice-chairs

Martin Gomberg†
Jill Parker†
Yusuf Shafi†

Secretary

Revd Christopher Collins

Treasurer

Arshang Jahedi*
Martin Gomberg††

Ordinary board members

Khalid Akhtar†
Harmail Bhogal
Parveen Brigue*
Jaswinder Chaggar
Revd Christopher Collins
Parvinder Singh Choda†
Jennifer Davis
Ganesh De
Bhajan Devsi
Isobel Gillis*
Rajesh Jain†
Satinder Kaur

Muhammad Yaseen Khan†
Iris Linn
Revd Rachel Parkinson
Gurdev Rai*
Mohammad Rashad
Harun Rashid*
Satya P Sharma†
Revd Mary Stella*
Mazir Uddin†
Revd David Wright†

* Retired from the board on 18 September 2019

† Elected on 18 September 2019

†† Appointed by the Board on 16 November 2019

The Charity's Objects

As set out in the Articles of Association, are specifically restricted to the following:

- a. The advancement of education aimed specifically at knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of religious faiths with the purpose of the enhancement of religious and racial harmony within the City of Wolverhampton and its environs.
- b. To develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged community of Wolverhampton and its environs in such a way that they are better able to identify and help meet their needs and to participate more fully in society by:
 - i. providing advice and support on how they identify and evidence needs or priorities of their community; how they plan projects; how they source appropriate funding, implementation and sustainability;
 - ii. supporting specific projects that are of benefit to the community helping people to take a full role in and participate more fully in society.
 - iii. The promotion of sustainable development for the benefit of the public by increasing awareness and knowledge in the area of energy conservation and the protection of the environment through prudent use of natural resources, thereby assisting in the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the charity

The activities of Interfaith Wolverhampton have been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic however the Directors consider that the charity has been able to continue to work in line with our charitable objectives. Since March 2020 we have been unable to hold our regular "Bring and Share Lunches" and we cancelled our planned April film evening which has historically been an important fundraising event. Sadly, we have not been able to engage with our school members in in-person projects. In November we held our annual conference in an online form and have instituted an on-line version of the Bring and Share lunch which allows mutual conversation and learning.

We have held governance meetings on-line since March 2020 in the form of regular meetings of the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Vice-Chairs who constitute the Officers. Due to the difficulty of many of our Board to meet on-line, we have not held a Board meeting since March 2020. The Officers have communicated regularly with Board members. We held our first on-line Board meeting on 9 November 2020.

The Director's estimate that Covid-19 did not have a significant impact on the financial position of InterFaith Wolverhampton. The Director's keep the financial situation under review however given the level of reserves held by the charity there is no significant doubt on our ability to continue as a going concern.

Performance and Achievements October 2019 to December 2020

During the year, Interfaith Wolverhampton has contributed to the understanding of faiths within the city of Wolverhampton in diverse ways. We present here a summary of the main events throughout the year.

School visits

IFW continues to support local schools in delivering broad faith understanding by organising visits to places of worship and faith presentations in schools when possible. Although significantly impacted by Covid-19 we facilitated 14 school visits and have increased our school members to 29.

Work with the Local authority

IFW continue to forge strong relationships with the City Council and continue to work in collaboration in reviewing our strategies. During 2020, InterFaith Wolverhampton has facilitated conversations between the local authority and faith groups in the city in relation to the response of faith groups to Covid-19. InterFaith Wolverhampton continues working with the City Council to develop a "Digital Board of Remembrance" as a response to the high number of deaths due to Covid-19.

Safeguarding in faith communities

InterFaith Wolverhampton continues to focus on this critical issue of raising awareness of the need for Safeguarding awareness and training in faith communities. The program has been a success in bringing people of differing faiths together to learn about being compliant with legal requirements. The project has developed through co-operation with WVSC to run train-the-trainers training to build capacity for training in faith communities.

Conferences

IFW organizes an annual conference around the time of Interfaith Week. In 2019, the conference focused on suicide prevention and considered faith responses to suicide. [The 2020 conference focusses on interfaith perspectives on Covid-19].

Holocaust memorial

Each year we work with City Council to facilitate a vigil to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

Annually we organize social events, home cinema and film shows to bring everyone together from all faiths and of none.

Financial review

During the year Interfaith Wolverhampton received a net expenditure of £1,182 which has reduced our reserves to £17,986. While total expenditure was less than in the year ended 31 March 2019, we also saw a reduction in fundraising activity.

The board is mindful of the need to keep expenditure under a tight control and will continue to ensure that we use our income prudently and in line with the objectives of the charity.

Public benefit

Throughout the year, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Future plans

The board will continue to invest in the regular activities of Interfaith Wolverhampton such as the monthly Bring & Share lunches, our schools work, public events such as taking part in civic events such as Remembrance Sunday and Holocaust Memorial Day as well as our popular annual conference. All of this and our future work will be shaped around our strategic aims for the forthcoming year being youth and community engagement and

community support for Covid-19 resilience.

Conclusion

Last year I wrote in this annual report that the uncertainties over Brexit meant we must not be complacent in seeking the peace, harmony and cohesion of our communities. This is ever more important as we continue to live with Covid-19 and plan for the kind of community we want to see after the pandemic given the inequalities faced by BAME communities which have been identified by Covid-19.

Finally, I should like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the Board and the membership as a whole for their continued help and support. In particular I would like to thank Mike Shelley-Smith, a passionate supporter of InterFaith Wolverhampton who retired as our part-time Schools Officer on 31 December 2019 and Gurdev (Devi) Bansal our part-time administrator. Both have shown extraordinary enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism to the work which ensures the success of our efforts, especially during this year as the charity has moved offices and continuing operating throughout lockdown.

Jas Dehar
Chair

[Date]