

CAMBRIDGE ETHNIC COMMUNITY FORUM [CECF]

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 16th November 2022.

Present:

Asaduzzaman Ahmed, Abdul Hye (Bangladeshi Welfare and Cultural Association); Ari Henry, Julie Cornwell, Melanie Baker (Cambridge City Council); Fiona Brice (National Lottery Community Fund); Heidi Pérez (Escuelita CIC); Hsin-Ling Liang, Dr. Wei Sun (Tzu Chi Foundation UK); Joyce Andrade; Penninah Serrano (CECF Chair, Cambridge Jewish Residents Association); Michael Berkson (Cambridge Jewish Residents Association); Mike Todd Jones (Councillor, Cambridge City Council); Mark Freeman (Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services); Nicky Shepard (Abbey People); Reem Assil; Saira Law; Shopna Begum (The Karim Foundation); Sheillah Mushunje; Thak Patel (Cambridge Hindu Association); Valerie Berkson (Cambridge Jewish Residents Association / CECF); Yan Wang (Chinese Families Together / CECF)

Staff and volunteers:

Ana Maldonado (CECF Refugee Services Manager), Eddie Stadnik (CECF CEO), Ila Chandavarkar (CECF Development Team and AGM minutes taker), Lucia Medici (CECF Finance Officer), Rosemary Watson (CECF Refugee Services / Development), Samuel Budu (CECF CHES).

Apologies: These were received from Qamar Nizam and Shanaz Malik (Khidmat Sisters); Luthfa Khatun (Cambridge City Council and Louise Baker (Cambridge Sustainable Food).

1. Welcome, minutes and introduction from the Chair

The Chair, Penninah welcomed all to the CECF AGM. She went through the main points of the 2020 AGM minutes and asked if the meeting agreed that this was a true record. The minutes were agreed – proposed by Valerie Berkson and seconded by Penninah Serrano. There were no matters arising.

2. Chair's report

Penninah pointed out the full version of her report in CECF's Impact Report for the year, with copies available for all.

CECF has had a busy and productive year ending the 31st of March 2022. The trustees and staff worked with a consultant, allocated to CECF, as part of the funding it received from Lloyds Bank Foundation to develop CECF's strategic vision and business plan. This was invaluable work which will give CECF a strong foundation in future services.

During the year under review, CECF was involved in the Refugee Support Service, funded by Cambridge City Council, assisting 139 new arrivals from Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, and South America. Penninah thanked Ana Maldonado for putting her heart and soul in managing CECF Refugee Services, Race Equality Services and Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS). Her thanks went also to the volunteers - Udomluck Srassmit and Rosemary Watson

Work on the Cambridgeshire Human Rights & Equality Support Service (CHESS) continued throughout the year. Penninah thanked Sam Budu for his diligence, perseverance and good results achieved.

CECF worked with a partnership led by the Papworth Trust, 'Bringing Better Opportunities' (BBO), helping to bring disadvantaged individuals closer to being able to join the workforce. She thanked Panna Chowdhury for her reliable and steadfast work.

During the year Suzan Murrad managed the 'Crafting the Self' project sessions for refugee and migrant women. Penninah thanked Suzan who worked passionately to make the group feel welcome, encouraging participation and initiating trust. Suzan also supported CECF's European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) project, a partnership with We-Are-Digital. She also managed the 'Reach out For Health' and the 'Improving Diabetes Care' projects, when Adila Ahmed Gumaa who had set up the projects left our employment. The health projects were organised in partnership with the NHS Primary Care Networks (PCN) with Innovation Fund monies. Suzan was assisted by 7 volunteer Community Health Champions who were also thanked for all their support: Imene Hamzaoui, Mahasin Abdullaah, Mona Almansoury, Nagla Abdel Rahman, Omnia Ahmed, Sarah Schechter and Shiellah Mushunje.

Penninah thanked Ila Chandavarkar for her valuable contributions to CECF delivering advice surgeries to help minority ethnic community groups set up and develop, and for running workshops, including life skills and fundraising.

Penninah said all these projects were funded by different funders, and the details are in the accounts.

She then expressed her gratitude to other core contributors: Lucia, our Finance Officer, for her book-keeping which is especially important. She said CECF was indebted to Valerie Berkson, the Treasurer, a longstanding trustee who has served as both Chair and Treasurer. She thanked Valerie, for her loyal, unwavering and selfless service to CECF, showing such humility and respect for others that she has been a great encouragement and comfort to many people over the years.

Penninah expressed particular thanks for the previous chair Heidi Perez, whose progressive input into CECF, with such vibrant enthusiasm and dynamic ideologies, has been invaluable. She wished Heidi well with her PhD at Cambridge University.

Finally, Penninah expressed a big thank you to CECF's longstanding Chief Executive officer (CEO), Eddie Stadnik. He had worked extremely hard to obtain vital funds for our projects and without his knowledge, ability, and efforts to obtain the funds, all the above would not have been possible. Eddie put in many hours and overtime to meet deadlines and achieve important goals for CECF.

Penninah was grateful to all the trustees for their contribution: Yan Wang from Chinese Families Together, Qamar Nizam and Shahnaz Malik from the Khidmat Sisters, Abdul Hye and Asaduzzaman from the Bangladesh Welfare and Cultural Association, Azza Zein from the

Sudanese Community, Valerie Berkson from Cambridge Jewish Residents Association and Heidy Perez-Cordero from Escuelita CIC.

Penninah said her time as Chair has sadly been short but sweet as she had to step down due to reaching the full term allowed to a CECF Trustee. She would continue to be interested in CECF and its work.

3. Chief Executive Officer report

Eddie said that 2021/22 had been a challenging year, because of COVID. Most work had to continue to be done online, with safety measures for all work carried out at CECF premises. Some support for community groups in public venues was started again.

Services providing help during the pandemic continued, that is delivery of food and other essentials. 79 dry food packs were organised for 46 households, helping 137 beneficiaries. This was done in partnership with Cambridge Central Mosque and helped some of the most disadvantaged in the city. CECF also distributed food and fuel vouchers helping over 250 beneficiaries. In partnership with the Karim Foundation, CECF assisted in the delivery of 52 culturally appropriate food supplies, making deliveries where people had tested positive for COVID. This helped people who were isolating as well as provided safety measures to restrict the spread. CECF also delivered 119 TESCO vouchers from £25 - £30 to help people purchase essentials, and distributed 43 small grants of £50 for energy bills and pre-paid meters. Funds for these grants came from a variety of sources, including Amazon.

The BME support programme flourished. Eleven groups were helped with one-to-one advice surgeries including the Khidmat Sisters, a new African community group, the Sudanese Community Association, the East Timorese Community in Cambridge, Tzu Chi Foundation UK, and the African Caribbean Research Group. A new monitoring system was devised and adopted to ensure data was captured in the most effective way.

3 training sessions were delivered. These were on managing money well, making effective fundraising applications and building an effective management committee. They were attended by representatives of 7 to 8 BME community groups. Feedback was very positive. An online consultation was held with representatives from the Hong Kong community – Eddie was given to understand that there are now over 400 families in Cambridge. The meeting helped collect information on issues the community faced, as well as give representatives an introduction to what CECF provided. The meeting was also used to go through safety protocols and guidance around COVID.

CECF also helped Women's Voices in Africa run an event celebrating African and Caribbean culture during Black History month. CECF also worked with Tzu Chi Foundation UK to help with a cultural evening and fundraiser.

CECF played a role in supporting the National Census with civic engagement work, as traditionally there have been lower returns from BME people. Officers of the Census wrote to CECF saying how useful this role had been. CECF also worked in partnership with Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services leading to Ila delivering several sessions on Unconscious Bias

and Building Effective Multicultural Practice. CECF is working with Cambridge City Council on an inclusion survey – it is hoped that the results will be out in the following year.

CECF was part of Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS). CLAS is a local partnership of charitable organisations led by the CHS group. CECF received £2500 to help people in need. This helped 3 refugee families that moved into unfurnished accommodation and were helped with second hand furniture, bedding and a cooker. The scheme also helped 13 households experiencing hardship. Details of this work and the case studies of people helped are in the Impact Report.

Suzan Murad who was employed for two years by CECF left at the end of September this year. She ran two health projects: Reach out for Health and Improving Diabetes care. The first was to help break down barriers that BME people faced in accessing health services. The second was to help people with diabetes, given the high rates in BME communities. The project recruited 7 Community Health Champions, mentioned by Penninah. They visited a wide range of BME community groups, gave presentations and encouraged them to share information with friends, families and neighbours. They helped with a Diabetes survey which was still continuing at the end of the reporting year and participated in a Diabetes Wellness event at Cambridge Central Mosque in March 2022. This event helped the Primary Care Network connect with the Mosque. Suzan and the Health Champions produced material in different languages. At the event information on health eating and exercise was given and conversations had with 14 people of diverse backgrounds.

Suzan also ran the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) services. CECF ran these in partnership with We Are Digital who provided help and advice. This was to help EU people who wished to remain in the UK after Brexit. 40 people were helped through 54 appointments.

Suzan also ran the Crafting the Self project which engaged 45 women from 23 different countries, 30 in the 2021/22 year. Those in the south of the city were run online, the ones in the North resumed at the Arbury Community Centre from April 2021. Beneficiaries switched from drawing and painting to embroidery and stitching till December and then took up crochet from January to March. The Refugee Council Therapeutic Caseworker visited the group and introduced therapy techniques to help. The group was also visited by the Think Communities team who introduced women to various community initiatives.

Eddie said CECF was very grateful for all Suzan had done in the year.

The Refugee services have been very busy – the main description of work and detail is in the Impact report and shows the many beneficiaries, who each need lots of help. This is funded by Cambridge City Council and does not cover those provided for under resettlement programmes. The service saw 139 people from 24 different countries of origin, with the largest number coming from Syria and Iran. There were 910 interactions with the largest number of enquiries to do with welfare. Other issues were immigration, legal issues outside immigration, health, ESOL and other training, employment, benefits and education. Welfare issues are complicated and offers help through to settlement, working with traumatised new arrivals to those with issues that are similar to other BME communities. A small hardship fund

helps in some cases, for example, helping to pay fares so people can get to appointments. Most of this work has to be face to face as people can't access online services. Ana is qualified at OISC Level 2 and helped 6 people get their leave to remain. CECF is aware of a number of asylum seekers who have been settled in areas outside Cambridge, for example, in St. Ives but are currently not funded to work in these areas, although they do what they can through connections like giving 2 laptops through Cambridge Resettlement Campaign.

Ana also helped run the Race Equality Services which had 579 contacts, requesting help with housing, benefits, health, education, employment or accessing ESOL. Those wanting help with employment could be referred to CECF's employment project, Building Better Opportunities a partnership project with the Papworth Trust. This is helping people furthest away from the labour market and so it is not so much about numbers as quality of service. This was slightly slower during this period because of COVID, but numbers are picking up again now. Most of the year was ongoing work with beneficiaries from earlier years, and there were 10 new referrals in 2021/22.

Eddie thanked all the staff, trustees and volunteers for the helping to produce all of these achievements. More detail and case studies are in the Impact Report. Eddie also thanked the funders: Cambridge City Council, the Evelyn Trust, the Papworth Trust, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Cambridgeshire Community Foundation and the funds that were provided through various NHS initiatives such as the Innovation Fund.

4. CHES report

Sam Budu went through the main points of the Cambridgeshire Human Rights and Equalities Support Service (CHES) at CECF. This service helped 32 individuals and their families through one-to-one appointments and telephone / email support. These were 4 in university education, 2 with racism in school, 10 with employment issues, 10 with housing issues, 3 on discrimination and 3 on matters to do with the police. There were other enquiries but these were not matters for CHES, for example, to do with matrimonial disputes and they were given information on other services. CHES has had amazing success with their intervention: it helped 7 of the 10 with employment disputes with successful outcomes.

5. Treasurer Report

The accounts were presented by the Treasurer, Valerie Berkson. She thanked Eddie and Lucia for their work in managing CECF funds, keeping spending on track and production of accounts. The income for the year was £194,347 a 76% increase on the previous year income which was £148,979. Expenditure was £184,218 leaving a surplus at the end of the year of £10,159. This is all very positive, including a healthy balance in unrestricted reserves of £32,588 which means CECF has the reserves it needs to meet potential liabilities. £52,054 is carried forward. Of this £19,436 is restricted. Valerie thanked Eddie and Lucia for ensuring that money was managed well, with clear records.

Valerie then touched on the listing of the main grants received on page 9 of the accounts. She thanked all the funders, including the individual donors who helped build the Hardship fund and a £1000 donation from Amazon. She also thanked the accountant, Geoff Mann, and asked that he was nominated in the same role for the following year. The accounts were approved, proposed by Penninah Serrano and seconded by Joyce Andrade. Geoff Mann was

appointed. Valerie announced that she would be stepping down from the CECF Management Committee this year. Eddie thanked Valerie for her work as Treasurer and for all her invaluable support through the many years – she has been a cornerstone of the Forum. Penninah echoed the thanks and said CECF would give two gifts in thanks – one now and one in January. Various people expressed their thanks and admiration for Valerie.

6. Elections

The following management committee members resigned from the committee

1. Penninah Serrano (Cambridge Jewish Residents Association)
2. Heidy Pérez (Escuelita CIC)
3. Valerie Berkson (Cambridge Jewish Residents Association)
4. Azza Zein (Cambridge Sudanese Association)

Penninah said she was standing down as she had come to the end of the allowed term. However, she was still interested in working with CECF and would like to attend meetings as an observer. Eddie said this would have to be approved by the new committee but he felt it would be fine.

The following 5 were continuing as members of the management committee

1. Abdul Hye (Bangladeshi Welfare and Cultural Association)
2. Asaduzzaman Ahmed (Bangladeshi Welfare and Cultural Association)
3. Qamar Nizam (Khidmat Sisters)
4. Shanaz Malik (Khidmat Sisters)
5. Yan Wang (Chinese Families Together)

The following were nominated to the management committee

1. Salah Bander (Cambridge Sudanese Association)
2. Shopna Begum (Karim Foundation)
3. Cecil Chipendo (CB Mentoring)
4. Carol Leonardi-Brown (Cambridge African Network)
5. Hsin-Ling Liang (Tzu Chi Foundation UK)
6. Dr. Wei Sun (Tzu Chi Foundation UK)

The numbers standing for election were less than the number of available places so they were all accepted on to the Management Committee. The Chair was nominated and elected. This was Asaduzzaman Ahmed, who thanked the previous Chair and said he appreciated the opportunity to give something back to CECF, as they had helped him with the foodbank he set up.

7. Speakers:

Eddie introduced the first speaker, Reem Assil from Common Purpose

Reem thanked CECF for the invitation. She said she had known the organisation for a few years, joining as an interpreter and translator and her sons had done work placements at CECF. She is Syrian British and moved from Damascus to the UK. She is the Development Director at Common Purpose, which is a not for profit, global organisation across more than 100 cities developing leadership. Common Purpose has a wide range from all work sectors. A

significant strand is working with those from the diaspora, helping people thrive across boundaries that are generational, geographic, sectoral and cultural. She is interested in emotional intelligence and has worked with 120 leaders from diverse backgrounds, such as, African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Syrian. There is an open application scheme, leaders apply and are selected with 40 leaders in each cohort. They are given tools and skills to develop cultural intelligence. They also design their thinking processes about communication needs, identifying and analysing needs. Each cohort runs brainstorming, creating prototypes for a project. They then run this prototype by a panel and get feedback. The process is experiential not theoretical through lectures.

It is all about bridging gaps between cultures. E.g. people from the Syrian diaspora invited people from other diaspora to speak. Another example was a programme run to develop leadership skills in Bangladeshi people. This was an online over 4 days, training them to be mentors. This engaged young leaders involved in social action in Bangladeshi. The programme was funded by the British Council who brought them to the UK and ran workshops for them where they could share their knowledge and expertise. Reem would like to explore ways to provide something similar for the different BME communities in Cambridge.

Sam asked if diaspora meant 1st generation immigrants or 2nd/3rd generation who had settled in Britain. Reem said both.

Reem was asked for more detail on the different programmes. She said they covered cross-boundary leadership, cultural intelligence and leading beyond authority. The actual programme and outcomes depended on what the client and funders wanted. She will send information to Eddie who can circulate this.

Eddie thanked her for her talk.

Eddie introduced the second speaker, Edwin Panford Quainoo, the founder and President of CB Mentoring, a new charity registered in February 2021 with help from Eddie and Ila. Edwin wanted to talk about where CB Mentoring is at the moment. It started with his interaction with a young person who had posted about George Floyd. This was an emotional outpouring and Edwin got interested in the issues. This led to 13 of them sitting together to set up the charity with the mission of empowering the next generation of leaders through education and social and cultural experiences around Cambridgeshire. There are currently 3 pillars to the organisation: mentoring; a Saturday school and social/cultural activities.

The mentoring has not fully taken off because of COVID but what it did bring was parents who talked about the difficulties children had with interrupted schooling. So CB Mentoring started the Saturday school. Edwin said that when he came to Cambridge from Ghana he had attended a Saturday school run by the Black Women's Support Group. He interacted with a lot of the participants, some are still friends and some have now become trustees for CB Mentoring.

He did a presentation for Cambridge Assessment and through this was given contacts at Wolfson College which provides a site for the school from 10 am to midday. It started with 5, there are now more than 20. The first cohort joined in 2021 and were taught by volunteer

students from Wolfson. There are 11 – 14 volunteer tutors. There has been interest in running similar schemes in other colleges – Newnham and Murray Edwards. They are meeting with the master of Jesus College who would also like them to expand there. They are also picking up connections with schools, helped by Eddie.

CB Mentoring also started its activities during the summer. For example, they ran a hidden maths and science class called Mocktails which used colours and volume of mocktails to teach. They also ran a culture and identity workshop with Djibo Arts in Peterborough and health and fitness workshops in partnership with Nuffield Health.

They did a survey at the end of the academic year and found all would recommend the organisation. All the children attending the Saturday school felt that the tutors helped them understand their work. All enjoyed attending and wish to continue. The student volunteers found this rewarding, shaping their experience in Cambridge. They even had someone wanting to enrol remotely from New York.

They have started a partnership with businesses and plan to showcase Black businesses next summer. They are now looking for grant funding opportunities.

Saira asked if they had any plans to develop a similar school in Peterborough and if so where. Edwin replied that 3 founding members live in Peterborough and are keen to do this. They have not yet got a site and are exploring possibilities. He would welcome suggestions. Saira said that Anglia Ruskin might be worth talking to. Edwin said they had had initial talks with them and he would explore this further.

Sam asked what plans they had to track impact. Edwin said they are developing this. At the moment they collect emails from parents, do things like the survey he mentioned and also write up case studies. They had an email from a teacher who said “don’t know what you are doing, she has become a model student”.

Penninah said it was exiting to see young students involved. She asked for more detail on what that brought to education. Edwin said he was blown away on how inventive they were. He saw a class which was built round a flower to teach maths. He said they also had classes built round children bringing games from home. Children learnt much more when the education was fun.

Reem said that Common Purpose had a programme to build leadership of young people that was city focussed. She would post the link now. She offered to help as a trained transformational coach. Edwin said he would definitely be in touch.

Heidy asked if they get any help from the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRCSE). Edwin said that he was aware of them and one trustee was looking into this but would welcome any information on this. Heidy said that their material on GCSE was useful and she had found this as a language teacher.

8. Thanks

Nothing was raised under Any Other Business. Eddie thanked all for attending.