

Kings Heath Action for Refugees

**Kings Heath Action for Refugees
Trustees Annual Report
2022-23**



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Chair's Overview

The year 2022/23 was a landmark year for Kings Heath Action for Refugees, it saw a return to form for many of KHAR's activities post pandemic.

The biggest highlight and change for the team was in August we were successful in our application to become a CIO, a change to our legal status and a commitment to the longevity and the work of the team both looking back and moving forward.

A big feature of the year was a return to in person events, from team favourites like our Welcome Walks, the locally renowned Cocomad, our much loved *Shimmer Shack*, our own community fundraiser KHARNival and even attending markets both old and new with our fundraising merchandise and awareness raising.



KHARNival 2022 on one of the hottest days of the year saw us back in Highbury Park Orchard and thanks to the Chamberlain Highbury Trust including KHARNival in their successful bid to Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games celebrating communities fund, we were able to make the event bigger than ever before across the orchard, the mansion and the lawns.

Our monthly Welcome Walks went from strength to strength with more volunteers attending than previously before and a really strong relationship built with the Initial Accommodation Centre (IAC) we work with, highlights include our first even Iftar, external trips to Think Tank and the Nature Centre and visits from circus company flying seagulls.

Following on from the success of 2021 we fundraised for and delivered over 70 tailored winter packs for sanctuary seekers living in the IAC including hats and gloves, toiletries, chocolates and activities.



We held a new style of event with authors Gulwali Passarlay and Dina Nayeri discussing their work and experiences as asylum seekers, we held it with support from Aston University who also chaired the discussion for us.

We had a hugely successful winter market season attending 7 markets and the launch of our first ever sweatshirts which needed a reprint after selling out.



September 2022 saw our 7th birthday and in January we held our first ever externally facilitated AGM as a charity which was part of a wider team planning day for the committee with a guest speaker to help us focus our aims and ideas for the coming 12 months and allow us to understand our ambitions. These include plans for applying for funding, developing ideas for new events and partnerships, looking at our methods of communications and in house structures to improve volunteering.

Treasurer's Report

Income and Expenditure Account for the Period of 9 August 2022 to 31 March 2023

Income	£
Donations	4,550
Merchandise & Events	4,963
Other	85
Total Income	9,599

Expenditure

Donations	1,737
Merchandise & Events	3,093
General	610
Total Expenditure	5,439

The bank balance is now over £9k due to strong merchandise sales and nearly £6k in donations and grants received, resulting in a surplus in the year of over £8k.

£3K of this was due to a generous donation from a local resident keen to support the work KHAR does.

There was £1200 from a bake sale partnership with the Old Post Office Space and Women in Hospitality in June 2022 and a further £1,100 of contributions from Andrew Souter, GB partnerships and Forum Auctions.

There was also over £4.7k of profit from various events over the year of which KHARNival was the highlight, as well as merchandise sales being strong throughout the period, especially during the Christmas market season.

The largest donations given by the charity over the year were to St Edwards Catholic school (£911) to support the school with activities such as school trips, breakfast clubs and other assorted costs due to the high numbers of Asylum seeking children in the school and earthquake appeals due to the Turkish/ Syrian earthquake, to Molham Team (£600)



Our AGM 2023



KHAR hosted its AGM on 28 January 2023 bringing together committee members and supporters for a half-day review and planning event. We invited a representative from Migrant Help to share information on the hotel and accommodation picture and specific challenges facing new migrants awaiting Home Office processing in Birmingham. As part of an externally facilitated strategic, creative exercise, four priority actions were identified for the year ahead:

1. To improve volunteer engagement through enhanced onboarding, training, briefing and support
2. To further nurture our supporter community and connections through enhanced communications and information sharing
3. To further develop partnership working and connections in Birmingham as part of coordinated refugee support initiatives
4. To increase funding through submitted bids
5. To grow schools outreach and awareness raising in our local community

Significant progress has been made across these priorities during the reporting period as outlined in this report. Of note, in response to the AGM aspirations, KHAR has:

- Introduced a new onboarding and formal training framework to welcome volunteers and a regular bi-monthly support meeting held virtually.
- Created a new monthly e-newsletter distributed to volunteers and supporters and is seeing strong engagement.
- Increased social media content for regular and varied posts to keep followers informed of our work and grown its online following and engagement as a result.
- Connected regularly with other charitable organisations including Birch, Journey and Migrant Help, which has brought significant benefit in establishing new relationships

to support residents at Initial Accommodation new to KHAR in 2023, as well as helping KHAR to effectively invest its fundraising for impact in both community and individual support initiatives (travel sponsorship, housing furnishing, event support)

No new nominations were made for trustee positions due to the newly confirmed constitution and charity status.



Volunteers



We have had a brilliant year with our volunteers and have appreciated their efforts and support greatly. As has become a notable pattern within our work, the international context and news coverage has increased interest in volunteering at points across the year, for example in response to the war in Ukraine. However, the pandemic impacted our ability to offer volunteering opportunities, meaning we had to reinvigorate volunteer interest and capacity. We made efforts to re-engage our committed volunteers and build up new capacity. We have onboarded 11 new regular volunteers, with even more interest. We appreciate the skills and diversity within our volunteer group, from a range of backgrounds and experiences. During volunteer week, we were able to celebrate some of our volunteers

using a media spotlight on our social channels: we shared their photos, some information about them, and the work they contribute to KHAR.

A priority for us emerging from our January 2023 AGM was to streamline our onboarding process for new volunteers, to enable them to understand their role, what is expected, and our overall mission as a charity. We began to make progress towards this, by revising/creating onboarding documents. The first is an overview of our charity, including our history, aims, the type of work we do, and introductions to committee members. We also created a Welcome Walk briefing document. This explains the activity and establishes expectations for the role. Finally, we updated the Befriending briefing document, sharing the core skills associated with befriending, suggested tips for conversing with those we support, cultural considerations, and boundaries of the role.

Overall, our volunteers have engaged in a variety of activities. Between April 2022 and March 2023, we ran monthly Welcome Walks, including a special Iftar celebration. These require volunteers to collect residents from local hotels, and to support providing a meal and activities at a local community space.



Kings Heath Action for Refugees 22
ونستضيف مأدبة إفطار في غروب الشمس الليلة ، 22 أبريل.

العشاء سيكون في كنيسة المسيح ، طريق بيرشور (5 دقائق سيرا على الأقدام من فندق كينسينجتون). ستكون في فندق لنقل السكان من الفندق إلى مكان العشاء. يمكن Kensington أداء الصلاة في مكان العشاء.

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We ran our yearly family festival again, KHARnival, for the first time after the pandemic, and volunteers were very pleased to be able to do this again. Roles included ushering, organising entertainment acts, welcome desk, merchandise stall, supporting activities, our 'shimmer shack'. Our volunteers have also supported our market stalls, selling our merchandise to fundraise. A huge part of our volunteer work is also spreading the word about campaigns we are running/new merchandise we are selling/fundraising initiatives. For example, our winter packs campaign. Word of mouth and sharing social media posts hugely supports us to fundraise and raise awareness, so we ensure to maintain communication with volunteers within our channels and appreciate their efforts.

Partnerships and Stakeholders

KHAR continues to work with existing partners whilst also forging new relationships with organisations and groups supporting refugees in Birmingham. This year, we worked in partnership with the following organisations:

- **Birch Community Hosting Network:** This year, Birch has supported us in setting up our relationship with the Home Office accommodation, Britannia Hotel after our nearest accommodation site shut down. Birch supported us in obtaining access to the management and introduced us to the residents. We work with Birch on an ongoing basis as they, for instance, accompany hotel residents to our events when needed.



- **Migrant Help:** we collaborate with Migrant Help on running joint events for hotel residents, such as our welcome walk to the Birmingham Wildlife Park.
- **Flying Seagulls:** Flying Seagulls is a charity supporting refugees through play and performance. We have partnered with the Flying Seagulls for several of our Welcome Walks.



- **Local business partnerships:** we continue to work with local businesses who support us through in-kind donations or support in facilitating some of our projects or both. For instance, we are supported regularly by a co-working venue. The Old Post Office, who regularly donate their space as well as support our fundraising efforts.

We are also supported by a number of local catering and bakery businesses such as Loaf, Damascena, Grace and James, The Early Bird Bakery and Change Kitchen, who regularly donate items for our Welcome Walks and KHARNival. We also have regular stalls to sell our merchandise at local artisan and craft markets, such as Kings Heath Artisan Market, Cocomad, Paperdolls and the Stirchley Community market who give us free spaces or preferential rates as a charity.

- **Local artists and performers:** we are supported by local artists and performers who donate their time to our events, especially KHARNival. This includes local performers such as Andrew Souter who has also fundraised for KHAR through his Christmas single in 2022.

KHAR also continues to network and engage with other organisations in our area. We attended the Birmingham Migration Forum in December 2022, taking part in discussions on activities supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Birmingham. We also took part in an informal network of groups supporting the Home Office accommodation, Kensington Hotel, whilst the hotel was open.

Events & Markets

It was fantastic to return to fundraising and community events post pandemic in 2022. In June, along with Refugee Support Europe, we hosted Dina Nayeri and Gulawli Passarlay to talk about their journeys as refugees as told in their respective books *The Ungrateful Refugee* and *Lightless Sky*.



In July we were able to hold our annual KHARNival event once again in Highbury Park. For the first time we worked in partnership with Highbury Hall aided with funding from the Commonwealth games “Celebrating Communities” fund, this meant the event not only occupied Highbury Orchard as it had previous years but also Highbury Hall and the

surrounding grounds. We displayed locally crafted “Birds of one sky” throughout the woodland, provided food donated from local independent businesses, hosted musical performances, craft and fitness workshops, lawn games, bicycle donation drop off for Birmingham Bike Project, and stalls including our merch and Shimmer Shack.



We had a great year attending various local markets, including Paperdolls, The Kingsway and Cocomad, with our “Shop with love” stall selling cookbooks, cards and screen printed merchandise. whilst also promoting the work that we do. Our “all together brum” t-shirts and sweatshirts as well as new pin badges were especially successful in the run up to Christmas.

