

LEEDS AFRICAN COMMUNITIES CHARITY TRUST (LACT)



TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT & INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust (LACT) is a legally constituted voluntary community-based organisation in Leeds, West Yorkshire, established for the purpose of serving as the umbrella body for the diverse range of African community groups that are operating across the City of Leeds.

It was registered with the UK Charity Commission on 20th October 2020 as a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**, and granted Charity Status Number **1191879** to *advance education for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively, by providing information, advice, and guidance for people of African origin or descent in Leeds; and prevent or relieve poverty for people of African origin or descent in poverty or need, due to their economic and social circumstances in Leeds by providing food items, clothing and toiletries, as well as advice and guidance in particular but not exclusively, for the public benefit in collaboration with other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty.*

The Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust, previously known as the Leeds African Communities Network, was born after a series of meetings organised by a group of concerned Africans, who initially came together under the auspices of Councillor Abigail Marshall Katung to discuss the spate of xenophobic violence in South Africa against African migrants from other parts of the continent.

Our Values

We are a values-based organisation. Respect for human rights and the protection of personal and collective freedoms underpin our standards of behaviour, and we are strongly committed to upholding the following values:

Integrity: We strive to consistently do the right thing, guided by a strong personal and collective moral compass. We endeavour to be fair, honest and truthful in everything we do.

Accountability: We take our mandate seriously and engender accountability mechanisms in our decisions, behaviours and their outcomes, acting in the best interest of our members.

Respect: We inculcate self-respect and are mindful of the feelings, beliefs, views and cultural expressions of others, even when they differ from our own.

Altruism: We give of our time, expertise, talents and material contributions in pursuit of the greater good of others and will make the sacrifices necessary for the achievement of our goals.

Professionalism: We uphold the highest standards of behaviour and draw from our combined mastery of various fields to provide an exceptional service to our people.

Ubuntu: We work in the African spirit of Ubuntu, steeped in the understanding of the interconnectedness of all human beings. We merit collaboration, promoting the spirit of mutual respect as we take a holistic approach to delivering exceptional value to our people.

STRATEGIC AIMS

The Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust is striving to achieve the following:

To provide a dynamic, supportive and innovative service for the wellbeing of our African communities:

- Work with community leaders to identify areas of concern for members, understand their pervasiveness and relevance.
- Identify priorities and prepare targeted action plans with respect to these priorities.
- Offer training and support as required in response to community needs.
- Identify relevant services and increase uptake of targeted initiatives through strategic promotion, networking and collaboration.
- Work in collaboration to find holistic solutions to issues facing African communities in Leeds.

Be a catalyst for community cohesion and development:

- Seek opportunities to maintain and develop intra and inter community interaction.
- Engage with existing strategic networks for collaborative networking and develop new ones where appropriate.
- Promote and share best practice with relevant community, voluntary and statutory sectors.

To become the African voice – providing a larger and stronger participation and representation of all things African:

- Utilising our vast grassroots membership base to ensure that relevant issues are effectively tabled and heard by authorities on behalf of our members.
- Making sure the views and concerns of our members are adequately presented and catered for in key political, legislative, social and economic decisions.
- Raising awareness of and engage with local and national policy matters affecting the African continent and work in collaboration to inform these where necessary.

To promote good citizenship and make a positive contribution to society:

- Encourage members to participate in relevant local and national debates.
- Support members to integrate and build meaningful relationships with others in what is becoming an increasingly multicultural society.
- Contribute to local and national initiatives, working with other communities to engender positive and sustainable change for all.
- Educate and train members on their rights and responsibilities and encourage meaningful engagement with and contribute to relevant issues of local and national interest.

Draw attention to contributions made by the African diaspora, leveraging these for the empowerment of members and their communities:

- Hold awareness campaigns aimed at promoting member activities and contributions in the UK and abroad.

- Design, host and participate in events that honour member contributions in various fields including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), theatre and the arts, business and commerce, academia, public service, sports, tourism, etc.
- Promote a view of Africa that goes beyond 'tribal' cultures, natural resources and catastrophes.
- Empower members to work together to provide a more meaningful contribution to various fields through collaborative work practices, networking, mentorship programmes, scholarships, and funding of shared initiatives.

To grow a strong and sustainable organisation in service to all members:

- Build sustainable revenues through a variety of income streams and use these for the benefit of members and the wide community.
- Develop and embed a research-based framework for the identification, prioritisation and actioning of issues and initiatives.
- Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation tools and systems for impact measurement.
- Ensure sound governance through an appropriately skilled executive team and advisory board, promoting accountability through appropriate reporting structures.
- Recognise staff and volunteer expertise and provide opportunities for continued professional development.
- Maximise organisational effectiveness through actively seeking collaborative working opportunities.

GOVERNANCE

In the financial year ended 31st March 2023, the Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust (LACT) was governed and managed by a Board of Trustees and co-optees, comprising of:

Abdul Rashid Thomas – Chair

Victoria Ajayi – Vice Chair

Lucy Ndlovu – Acting Secretary / responsible for Communications

Yankuba Sawo – Treasurer

Sekou Toure

Mohamed Dawo (Sierra Leone Community)

Bampha Jaiteh (Gambian community)

Makhame Sene (Senegalese Community)

Paul Njoroge – (Kenyan community)

Brouch Boggon - Secretary

Hawa Bah (Guinean community)

Aissatou Turay

Mingson Mingina (Congolese Community)

In this financial year, the Board of Trustees has continued to provide oversight of and accountability for the funds received by the Trust. It has also ensured that the activities of the Trust are consistent with the objectives that are stated in its constitution, approved by the Charity Commission.

The Board of Trustees is the Executive Team that oversees the strategic management as well as day-to-day running of the Trust. Currently, these are all appointed volunteers drawn from various communities bringing their expertise together to develop the Trust and manage its affairs.

Many of the trustees listed above are elected chairpersons or representatives of various African community organisations in Leeds.

The Board met monthly throughout the year via zoom to discuss and approve plans and actions.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2022 / 2023 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Little London Community Food Pantry

The Leeds African Community Charity Trust was successful in its request to the Leeds City Council for grant of £29,100 to purchase and convert a shipping container for use as a community food pantry, located in Little London.

The total cost of the project was £35,000, and the Leeds African Community Charity Trust contributed £5,900 in matched funding.

In this financial year, the Little London Community Food Pantry provided groceries and essential non-foods household items to over 1,200 residents of the Little London, Woodhouse and neighbourhood communities that were experiencing hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and economic impact of the Covid pandemic.

A key objective of the Little London Food Pantry Project is to improve the quality of life for people in the community, by helping to minimise the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on people's health and well-being.

Managed by the Leeds African Community Charity Trust, with the assistance of 14 volunteers, including Local Ward Councillors, the Food Pantry delivered its services every Friday between 12pm and 2pm.

Each beneficiary of the Pantry paid a one-off membership fee of £1, along with a weekly contribution of £3 (paid every Friday) towards the costs of running the pantry. In return, they received a bag of groceries and other non-food items which would normally cost about £30 to £40 in the supermarkets.

Since opening its doors on 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, the total number of households using the pantry grew from 39 on the first day to over 400 that are now regularly using the service; thus, helping to cushion over 1,200 individuals against the cost-of-living crisis (assuming three people in a household).

The vast majority of pantry users were women with children, though increasingly more men came forward to make use of the service.

The pantry also provided free refreshments every Friday, between 12pm and 2pm for service users and their families. The Food Pantry Café brought together people of diverse social background and age, to interact, share stories and experiences. This has helped to combat isolation and loneliness; as well as improving the mental wellbeing of people in the communities.

The Food Pantry Café has also helped in building community cohesion and promoted social inclusion.

Most of the food supplies acquired for the Food Pantry were sourced from Hamara, Rethink, Morrisons and Aldi; and occasionally from Aunty Pheby Stores and CC Continental Supermarket.

The Little London Climate Action Project

In September 2022, the Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust was approached by Together for Peace (T4P) to help develop and manage the Little London Climate Action Hub. A project agreement was signed by both parties, for LACT to act as the employing body of the Project Worker and manage the project funding on behalf of the community-led project Steering Group, as part of the Climate Action Leeds initiative.

The aim of the Climate Action Leeds initiative is to engage a range of communities and individuals in the climate emergency, by developing eight hubs across Leeds to deliver community-led activities that bring sustainable change beyond the duration of the funding.

Community Hubs will come together in city-wide assemblies to ensure that their plans are joined up and learning is celebrated and shared to inspire others. After five years it is envisaged the eight city-wide hubs will have secured the additional funding

required to sustain them. Learning from these hubs will support the development of new hubs in other areas of the city with local funding.

With LACT's involvement, the Climate Action Leeds initiative aims to engage people and community organisations in neighbourhoods across Leeds to develop plans, deliver projects, activities and achieve behaviour change that will contribute to the overall goals of Leeds becoming zero carbon, nature friendly and socially just by 2030.

The community-led Steering Group of the Little London Climate Action Project is responsible for producing an initial and then annual climate action plan. This plan will contain details of activities and hub operations showing how these will contribute to the Climate Action Leeds overall goals of a zero carbon, nature friendly, socially just Leeds by 2030. The plan will also contain a budget showing how the money will be allocated.

The main budget items for LACT are salaries, overheads, and hub activities in support of the Little London Climate Action Project delivery Plan.

In this financial year ended 31st March 2023, LACT received a total of £11,531 funding from T4P, for the employment of the Little London Climate Action Hub Worker, including overheads, and in support of the Hub activities.

LACT has employed the Hub worker to support the development of the Little London Climate Action Project and all local activities that aim to achieve the outcomes of the Little London Climate Action Project and Climate Action Leeds.

LACT has ensured that the Project Worker's responsibilities are closely aligned with the Job description for Hub workers provided by Together for Peace.

LACT has supported the Hub worker to carry out the actions and activities required by the Little London Climate Action Project as appropriate.

LACT has Kept good records of all payments and expenditure incurred in relation to the Hub worker and the Little London Climate Action Project, including receipts and invoices in relation to expenditure.

LACT has provided quarterly reports on all financial transactions to T4P throughout this financial year.

Progress

In this financial year ended 31st March 2023, the Little London Climate Action Project has progressed well. The Project Steering Group has been formed; meetings have been held and discussed local community priorities and actions.

Some trees have been planted by project volunteers in parts of the community. The aim now is to involve local school children in growing vegetables for a school's farming competition in the summer.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2022/2023	
OPENING BALANCE - 1 APRIL 2022	5,107.20
LEEDS CITY COUNCIL GRANT	28,050.00
LEEDS CHRISTIANS CHARITY	9,000.00
T4P - CLIMATE ACTION	11,530.84
FOOD PANTRY SALES	4,522.00
CASH DONATIONS	350.00
REFUNDS	119.96
LORD MAYOR DINNER	850.00
BARCA - GRANT	750.00
OBLONG GRANT	1,500.00
TOTAL INCOME AS AT 31 MARCH 2023	61,780.00
EXPENDITURES:	
FOOD PANTRY SALARY	1,728.00
CLIMATE ACTION SALARY	3,809.60
FOOD PANTRY GROCERIES/SANITARIES	10,667.56

FOOD TRANSPORTATION	737.50
CONTAINER PURCHASE/CONVERSION	8,763.00
PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE	119.19
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT / HOSTING	529.44
LACT PUBLICITY	150.00
ZOOM LICENCE	144.00
COMMUNITY EVENTS	1,310.00
CLIMATE ACTION PURCHASES	1,401.66
MEETINGS - FOOD / DRINKS	735.00
ACCOUNTING PACKAGE TRIAL	4.08
PANTRY CAFÉ	528.17
LORD MAYOR DINNER	700.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	31,327.20
SURPLUS INCOME AS AT 31 MARCH 2023	30,452.80

SIGNED:

Mr Abdul Rashid Thomas

Chairman, LACT