



**HAWA**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2015-2016**

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## WORDS FROM THE CHAIR

This year has been a phenomenal year for Hertfordshire Asian Womens' Conference (HAWA) we have gone from strength to strength this year. From the launch of the HAWA website to the information and membership letter success that lead to the recruitment of new younger members to join the board of management committee.

This year has been marked by many turning points for HAWA. The dissolving of our sister organisation the UK Asian Womens' conference which had been established for over 40 years in March 2014 marking an end of an era. We came away from UKAWC in 2008 to form our separate organisation, HAWA and have been progressing step by step ever since.

On reflection of the last year, it has been tough and we have worked really hard to survive as an organisation. The imminent threat of the Saheli Tiffen Club project being forced to close led us to re-group and focus on ways to secure the continuation of the project. With the support of management committee we were able to bring this vital service for our elderly Asian women back in operation and then receiving funding to continue the project. We at HAWA are extremely grateful for the support from the Community Grant Fund and Locality Budget.

We had acquired a short-term office space at the Ziggurat building on Grosvenor Road, we were delighted to be given an office space but unfortunately it was short lived as whilst I am writing this report we have been asked to vacate the office space. We are disparately in need of office space and request any organisation for support.

The goals for next year are to continue the strong growth of the organisation by recruiting new members and increasing awareness of HAWA throughout the District. We look to make our management committee even stronger this year by introducing training days for the team. We aim this year to hold a one-day conference on current issues faced by Asian Women. We also would like to focus on working in partnership with other organisations in the district but would especially like to focus on working with the National Alliance of Womens Organisation (NAWO). We at HAWA, would like to raise the profile of Asian Women in British society.

I would to like to especially thank Rushna Miah who has supported and worked along side with me through this year. She has both work commitments and a young family but none the less she worked extremely passionately towards the success of HAWA and the continuation of the Saheli Tiffen Club. Thank you Rushna for all your hard work and support.

Times are changing for our young generation are forever under constraints pressure of life and work. HAWA need younger members to come forward and help enable our organisation to fulfil its aim. You have the abilities and skills to take this organisation forward and your support has not been unnoticed. A special thanks to Romina Begum, Maariyah Khan and Kulsoom Khan for their support.

I would also like to thank the whole management committee for their time and commitment in building this organisation without passionate members that HAWA consists of we would not be the successful organisation that we are now.

## **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

**Chair:** Farhat Zia

**Vice Chair:** Rushna Miah

**Treasurer:** Kausar Nisar

**Assistant Treasurer:** Tamaana hussain

**Secretary:** Rimona Begum

**Assistant Secretary:** Henna Zia

**Social Secretaries:** , Sajida Kamran, Maumoona Khalid

**Social Media Administrators:** Maariyah Khan, Kulsoom Khan

## **HAWA VALUES**

HAWA was founded in 2008 after coming away from its sister organisation, UK Asian Women Conference- Herts Branch. Our aim is to work intensely at the local level for BME (British and Minority Ethnic) women. Our work is primarily based in the area of St Albans City and District and in the future we are aiming to branch out to the rest of Hertfordshire. HAWA is an independent organisation which has no religious, national or political affiliations; therefore membership open to all women.

The Hertfordshire Asian Women's Associations' objectives are to promote education, employment, training as well as guidance. We strive to work towards the advancement of women and promote human rights and gender equalities at a local, national and international level. HAWA aims to:

- Inform, advise and involve Asian Women on issues that affect them.
- To undertake a programme of activities to meet the needs of Asian Women; arrange professional trainers to facilitate empowerment training, to all members and outside bodies or organisations working towards the aims and objectives.
- To work towards a society based on the principles of social justice, equal rights and opportunities for all.
- To support the claim of every citizen to the right to enjoy basic civil rights and freedom.
- To value each and every members contribution.
- To enable Asian Women to take an effective part in the development of their day to day lives in the United Kingdom.
- To obtain and provide advice to Asian women on education, health, employment, housing, welfare, domestic violence, forced marriage, gender equality and any other issues that discriminate women in the UK.
- Enable Asian women to develop their self-confidence, enable them to seek knowledge through education, voluntary work and gain skills in their chosen areas.

## **SAHELI TIFFIN CLUB**

The Tiffin Club is not just a luncheon club but a place for elderly BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) ladies to meet and interact with one another and the wider community. The aim of the project is to help decrease the isolation of BME older women in the community and to increase their confidence for them to access local services and integrate more with the local community. These ladies are from a generation where females were not allowed access to educational facilities and therefore we have tailor-made a basic literacy and numeracy programme for them according to their needs. We also provide exercise classes to increase mobility and motivate the ladies to participate in physical activities outside of the club. After our timetable of activities we provide healthy snacks and refreshments where the ladies have a chance to socialise with each other. Most of these ladies either live alone or are a part of an extended family system where they have no space of their own, and the Tiffin Club helps these ladies come together by interacting with each other and overcoming language and social barriers.

We have been running the Saheli Tiffin Club for almost seven this year we went from strength

years now, however last year we were struggling to continue to provide the service due to funding cuts. This forced HAWA to close the club for a short period while we rethought our strategy on how to re-open the club. HAWA's executive members and the two project coordinators of the Saheli Tiffin Club - Shahnaz and Sadia - helped run the project on a voluntary basis for one whole term until we secured enough funding to continue the project for a further year. With help from the Centre for Voluntary Service (CVS) and their guidance on how to plan and submit a funding application, we were successful in securing funding via two funding applications: the Community Grant Fund from St Albans District Council and the Locality Budget which was supported by Councillor Sandy Walkington. The Community Action Dacorum helped us by providing us with an exercise tutor. St. Luke's Church has also been a huge support with the provision of two English tutors. We are grateful for the support that they have given to the project as without the funding we would be unable to continue to provide this valuable service for the Asian ladies in the district.

The group meet at St Luke's Church on Thursday from 11am - 2pm during term time only. This year we ran the project for 39 weeks with 15+ ladies attending each week. In total we had 585 attendance. We provide a three hour activity programme which includes an hour of exercise class followed by an English class. In the final hour, we arrange for a speaker – from a local organisation – voluntary and statutory organisation to come in and talk to the ladies about what they do and

what services they provide. After this the ladies are served a healthy snack and drink and are given time to socialise with each other.

A report from the English tutors:

*"Since September 2013, we have been teaching English voluntarily at the Tiffin Club. At the outset we had no formal training, just a desire to help the ladies practise and improve their English. However, encouraged by her experience at the Tiffin Club, Angela decided to take a TESOL qualification and is now a fully qualified English teacher. We have recently been joined by a third person, who brings with her valuable experience from her days as a primary school teacher.*

*In our weekly lessons we have tried to cover topics which will be of "everyday" use, such as health, shopping, employing a tradesman, time and seasons. We have also studied prepositions and practised pronunciation, along with a little reading and writing. We want the ladies to enjoy using their English and so try to include some fun activities in our teaching.*

*We feel privileged to have had the opportunity to meet the members of the group. We have enjoyed learning more about a different culture and, in turn, we have shared some of our culture and customs."*

Here is a list of the activities and speaker which the ladies from the Saheli Tiffin Club have participated in.

- Cake making
- Beauty session
- Healthy eating
- Recycling
- Democracy Week
- Local police constable
- Mental Health support



From l-r: Cllr Sandy Walkington at the Saheli Tiffin Club, Flower arranging.

### **HAWA ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER**



For the past two years we have been holding our Annual Fundraising Dinner for Saheli Tiffin Club at the United Reformed Church on Homewood Road in St. Albans. This event normally consists of speakers, entertainment and a threecourse meal, with all profits going directly to the Saheli Tiffin Club. This year we raised over £1000

This year the dinner was well attended and we are thankful to everyone in HAWA who worked tirelessly to ensure that the event was special and successful. We raised over £1000 which helped massively towards the continuation of the Saheli Tiffin Club project.



Bollywood dancer Gopi with the children.



HAWA member Shamima with speaker Jyoshna Ghosh



**OXFAM HERTS HIKE**

HAWA supported the Oxfam Herts Hike for the first time in 2013. The Oxfam Herts Hike is a charity and community sponsored walk or hike which raises funds for a pre-designated cause. Groups of friends and families took part in the walk in the beautiful setting of Heartwood Forest in St Albans, in the depth of Hertfordshire countryside with tea and home-made cakes as they finished in the Scout Hut, as well as a Fairtrade stall and craft activities. Last year the funds helped village communities in Bangladesh prepare for and cope with natural disasters such as floods, droughts and cyclones. This year, money raised will go towards improving girls' education in poor and disaster-hit areas of Pakistan.

HAWA members as well as friends and family took part in the walk last year - and by collecting sponsorship and personally donating to the cause. We were the largest collective group on the day and even received a certificate!



HAWA at the Herts Hike, with Hillary Tyrell from Oxfam

**OXFAM HERTS HIKE FUND RAISING DINNER 22<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013**

We also supported and organised a Fundraising Dinner the following day for the Oxfam Herts Hike at the Abbey Spice Restaurant for with 60 people attending.

Lady Mayor Annie Brewster, Councillor Momtaz Rahim, Hilary Tyrell (Oxfam) and Farhat Zia (HAWA) were the main speakers on the night. HAWA raised over £1000 from the walk and dinner at the Abbey Spice.



Lady Mayor Annie Brewster and Members of HAWA along with Councillor Momtaz Rahim and Hillary from Oxfam. And manager of Abbey Spice

## **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

We are one of the Key partners in the CAB linked project "St Albans linked advice service." CAB have been successful in securing £220,000 fund for two year project and plan to train and support a new triage team in our multi-agency information and advice hub to ensure that clients have quick and easy access to the agency most able to meet their needs and additionally intend to develop an Advice Partner Network (APN) to share and disseminate good practice amongst a disparate advice sector. Farhat Zia represents HAWA and sits on the Board of the Advice Partner Network (APN.)

In February three of our volunteer members Shahnaz, Sadia and Siama were trained for the Meet and Greet role to welcome clients at the hub enabling them to have easy access to the agency and signposting them to certain agencies located outside the hub at St Albans District Council. Our three volunteers work on rota base every Tuesday at the Hub.

The next stage of the project is to work with the local communities to enable communities hubs outside of the core CAB and to train advisors who will be able to provide support and guidance to those in need.

### **ST ALBANS DISTRICT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL COMMUNITY CONFERENCE CUNNINGHAM HUB**

Hertfordshire County Council has completed the £1 million refurbishment works to the former Cunningham Library in Cell Barnes Lane. The refurbished building now houses St Albans Day Services and will provide modern services for those adults with a learning disability, living in St Albans and Harpenden, who need daytime activities, care and support, or whose carers need respite.

St Albans Day Service supports people with a wide variety of needs and aims to provide responsive services in a safe, caring and supportive environment, which meets the needs of each individual, promotes independence and encourages choice. The service offers people a variety of opportunities, including work experience, social skills and leisure activities.

St Albans and District Local Strategic Partnership has set aside funding to help with the development of the Hub as a community centre. It expects that this funding will be used to offset room hire costs for emerging community groups whilst they are becoming established. It is expected that the building will be mainly used by local groups and that the majority should be able to walk to it although limited car parking will be available

### **FACE (FAITH & CULTURE ENTERPRISE), ST ALBANS**

The St Albans Faith and Culture Enterprise (FACE) has been created to support and work with groups from a range of faiths and cultures. The aim is to ensure the voice of people from these groups are heard and to encourage diversity and community cohesion. Rushna and Farhat are on the committee of FACE representing HAWA and meet once a month where various local issues are discussed.

Through FACE, HAWA has negotiated another ladies' only swimming session at Westminster Lodge where there will be a female lifeguard and completely secluded to ensure ladies from the BME community attend and use the facilities. The session is every Friday 7-8pm in the teaching pool.

#### INTERFAITH WOMEN GROUP ST ALBANS

We were invited by the Mother Union to deliver talk on "Women in Islam" and supported by Ann Scrorer, the Chair of the Interfaith Women Group. Furrukh and Farhat carried out the talk which began by stating the five pillars of Islam: the core of the Islamic belief. Furrukh then followed and spoke about women equality in Islam followed by talk about Marriage. Farrukh and Farhat both discussed the way their own marriages were arranged and conducted, and how this has differed from the weddings of our children. They also spoke about difference between arrange and forces marriages.

Over 40 members from Mother Union and other faiths were at this meeting and our talk was well received as we had so many questions from the audience. Since then Furrukh has carried out a talk at the University of Hertfordshire.

#### TALK ON ISLAM AT BAPTIST FREE CHURCH, MARSHALSWICK

Rushna and Mumtaz were invited by the minister Garaham Clarke to give a talk on Islam and the practical way of life as a Muslim. The talk was given to approx. 25 people who attend the Baptist Free Church and other local churches. The session was very informative where people asked many questions regarding the misconceptions about Islam and how the media portrays Islam negatively. Positive feedback was received by the attendees stating that the session was very helpful as we were giving the talk from a personal perspective and from our own personal experiences of how it is like to live in England as a British Musl

### **MUSLIM WOMENS NETWORK UK**

HAWA is a member of the Muslim Women's Network UK. The MWN aims to strengthen Muslim women's ability and to bring Muslim women's

diverse voices to Government. In May 2013 Farhat Zia and Shajida Kamran attended their AGM in the House of Lords hosted by Baroness Halleh Afshar and Barnes Paula Uddin with Jo Swinson Minister of Women and Equality as a key note speaker.



Farhat Zia and Shajida Kamran with Baraness Paula Udd

### **ST ALBANS DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013, Farhat and Shamima attended a one day conference at Wheathamsptead research centre where HAWA was involved in a networking session with other organisations. The profile of HAWA was raised whilst focusing on the employability skills of Asian ladies in the district. We also raised the issue of the cut back of funding for the support of bi-lingual BME children.

Please see attached link for further details: [Community Conference Summary 2013](#)

### **SOROPTOMIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN DAY**

Members of HAWA joined The Mayor of St Albans, the Head of St. Albans Girls' School AGS Margaret Chapman plus many more friends

and supporters who had been invited to “Join Women on the Bridge” in Verulamium Park St Albans. The theme for the day was “Educate to Empower and Enable Women and Girls”. The 50-strong group met on the bridge in the boating lake to symbolise the connection of women all over the world. All attendees wore blue and marched through the park, the end of the walk was celebrated by speeches focussing on uaction for girls locally and in a wider context and the value that it brings in enabling and empowering women and their communities world wide.



HAWA members on the day



HAWA with members of Soroptimist.

## **COMPUTER CLASS**

HAWA opened a 'Computer Class' in a joint partnership with Computer Friendly - a non-profit organisation based in St Albans. The purpose of this course was to introduce the fundamentals of the Windows Operating System, to enable those new to computers to use the mouse & keyboard, to perform basic text editing and formatting and to be able to access the Internet and use email. The aim was to banish any fear of the technology and equip students to benefit from the opportunities it offers. Ten ladies successfully completed the course and have signed up to the next phase.



The Mayor of St Albans, Annie Brewster with Rushna Miah from HAWA

Farhat Zia, chair of HAWA said: "We are very grateful to the Mayor for joining us at our meeting, and for presenting the training certificates. Many congratulations go to the women who have been successful in learning computer skills."

The city's Mayor said: "The Tiffin Club is the most wonderful club that has offered Asian women fellowship, support and fun for nearly a decade. HAWA now reaches beyond their community to work with a broad range of organisations to promote wellbeing in Hertfordshire. Thank you for your inspirational service to St Albans City and District and for your very warm hospitality



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

HAWA would like to thank the following people for their commitment in the past year.

**Angela Jones, Kathryn Walker** and **Gill Ogilvy** – English tutors at the Tiffin Club.

**Daphne**; for teaching knitting at – and for her devotion to - the Tiffin Club.

**Sandy Walkington**, Liberal Democrat Councillor for St Albans South; for his support of our funding bid and speaking at the Tiffin Club Fundraising Dinner.

**Geoff Churchard**, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Sandridge, for his support of our funding bid.

**Jyoshna Ghosh**; for her continued support and her speech at the Tiffin Club Fundraising dinner.

And finally all HAWA members for there continued support and participation

## ACCOUNTS