



HAWA

HERTFORDSHIRE ASIAN
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
community | culture | empowerment



Annual Report 2020

hawaherts.co.uk

Management Structure

Chair: Rushna Miah

Vice Chair: Zia Kiani

Acting Treasurer: Zia Kiani/Rushna Miah

Secretary: Rahena Chowdhury

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

Social Media Administrator: Mouna Vacca

Admin Support: Yasmin Vacca

Saheli Tiffin Club

Tiffin Club Project Coordinator: Touria Oulhat

Tiffin Club Sessional Workers: Sadia Sharif and Shanaz Shama

Message from the Chair

This year has proved to be a year like no other. The Covid 19 Pandemic brought the whole world to a halt and forced us to slow down the pace of life. With the Lockdown came many challenges, social distancing rules, staying and working from home became the new norm for us all. HAWA like many other organisations had to make decisions to close the Tiffin club and other services due to the pandemic to ensure safety and wellbeing of our members. Unfortunately, we lost 4 dear members of HAWA to Covid 19 - Siria Choudhury, Daphne, Bithi Roy Choudhury and Vasanthi. I would like to pay tribute to these ladies who were valued members of HAWA and to the contributions they made. They will forever remain in our hearts. I also want to mention how much I appreciate the support from our HAWA Vice Chair Zia who during the year lost her niece and her mother, Sanam Kiani and Khanam Ji.

Nevertheless, HAWA Team and volunteers came forward and worked relentlessly to fulfill the needs of the community and ensure that help was at hand for those that reached out for help. The HAWA team immediately sought alternative ways to help the community by setting up The HAWA Hub services via the virtual medium, online exercise and literacy classes to deliver healthy fruit and snacks to our Tiffin club members to ensure that they are well looked after. Working in partnership with the St Albans & District Foodbank, HAWA helped with food donations for those families and residents in the community who were struggling as a result for the pandemic. From prescription collection, food shopping, befriending service, to ensuring our members, especially the elders were safe and well. I personally made regular contact with them to have a chat to make sure that they were okay as many were living on their own, isolated and lonely.

They were pleased to hear a friendly voice and chat about how they were feeling. HAWA also made valuable contributions to other countries and regularly donated to causes such as the Leicester Children's Hospital, St Albans Oxfam, Humanity Care Fund, Winter Blanket project, Syrian Winter Coal project to name a few. This was made possible as we had a regular business donor. I would like to thank Ronnie from Kimaya for his invaluable contribution. I would also like to thank all the HAWA management committee, Tiffin club staff and volunteers for their continued support and hard work during the past year. We have a wonderful team, and I am proud to lead such a hardworking and dedicated team. HAWA is going from strength to strength as we continue to work in partnership with many statutory and non- statutory organisations for the betterment of the community we serve. However, on a sad note our Funding Coordinator, Sabina Mostafa will be standing down after 4 Years of being on the management committee and our Secretary Rahena Chowdhury. I would like to thank them both for all their hard work. Both Sabina and Rahena have made valuable contributions to the team and will be greatly missed. They will however stay on as members and will continue to support HAWA. I would also like to thank all our funders, without their help, HAWA would not have been able to provide and sustain the services we are delivering. As the lockdown eases, I am hopeful that we will soon be able to resume our normal services. I look forward to another year of running HAWA. Whatever lies ahead, I am confident the HAWA team will rise to the challenge in a positive way and will continue with the wonderful work and excel in what we do.

Best Wishes,

Rushna Miah

Chair

Hertfordshire Asian Women's Association (HAWA)

HAWA

Introduction

Our Values at HAWA are to support members of our community, including those who are vulnerable, in need of support and the B.A.M.E community. In 2020 we faced many challenges as an organisation, however as a community we were able to unite together on many occasions. Below are some of the activities and events that took place throughout the year.

Food Bank

As many people struggled in 2020 to feed themselves and their families, we at HAWA decided to help in many different ways, one of which was by collecting and donating food to the St Albans food bank. We would also like to thank everyone who supported this initiative, to advocate for members of our local community. A very special thank you to Ronnie at Kimaya Restaurant for his generous donations.



The Big Iftar

COVID-19 had a huge impact on celebrations, events and festivities that are normally carried out throughout the year. Technology helped us adapt to these new changes, so that The Big Iftar could be held virtually during Ramadan. We had to reflect and find different ways to support our community during this time. Fortunately, many people from different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs came together to show their support for the Muslim community. During May 2020, various members of the council including the Mayor of St. Albans, Janet Smith, the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire Sarah Beazley, local MP's and many people from our local community took part in this event by fasting from dawn until sunrise. Those who fasted for the day were given gift bags

full of food to break their fast in the evening, which was a very positive sign of joining in with those in our community who observe the month of Ramadan.



Small Acts of Kindness

This year we wanted to continue to aid those who needed support, especially those who faced difficult times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent government lockdown. By collaborating with Small Acts of Kindness we distributed winter gift bags with essential items such as hot drink packs, Mugs, socks, gloves, hats, blankets. We collected 40 winter gift bags from Small Acts of Kindness' new warehouse in Watford and delivered them directly to elderly and vulnerable people who lived in and around St Albans.



Car wash for Yemen

On the 27th of June, HAWA members worked together with Al Furqan's Youth Project and Crisis Aid to support people in Yemen by offering a car washing service. Fortunately, the car wash was very successful and we managed to raise over £5,000. A huge thank you to all of our members who took part.

Oxfam Walk for Water

HAWA and Tiffin Club members collaborated with Oxfam Walk for Water. Oxfam Walk for Water raises money for children in Africa who cannot get access to clean water. We wanted to support this cause as at HAWA we hope to make a positive contribution to others especially those in need.

The walking route was located in local areas of St. Albans. HAWA and Tiffin members were split into two groups to explore St. Albans. Although it was challenging for our members who had to walk in rainy conditions; the morale was good regardless. We were able to raise £110 for Oxfam.



HAWA Community Hub

The advice hub has always been a crucial part of HAWA. Helping the BAME community has been a high priority for HAWA, however, since the pandemic the hub has excelled to ensure that the community receives a high quality of service and advice during this difficult situation. Before the pandemic we were operating in person at St Albans District Council on alternative Fridays and at the Tiffin Club situated in St Luke's Church on alternative Thursdays. We also used to run one session a week at Mandeville School and now several referrals come from there.

Since the pandemic, the hub has been run differently, we are working from home and ever since the pandemic there has been a high demand of advice and support needed from the community which has led to the hub operating 5 days a week including holidays instead of once a week on a Friday. A lot has changed during this difficult situation as we are faced with a wider range of issues and support is needed for many things such as prescription deliveries, housing, benefits, taxi renewals, food parcels, grants, domestic violence and much more.

At the Hub we understand the difficulties of lockdown and the major effects it can have on an individual's mental health; therefore, we provide services like the befriending service who reach

out and communicate with those who are on their own. The help they offer is providing them with someone to talk to so they feel less isolated and can share their problems. During the pandemic, we also helped the vulnerable by delivering food parcels and prescriptions to those who are shielding. Although this is more challenging, we are very happy and glad that we are still able to help the BAME community during COVID19.

We have four volunteers; Rushna Miah, chair and treasurer of Hawa; Zia Kiani, vice chair, treasurer and coordinator of the hub; Farhat Zia, executive member and Rubeca Khanam. Normally, all the volunteers are delegated three hours per week but due to the increased demand of help and support, we tend to go over the limit. Before lockdown we used to attend monthly hub meetings with other organisations at St Albans District Council, however, during this period the meetings have been done remotely through zoom, which has proved successful. All the partners have been able to attend since we are all working from home. We relay the information and knowledge that is said at the meetings to the hub to improve our services and ensure that we provide the best support for the BAME community making sure that they have equal access and are aware of all the services available. We work in partnership with other essential organisations such as St Albans District council, Citizens Advice Bureau, Oaklands College, Communities First, Food bank, Computer Friendly and many other key partners. A massive thank you and appreciation to all of the healthy hub partners, organisations and all the volunteers who have taken their time out and have been working extremely hard during the pandemic to provide the best service and to help those in need. They have gone above and beyond to help the community especially during this difficult time working from home to ensure that the community is being supported

Habiba Community Garden @Hixberry Lane

Habiba Tiffin club Community Garden. We have kept going through Corvid 19 period. It has been unfortunate that we were not able to involve our ladies from the Tiffin Club during the summer period. But we have kept the Habiba Garden tidy with the help of Ozzy and Iqbal and myself following the NHS guidelines. Our International Herbs Garden has now a good variety of herbs growing. The rose bed had beautiful bloom through Summer and were still blooming beautifully till late October. However our vegetable the courgettes and marrow did not grow well, due to lack of watering in the Summer Thanks to Sabina, Sohanna and Touria for contributing these plants.

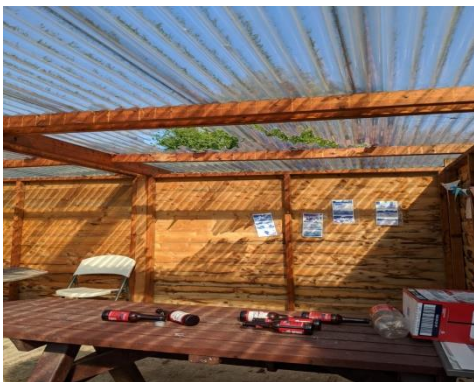
However with the key people from our Community groups we have continue to develop the garden in many ways as they could taking precaution and safety e.g, taking and using our own tools and gloves and not sharing any equipment with anyone and keeping safe distance, whilst enjoying the beautiful weather. We have grown into a little friendship group under CDA Herts. It help keeps us focus and our spirit up during the lockdown. The good environment helps us all with our mental also emotional wellbeing along with a great deal of fun, enjoyment and learning from each other.



We were given over 105 saplings freebies from The Woodland Trust, a variety from Crab Apple, Hazel blackthorn, dog roses and edible hedge and others we kept in our Poly Tunnel. Our very kind helpers have been planting them each week. Over 100 have been planted. We were grateful to have received £225 from Community Matters St Albans Waitrose & partner green token scheme.



We did have a spot of bother at the end of summer at the community Garden where group of young people were meeting initially, but then they went on Rampage causing great deal damage to the shelter hut and litter everywhere, and cause a great deal of distress.



Looking forward to summer of 2021 hopefully lockdown will be lifted and our ladies can once again enjoy the outdoors

SustFest20

Due to the pandemic SustFest 2020 was cancelled, we are looking ahead to this Year HAWA will be taking part in SustFest21 and linking in to our native countries. And Rafina and Farhat will be doing Event at the community garden on Health Benefit of Ginger and Fenugreek.



On 1st April 2021 Farhat had organised a Tribute to ex member Of UKAWC, Member of Hawa Tiffin clubs and friends who passed away during the year a rose bush was planted in the Memory of each ladies and the family had attend the tribute. Family members and friends gave tributes and planted the roses Ash and Deepak Chury planted a white rose in memory of their mother, Vasanti Chury. Dee said: "Mum, who was a social worker for Herts County Council, spent her whole life supporting the community and the planting of a rose bush is a really lovely way for her efforts to be recognised." Vasanti who founded the Cinnamon Club in Hemel Hempstead, and was a treasurer of the UK Asian Women's conference.

A yellow rose was planted for Bithi Roy Chaudary, who was a member of HAWA. A red rose was planted for Siria Chaudary, who volunteered at the Tiffin Club.

Daphne Morgan, who helped run the knitting group at the Tiffin Club, was remembered with a yellow rose tree. A red rose was planted in memory of Sanam Kiani, member of HAWA who passed away at very young age. A red rose was also planted in memory of Khanam Ji, the mother of HAWA's vice chair. Chantal Haddon, a friend of the group was remembered with a yellow rose. Sayfa Khatun, grandmother of Sabina, the funding officer for HAWA, was also remembered, it was a wonderful to remember them, and they will forever live in our heart Some photographs of the Tribute. We were honoured to have Shubia Sinha on the day,





Grants for Family Needs

As many families struggled during the Lockdown, we wanted to help as much as possible through obtaining grants for family needs. We received a grant from the Hertfordshire Charity for Deprived Children of £518.98 and £249.99 from the Hertfordshire Community Foundation. We also donated £200 to a family that needed support to buy essential items.

HAWA Magazine

We wanted to connect more with our members and decided to launch our first digital magazine that runs on a quarterly basis. We launched 2 magazines, Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter editions. The magazines provided insights into more details of 'What we do at HAWA' as well as activities and recipes for our members to try.

Saheli Tiffin Club

At the Tiffin Club we pride ourselves on having 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. This year we have had to do things differently in order to continue to provide the service that the Tiffin Club ladies have enjoyed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Weekly Walks

We take the ladies on an hour walk around St Albans every week, each week we choose a new area of St Albans to explore, we discover new places and pathways that we never knew existed. This has given the ladies an opportunity to get fresh air, exercise and a chat which otherwise they may not be able to do and is sometimes the only opportunity that they get to go out.



Exercise Classes with Rubina

As the Tiffin Club closed due to COVID-19, we launched 'Keep Fit with Rabina' via Skype every Thursday for The Tiffin Club and HAWA members. This is a great way for the ladies to keep in touch with everyone and exercise together!

Online English Lessons

We managed to secure some of our funding money to purchase 10 Samsung tablets for the ladies who did not have access to digital equipment in order to take part in the online English lessons which take place every Monday via Zoom from 10:45am to 11:45am and a second session 12-1pm. These classes help the ladies to continue to develop and enhance their English skills.



Healthy Snacks

We at the Tiffin club understand how hard it is to try and stay healthy by eating the correct foods at snack time as especially in these difficult times. We deliver healthy snacks to the Tiffin club ladies every fortnight. The ladies always look forward to receiving their snacks and a visit from one of our Tiffin Club staff.



Acknowledgments

HAWA would like to thank our funders for all their support as without your help we would not be able to continue to offer such valuable services to the BAME community.



St Albans Fund for the Future



Hertfordshire Community Foundation

Waitrose
Community Matters

Accounts