

Sussex Syrian Community CIO

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2024

The trustees present their annual report and examined accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Name of charity

Sussex Syrian Community CIO Registered Charity number
1196947

Address

St. Mary Magdalens Community Centre, 55 Upper North Street, Brighton, BN1 3FH

Website address

sussexsyriancommunity.co.uk

Facebook page:

Trustees

Ahmad Yabroudi (Chair)

Fathi Khalil

Mohamad Khaled Morad

Johnny Massara

Esam Albدين

Jamal Alsakka

Accounts' Examiners

Resource Centre, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton, BN2 0GY

Bank

Barclays Bank PLC, 8 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2TB

Governing document

Sussex Syrian Community CIO is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission on 6th December 2021 under charity number 1196947. It is governed by the constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Association Model) with voting members other than its trustees

Organisational structure

The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits.

The trustees meet together monthly and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to running all the activities provided by the charity.

Appointment of trustees

Trustees are elected by the members of the Charity at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). At each AGM half of the existing Trustees retire. The membership then elects the trustees for the coming year, which can be new Trustees or those who have retired at the beginning of the meeting.

Induction and training of Trustees

Following appointment, new trustees are provided with a copy of the constitution and advised of their responsibilities as a charity trustee. They are provided with copies of all the charity's policies and advised to familiarise themselves with them. They are asked to sign the Charity Trustee declaration of eligibility and responsibility.

Risk management

The trustees discuss possible risks to the charity and how to mitigate them at our regular monthly meetings. We have identified the main risks faced by the charity as follows.

Insufficient funds to run our core activities

In 2022 we prepared a 5-year plan of activities and budget. This allows for inflationary increases in our costs as forecast by the Office for National Statistics. This will be reviewed each year going forward. We have prepared a fundraising plan based on this budget and secured five-year funding from The Lottery Communities Fund, starting in October 2023. This funding will not cover all of our activities and we will still need to apply to other funders. At the beginning of each year we review our budget and plan our fundraising applications accordingly. We review this throughout the year and adapt our activities depending on the level of funds we have been able to raise.

Provision of venues for our activities

The majority of our activities take place at Brighton College, Eastern Road, BN2 0AL and St. Mary Magdalens Community Centre, 55 Upper North Street, Brighton, BN1 3FH. We pay an hourly fee for the use of St Mary Magdalens, which we include in our budgeting. Brighton College very kindly provides us with space free of charge as an in-kind donation. We are aware that this may not always be available to us and so maintain regular contact with the college to ensure we will know in advance if there are any changes to this arrangement and will be able to adjust our funding or activities as necessary. We have allowed for this eventuality in our 5-year budget running 2023 – 2028.

Risk of a serious incident or safeguarding incident

We have robust safeguarding procedures as set out in our Safeguarding policies for children and vulnerable adults, and ensure that our designated safeguarding lead receives regular training.

Objectives and activities

Our objects, as set out in our charity constitution are:

- 1) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by working with people in Sussex who are socially excluded on the grounds of their ethnic origin, religion, belief or creed (in particular, members of the Syrian community) to relieve the needs of such people and assist them to integrate into society, in particular by providing:
 - a) education and training in the English language and in other skills and subjects;
 - b) a local network group that encourages and enables members of the Syrian community to participate more effectively with the wider community;
 - c) social and recreational facilities and events involving the local community.
- 2) The promotion of racial harmony for the public benefit by:
 - a) promoting knowledge and mutual understanding between the Syrian community and all other racial groups;

- b) advancing education and raising awareness about the Syrian community to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups;
- c) raising awareness of Syrian culture by running classes, holding events and sharing information.

Activities and achievements

Public benefit

The trustees are mindful of our duty under section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission. We have referred to this guidance when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. We believe the summary of our activities, outlined below, demonstrates our commitment to creating public benefit in all our work.

Summary of activities

In 2023-24 we have continued to expand our activities to make our community stronger and more cohesive, improve the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone, and support Syrians to access activities and services they need.

Over 600 adults and children have attended our activities over the year. This includes those who were already living in the area prior to the war in Syria, those who have settled here since as refugees and those who are still arriving.

- 240 people received support from our weekly drop in service
- 20 - 30 people attended each of our fortnightly Breakfast Clubs
- 60 adults attended our Sunday classes for English, Life in the UK and Driving Theory
- 125 adults and 90 children came to our Christmas and New Year party
- 35 adults and 60 children attended our graduation celebration
- 85 children attended our Arabic language school
- 20 community members regularly volunteered to support our activities

Our inclusive and vibrant Children's Arabic School

85 children attended our Sunday Arabic School held at Brighton College. We continued to run this free of charge in 2023-24 to make sure no one was excluded. This has helped children from Arabic-speaking families to continue to communicate with their older relatives, to better connect with their heritage, to read literature and access written and spoken information from Syria, and to feel a sense of belonging in the Syrian community locally.

At our graduation event in June 2023 we thanked our teachers for all their hard work and care during the year and celebrated our children's achievements so they could understand how valued they are by all of our community.

Building an integrated and intergenerational community

Every Sunday, alongside the Children's Arabic School, we provided language & skills training, social networking and social activities for adults. These helped established and newly arrived refugees to engage more actively in the wider community through paid work, volunteering and cultural activities.

We ran classes for 26 weeks in:

- English conversation. Giving people exposure and practice in spoken English in an informal environment.
- Driving theory. Run by a qualified driving instructor in English and Arabic.
- Life in the UK. Passing the Life in the UK test is an essential criterion for citizenship applications, so these classes help everyone to establish their life here.

In addition, we shared notices about other training, skills, employment opportunities, job fairs, and cultural activities through our Facebook group.

Festivals and celebrations

Our celebrations build a bridge between our lives in Syria to our new lives in Brighton and Hove. Our Christmas Party in 2023 was a great success. Our very own Father Christmas distributed presents to 90 children and 125 adults attended.

Our planned celebrations for Easter, Mother's Day and Eid al-Fitr were delayed this year as Mother's day (which we celebrate on 21st March every year) fell in the middle of Ramadan. We therefore plan to hold a large '3 in 1 mix and match' community celebration in July 2024. We will have presents for the mothers, activities for the children, and Syrian music so that everyone has a truly memorable day.

Wednesday Advice Drop-in and Breakfast Club

Every Wednesday our team of volunteers provide a free advice service, which is available to everyone and accessed by many people beyond our own community. We help people to access the services they need, signpost them to specialist agencies. We provide a listening ear, translation, accompany people to appointments, and continue to provide support until it is no longer needed.

Every two weeks we hold our Breakfast Club of traditional Syrian food, where everyone gathers and we invite representatives from the wider community to join us.

Making our mark in the city

We connect with and support many other organisations in the city, by sharing our knowledge, experience and culture. This year we were proud to see our esteemed professor of Arabic music, Jamal Al Sakka, travel to Algeria to give a keynote speech on the music and culture of Arabic and Andalucian peoples and receive an award for his work.

Closer to home, our member, Wadee Skaif, was honoured with an award from Brighton Table Tennis Club for the work he has done teaching young people at the club.

Over the year we have worked closely with organisations supporting refugees: in particular, Voices in Exile, Sanctuary on Sea, Music Action, Migrant English Project, Sussex Interpreting Services, University of Sanctuary, EuroMernet, Best Foot Music and T4K. We receive referrals from these organisations.

We have continued our longstanding partnerships with Brighton College (who provide a free venue for our Sunday classes and community celebrations) and St Mary Magdalens Community Centre (where our weekly advice drop-in and Breakfast Club are held). We have received support from the Resource Centre, and our Chair is one of their Trustees.

We are part of the Functional Skills UK network and also signpost/refer people to support organisations, such as CAB, BHESCo, Money Advice Plus, Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, local churches, mosques, universities, and schools.

Use of volunteers

Volunteers are an important resource to us in all our activities. They run the activities, prepare the food, provide transport, give advice and support, and help in too many ways to list. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without them. The majority of our volunteers are also members and beneficiaries. We aim for our volunteers to gain skills, knowledge and experience through their volunteering role that is also an asset to them in sustaining and improving the lives of themselves and their families. All our trustees also give their time freely.

Financial review

Funding sources

In 2023-24 we received grants of £5,000 from Brighton and Hove City Council and £13,309 from The Lottery Communities Fund (Reaching Communities). We carried forward £6,243 from The Lottery Communities Fund (Awards for All) and £1,966 from Brighton and Hove City Council for use during the year.

From October 2023 we have a 5-year grant from The National Lottery Communities Fund, which will amount to £144,211 over the 5 years.

Reserves Policy

At 31st March 2024 we held £14,046, of which £3,259 was unrestricted funds.

We rely entirely on grant funding to run our activities and therefore have a very small level of free reserves. We have always had very limited funds and to date we have always been fortunate enough to receive sufficient funding to cover our costs. Over the years we have learned to manage our expectations and our budgets carefully to ensure we are consistent, sustainable and inclusive. As the year progresses we review our budget and make adjustments according to the success of our grant applications and the cost of activities.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and SORP (FRS 102).

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statement, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent, and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the company will continue on that basis

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. 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.

The trustees for the purposes of charity law who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 1.

Approved by the trustees and signed on its behalf by

Ahmad Yabroudi (Chair)

Signature



Date 22 / 11 / 2024

Sussex Syrian Community CIO

Accounts year ended 31st March 2024

Registered charity: 1196947

Charity correspondent:

AHMAD YABROUDI
ST. MARY MAGDALENS COMMUNITY CENTRE
55 UPPER NORTH STREET
BRIGHTON
BN1 3FH

These accounts have been prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis from information and explanations supplied by the charity.



Mireille Shimoda

Resource Centre
6 Tilbury Place
Brighton BN2 0GY

19th June 2024

These accounts have been approved by the Trustees of the charity.

Signed by one or two Trustees on behalf of all the Trustees

1. 

2. 

Date 28.10.8/2024

Sussex Syrian Community CIO

Statement of Financial Activities year ended 31st March 2024

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2024	Restricted	Unrestricted	2023
Receipts						
Donations & grants	18,309	-	18,309	11,080	-	11,080
Other	-	-	-	668	-	668
Total Receipts	18,309	-	18,309	11,748	-	11,748
Payments						
Expenditure on charitable activities	15,620	100	15,720	24,120	-	24,120
Other	-	-	-	668	-	668
Total Payments	15,620	100	15,720	24,788	-	24,788
Net receipts/payments for the year	2,689	(100)	2,589	(13,040)	-	(13,040)
Funds at 1st April 2023	8,110	3,347	11,457	22,513	1,984	24,497
Transfer of funds	(12)	12	-	(1,363)	1,363	-
Balance of funds at 31st March 2024	10,787	3,259	14,046	8,110	3,347	11,457

NB some additions may vary by +/- £1 due to rounding

Sussex Syrian Community CIO

Receipts and Payments Account year ended 31st March 2024

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2024	Restricted	Unrestricted	2023
Receipts						
<i>Donations & grants</i>						
Reaching Communities - National Lottery	13,309	-	13,309	-	-	-
Brighton and Hove City Council	5,000	-	5,000	7,000	-	7,000
Sussex Community Foundation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brighton College	-	-	-	4,080	-	4,080
<i>Other</i>						
Earthquake emergency appeal	-	-	-	668	-	668
Total Receipts	18,309	-	18,309	11,748	-	11,748
Payments						
<i>Expenditure on charitable activities</i>						
Arabic School - teachers' fees	9,975	-	9,975	8,460	-	8,460
Arabic School - stationery, printing, supplies	123	-	123	535	-	535
Arabic School - refreshments	38	-	38	-	-	-
Arabic School - gifts to teachers	-	-	-	270	-	270
Arabic School - graduation party	306	-	306	1,271	-	1,271
Breakfast Club - food	347	-	347	121	-	121
Drop-in - room hire	1,080	-	1,080	1,200	-	1,200
Drop-in - refreshments	7	-	7	21	-	21
Drop-in - admin and supplies	52	-	52	49	-	49
Events - Mother's day & Easter	-	-	-	1,425	-	1,425
Events - Christmas & New Year	1,905	-	1,905	1,942	-	1,942
Events - Worthing Refugee Choir	100	-	100	-	-	-
English classes - travel	210	-	210	5,490	-	5,490
Driving theory classes (tutor fees)	-	-	-	190	-	190
Committee & volunteer expenses	1,425	-	1,425	1,610	-	1,610
Admin: stationery, printing etc	52	-	52	-	-	-
Emergency family support	-	100	100	1,536	-	1,536
<i>Other</i>						
Earthquake emergency appeal	-	-	-	668	-	668
Total Payments	15,620	100	15,720	24,788	-	24,788
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Sussex Syrian Community CIO

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31st March 2024

Monetary Assets & Liabilities

Barclays current account	16,983
Minus uncleared cheques (108, 117, 118, 120, 185, 186, 195, 196, 197, 198)	(2,965)
Cash in hand	35
Owed to committee member	(7)
Balance of funds held at 31st March 2024	14,046

Non-Monetary Assets

None

Breakdown of funds at 31st March 2024

Restricted funds

Reaching Communities - National Lottery	8,382
Brighton and Hove City Council	2,405

General funds

14,046
