

Birchfield Community Association

Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statement for the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Charity name: Birchfield Community Association

Principal address:

c/o United Reformed Church
13 Wilton Road
Handsworth
Birmingham
B20 3RX

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the charity are:

1. To develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged community of Birchfield Ward, Birmingham, in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society.
2. The promotion for the public benefit of urban regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation (and in particular Birmingham's Birchfield Ward) by all or any of the following means:
 - a) the relief of poverty in such ways as may be thought fit;
 - b) the relief of unemployment in such ways as may be thought fit, including assistance to find employment;
 - c) the advancement of education, training, or retraining, particularly among unemployed people, and providing unemployed people with work experience;
 - d) the provision of financial assistance, technical assistance, or business advice or consultancy in order to provide training and employment opportunities for unemployed people in cases of financial or other charitable need through help:
 - (i) in setting up their own business, or
 - (ii) to existing businesses;
 - e) the creation of training and employment opportunities by the provision of workspace, buildings and/or land for use on favourable terms;
 - f) the provision of housing for those who are in conditions of need and the improvement of housing in the public sector or in charitable ownership provided that such power shall not extend to relieving any local authorities or other bodies of a statutory duty to provide or improve housing;
 - g) the maintenance, improvement or provision of public amenities;
 - h) the preservation of buildings or sites of historic or architectural importance;

- (i) the provision or assistance in the provision of recreational facilities for the public at large and/ or those who, by reasons of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances, have need for such facilities;
- (j) the protection or conservation of the environment;
- (k) the provision of public health facilities and childcare;
- (l) the promotion of public safety and prevention of crime; and
- (m) such other means as may from time to time be determined subject to the prior consent of the charity commissioners for England and Wales.

Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit

The charity was created as a legacy to the Lottery funded Birchfield Big Local programme with the aim of continuing to build the capacity of residents to identify needs and priorities and take action to address them. Birchfield Big Local is due to close out in June 2024 and as close out approaches there has been greater focus on developing the business plan for the charity, strengthening governance and creating a funding strategy to enable the charity to raise the funds required to continue and develop its activities.

The focus for the business plan has been developing Wilton Road United Reformed Church where the charity is based as a community hub where activities of benefit to residents can be delivered. Such activities include the Seniors' Club a weekly session for over 50's which helps reduce social isolation and provides advice and support to older residents. With support from Birmingham Adult Education Service regular adult education classes in English and IT have been provided enabling residents to improve their conversational English and digital skills. A weekly Job Club has enabled people to access help with CV writing and job search and advice on opportunities for further education and training.

The community hub also provides a base for outreach to the local community. This includes energy advice and advocacy on home energy saving measures and fuel bills for low-income households funded through the Energy Redress Scheme and Brum Energy programmes.

The charity has continued to organise community events and activities aimed at bringing people together to celebrate the history and diverse cultural heritage of the area. This has included a second Heritage Trail launched during Birmingham Heritage Week 2023 and the Birchfield Jazz and Heritage Festival hosted at Wilton Road URC.

With the end of Birchfield Big Local and Big Local Partnership fast approaching there has been an emphasis on strengthening the governance of the charity including recruiting new Trustees and running workshops to explore the role of Trustees and good governance. Mark Walton from Shared Assets provided these.

Statutory declaration

The Trustees declare that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

Achievements and Performance

This report covers the financial year from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. Efforts to build the capacity of the charity have intensified as the close out of the Birchfield Big Local approaches in June 2024. Work on the business plan continued with support from Mark Walton at Shared Assets. In addition, work started on a funding strategy with help from Dan Woolley and Megan Romania at Stir to Action. The aim is to target some larger funding sources that will help continue and develop activities at the community hub. This was the first full year at Wilton Road United Reformed Church which provides both an office base and community hub. A much clearer picture is emerging of the annual costs of operating the building to be included in any future funding applications.

B:CAN Energy Programme

Funded through the Energy Redress Scheme and Brum Energy Project, this partnership with five other local community organisations has enabled BCA to provide energy advice and advocacy to vulnerable households in the area. A part-time Energy Adviser was appointed late February 2024 to help deliver the programme which includes face to face advice sessions, energy cafes and home energy visits.

The Energy Redress Scheme funding continues to January 2025 and the Brum Energy funding till March 2025.

Warm Welcome Space

The community hub was registered as a Warm Welcome Space with Birmingham City Council and included in their online directory. The hub is open 10.00 – 4.00pm on two days a week to Birchfield residents looking for company in a warm and welcoming environment.

Seniors' group

The Seniors group meets once a week at the hub where light refreshments are provided together with activities such as dominoes. In collaboration with Athac CIC we are planning to offer arts and crafts activities with the aim of encouraging more women to attend the sessions.

Most of those attending are of the 'Windrush Generation' and in August 2023 were able to participate in Carnival Windrush - an event at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush.

Heritage Trail

Following the launch of the first Birchfield Heritage Trail during Birmingham Heritage Week 2022, a second trail was produced ready for Heritage Week 2023. Called the Red Route – this trail takes us on a journey around the east side of Birchfield. It includes the site of a 2nd Century Roman Kiln; the locations of Aston Villa's first match and first permanent football ground, and the first Odeon Cinema in the UK. It also explores the area's contribution to documentary photography and raises questions about Britain's colonial history. A tour was organised for Birmingham Heritage Week and publicised alongside the Birchfield Jazz & Heritage Festival on the Heritage Week website.

Birchfield Jazz & Heritage Festival

Support from the Commonwealth Games Legacy Community Events Fund and the Mayor's Community Weekend Fund enabled BCA together with Ifa Yoruba Contemporary Arts Trust to organise a Jazz and Heritage Festival on Saturday 7th September.

This was the seventh year for the Jazz Festival and the first time it was held at Wilton Road United Reformed Church where Birchfield Community Association are now based. The festival is a wonderful opportunity to showcase accomplished musicians and promote local talent. The line-up included the Kate Luxmoore Group, Josh Vadiveloo Quintet, Mabowunje Harrison, Gabbidon Acoustic and the Thomas Atlas Band. In the garden there were family arts and crafts workshops with Faith Pearson and ILdiko Nagy and health and wellbeing sessions including boxercise and a smoothie bike with Impact 4 Life. Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor, attended with members of his team.

Financial Review

This is the third full financial year for the charity which was registered in January 2021. Funding sources were a combination of small grants from Birmingham City Council including Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme, Warm Welcome Spaces and the Commonwealth Games Legacy Community Events Fund and funding from the Energy Redress Scheme through the B:CAN Energy partnership led by Witton Lodge Community Association. The latter fund is dependent on the B:CAN Energy partnership meeting quarterly performance indicators and has enabled the charity to employ a part-time Energy Advisor.

The Trustees have been working with Stir to Action to develop a funding strategy for the charity. A priority is raising funds to cover the core costs of running the community hub such as staff, volunteer expenses, rent and utilities. Stir to Action are to provide support in writing some initial funding applications.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

Foundation model constitution

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered 19th January 2021

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Jimoh Folarin	Chair	19.01.2021
Sabirul Islam		19.01.2021
Shamala Antonio		20.03.2023
Lisa Novenster		11.07.2023
Baljeet Singh Ghataora		27.03.2024

Tom Clements stood down as a Trustee during the year and Lisa Novenster and Baljeet Singh Ghataora joined the Trustees. The following expressed an interest in becoming Trustees – Mohammed Zahoor, Nyah Cole, and Mehnaz Afzal – and have been attending workshops on the role of Trustees and good governance alongside the existing Trustees. Many thanks to the Trustees for their continued time and commitment.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustee's report as above.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Signature:



Full name: Jimoh Folarin

Position: Chair

Date: 9th December 2024

Birchfield Community Association

Financial Statement

1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Income

	Amount (£)
Birchfield Jazz & Heritage Festival (CWG Legacy Community Events Fund)	4,700
Warm Welcome Grant Fund	4,000
B:CAN Energy Project (Energy Redress Fund) Quarter 1 – 3 payments	9,285
Brum Energy Project (Feb & Mar 2024)	3,000
Total income	20,985

Expenditure

	Amount (£)
Birchfield Jazz & Heritage Festival	3,849
B:CAN Energy Project – Energy Adviser salary	1000.13
Room hire for Seniors group	1,050
Vouchers for food and other essential items	500
Heritage trail leaflet design	500
Insurance (Public Liability and Employers Liability)	332.08
Total expenditure	7,231.21

Income minus expenditure

20,985.00
7,231.21

13,753.79

Balance from 31st March 2023 **6,079.83**

Balance as of 31st March 2024 **19,833.62**

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Signature:



Full name: Jimoh Folarin

Position: Chair

Date: 9th December 2024