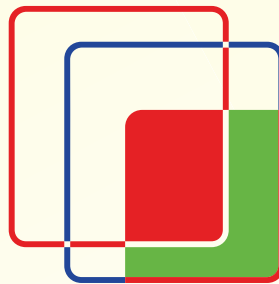




Ilford Community Initiative

Networking ● Community Cohesion ● Empowerment

Ilford Community Initiative - Progress and Activity Report First Annual General Meeting Sunday, 02 October 2022





Khaled Noor



Nurul Islam



Noorjahan Begum



Muhit Uddin

Foreword

The last few years have seen momentous challenges in the UK and around the world. The impact of Brexit, COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine - which become the biggest threat to peace and security in Europe since the end of the Cold War, its consequences will be felt by generations to come.

Communities throughout the UK including those in Redbridge are facing the toughest winter ahead with economic downturn, rising fuel tariffs, the cost of living crisis and a underfunded health and social care system. In the face of unprecedented challenges, isolation and rising need, more than ever before, there is a need for residents and local communities to come together for mutual benefit.

Out of this spirit of resilience and mutual aid, the British-Bangladesh residents in Redbridge, in particular those living in Ilford South and Ilford North constituency areas have organised themselves to set up the Ilford Community Initiative (ICI) in April 2021. We hope that through networking, collaborative working, influencing policy making and working with residents and other organisations, we can better address some of the issues and empower our communities towards better outcomes.

ICI is a non-political voluntary initiative for the residents of British-Bangladeshi from all walks of life. It aims to work as a community platform where members can work for the common good. Through sharing information, sign posting and exchange of opinion; providing facilities for our elderly and youth to come together; organising seminars, roundtable discussions and other activities - we can reach out to residents and make a difference. At the same time, this platform can help build bridges between communities for a better and harmonious society for all.

As part of the ICI Co-ordination Group, over the last one and half years - we have tried our level best to realise the vision to set up and organise this platform. We thank members of the ICI Working Groups, members, donors and our sponsors for their ongoing support and encouragement.

Finally, we are delighted to invite you all to this member lead local voluntary movement. We welcome members, friends, local community groups to come forward to work in partnership for our common good. We believe that with everyone's engagement and contributions, we can look forward to achieving more in the coming year.

Community Engagement

A number of British Bengali Ilford residents had, at various times at local events and gatherings, expressed a wish to have a collective forum where local people of Bangladeshi heritage could convene and have a singular unified voice for the benefit of the community. Residents were keen to share experiences, raise issues of concern and empower one another for the betterment of the community. Many Bengali residents wished to be involved fully in public/civic life but faced barriers. Others were interested in networking, grassroots activism and social mobility. Following the COVID19 pandemic and several lockdowns some Bengali residents were facing the negative impact of social distancing, isolation, socio-economic downturn, and wellbeing issues. They were interested to reach out, get to know fellow residents and create opportunities to improve contact, cohesion and collaboration amongst residents, agencies and organisations.

Scoping Exercise

Local community activists were approached by Bengali residents in Ilford to consider the formulation of a community based voluntary entity for the benefit of local families and individuals particularly those who wished to raise awareness and influence change in the areas of housing, education, arts, culture, anti-social behaviour, crime, health services and other public services. They considered the range of community groups and found a gap. Whilst residents of Bangladeshi heritage both long established and newly arrived groups in Redbridge had access to a variety of statutory and community services and community groups, no singular organisation existed to bring together residents of Bangladeshi heritage with a focus on activism, enablement and building resilience. There was a clear need for a resident lead, shared, unified, non-political local platform for the common good.

Initiation

In April 2021, local Bengali residents together with the support of Cllr Khaled Noor, set up an initial Zoom meeting for Bengali residents in Ilford South to gauge the level of interest and gather ideas, suggestions, and comments about the way forward. After receiving positive feedback and thanks to the enthusiasm of attendees, a proposal was adopted to initiate activity with the aim of setting up an entity called Ilford Community Initiative (ICI) as proposed by Cllr. Barrister Khaled Noor.

Planning Meetings

Khaled Noor and Noorjahan Begum met with ad hoc members/ residents of Bangladeshi origin to organise activity & facilitate discussion on the type, scope and focus of a possible community initiative. Individuals volunteered to complete research and work towards setting up of the initiative. Following feedback from locals, a proposal was drafted and put forward to members for comments.

Working Groups

In order to accelerate the development work of the Ilford Community Initiative, a meeting was held on the 20th June 2021. Following a presentation of the draft summary of the ICI governing document and a question & answer session, Ad hoc members unanimously agreed that Ilford Community Initiative shall be a community platform for the residents of Bangladeshi heritage living within the Ilford South and Ilford North constituency boundaries. It was agreed that two sub-groups will be formed as follows:

- **Community Engagement Working Group**
Lead Member: Nurul Islam

Team Members: Alaur Rahman, Forhad Hussain, Muhit Uddin, Nahim Halim Mahmud, Abdur Rashid, Shelim Khan and Rutba Amin.

This Working Group would be responsible for the creation of a strategy including engagement, publicity and promotion.

- **Community Initiative Drafting Working Group**
Lead Member: Noorjahan Begum

Team Members: Barrister Khaled Noor, Barrister Tareq Chowdhury, Accountant Muhit Uddin, Nurul Islam and Barrister Hamidul Afindi (Liton).

This Working Group would be tasked to collect data, carry out research and draft the necessary constitution, membership and other documents governing the new entity.

In the meeting it was also agreed to form a co-ordination team to lead the tasks and providing strategic direction.

- **Co-ordination Team**

This team would have overall responsibility organising the work of the subgroups and providing strategic direction.

Chief Co-ordinator: Khaled Noor

Team Members: Noorjahan Begum, Muhit Uddin and Nurul Islam.





Drafting Documents

During August and September 2021 both sub-groups met to discuss, gather information, collate and write up the Ilford Community Initiative constitution, Membership Application and publicity materials. The draft ICI constitution document has been written and several iterations circulated amongst members for comment and feedback. The draft clearly outlines the Vision, Mission, Values, Aims, Objectives, Membership, Elections, Organisation Structure, Legal status, Governance and Code of Conduct for members. Following consultation of ad hoc members, the draft document has been finalised and agreed that it will be adopted following members approval at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Launch Event

The ICI celebrated its inaugural launch event on the 12th October 2021 to increase awareness of the groups work thus far and to invite the Ilford South and North British Bangladeshi residents to formally contribute and help the design process.

Feedback on the draft ICI constitution / governing document received at the launch event, thoroughly recorded and compiled, and accordingly the relevant suggestions has been incorporated into the draft document and approved following the meeting of the joint Working Groups of the ICI.

Consultation & Feedback

At the launch event it was discussed that after the AGM, public discussion and feedback will be used to develop an annual ICI Action Plan and Events Schedule. Future meetings, events will include consultation exercises which will inform the Ilford Community Initiative future workstreams. Local and national issues, legislative changes, environmental and other factors will also inform and the work of ICI.

Formulation of Election Commission

The ICI Working Groups met on 11 June 2022 to select and appoint the Election Commission to oversee the Election of the ICI Executive Committee. They are Dr. Rayhana Yasmin, Accountant Mohammed Faruk Uddin and Barrister Zakir Ahmed. We thank them for

coming forward to ensure the integrity and transparency of the election of the executive committee.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) – Working Group Meetings

The ICI AGM and Election date was initially set for Sunday, 24th July 2022, but considering concerns about attendance because of the school holidays; people are away, and number of apologies received in advance, a special ICI Working Group AGM Planning Meeting was held on 16th July 2022 agreed to move the first AGM to 18th September 2022. Accordingly, a revised timeline for elections and make all necessary arrangements were agreed. This follows a membership drive where all existing members are asked to encourage friends, family, and associates to join ICI. A sponsorship strategy is also formulated and implemented to assist with the cost of the AGM, website, and boost ICI funds.

Following the sudden death of HM the Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September 2022, the ICI issued and posted a statement expressing our sadness at her passing and condolences to the King and the Royal Family. And considering the ten days national mourning and the State Funeral of HM the Queen and to show our respect to her, the WGM was held on 11 September 2022 - unanimously agreed to postpone the planned AGM and Networking Event on 18th September 2022 for at least two weeks. It was also agreed that depending on venue availability, the AGM and Networking Event will take place either on Sunday 2nd or 9th October 2022.

Conclusion

It has been a long journey since April 2021. Over the past 18 months, member of the ICI Working Groups has met on many occasions to organise and discuss progress; they shared their expertise and ideas and followed by the detailed discussion they agreed unanimously before taking any action. In realising the aims and in discharging their voluntary responsibilities, the Chief Co-ordinator of ICI Working Group, Khaled Noor and the Lead Member of the Drafting Group, Noorjahan Begum along with Nurul Islam, Muhit Uddin and other members of the WG has dedicated their time and energy with a methodical approach for laying a solid foundation for the ICI. As a result of their dedication and everyone involved, in the past one and half year, we have seen the inception and formulation of the Ilford Community Initiative. A grassroots community organisation with a vision to create a safe, shared, and harmonious space for residents of British-Bangladeshi heritage living in Ilford South and North to come together with the aim to improve their quality of life and to work for common good, is slowly growing and being steered by its members.

Next Steps

Over the next year ICI will aim to do the followings:

- Following the AGM, the Executive Committee (EC) will meet to co-opt members and organise various sub-committees to support the work of the EC, appoint Panel of Advisors and seek Patrons as required.
- Once elected individuals in place, start the implementation of the Action Plan and Events Schedule.
- Encourage residents of British-Bangladeshi heritage to become members and join our regular activities.
- From the public/member consultation, identify the top three issues and consider funding streams/formulate bids for future projects.
- Work with other voluntary, statutory organisations to meet ICI objectives.

ACTIVITIES

Launch Event



The ICI celebrated its inaugural launch event on the 12th October 2021 to increase awareness of the groups work thus far and to invite the Ilford South and North British Bangladeshi residents to formally contribute and help the design process. The event included presentations, public discussion, and feedback on the possible work of ICI and draft governing document/constitution. Food, drinks, entertainment was enjoyed by all. Residents were invited to volunteer, participate, shape workstreams, share ideas, and engage with the future work of ICI.

Coffee Morning

After the new year, ICI members enjoyed a Coffee Morning at Valentines Park on the 12th February 2022. Despite the blustery weather, members enjoyed the opportunity to catch up, enjoy refreshments and take part in fundraising activities. Members feedback included requests for more activities and social events.



Diabetes in Ramadan and Living with Covid19 Health Workshops



Local health data shows that there is a very high prevalence of Diabetes and People of South Asian origin including people of Bangladeshi heritage have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. In response to members requests and local public health data, ICI jointly with the Ilford Islamic Centre, arranged its very first open twin health workshops for the local community in Ilford. Dr Rayhana Yasmin gave an excellent presentation on 'Diabetes in Ramadan' and Dr Imran Ahmed presenting 'Living with Covid-19' workshop. Following the pandemic and with the onset of fasting for Ramadan, this was a timely and useful health promotion event. Members who attended were able to participate in a valuable Q&A session and give feedback on their own experience of both Diabetes and Covid19. The event organisers received positive feedback and will be planning more health information events in the near future.

Eid Reunion and Networking Event



On the 15th May 2022, approximately 75 people including ICI members, friends and community leaders gathered to celebrate Eid-al-Fitr. Members cooked and shared festive food. There were presentations from two young activists, namely Onanna Thulhi and Abdullah Noor about their voluntary community work and Ramadan experience. The event was attended by Sam Tarry MP, who highlighted the importance of community cohesion and activism. Members recited poetry and sang songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam along with fundraising raffle draw were took place. This was a wonderful opportunity for families and individuals to meet and socialise, particularly after so many restrictions in the pandemic.

Finance Reports

ILFORD COMMUNITY INITIATIVE (ICI)
Profit And Loss Account
For the year ended 26 September 2022

		2022	2021
		£	£
Income	Coffee morning income	60	-
	Members' contributions (Launc & Eid reuni	1,080	-
	Membership fee	1,245	-
	Nomonation fee	90	-
	Raffle draw tickets	268	-
	Sponsorship	1,000	-
		3,743	-
		3,743	-
Expenses	Banner	(70)	-
	Coffee morning expenses	(44)	-
	Domain registration	(9)	-
	Food bill to Al Qasar	(530)	-
	Hall hire	(270)	-
	Information and publications	(700)	-
	Logo design	(50)	-
	Raffle draw prize	(29)	-
	Stationery and printing	(340)	-
		(2,042)	-
Net profit		1,701	-

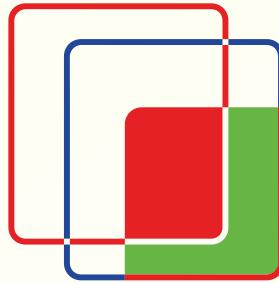
ILFORD COMMUNITY INITIATIVE (ICI)
Balance Sheet
As at 26 September 2022

		2022	2021
		£	£
Debtors	Prepayments (AGM hall hire deposit)	100	-
		100	-
Bank	Current account	1,385	-
	Petty cash	216	-
		1,601	-
		1,701	-
Net assets		1,701	-
		£	£
Profit and loss account	Net profit	1,701	-
		1,701	-
Total funds		1,701	-



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Ilford Community Initiative (ICI) is a common platform for the residents of British Bangladeshi heritage.

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