

North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network
(operating as Race Equality North Somerset)

Annual Report 2021 to 2022



RENS
Race Equality North Somerset



North Somerset Black and Ethnic Minority Network is the name that we have used for many years. However, it was widely agreed that it was time for a new name.

Our new name Race Equality North Somerset (RENS) emphasises the importance of race equality as being of paramount importance in our charity's work and in our view of society.

Our new logo has been specially designed to not only highlight the 'equals' symbol but also to be uniquely responsive to its application and context. It now provides us with the creative ability to show our solidarity with project partners and campaigns by using their own colours when working collaboratively.

In the examples below, the logo was adapted to show our support for a variety of partner initiatives. From left to right: UK AIDS Memorial Quilt Exhibition, Big Green Week, Islamophobia Awareness Month and Holocaust Memorial Day.



A period of transition

This report uses our new name of Race Equality North Somerset (RENS) which has been approved by the Charity Commission as our working name, and which we have been successfully using since we launched our rebrand during Race Equality Week in February 2022. Our new name, reflecting our refreshed commitment to our charity's objects, has been welcomed by VCSFE organisations and is to be formally adopted as part of our updated Constitution at the next AGM.

Our previous Annual Report (2020-21) covered the period of the three COVID related lockdowns that ran from the end of March 2020 to the end of March 2021. Here, we cover the financial year April 2021 to March 2022 and focus on the actions taken following the final lockdown to begin the process of recovery and rebuilding.

During the period of COVID and lockdowns, it rapidly became clear that a return to past activities was neither possible in practical terms nor appropriate within a radically changed landscape. The end of the pandemic heralded the beginning of period of significant transition where we needed to review and reconsider the ways we could best fulfil our objectives.

Two areas in particular shaped our planning; the impacts of the pandemic on daily operations and the increased national and local focus on the impacts of inequality and racism.

Post pandemic, while Wellbeing Café's continued online, many remained reluctant to meet in person. Spaces used by the community closed and online meetings became the new norm. Our Digital Inclusion grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, which allowed us to provide software, training and hardware, provided valuable support for members of the community who needed to continue working this way. However, volunteers who had previously been able to provide a drop-in service and a range of activities at our office in Orchard Place were unable to continue, and it was clear that reopening the office as it was previously used would not be practical.

The context of operations had also changed. The murder of George Floyd had shone a spotlight on the devastating impacts of racism and the pandemic had highlighted the damaging impact of widespread inequalities in the population.

Weston Town Council pledged to be anti-racist in November 2020 and discussions were in progress with North Somerset Council regarding a similar pledge (subsequently adopted in April 2022). Organisations across all sectors were bringing a new focus to the issues raised and there was an obvious need for our organisation to respond by fulfilling a more strategic role.

In response to these challenges, we began to develop a two pronged strategy to reconsider both our approach to community engagement and our operational involvement at a strategic level.

Introduction from the Chair

Community and Inclusivity

Historically, Black, Asian and other ethnic communities have been minoritised and marginalised, leading to mistrust and tensions within and between communities. If we are to have a truly inclusive society that is free from discrimination, then all ethnicities need to be acknowledged and respected as equal and contributory partners in all aspects of life in the UK.

It was with this underlying philosophy that our charity's small single-room office was redesigned and relaunched as a free community hub space; to be used not just for our own organisation or as a drop-in for associated communities but rather for the entire community in which we are all (or should be) equal participants. It was to be a place where the community - of any and all races - could meet or hold events, as equals, and learn more about each other and explore how we can all work collaboratively to improve wellbeing in the lives of everyone.

With the success of North Somerset Council's Community Renewal Fund application, we were able to further develop this approach with the opening of The Other Place.

Organisational and strategic context

Our charity has been considering a change of name for a long time. As an established, 15 year old, award-winning organisation, any new name needed to connect with our own history, acknowledge the many changes in society that have taken place during our existence and also be relevant to contemporary issues in our society. The renewed society-wide attention on issues of racism in particular (and equality in general) highlighted the fact that this new branding was long-overdue and that changes to our name and operational style were now an imperative.

Changing an organisation's name is never easy, but careful consideration was made even more critical in the context of current terminology used in relation to issues of race, ethnicity and culture – particularly as the terms 'BME' or 'BAME' are now regarded as highly contentious and discredited.

Following research and a range of discussions, we returned to a name originally suggested by our Board of Trustees in 2013, which was felt to more clearly communicate our mission and vision; 'Race Equality North Somerset' (RENS). We chose to publicly announce our new name during Race Equality Week (which we began promoting in 2022), and it was welcomed not only by those of various ethnic minority groups but also by the local councils, funders and other organisations in North Somerset and beyond.

In the wider context, the Government Census 2021 showed that more than 1 in 6 people in England and Wales have been born outside the UK. This changing demographic is reflected in the fact that over 80 languages are being spoken amongst our increasingly ethnically diverse communities in North Somerset, and we recognised the growing demand for us, as a dedicated local charity, to support the appropriate identification, co-ordination and delivery of targeted strategies and services.

Introduction from the Chair

However, such work must always be done with regard to the principle of 'Nihil de nobis, sine de nobis' ('Nothing about us without us'). Consequently our new strategy also involves increasing engagement, partnership and collaboration with other organisations and local initiatives covering topics such as Anti-Racism, Placemaking; Business and Economic Development; Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants; Housing; Policing; Health and Wellbeing amongst others.

Conclusion

As we continue developing our programme of activities, our work and our role are being increasingly recognised as making a valuable contribution to discussions relating to the positive, holistic development of the community as a whole.

All of this work could not have been done without the generous support of our patron, Dennis Burn OBE, Deputy Lieutenant; the Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset, Annie Maw; the High Sheriff, Thomas Sheppard; the Mayor of Weston, Cllr James Clayton; the Councillors and Council Officers of both Councils; and the tremendous collaborative efforts of the many organisations and volunteers whose opinions and hard work inform and guide our activities everyday. Our sincere thanks to everyone who has worked with us and accompanied us on our journey in what was undeniably a challenging, but hugely successful, year of transition.

We look forward to building on this foundation; continuing to explore new ways of working and new collaborations that will help us build and contribute towards a more equitable and inclusive society for all in North Somerset.



Ian Noah
Chair, Board of Trustees

Activities and Impact THE CHAT ROOM



Issues of isolation, inclusion and community cohesion were brought into sharp relief by the pandemic, and the impact of these factors, coupled with the severity of disruption to informal and largely invisible support systems that have developed organically over many years, could not be underestimated.


While online meetings had helped fill some gaps, they had not replaced the need for face-to-face engagement. Many groups, including those that provided support for some of the most vulnerable, had been unable to meet online at all.

There was an urgent need for these groups, particularly those that were small and more informal, to be able to reconnect. Without positive action, there was also a danger that new and increasingly diverse communities in the town would remain disconnected at a structural level during recovery, limiting potential and opportunity.

From our conversations with a range of organisations and individuals, we believed that there was an urgent need for a community hub for all; a space that could harness synergies between community groups, continue to build on collaborative community action, spark chance encounters, and build enthusiasm for working together. Such connections need to be given the opportunity to grow organically, and it was felt that the bridging role played by a community hub would make a significant contribution to building towards better connected, more cohesive and resilient communities across Weston, actively enabling and facilitating community-led action.

Activities and Impact THE CHAT ROOM





The CHAT Room
www.thechatroom.org.uk

What happens in The CHAT Room?

The CHAT Room is a multi-purpose space.

Sometimes it is open for anyone to drop in and you are welcome to come in to have a chat or just sit quietly.

Sometimes there will be exhibitions. We're opening this month with PROUD TO BE, a Black History Month exhibition that celebrates the contributions of black people to the UK and around the world.

Sometimes there will be advice sessions run by organisations who provide specific services.


Sometimes there will be open activities, like our knitting circle which is running on Tuesday's at 1pm.

Sometimes there will be closed sessions when the room is in private use by a particular group.

Sometimes it will be waiting for your ideas and action, and nothing will be happening.

The door will always be open when people are in the room, but this doesn't mean that the room is always open to people passing by.

When a closed session is in progress there will be a sign in the doorway with the times that the session is running. Please do respect this and come back when the session is finished.



The Community Hub Action Team & The CHAT Room are non-profit, entirely volunteer led, collaborative projects

In response to these identified needs, RENS (formerly NS BME Network) submitted an expression of interest for the Community Renewal Fund to North Somerset Council. This was subsequently developed into the North Somerset Community Hubs Network proposal, in partnership with other areas in North Somerset, and was submitted to Government by North Somerset Council.

Whilst waiting for a response, and to help address some of the areas of urgent need, RENS decided to take immediate action and converted the existing offices in Orchard Place into a micro, multi-purpose community hub for use by all members of the community. The redesign and refurbishment work was carried out by volunteers and with the support of Pappadoms, and 'The CHAT Room' was opened by James Clayton, Mayor of Weston, on 1st October 2021.

With the use of the space, the existing Community Hub Action Team (CHAT), originally formed as part of the campaign to secure Victoria Church for the community, grew rapidly and the team met regularly to discuss and plan the way forward collaboratively.

With the success of the Community Renewal Fund bid, this team continued to grow to around twenty regularly involved members and, following our move to Meadow Street, became the Meadow Collective.

Activities and Impact BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Black History Month (BHM) is a national celebration that aims to promote and celebrate the history, lives and contributions to British society of those of African and Caribbean heritage and to foster an understanding of Black cultural history. It was first celebrated in the UK in 1987.

However, it had not previously been celebrated in Weston with a coordinated programme. With the development of a dedicated website, ticketing and social media platforms, the aim was to reach as wide an audience as possible with a range of events at multiple venues.

In October 2021, with the generous financial support of Weston Town Council, RENS launched Black History Month North Somerset. The theme for BHM2021 was *Proud to Be* and The CHAT Room hosted the '*Proud to Be*' exhibition with materials produced by the national coordinating organisation, Black History Month UK. It also provided a base for all operations during the month and the connections made with many of the people who dropped in formed the basis for productive discussions that continued beyond October.

During this month, we were delighted that we were finally able to hold a gathering for our charity to be officially presented with the Queens Award for Voluntary Service by the Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset, Annie Maw. This had

been previously prevented by COVID. We were also privileged to be visited by the High Sheriff of North Somerset, Thomas Sheppard.

Our key public BHM events during the month included: The Launch of The CHAT Room and the *Proud to Be* Exhibition; An Evening with Roger Griffith MBE at Weston Museum; Johnny Mars: A Musical Journey at Weston Museum; Marvin Muoneke and fellow 'Ratpacker' Dennis DeMille at The Vaults; Two Man Ting at Weston Museum; Readings: Poetry and Prose by Contemporary Black Writers at The Stable Games Room; and a film Screening of 'Belle' and Closing Reception of Black History Month at The Stable.

The *Diversity Champion* campaign ran throughout the month, with digital badges and banners available for download. Printer stickers and window stickers were also available and we welcomed the community interest and support shown by North Somerset Council's symbolic act of solidarity in flying the Pan-African flag over the Town Hall; a historic first.

All events were exceptionally well attended, bringing together a diverse range of communities in Weston, and the month ended with plans already in progress for BHM 2022!

Activities and Impact

THE COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND



The success of the Community Renewal Fund Application was announced just after the end of Black History Month on 3rd November and planning for project delivery began. RENS was appointed by North Somerset Council to deliver the Weston Community Hubs project within the wider Community Hubs Network, in partnership with VANS and The Stable.

The funding application had been shaped by Complex Systems Theory, with a Participatory Action Research (PAR) programme at its core, with delivery being focused on three key opportunities: more inclusive and equitable community development that improved connections with frequently marginalised communities; building on the recent growth of community-led action; and the opportunity to innovate.

Strong, community-centred collaboration was essential if these opportunities were to be realised and early collaborations were established with LGBT+ Forum and North Somerset Training. Strategic-level discussions were facilitated by the formation of a cross-sector team including representatives from North Somerset Council, Weston Town Council, VANS, CANS, Integrated Care Partnership, Alliance Homes and locally-based businesses. All participants would be trained to use the innovative Wicked Lab Tool for Systemic Change; an internationally recognised methodology for addressing phase transition in complex systems.

Activities and Impact

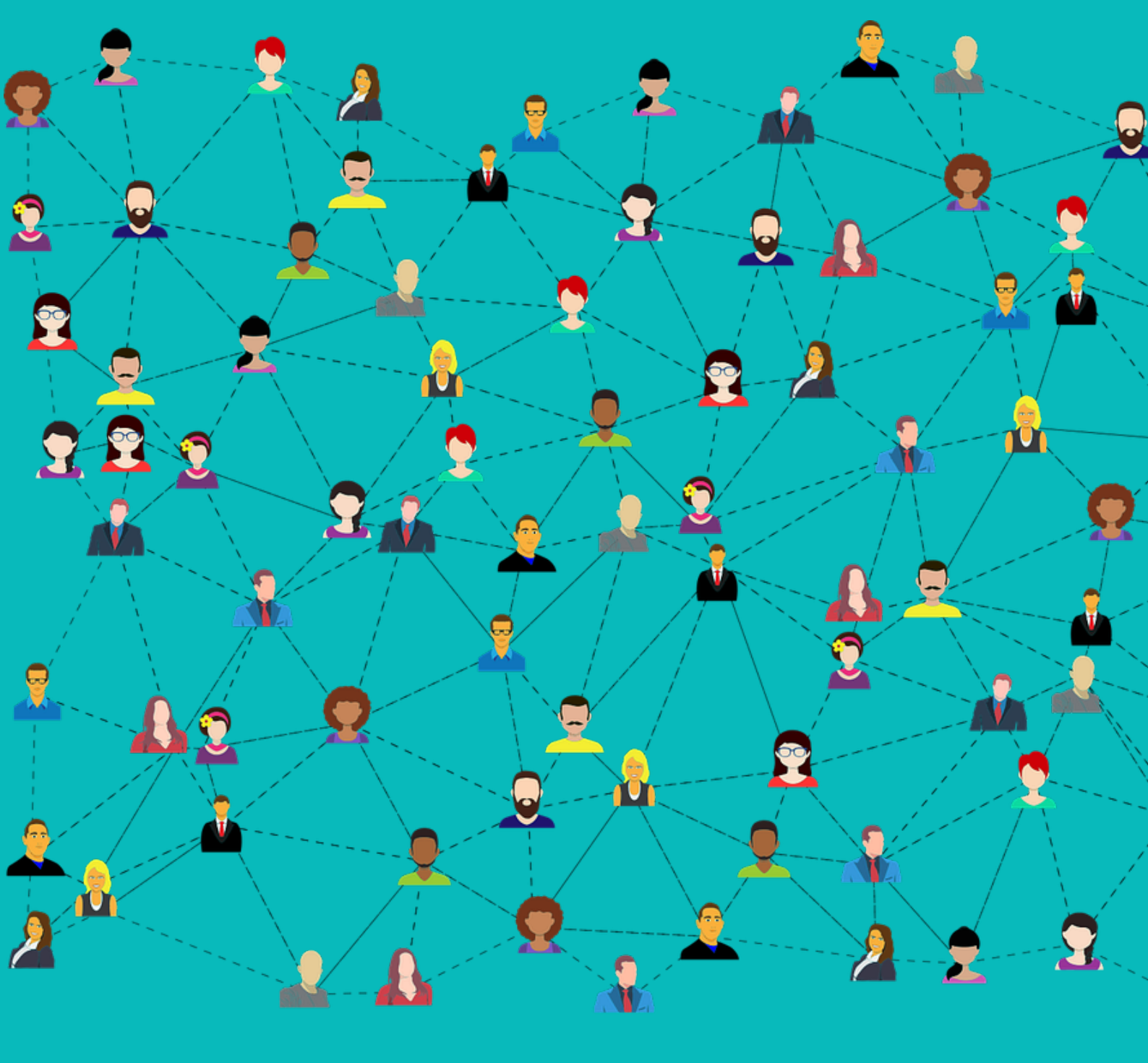
THE COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND



At the core of the project was the need for additional space for inclusive community activity, and in keeping with our philosophy RENS secured the lease on premises in Meadow Street to provide a base for community-led experimentation. The new space was developed in collaboration with the growing Meadow Collective and community partners, and named 'The Other Place'.

Activities began almost immediately, demonstrating the urgent need for such facilities. These included a Community Cafe run by Refugee Welcome North Somerset, Bangla classes run by the North Somerset Bangladeshi Association, an expansion of existing English classes run by RENS, and early meetings. An exhibition hanging system was installed and the launch exhibition 'Our Art, Our Town', curated by Julie Tarr from C&J's Little Shop of Allsorts, celebrated the work of local artists.

The first public event at The Other Place on 26 March was the birthday celebration of a founding member and former trustee of NS BME Network together with the launch of Ago! Ame!, an African and Caribbean group that had developed from Black History Month activities. This was followed by the official launch of The Other Place on 30th March, attended by more than 300 people over the course of the afternoon.



With grateful thanks to all our supporters

Race Equality North Somerset
The Other Place
81-83 Meadow Street
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1QL

office@rens.org.uk
www.rens.org.uk

Reg Charity No: 1162483



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

RENS
Race Equality North Somerset

**North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network
(operating as Race Equality North Somerset)**

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Charity Registered in England and Wales Number: 1162483

North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network

Reference and Administrative Details

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Trustees

I Noah (Chair)
S Ahmed
Y Clark
K Roberts

Registered Office

The Other Place
81-83 Meadow Street
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1QL

Independent Examiner

Michelle Ferris BSc (Hons) FCA DChA
Albert Goodman LLP
Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 2PX

North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network

Trustees' Report

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network (operating under the name of Race Equality North Somerset or RENS) is a registered charity. The trustees present their Report, together with the Financial Statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022, which have been prepared in accordance with the current statutory requirements, and its governing documents.

Constitution

North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, number 1162483, controlled and managed by the trustees, under a governing document dated 1 July 2015.

Trustees

The following were Trustees during the year and since the year end:

I Noah (Chair)	
S Ahmed	
Cllr R Armstrong	(resigned 9 November 2021)
Z Banks	(resigned 9 November 2021)
Y Clark	(appointed 5 January 2023)
J Dunne	(resigned 9 November 2021)
Dr M Kellaway- Marriott	(resigned 9 November 2021)
C Neale	(resigned 9 November 2021)
A Papadelli	(resigned 9 November 2021)
K Roberts	(appointed 9 November 2021)
Z Shamseer	(resigned 9 November 2021)

Trustees are appointed by the current board, based on their expertise and experience of the charity. New trustees receive a copy of the charity's constitution, accounts and major policies on appointment. It is anticipated that any new trustees are likely to already be aware of the charity's operations but full briefing will be given by existing trustees if required.

The charity is run on a day to day basis by its trustees. All trustees are volunteers and practically the operations are carried out by volunteers, both trustees and others. The charity does not have any paid staff.

The trustees consider the major risks to the charity at every meeting and what is being done to manage them.

Principal Activities and Objectives

The objects of the CIO as set out in the governing document are: *"To promote the social inclusion for the public benefit by working with people in North Somerset who are socially excluded on the grounds of their ethnic origin and to relieve the needs of such people and assist them to integrate into society and to promote racial harmony, in particular but not exclusively by all or any of the following means:*

- The advancement of education, social and economic inclusion and good race relations by eliminating discrimination on the grounds of race and encouraging equality of opportunity between the racial groups in the area of benefit;*
- Assisting in the development of voluntary sector organisations representing those persons referred to above;*
- Promoting the efficient application of resources for charitable purposes by charities and voluntary organisations working for the benefit of or for the furtherance of the minority ethnic voluntary sector in the area of benefit.*

North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network

Trustees' Report

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Achievements and Performance

The activities, achievements and performance of the charity are set out in the attached Annual Report.

Financial Review

The income of the charity rose by £94,170 in the year to 31 March 2022, to £115,853 (2021 - £21,683). This was due entirely to the receipt of Community Renewal Funding from North Somerset Council, amounting to £109,785. Associated expenditure also rose from £13,535 to £70,665, meaning that the charity generated a surplus for the year of £45,188 (2021 – surplus of £8,148). This is entirely due to Community Renewal Funding which was not spent at the year end, to be carried forward to 2022/23 – the project was completed in November 2022.

Overall, the funds of the charity carried forward totalled £55,312 (2021 - £10,124), with restricted funds in relation to the Community Renewal Fund making up £50,583 of this total.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards relevant to smaller charities preparing their accounts on the receipts and payments basis.

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements, and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed/constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the board on 30 January 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

I Noah
Trustee

North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network

Independent Examiners' Report

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Independent examiners report to the Trustees of North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network ("the charity") for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act;
or
2. the accounts do not comply with these records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Michelle Ferris BSc (Hons) FCA DChA

Albert Goodman LLP

Weston Gateway Business Park

3 Filers Way

Weston-super-Mare

BS24 7JP

Date: 30 January 2023



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network

No (if any)
1162483

CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 01/04/2021	To	Period end date 31/03/2022
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
North Somerset D.C Grant	-	109,785	-	109,785	10,000
Donations	6,055	-	-	6,055	670
Other Income	13	-	-	13	13
South West Community Grant	-	-	-	-	1,000
National Lottery Covid-19 Fund	-	-	-	-	10,000
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	6,068	109,785	-	115,853	21,683
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	6,068	109,785	-	115,853	21,683
A3 Payments					
Bank Charges	71	-	-	71	-
Projects & Equipment	-	14,400	-	14,400	7,020
Postage, Printing & Stationary	-	-	-	-	153
Repairs and renewals	-	-	-	-	885
Travel	-	-	-	-	100
Advertising	-	-	-	-	37
Accountancy	-	-	-	-	88
ICO Data Protection	35	-	-	35	-
Insurance	312	-	-	312	282
Utilities	1,004	-	-	1,004	720
Expenditure	4,071	2,831	-	6,902	401
Rent	3,900	11,580	-	15,480	3,000
Training Courses	1,377	3,812	-	5,189	705
Softwares and Websites	144	26,579	-	26,723	-
Telephone Charges	549	-	-	549	144
Sub total	11,463	59,202	-	70,665	13,535
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	11,463	59,202	-	70,665	13,535
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 5,395	50,583	-	45,188	8,148
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	10,124	-	-	10,124	1,976
Cash funds this year end	4,729	50,583	-	55,312	10,124

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at bank and in hand	4,729	50,583	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	4,729	50,583	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Accountancy		1,220	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	I Noah	I Noah	30/01/2023	