

Kings Heath Action for Refugees

**Kings Heath Action for Refugees
Trustees Annual Report
2023-24**



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Chair's Overview

2023/24 was another outstanding year for Kings Heath Action for Refugees, with creative fundraising campaigns, a newly invigorated welcome walks project and our first ever indoor KHARNival.



KHARNival 2023 took place on a wet and stormy day in July and provided the volunteer team with the challenge of how to fit a sprawling orchard based festival into the Grade II* mansion house and former residence of Joseph Chamberlain. It was a great day with a wonderful atmosphere raising over £1000 to support summer holiday activities for families.

After a tricky start to the year which saw our long held partnership with a local accommodation centre disappear after it's closure; the latter half of the year saw a revival of our welcome walks in a new city centre venue with an even bigger hotel.



Events this year included a film screening with screen B14 and being the charity partner of a local music festival, whilst attending local festivals such as Kings Heath Street Festival and CoCoMad

Our merchandise and markets presence grew from strength to strength launching new ranges including keyrings, iron on patches, Christmas cards, tote bag and an A3 print and a number of merch collaborations with local partners such as Journey LGBTQ+ Asylum Group and Stirchley Printworks.



Treasurer's Report

Income and Expenditure Account for the Period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Income	£
Donations	2817
Merchandise & Events	11058
Other	686
Total Income	14561

Expenditure	
Donations	3417
Merchandise & Events	10309
General	1802
Total Expenditure	15528

The bank balance is now £8k driven by a deficit in the year which was attributable to over £3k of donations which were mainly to the Holiday Club (£1500), Journey Asylum (£950) and £500 to St Chads.

However there was profit from the sale of merchandise and winter packs of nearly £2k and 2 grants from Asda Foundation and cooperative £1650 towards the production of a cookbook.



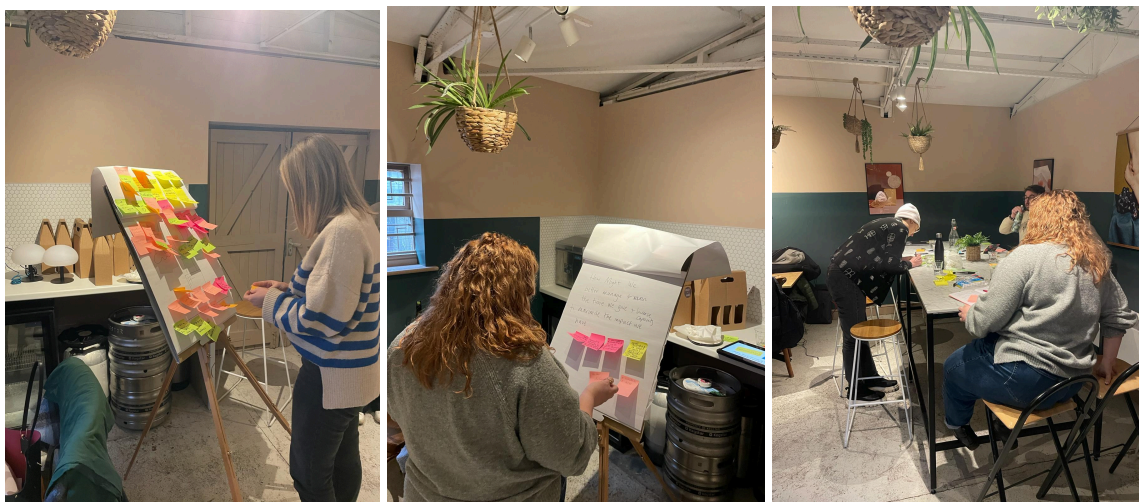
Our AGM 2024

KHAR hosted its AGM on 27 January 2024. The AGM was a half day event, attended by committee members and an external facilitator, who joined us as a volunteer on the day. The purpose of the event was to hold a review of our activities and capacities, and to carry out planning for the coming year.

We had also invited a representative from Migrant Help, to share information on the current situation regarding hotel accommodation in Birmingham and the key issues facing resident asylum seekers. At the time of our AGM, the situation regarding Home Office hotel accommodation was fluid, as hotels were due to close, with other hotels receiving new

residents. Hearing an update from the Migrant Help representative was crucial in helping us learn more about the key concerns of asylum seekers residing in hotels, and understand better the key challenges and opportunities of supporting the different hotels.

The external facilitator led the discussion in which we identified our core strengths, what we do well as an organisation, and our priorities for the forthcoming year. We had extensive time for discussion through smaller break out groups.



As a result of this discussion, we identified the following priority areas:

- KHAR branding, logo and brand packs. As our charity has grown and changed, we felt that our original logo did not work across all of our activities. For instance, merchandise has become an important source of fundraising for us but the logo did not work in a smaller printed format. We also needed to move away from the 'sea' theme of our logo as it held negative connotations for many asylum seekers. We also wanted to have a brand pack to enable consistent branding and visibility for our charity but likewise to have a downloadable pack that our supporters could use if they wanted to fundraise for us.
- Identifying capacity. We identified having capacity but also identifying capacity as a priority. We discussed asking volunteers to identify their key skills and capacities that could be helpful in the work that we do, for instance, speaking multiple languages. We also discussed the potential of hiring specialists for paid work where required, and where we could not get volunteers or had no capacity, such as design work.

We have made progress in these areas in the reporting period.

- We started to identify potential designers we could work with for the branding and logo, looking at the work of local designers. In our subsequent committee meetings, we also started identifying some branding priorities and themes.

Volunteers



A key priority for us that emerged from AGMs and committee meetings, was to streamline and refine our volunteer onboarding process. Much of this work began in January 2023 and continued into the following year. We developed a Standard Operating Procedure for volunteer onboarding, and have practiced in line with this to ensure our volunteers get a positive and supported welcome into our charity. As part of the process, this year we implemented 'reflection sessions' whereby volunteers meet with trustees/committee members roughly quarterly. This has enabled volunteers to come together, connect, learn about committee activities, plan events, ask questions, and raise concerns. We hope this has created more connection and transparency between our committee and volunteers, by creating a space for mutual feedback. 3 reflection sessions were run this year, with positive feedback from our volunteers.



Overall, our volunteers have engaged in a variety of activities. Between April 2023 and March 2024, we ran monthly Welcome Walks, including a special Iftar celebration for those practicing Ramadan. Welcome Walks require volunteers to collect residents from local hotels, and to support providing a meal and activities at a local community space. One of the highlights of our year for volunteers is our family: KHARNival. Despite a last-minute change of

venue due to bad weather, our volunteers and supporters made the day a huge success. Roles included ushering, organising entertainment acts, manning the merchandise stall or

welcome desk, supporting activities, and face glittering in our 'shimmer shack'. Our volunteers have also supported our market stalls, selling our merchandise to fundraise. Another of our larger events is our Winter Pack campaign: we collect and distribute gift packs to residents in local hotels. These often include toiletries, warm clothing, games and chocolate. Our volunteers contributed to the largest distribution yet: they supported packing and delivering 317 packs to local refugees. Finally, our volunteers have readily raised awareness about campaigns/merchandise/events and fundraising initiatives. 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

Kings Heath Action for Refugees continues to strengthen its partnerships and collaborations, working with existing allies while forging new connections with organisations and groups supporting refugees in Birmingham. This year, we partnered with the following organisations:

- **Birch Community Hosting Network:** Birch has played a key role in our relationship with Home Office accommodation, liaising with hotel management and residents on our behalf. They have also accompanied hotel residents to our events when needed. In return, we provided funding for bus travel through Birch, enabling families to attend various cultural events across the city.
- **Migrant Help:** We collaborated with Migrant Help to organise joint events for hotel residents and worked together on our winter pack campaign.
- **Journey LGBTQ+** Are an organisation supporting LGBTQ+ Asylum seekers and Refugees in the Birmingham Area, we partnered with them to produce a rainbow coloured version of our "All together Brum" tote bag with all profits going to the group.
- **Future Days Festival:** The promoters of Future Days Festival, a biannual all-day music event in Birmingham city centre, selected us as their charity partner. We received donations from ticket sales, hosted a market stall, and collected additional contributions at the events.
- **ScreenB14:** We once again partnered with local cinema group ScreenB14 for a fundraiser screening of *Limbo*, a comedy-drama about asylum seekers in a remote Scottish village. The screening was hosted at Kitchen Garden Café, which generously provided their space.
- **Stirchley Printworks:** Designed and screen-printed a limited-edition "*Safety is a Human Right*" print for us to sell. We also produced an iron-on patch featuring the design.
- **Megan Reddi:** A talented local illustrator donated four beautiful Christmas card illustrations, which we printed and sold at our markets in the lead-up to Christmas.



We were also supported by several local restaurants and catering businesses—including Eat Vietnam, Change Kitchen, The Earlybird Bakery, Grace + James, Loaf, and Lil's Parlour—who donated food for our Welcome Walks and KHARNival.

Highbury Hall remained an important partner for our KHARNival event. Due to poor weather, we were especially grateful to be able to host this year's event inside the hall.

We regularly sell our merchandise at local artisan and craft markets, including Kings Heath Artisan Market, Cocomad, Paperdolls, and Stirchley Community Market, all of which kindly offer us free spaces or preferential rates as a charity.

Local artists and performers have continued to support us by donating their time at our events, including KHARNival, and fundraising on our behalf. Birmingham band *Goodnight Berlin* even released a Christmas single, donating all proceeds to our winter pack campaign.

Markets

Markets form an integral part of the work KHAR does as a charity. Firstly, they are one of the most effective ways in which we raise revenue to support our work. In 2023/24, KHAR took part in seven community markets in and around South Birmingham, as well as selling merchandise at two partnership events. Through these, we raised over £5,100 in funds and sold hundreds of items of branded merchandise.

As well as raising money, markets play an important part in developing our local reputation and working with the community. A regular presence at a market means that our products become recognisable and popular, helping to spread awareness of our projects. When we sell items in person, this is an opportunity to promote our projects with the local community, encourage donations to appeals, or advertise forthcoming events.



Markets are also an opportunity to develop volunteering opportunities within KHAR. Volunteers are vital to how we work, and markets are a way for our incredible volunteers to meet in person, develop skills, and see the benefits of their generosity firsthand. In 2023, eight different volunteers kindly gave their time to help out on markets.

From a merchandising perspective, the greatest success in 2023 was the release of our Birds of One Sky tea towels. The stylish design and affordable prices meant that we sold hundreds of tea-towels and had to re-print new items in two separate re-stocks. These tea-towels have been gifted to hundreds of homes, meaning that KHAR merchandise can be found in North America, the Arabian Gulf, and right here in Birmingham.



Winter Pack Campaign - 2023

The 2023 Winter Pack campaign was the largest to date, with around 300 residents at the Britannia Hotel. This led to a fundraising target of £3,300.

Fundraising

- **Increased presence of Winter Packs at market stalls** - creating a 'sample' winter pack and having this displayed at markets allowed potential customers to understand the campaign rather than donating to an abstract concept.
- **Partnership with Future Days Festival** - the festival chose KHAR as their charity partner, donating a portion of ticket costs to us. We also had a merch stall at the event, where the winter packs were displayed alongside our wider merch offering.
- **Social Media** - utilising social media to reach our audience, we posted a number of 'behind the scenes' posts to drive purchases, including the packs being put together.

Purchasing



- **Costco** - with a charity Costco membership we were able to purchase items such as socks and shower gel in bulk. This was quite an undertaking.
- **Utilising wholesalers** - this year, we decided to put the Winter Packs in reusable tote bags that would be useful for recipients. An order was placed in bulk which allowed us to save cost.

Packing

- **Venue** - we were able to use a large hall space at The Old Print Works to pack, which was incredibly helpful and allowed us to create assembly line style packing methods and increase speed.
- **Volunteers** - on the day, we had 20 volunteers, including 4 members of the committee. This meant that we were able to create 317 packs in around 6 hours.



Distribution

- **Location** - delivering packs to only one hotel meant we only needed to liaise with one set of staff. However, the Britannia's location in the City Centre was difficult due to the large crowds visiting the Christmas Markets
- **Transport** - due to both the city centre location and number of packs, we took 4 taxis with two volunteers in each to the city centre. This was not ideal travelling from The Old Print Works narrow entrance at the same time, and the taxis then had to stop on Stephenson Place amongst crowds of the public.

