

# KINGS HEATH **ACTION** FOR REFUGEES

## Kings Heath Action for Refugees Trustees Annual Report 2024-25



# Contents:

<b>Chair's overview</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our AGM 2024</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Partnerships and Stakeholders</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Markets &amp; Merch</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>KHARnival</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Winter Packs</b>	<b>11</b>





## Chair's Overview

2024/25 was another outstanding year for Kings Heath Action for Refugees, with creative fundraising campaigns, a rebrand, bigger targets than ever before for our winter packs, exciting partnerships and beyond.

We saw new partnerships like that with Birmingham Trainee Solicitors Society which helped push our fundraising and volunteering numbers further than before.



Events this year included Queen's Heath Pride, where we became Queen's Heath Action for Refugees for the day, a local Pride event where we fundraised for Journey LGBTQ+ group, and of course our flagship event KHARNival, back in the sunshine of Highbury Orchard after bad weather took us inside last year. A joyful mixture of craft, music, glitter and community.



Our massive winter pack target taught us many lessons about how to streamline our process to maximise our output and the reflection after the event will shape how we manage those campaigns moving forwards.

Our merchandise and markets presence grew from strength to strength launching our No One is Illegal merchandise range with local Instagram upcycler Maisie Violet Rees, a powerful and popular range of T-shirts, totes and sweatshirts with neon and collage inspired design with Birmingham and welcome woven into its message



Most importantly our rebrand helped to shape our direction for the future of KHAR, and bring to light our core brand values.



## Treasurer's Report

### Income and Expenditure Account for the Period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

<b>Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2025</b>		
<b>Income</b>		£
Donations		6,647
Merchandise & Events		15,577
Other		303
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>22,527</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Donations		3,686
Merchandise & Events		12,268
General		2,469
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>18,423</b>
<b>Surplus of Income over Expenditure</b>		<b>4,104</b>

The bank balance on the 31 March 2025 of £12k was supported by a surplus of £4k in the the financial year which was attributable to nearly £7k of donations from, amongst others, the Migrant Helpline (£3k) and a local sponsored event (£1,300).

There was also over £3k of profit from sales of merchandise. On the expenditure side, there were contributions of £3.7k to local projects and £2.5k of running costs for the charity.

## Our AGM 2025

KHAR hosted its AGM on 26 January 2025. 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.

Key planning items included our 10th birthday celebrations and how we could weave that into our work, how to launch our rebrand.





## Volunteers

Our volunteer onboarding process continued to be streamlined. Through collaborating with a local team of solicitors, we gained significant volunteer capacity, as employees kindly offered their time to support our events. Volunteer lead (Sarah) took a break from KHAR from October, whilst spending time abroad, but ensured that a useful handover was provided. The onboarding process continued to be used, involving monitoring for requests, directing to google forms, and making appropriate follow up actions (e.g. adding to relevant whatsapp groups, sending briefing documents). Lucy (chair) took over committee volunteering requests.

After careful consideration of the changing landscape of initial accommodation processes, we decided to stop running welcome walks for local refugees for now, and focus our efforts into our main fundraising events. We understood that we could make a great impact through our partnerships with local charities offering more grassroots support, via fundraising. However, as always, the two most significant volunteer opportunities included our yearly festival, KHARNival, and the Winter Packs campaign. KHARNival 2024 was held on the 21st July at Highbury Orchard and we provided a volunteer briefing meeting, and document, to ensure this ran smoothly. Our volunteers and supporters made the day a huge success. Roles included ushering, organising entertainment acts, manning the merchandise stall or welcome desk, supporting craft activities, and face glittering in our 'shimmer shack'. In December, our Winter Packs campaign was our biggest yet: we collated and distributed 765 gift packs of essential items to refugees in initial accommodation. This involved a significant effort for volunteers on the packing day!



There were also ongoing opportunities to represent KHAR and sell our merch to fundraise at local markets across our city. Finally, our volunteers have been essential in raising awareness about campaigns/merchandise/events and fundraising initiatives. Word of mouth and sharing social media posts enables us to build support and fundraise, so we ensure to maintain communication with volunteers within our channels and appreciate their efforts.



## Partnerships and Stakeholders

We continued working with our existing partners and stakeholders, whilst also creating new partnerships. This year, we partnered with the following organisations:

- **Birmingham Trainee Solicitors Society:** This year we were selected by BTSS to be their charity of the year. This meant we worked with the committee on designing volunteering opportunities to help the early career solicitors give back, attend events and fundraise for our work.
- **Migrant Help:** Migrant Help supports people living in Home Office initial accommodation, and are a key liaison between KHAR and hotels. They support our access to hotels for our winter pack campaign, for instance. Migrant Help also attended our AGM and provided a briefing update on the situation in the hotels.
- **Birch Community Hosting Network:** we continued our partnership with Birch, who are another key liaison between us and hotel residents. For instance, Birch supported our December 2024 welcome walk in Digbeth by highlighting our event to hotel residents.
- **Journey LGBTQ+:** we also continued our partnership with Journey LGBTQ+ group, who support LGBTQ+ migrants in Birmingham. We partnered with Journey to host a stall at our local Queens Heath Pride festival in July 2024, and we supported their fundraising at the festival through the sale of our merchandise and through our Shimmer Shack glitter stall.



- **Future Days Festival:** Future Days Festival promoters are a partner in our fundraising activities. They host KHAR at their music festival in Digbeth. We received donations from ticket sales, hosted a market stall, and collected additional contributions at the events.

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.

## Markets & Merchandise

In 2024/25 KHAR took part in 24 independent traders markets around south Birmingham. Sales at these markets fund our other events and activities throughout the year. Markets are also an opportunity to develop volunteering opportunities within KHAR, and for volunteers to meet in person for a cause. In 2024, 16 different volunteers kindly gave their time to help out on markets.



We had a line of 14 different kinds of products, including clothing, stickers and stationery, badges and patches, art prints, and the ever-popular tea towels. We always price tea towels at £5 to ensure that they are always popular and affordable, and require several stock re-prints every year. Because Birmingham is a global community, our tea towels now appear in kitchens in Canada, Cairo, Karachi, and hundreds right here in Kings Heath.



This year also saw the release of four new popular lines of merchandise. In May 2024, we released a new line of All Together Brum pin-badges. We also worked with a local artist to create our No One Is Illegal design, which was then printed on T-shirts, tote bags, and sweaters for release in June 2024. Then in October we began selling sticker packs,

celebrating each of our four major design lines in recent years. Finally, in November 2024 we launched a range of unisex socks, which have been incredibly popular.



## **KHARNival - 2024**

KHARNival 2024 was thankfully a lot less rainy this year. It took place in July and we were thus able to take our family festival outside again. We had performances from local choirs, acoustic sets, singalongs, and our crafts table and famous shimmer shack were busy all day. As always, we collaborated with local food vendors to provide a range of delicious food. It was a great day with a wonderful atmosphere raising over £1500 to support summer holiday activities for families. We used the money raised to buy mobile phones for residents in local initial accommodation centres, following an identified need from our local partners.





## Winter Pack Campaign - 2024

The 2024 Winter Pack campaign was once again the largest that we have delivered to date, expanding the operation beyond the Britannia hotel to reach more than 600 residents across five hotels. This led to an initial fundraising target of £6,750, which we surpassed by fundraising more than £9,000.

### Fundraising

- **Continued 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. We offered only one purchase value this year, making it simpler for people to donate.



- **Partnerships** - Future Days Festival continued to feature KHAR as their charity partner, donating a portion of ticket costs to us. We also received additional funds from other partnerships, including a substantial amount from Birmingham Trainee Solicitors Society (BTSS) and Sew Brum.
- **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. A last minute push on social media was also successful in gathering additional funds.

## Purchasing

- **Utilising wholesalers** - Building on the ease of using wholesalers for tote bags in 2023, we used further wholesalers to bring down costs per pack.
- **Cash for Kids** - This year we were recipients of donations from Cash for Kids, which allowed us to provide additional toys in children's packs at no cost to ourselves.
- **Local businesses** - We sourced toiletry products from the Bullring Rag Market, supporting local businesses whilst also receiving wholesale cost.

## Packing

- **Venue** - we were again able to use a large hall space at The Old Print Works to pack.
- **Volunteers** - on the day, we had 20 volunteers, including 4 members of the committee.
- **Method** - this year we switched to a production line method, with volunteers adding one item to each pack rather than creating an entire pack each. This made sure each pack had every item in and was more efficient than previous years.
- **Wrapping** - an additional challenge brought by the Cash for Kids donation was to sort presents into age groups and gift wrap them. The volume of toys exceeded expectations and therefore this took more volunteer resource than anticipated.



## Distribution

- **Location** - it was a logistical challenge to arrange packs for multiple hotels, but made easier by the fact that we had numbers for each hotel in advance. This meant we could deliver to each hotel as soon as the correct number of winter packs were ready.
- **Transport** - We were very fortunate to have two volunteers with a van facilitate delivery for us. This ran far more smoothly than the previous year's taxi adventure, and having volunteers dedicated specifically to delivery meant that this could happen on a rolling basis rather than all at once.

