



HAWA

HERTFORDSHIRE ASIAN
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
community | culture | empowerment

Annual Report 19/20



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Management Structure

Chair: Rushna Miah

Vice Chair: Zia Kiani

Treasurer: **Acting** Zia Kiani/Rushna Miah

Secretary: Rahena Chowdhury/ Ayeisha Ahmed

Funding Co Ordinator: Sabina Mostafa

Executive Members: Rafina Suffee, Zaitun Sadikali, Farhat Zia, Mubin
Mohammed, Sufia Ali

Admin support: Rubeca Khanam

Saheli Tiffin Club

Tiffin Club Project Coordinator: Touria Oulhat

Tiffin Club Sessional Workers: Sadia Sharif and Shanaz Shama

Message from the Chair

I am very overwhelmed to have been selected yet again to be the Chair of HAWA for the fourth year. I was extremely proud to hear from The Mayor's Office that I was one of the nominees chosen for The Mayor's Pride Awards 2020 as a Community Champion of the Year. This Award aims to reward people who have regularly given up their spare time and frequently gone out of their way to help others in the community.

During these past few years, HAWA has encountered many challenges and achieved tremendous progress with wide-ranging results. I am delighted that HAWA has again had phenomenal success in obtaining generous funding from various organisations such as Hertfordshire Community Foundation, St Albans District Council, Barchester Health and Tampon Tax Fund.

HAWA has been working extensively in partnership with the Citizens Advice St Albans to provide free independent, impartial and confidential advice to the BAME communities at The Hub. HAWA is now recognised as one of the main associations in St Albans for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Group. HAWA's main ethos is to empower, inspire and motivate Asian and BAME women in Hertfordshire. We continue to work with Community Action Dacorum and St Luke's Church to provide this vital service to Tiffin Club ladies.

Our aim and objective are to help older, as well as, younger ladies to improve their confidence enabling them to seek knowledge through education and employment. I am very pleased that one of the Tiffin Club ladies has now graduated while others have since found employment. One lady confided to me that her mental health and wellbeing has improved tremendously since she attended Tiffin Club. Hearing these results certainly makes my job worthwhile.

Our Annual Fundraising Lunch was a fantastic event where we raised well over £1,000 for Tiffin Club and Crisis Aid. HAWA was also involved with The Adda Club for the first ever St Albans Big Iftar evening. We continue our multi-faith work with Lady Verulam and her colleagues, as well as with St Albans Faith and Cultural Enterprise and Herts Inter Faith Forum. We were also delighted to be invited to read prayers at the Mayor of St Albans Civic Service at St Albans Abbey.

Our Eid Party at St Luke's Church was very enjoyable and well attended. The ladies also had a great time at Lavender Gardens in Hitchin and at Oxfam Herts Hike in Heartwood Forest. We were delighted to invite various speakers at the Tiffin Club ranging from local and national organisations such as Morgan Sindall Digital Inclusion, St Albans Council and Mind in Mid Herts. The ladies also had a great time helping Sarah Beazley, High Sheriff of Hertfordshire to fill gift bags for Small Acts of Kindness.

HAWA has been very successful in having a very dedicated and committed Management Committee. Unfortunately, our critical work, at The Hub and at the Tiffin Club, had to stop due to the lockdown imposed by the UK Government and Public Health. However, we have joined forces with other Hub partners to provide these services over the telephone and online. I have also kept regular contact with HAWA members, especially those who live

alone or are isolated, to make sure that they are keeping well and to ascertain if they need help with shopping etc.

I would like to thank Zia Kiani, vice chair of HAWA for her continuous support and dedication and all our partners and stakeholders, without their support we would not have been able to fully achieve HAWA's aims and objectives. My vision is to see HAWA grow much further so we can work with other charities as well as with local and national statutory and non-statutory organisations in order to identify gaps in service provision and feed that back to the relevant organisations.

The Big Iftar

On May 18th 2019, HAWA in partnership with the Adda club, St Albans District Council, St Albans Friends Society and other local organisations came together to organise the first ever St Albans Big Iftar. This was hosted in Fleetville Park. During Ramadan the Muslim community fast for the whole month from sunrise to sunset. The event was organised to bring the St Albans community together by sharing the dawn meal when the fast is broken. It also promoted the sharing of knowledge and understanding of Islam.

It was a fun filled event with many stalls, bouncy castle, entertainment for the children, free iftar meal and fruits.

The event was opened by the Mayor of St Albans. Other distinguished guests included the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Rabbi and the Church and Muslim leaders.

The Chair of HAWA, Rushna Miah hosted the event. HAWA had a stall where we sold samosas, pakoras etc. HAWA made £62.00 In total for the Tiffin Club.



Club enjoyed a sunny day out. Upon arrival the scent and sight of the lavender could be smelt in the air from the distance.

A breath-taking and beautiful display of nature, with acres and acres of purple lavender everywhere. Our ladies were given their own paper bags and scissors to cut fresh lavender to take away home. To end the day, we enjoyed a lovely picnic amongst the lavenders. It was a perfect day out for our nature loving ladies and photographers.



HAWA Fundraising Lunch and Auction

On June 30th 2019 we held our annual fundraising lunch for the Tiffin Club and Crisisaid, at Homewood Church in St Albans. It was a wonderful, fun filled afternoon with sumptuous Indian cuisine, auction and raffle. We were privileged to have The Mayor of St Albans Janet Smith, Ruby Raut founder of WUKA and Ameeta Sabharwal from Soroptimist and Aarti Kumar as guest speakers. We also had a singing performance from Nazma. We managed to raise £1084.00 in total, £500 of which was donated to Crisis aid.



Tiffin Club Friends and Family Day

In June 2019 we held our annual party. This year the theme was Eid and bring your friends and family day. The ladies had lots of fun, playing musical chairs, pass the parcel and secret Eid gifts. All the ladies brought dishes which we shared and really enjoyed. We auctioned off a cake which was kindly donated by Artisan Chocolaterie which is based in Hatfield and raised £40 for the Tiffin Club.



St. Albans interfaith Asian women's group

On Wednesday 25th September 2019, Lady Verulam and the ladies from St Michaels church were invited by the 'St Albans Muslim Ladies' group to a live cooking demonstration on Asian cooking at St Paul's church. Some of the ladies made a chicken and dahl curry, vegetable pilau and chapatti. They made them from scratch whilst everyone watched. They explained every stage of the cooking process. Some of the ladies had a go at making the chapattis. It was a fun and interactive session. After the food was made, we shared a lovely meal together whilst chatting and sharing lovely ideas and concepts. We used the St Paul's church kitchen hall. The HAWA ladies contributed by making samosas and pakoras and paid a contribution towards the hall hire. It was a fun and enjoyable afternoon. The ladies thoroughly enjoyed the food and recipes were shared.





Oxfam Hike – Heartwood Forest

In October 2019 the Tiffin Club ladies, HAWA member and St Albans Friends Society took part in the 5-mile hike in Heartwood Forest, Sandridge, St Albans. The Mayor of St Albans Janet Smith also took part. At the end of the Walk we all enjoyed refreshments and cakes which were sold both by HAWA and other members who attended the walk. We managed to raise £565.00 for Oxfam Water Aid and £200 for Kashmir refugees.



Older People's Day at St Albans Arena

On 16th October 2019 HAWA got involved in the Older Peoples day. This year's theme was 'Flourishing Lives'. There were a variety of activities from Music, arts and crafts, entertainment along with stalls such as the fire service, Being green, Staying Independent, Food Bank, Small Acts of Kindness, Arts on prescription just to mention a few. It was a good turnout and a lot of fun.



High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, Sarah Beazley

In October 2019, the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, Sarah Beazley joined forces with the Tiffin club ladies, Rev. Canon Mark Slater from St Luke's church, HAWA members and Small Acts of Kindness to fill 600 hot drinks packs for the Small Acts of Kindness Winter gift bags. These were to be distributed to the elderly and vulnerable in Hertfordshire for winter. Small Acts of Kindness will be distributing around 7000 bags this year. All the participants had a great time, filling the hot drinks packs for the bags and socialising at the same time. We ended our morning with a lovely lunch which was provided by the Tiffin Club members.



Giving Back

Rafina Suffee, one of our executive members of HAWA and a member of Tiffin Club for a number of years has been using her knitting skills to contribute and give back to society. She has done this by knitting blankets and hats for the Syrian Refugees. These hats and blankets are sent by a charity organisation to Syria. During the lockdown period, Rafina has been busy knitting away making hats. This has not only helped her to pass time but has also been beneficial for her health and wellbeing.

When asked for how she felt, Rafina said, "Being part of a group dynamic helps improve social skills and confidence in the Tiffin Club. During this virus epidemic knitting has a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing. I enjoy knitting hats for Syrian refugee children; hopefully it will make a difference in their lives. Also in my religion it is stated 'be good to the neighbour who is your relative and to the neighbour who is not a relative...' Quran, 4:36 - I try to follow this example."



THE ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT CIVIC SERVICE AT THE CATHEDRAL AND ABBEY CHURCH OF ST ALBAN



Zia and Zaitun were honoured to be invited to attend the Mayor of St Albans Civic Service held on Sunday, 20th October 2019 at St Albans Abbey.

We arrived at the Cathedral just in time to read our prayers after June Chapman, St Albans Citizens Advice Bureau and Jacob Head, St Albans and Harpenden Volunteer Police Cadet.

The Civic and Cathedral Processions entered the Nave with the opening hymns followed by the Welcome and Opening Speech by the Dean of St Albans, The Very Reverend Dr Jeffery John. The Choir sang the Psalm and the First Reading of a Lesson from the book of Wisdom by The Deputy Mayor of St Albans, Councillor Sandra Wood as well as The Second Reading of a Lesson from the Gospel of St Luke by The Right Worshipful the Mayor and District of St Albans, Councillor Janet Smith. The Cathedral Choir sing Jbilate Deo. The sermon was read

by The Reverend Becky Leach, Mayor's Chaplain and Vicar of St Stephen's with St Julian, St Albans followed by the anthem sung by The Choir.

After this service, the Civic Procession left the Abbey and went to the City to the District Council office for refreshments and a buffet lunch where Zia and Zaitun briefly had the opportunity to network with the dignitaries.

Kashmir refugee support

In October 2019 Farhat was visiting Pakistan and, in her hometown, they had refugees fleeing from border of Indian-administered Kashmir to safety. A group of 17 people in total with many young children. They escaped from the conflict on border of Pakistan and India having travelled by foot for almost two days. Amongst the refugees was a pregnant woman and an elderly man who was terminally ill. HAWA helped through our network and fundraised over £200 to support these refugees. With this money HAWA was able to house the refugees for three months in a small house and were able to buy food, medicine and clothes. Thank you to our many supporters for donating to this cause.

HAWA Social Lunch

In March 2020, HAWA held its first HAWA members social lunch at Kimaya in St Albans. We enjoyed a variety of dishes and got to meet and chat with the members both new and old. We had lots of fun taking part in the quiz and winning prizes.



Saheli Tiffin Club

Here at the Tiffin Club we pride ourselves on a friendly and welcoming atmosphere providing a safe and fun environment for our Tiffin Club ladies. The primary aim of the project is to help decrease the isolation of BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) older ladies.

The club has helped these ladies to overcome language and social barriers. This in turn has given the BAME ladies confidence in integrating with the local community and local services.

The Tiffin Club gives older people the opportunity to meet with the friends that they have made at the club and to make new friends while having fun and sharing common interests.

The group meet at St Luke's Church every Thursday from 11am - 2pm during term time only.

At the Tiffin club we provide a three-hour activity programme which includes two one-hour sessions of Pilate's classes and two one-hour sessions of English classes. In the final hour, we provide refreshments and arrange for a speaker from a local organisation, voluntary or statutory organisation to come in and talk to the ladies about what they do and the services they provide.

We would like to say a big thank you to our funders, Hertfordshire Community Foundation Tampon Tax, St Albans District Council and Barchester Health as without their continued support we would not be able to offer this valuable service. We would also like to say a big thank you to our volunteer tutors Kathryn and Gill who teach the ladies literacy and our volunteers, Shelina, Monica and Memunawho come in and help every week.

Speakers at the Tiffin Club



Morgan Sindall Digital inclusion

Sizi from Morgan Sindall come into the club and ran 6 training sessions on Digital inclusion. In the sessions they covered:

- How to connect to Wi-Fi or enable mobile data on a smart phone
- How to download new Apps, where to locate the app store, how much they cost & how to install.
- How to log on to my St Albans and access the different areas
- How to use Google Maps and Google Translate Apps.
- How to make video calls, set up email, voice mail, new contacts, Photo messaging
- Also how to stay safe online, by creating passwords, identifying scam emails

The ladies really enjoyed the sessions as it gave them a greater understanding of the services available online and how to use the tools.



Oxfam Hilary Tyrell



HAWA has been working in partnership with Oxfam St Albans for the past six years by participating in their annual Oxfam Herts Hike at Heartwood Forest. Hilary Tyrell from Oxfam visited the Tiffin Club in September 2019 to talk about the walk and this year's fundraising project and other projects they were running in order to fight poverty and suffering across the world. This year's walk was to raise money for clean water in North Africa.



St Albans Council Older People day – Peggy Sharp

Peggy Sharp and Allison Cane come into the Tiffin club in September to invite the ladies to the Older People Day that would take place happening in October 2019. They provided information to the ladies on a variety of activities that would be happening at the event including other clubs they could join, societies and about staying independent such as

transport services, saving energy, recycling and keeping safe. Peggy also spoke about a new scheme that they would be running, Being Green which would allow people to grow their own fruit and Vegetables in allotments which the council would be providing.



St Albans District Council Shop mobility

Alison Cane came to the Tiffin Club with Peggy Sharp to talk to the ladies about Shopmobility Scheme which the council was running, based at Civic Centre, St Peters Street, St Albans. She gave the ladies information on how to borrow a scooter or a wheelchair from Shop mobility along with other items they lend out.

Small Acts of Kindness

Lynne Misner founder and CEO of Small Acts of Kindness came to the Tiffin Club to speak to the ladies about the charity she runs which provides warm winter packs for the elderly. She spoke about what the packs include a blanket, socks, gloves, a hat, a mug and a selection of hot drinks and soup, all packed in a reusable tote bag. These are given out to people over the age of 55 living in Hertfordshire to reduce loneliness, isolation as well as to keep vulnerable older people warm in their homes and connected to their community.



Sustainable St

On Thursday, 14th November 2019, Amanda Yorwerth from Sustainable St Albans visited the ladies at the Tiffin Club. She spoke about the environmental problems relating to plastic. However, there are some positive advantages of plastic including keeping our food fresh, so we waste less, it is sterile and durable. As we use



Working together for an environmentally sustainable district

so much plastic, every year 8 million tonnes of this plastic is found in the ocean causing huge environmental issues, both on land and in the sea. This plastic persists in the environment for approximately 400yrs before it disintegrates. Plastic pollution has a deadly effect on wildlife. Seabirds, sea turtles, seals and other marine mammals are killed after ingesting plastic or getting entangled in it and their natural habitats are destroyed. As plastic can only be recycled once, Amanda explained what we can do to reduce our plastic usage. First, we are encouraged to recycle our plastic through recycle centres. We can re-use shopping bags and even use paper or cotton bags. For storing our food, we can use reusable plastic containers instead of using bags or cling film. Amanda invited the ladies to participate at the two-week Sustainable Festival which was going to run from 23rd May to 7th June 2020. This is an event organized by local groups across St Albans and Harpenden to encourage sustainable living. Each year over 100 events and activities take place. These events include walks, talks, bike rides, plastic free events, litter picks, walk to school etc. The Tiffin Club ladies look forward to participating.

The Women's Institute

On Thursday, the 30th of January 2020 Pamela Kershaw from Hertfordshire women's Institute visited the Tiffin Club. The women's Institute movement started in Britain in 1915 during the First World War. The Women's Institute campaigned for many issues including equal pay, Breast cancer screening, ban on smoking in public spaces, human trafficking, mental health and even bees. The women's Institute offers opportunities for all women, the ethos of the organisation is to inspire women. The Tiffin club ladies found the talk very informative and inspirational.

Holistic Therapies – Sarah Baker

On 13th February 2020, Sarah joined us at Tiffin club. Sarah is a therapist of Reiki, Tai Chi Massage, Meditation and Mindfulness. Sarah did primarily exercise with the ladies. Sarah told them how to balance your body and mind. She discussed how to calm your mind by giving yourself space to manage everyday stresses and strains. Sarah answered a lot of questions which arose in the group. Indeed, it was really an informative session for our Tiffin club ladies.



Mind in Mid Herts

On Thursday 13th March, Maya Karpowicz, from Mind in Herts came to the Tiffin club to speak to the ladies about health services that they provide. Centres are based in St Albans, Stevenage, Hertford and Welwyn Garden City. Their mission is to provide prevention, recovery and support services in Hertfordshire, to empower people to take control of their

mental health. Mind in Herts services include vocational advice, friendship/social groups, peer support, community outreach, counselling, life skills courses and specialist groups (LGBT groups, men's/ women's groups, young person's groups and carers groups). The wellbeing team offer support for people experiencing emotional difficulties such as anxiety, worry, low mood, depression and stress. There is also support for carers and people who are struggling with long term physical health conditions and services for help for women experiencing anxiety or low mood during or after pregnancy. Anyone who wants to learn more about mental health can also take part in a range of high-quality courses and workshops delivered by mental health practitioners, this can be for individuals or an employer looking to better support their workforce. This indeed was a very beneficial talk from Mind in Herts especially for our Tiffin Club ladies who mainly come from the Asian Ethnic background. Awareness is vital as many have no understanding of mental health and the culture of shame and labelling among the Asian community is a barrier for many in trying to access help. It is a huge taboo in the community, whether its cultural, embarrassment or whatever, it is often ignored. The ladies were given leaflets with advice and contact numbers and a referral form if they needed to be contacted.

HAWA HUB

HAWA continues to work in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau to run fortnightly sessions, every other Friday at St Albans City & District Council. Similar sessions are also run every Thursday at Tiffin Club, St Luke's Church, Cell Barnes Lane and every Tuesday and Friday at Mandeville School, Mandeville Drive. Our volunteers are trained and are bilingual ensuring that individuals are able to speak at ease and obtain advice and support they require.

We offer advice on a wide variety of issues ranging from housing, domestic violence, NHS advice on filling out forms for college and blue badge applications.

We have managed to receive funding from St Albans City & District Council of £2912 for a duration of 7 months. We have expanded our outreach work and have now set up telephone consultations which have proved to be popular within the community.

Over the year we have helped hundreds of individuals from different communities including those within BAME communities. We have expanded our partnership with other organisations such as the local NHS Trusts so that we are able to increase our fields of advice that is available. Many have benefitted from our advice and they have felt comfortable enough to return with further issues and more advice.



Habiba Community Garden @ Hixberry Lane

As with each year our community garden is growing and blooming beautifully with new groups joining each year. Led by our Project Lead, Farhat Zia and several HAWA volunteers Rafina and Mubin, our herbs beds have grown vastly and now boast from variety of herbs.



This is our third consecutive year where we have taken part in sustainable St Albans Week. On the 23rd May 2019 we celebrated with Sustainable St. Albans their aim to make the district more environmentally sustainable. Over the course of three weeks 100 event have taken place as this is our district, we love it and want to make it sustainable for generations to come through choices we make. Our Tiffin Club Habiba Garden to take part on “How to grow Asian Herbs” and using recycle wood how to make garden planters and a bench. Rafina and I demonstrated how to grow Asian herbs and spoke about the benefit of different herbs and how would you grow them in your garden using a biodegradable container which are more environmentally friendly. After the talk people were given free samples of chillies and coriander seed to take away and grow, their own. We had a good turnout and number questions from people we answered, and we promoted HAWA to wider community.



Ozzy our helper and volunteer, who is a keen gardener was able to demonstrate and talk to people about making things from recycle wood. We were also supported on the day by Radio Verulam and raised awareness of HAWA Tiffin club project.

We also encourage people on the day to sign petition to ask St Albans District Council to declare a climate emergency and play greater part in responding to it, we ask the Council to: Declare that it recognises a Climate Emergency. Pledge to do everything within the Council's power to make the whole of St Albans city and district carbon neutral by 2030, it was agreed across all party meeting to dedicate enough staff and budget to achieve these aims, including training all Council staff and Councillors. The petition is a community-led endeavour, prepared by the local charity Sustainable St Albans with the support of St Albans Friends of the Earth and supported by HAWA.

Nelly from Sweden has helped and delivered a talk at our Tiffin club to our groups about growing different types of crops at our annual post-Christmas get together with our other groups at the Community garden.



Acknowledgments

HAWA would like to thank the following people /organisations for their commitment in the past year:

Sarah Beazley - High Sherriff of Hertfordshire
Kathryn Walker and Gill Ogilvy – English Tutors at the Tiffin Club
Monica Ali, Shelina Chowdhury and Memuna Khalid – Tiffin club Volunteers
Morgan Sindall
St Luke's Church
St Albans District Council
Herts Community Foundation

Communities 1st

Barchester Fund

Tampon Tax fund

And finally, all Tiffin Club speakers, HAWA members for their continued support and participation.