

Annual Report 2023

Membership

We currently have approx. 26 members who signed up as 'founding members' and paid a nominal fee to become members back in 2019/2020. We chose not to charge a renewal fee or actively pursue membership recruitment due to the Covid 19 pandemic

and the uncertainty surrounding the centre in the interim period. However, we have plans to formalise and open the membership once we have the lease and can officially open and offer incentives to the membership in return for a small annual fee (such as discounted drinks, events etc).

Out of the 26 members, we would like to extend special thanks to those who in the last two years have been a constant presence and source of support at the centre, effectively doing the day to day running of the centre, including repairs, maintenance and staging of events alongside the board.

We would especially like to thank Yella (Odelia de la Cruz), Utchie (Paul Uchegbu), Ralph, Chiaka, Sharon, Linda Priddie, Inspector (Carl Williams) and Jonno (Paul J Johnson) for their contributions.

We plan to appoint a Volunteer Coordinator and expand our network of volunteers to support the Centre's operations whilst also improving our offer to volunteers so we can contribute to the personal and professional development of those that volunteer with us.

Board of Trustees

Our board at the time of writing consists of 12 Trustees:

Michele Ross (Chair), myself Alan Crawford (Secretary), Michaela McCollin (Communication & Marketing), Miriam Serrano (Treasurer), Kerry Nugent, Maleka Egeonu-Roby, Barry Chang, Addae G, Andrea Vaz, Shelda Jane Smith, Deborah King and Junior John Goodall.

We would also like to acknowledge ex-board members Dominique Walker, Sophie Burge, Denise Campbell, and Curtis Holligan and thank them for their contributions as well as the original LACGI shadow board who laid the foundation that allows us to be here today.

Governance & Structure

We began this journey as a limited company called LACGI (Liverpool African Caribbean Grassroots Initiative). At this AGM we are pleased to share with you that we now have two arms - we retain the limited company and have a charitable arm (registered charity). We are also reviewing our policies, procedures, and organisational structure in preparation for taking on the lease and officially opening our doors. As part of this we are undergoing a re-branding with a new logo and name change to The African Caribbean Centre.

Meetings

We have been meeting as a board on a near weekly basis (currently on Thursday evenings) with an open member meeting every third meeting. A quorum has been present at all meetings.

Going forward we will likely reduce frequency to fortnightly and then monthly meetings.

We have also been meeting regularly with LCC (Liverpool City Council) via Teams, liaising with Mayor Joanne Anderson and a team of the council's legal and property officers.

Events & Successes

Thank you to those who have helped to organise events and particularly to the Events Team currently Maleka and Chaika and until recently also myself and Utchie) and the team of volunteers and members who have allowed all our events to take place without paid staff. These events have been a big part in us raising approximately £10,000 plus an additional £15,000 research grant from the University of Liverpool and Humanities Research Council (see Treasurer's Report for more detail).

Alongside many small events (such as family parties, christenings, funerals etc for local community members), I would like to draw your attention to highlight the following events and 'wins' for the centre this last year:

- In February, we welcomed Jamaican artist, Desanna Watson in partnership with the Liverpool John Moore's University who exhibited some of her art at the centre and spoke to local artists and community members.
- In May we put on a fantastic nighttime event, "The Unity is Strength" in partnership with Cool Guy Entertainment, featuring national and local DJ's, London's DJ Slysta and DJ Charlie C, DJ Jade, JAxon, DJ Tizzle, DJ Collguy, and DJ Chento.
- We also held a successful and popular Market at the centre in partnership with the Liverpool Black Men's Group. The market featured exclusively small, local, independent businesses, many of them black owned and celebrating black creativity, black joy and black excellence as well as providing an opportunity for the businesses to network and support each other whilst selling their products to the wider community.
- In the same month we also put out a recruitment campaign for board members / Trustees and volunteers, a recruitment drive which led to some excellent candidates coming forward.
- We also did an online consultation exercise where we asked the question, "What does the Caribbean Centre mean to you." I have compiled some of the answers to that question as an addendum to this report.
- In May we also welcomed artist Amber Akaunu to the centre as part of our partnership with the World Reimagined. Amber is a Nigerian-German filmmaker working in cinema, art & tv to document and explore Black culture, identity, and history.
- In June we held the 'Big Bank Holiday Bash' Fundraiser with DJ's Cool Guy, Charlie C and D Fresh.
- We also, in the same month, held an official Africa Oye after-party in partnership with Africa Oye and Gold Coast Entertainment, featuring DJ's Acapony and DJ Eddy.
- June also included our Windrush Celebration Day partnership with FACT and the Stepping Out, Stepping In 'movement jam session'- an evening of sharing stories, making connections, and sharing possibilities for local artists, activists, elders and community members.
- In July we started a course of dance classes 'fun, dance, fitness celebrating dance from the African diaspora' with Ithalia Forel in partnership with the Black Women's Health Forum.
- In August we celebrated Jamaican Independence in partnership with Culture Deck.
- In the same month, we began to host Ubuntu- The Liverpool Black Wellbeing Collective.
- We held sessions for kids through the summer holidays including Carnival Themed Arts & Crafts and African drumming sessions.

- At the end of August, we celebrated Trinidad and Tobago Independence Day.
- In October we held a joint event with SACHA the Southport African Caribbean Heritage Association who visited the centre to network with our members and trustees and explore ways we can support each other and work together.
- Later in that same month, we were honoured to host Dr Julius Garvey, son of Jamaican National Hero and major 20th Century Human Rights Leader, Rt. Honourable Marcus Mosiah Garvey. We had a reception for Dr. Garvey at the centre and were happy that he agreed to be our patron.
- In November we held a Bonfire Night Firework display which many describing it as the best display on Merseyside! Later that month we held a career day in partnerships with Merseyside Fire and Rescue and a Charity Fundraiser night for Reformed.
- November also saw us post a community Newsletter, Serving & Sharing to update the community on progress at the centre as well as us sending a small delegation to the Manchester Caribbean Centre to attend their Barbados Independence night, network and begin to build links.
- At the start of December, we celebrated Barbados Independence and Republic Day with the Deputy High Commissioner for Barbados and the Diaspora Affairs officer attending, alongside live performances including local drum group, Katumba.
- In December we also held Winter warmer events in partnership with Onward Housing.
- Later in the month we held our annual and much-loved Christmas market with Black Santa giving out gifts to local children. We also had a Christmas Elders Luncheon in partnership with RayRayz Caribbean Cuisine and then successful night events in partnership with Cool Guy Entertainment for Boxing Day and New Year's Eve.

Thank you for attending our AGM and I hope you enjoy the rest of the occasion. Please leave us your email address so that we can keep in touch with you in future about the Centre and our events and activities.

Thank you

Financial Statement LACGI

Liverpool African Caribbean Centre Grass roots initiative (LACGI)

April 2022 - March 2023

Unaudited Accounts

Bank Balance as at 1st April 2022

Credit Union Bank	£	3,230.23	
Cash Plus Bank	£	-	
Cash In Hand	£	830.00	
Total			£ 4,060.23

Income

April 2022 - March 2023	£	44,296.67	£	44,296.67
Including University Donation of £15,000.00				
Total			£	48,356.90

Expenses

Cleaning	£	68.47	
Consumables	£	251.38	
Miscellaneous	£	791.38	
Beverages	£	3,978.98	
Food/Sweets	£	1,200.98	
Building Repairs	£	5,725.49	
Maintenance Materials	£	275.93	
Utilities	£	294.00	
Entertainment	£	1,557.00	
Travel	£	-	
Cash Plus outgoings	£	5,957.32	
Credit Union Outgoings	£	1,085.00	
Total Expenditure			£ 21,185.93
Balance Income Less Expenditure			£ 27,170.97

Bank Balance as at 31st March 2023

Cash Plus Account	£	18,574.07	
Credit Union Bank	£	8,596.95	
Cash In Hand	-£	0.05	
Total			£ 27,170.97