

# Newsletter

### Engaging with community and raising awareness through Asian Art & Culture

#### On Behalf of Our Board of Trustees



Kaml Kaushik *Trustee* 

I wish you a warm welcome to our newsletter. This newsletter is a blueprint to everything the Association has done over the last six months - and it has been a busy six months! We mentioned in our last newsletter how the first half of 2020 was challenging; the rest of the year was no less challenging but peppered with successes that kept us going. The biggest step was our community meals project, Saffron Kitchen. The response has been overwhelmingly positive - from funders and service users. We plan for it to continue and expand the good work it is doing. We have also conducted cooking classes for adults when it was safe.

We continue to work towards attracting funding that supports our members, projects and activities. We were awarded with grants from Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Police Crime Commissioner's Vulnerability Fund, DCC Public Health Covid 19 Fund, CBC Discretionary Grant, details of which are provided on the last page of this newsletter.

We made great inroads towards maintaining communication through zoom and online platforms, not only for the purposes of work, but also to run programmes such as our online Yoga classes, cultural exchange programmes for kids and informational workshops. Members with vulnerabilities continue to be supported; and we have trained two more staff as mental health first aiders.

Sadly, within these past six months, we lost two valued members of our association. On behalf of all our trustees, members, staff and volunteers, I want to acknowledge Awadh and Om's contribution not only to the Association as members, but more importantly as friends who will be greatly missed.

As we work through a lockdown situation that has now become all too familiar, I encourage one and all to stay safe, take care of themselves and feel free to rely on us for support, friendship and to lend an ear.



Our community meals programme Saffron Kitchen has become a lifeline for many.

We are happy to say that since its inception on the 13th of July, Saffron Kitchen has now served more than 1500 meals!

After having to curtail our usual activities at the Centre, we took some time during the early days of the lockdown to decide how we could assist the local community during the covid19 pandemic. We pinpointed, from members' feedback and a wider community survey, a need for a midday meal delivery service. And so, Saffron Kitchen was established, with the specific purpose of providing meals to people with vulnerabilities, carers and to provide respite to busy, overworked families.

Since then, we have expanded services – we have provided meals at subsidised rates to medically and socially vulnerable individuals, families struggling with changing circumstances as well as families struggling with stress caused by the loss of subsidised or free school meals to children. This service covers Chesterfield Town Centre, Hasland, Grassmoor, Hady, Spital, Brampton, Walton and Calow and other areas within a reasonable radius of delivery.

This project was made possible by support from Rural Action Derbyshire and their

project Feeding Derbyshire; Saffron Kitchen is a proud part of their Chesterfield Batch Cooking Network.

The Centre's kitchen went through a major upgrade to suit commercial catering standards and, after successful trial runs of meal production and packaging along with delivery volunteers in place, the kitchen sent out its first meals on the 13th of July.

In its first eight weeks of operation, the kitchen provided more than 400 thrice-weekly, freshly cooked, hot meals to service users in the Chesterfield area.



The team that started it all! L to R: Sushri, Lauren, Joanna, Shruti, Sharan, Mita and Sanjukta

More on Saffron Kitchen on Page 6 and 7!  $\rightarrow$ 



# **Adapting Well to a "New Normal"**



The Asian Association has made it its mission in the last six months to move forward from the constraints that the year presented to us. If the first half of the year was spent recouping from the sudden change in circumstances and changing our strategy to accommodate for it, the second half of the year was spent making sure that planning comes to fruition thanks to the hard work and valuable input from our board of trustees, advisors, staff and volunteers. We are lucky to have a team that is focused and committed to delivering the charity's vision of inclusivity and care in the local community. We have continued to be major contributors to the BME Forum Meetings, in meetings with local government, regulatory bodies and other local charities to see where we could best provide value.

Our Zoom Yoga classes hosted by Anton Geoffrey have been happily attended by regulars for the last six months! They have been appreciated greatly for the personalised attention from the Yoga instructor. Geoffrey is a qualified Yoga instructor with over eight years of training under his master Radha Krishna who is currently "The Asia Director for International Yoga Federation". Geoffrey has won several Yoga state championship and participated has in Yoga National Championships.





By far our crowning jewel through these last six months has been the establishment of Saffron Kitchen. The centre went through a major refurbishment for it, we employed staff and were lucky to have dedicated volunteers join the team.

The response to it has been overwhelmingly positive from all sides. From our service users, to our funders, to the local community, we have had wonderful messages of support and encouragement for this project.

2020 has taught us many things, but most importantly it has given us confidence in our ability to adapt to any situation thrown as us!

# Change is Good

A glimpse into the changes the centre has undergone to accommodate new projects and goals!

> Clockwise from top left: Kitchen being refurbished, new glass partition thanks to Grassmoore Glass, New kitchen equipment, New banner at front of centre and New kitchen!

Since we haven't had the pleasure of regular visits from members and others, we thought we'd provide a

glimpse at the how the centre has changed in the last six months! For the purpose of running a community kitchen, we thought it necessary to refurbish the kitchen area to a commercial standard and thanks to



funding from National Lottery - Reaching Communities COVID grant. We also had an eye-catching addition to the front of the building with a Saffron Kitchen banner! We have more additions planned for the

building related to security and energy efficiency that we are looking forward to! We hope you come visit us when it is safe to do so!





Zooming into: YO 🕞 🛝

Our Yoga sessions held on Zoom have become a lifeline for the participants.

Our Yoga sesssions on Zoom have been going strong since they began in May of 2020. Our instructor Anton Geoffrey Rosareo is a qualified Yoga instructor with over eight years of training under his master Radha Krishna who is currently "The Asia Director for International Yoga Federation".

Geoffery has won several Yoga state-level championships and has also participated in Yoga National Championships.

Participants always say how the classes are tailored well to every level of proficiency, accounting for any aches, pains or mobility problems that each person has.



If you would like to join these Yoga sessions, please contact the number or email address on poster above. We are charging a nominal fee of £3 per session and would love to see more participation so that people can feel not only the health benefits of Yoga, but also of interacting with people on a weekly basis and making the most of a situation that has kept us socially isolated for the better part of a year now!



"It's good and relaxing. Easy to follow and very much tailored to you." -Meg "I have come regularly for the classes since they first began! Geoffrey is a great instructor." -Shruti

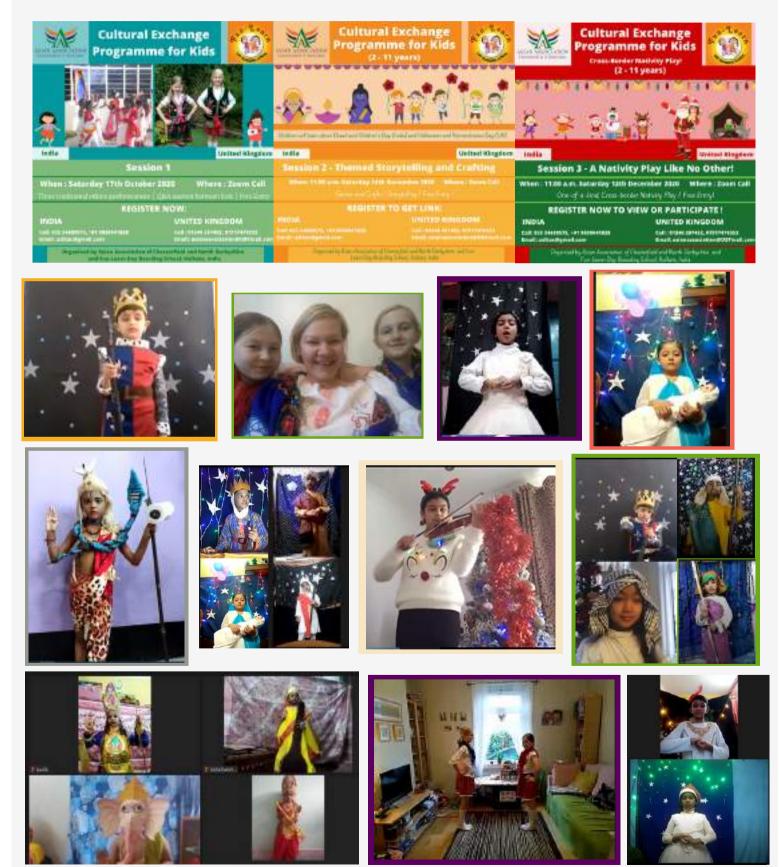
"I really enjoy the sessions. Can't start my Saturday without them!" -Kirti





# **Kids Cultural Exchange Programme**

Through this programme we hoped to keep children creatively engaged , learn something and make new friends! And we're happy to say that they did all of those things. Here is a story in pictures!.





## **Cohorts in Cultural Exchange - Fun Learn School!**

Headmistress and Founder of Fun Learn Day Boarding School, Udita Chakraborty gives us her view of the successful events!



Udita Chakraborty

I got a ping on my mail from a dear friend a few months ago that their organisation was thinking of a project with school children. Soon we were on a skype call with the Asian Association of Chesterfield & N. Derbyshire (AACND). The discussion that ensued was a uniquely interesting one. The AACND was thinking of a virtual cultural exchange prorgamme with the children of the UK and India.

Would we, Fun-Learn Day Boarding School (Fun-Learn), be interested? This school is in Kolkata, India. It caters to first-generation learners of the English language.

Brainstorming started, mails and more video-conferences followed to crystallise the ideas into a definite shape. Thus began the journey with the Asian Association and Fun-Learn school.

Our first programme on 17 October 2020, showcased how Dussehra and Durga Puja are celebrated across India. Children of Fun-Learn performed 'dandiyas', some children dressed up as Goddess Durga and her children, Laxmi, Saraswati, Ganesh and Kartikeya. The children and adult audience of the UK loved this. From the UK, Maja and Ola danced the Polka, a Polish folk dance. They floored the children of Fun-Learn. All these happened on the virtual platform.





The next month, on 14 November, a rather educative exchange programme was organised. The AACND explained to all in Fun-Learn the significance of Remembrance Day and why poppy flower has become a symbol of this day. The children were also taught how to make their own poppy badges by Ms. Megan Eley.

The children of Fun-Learn spoke about Children's Day, as 14 November is the birthday of the first Prime Minister of independent India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. A teacher from Fun-Learn, Ms Pragoti Hazra taught the children of the UK and India how to make a cap that was famously worn by Pandit Nehru. Children from Fun-Learn also educated the children of the UK on Diwali, that is celebrated that day in India and by all Indians across the globe. Some children also dressed up as the goddess Kali, decorated their homes with 'rangolis' and lighted lamps or 'diyas' to create the ambience of Diwali. Only the real sweets and treat were missing!





December's spirit of Advent and Yuletide was captured through the Christmas Carols that were sung by the choir of Fun-Learn. The highlight of the evening of 12 December was a unique cross-border musical nativity play. This had actors from the UK and India partaking in it. The preparations began a month in advance. Children from the UK would religiously join their Indian counterparts rehearse to everv weekend. The tenacity, sincerity and commitment of the children from either side the hemisphere of are commendable. Their labour showed at the Carol Evening which had a turnout of 50 in the audience, from India and the UK. The choir sang the hymns, the violin lent soul to the songs, the costumes, make-up, sets, props and the music transported us to Bethlehem.

There were two takeaways from the Carol Evening. One, as Fr. Franklin Menezez from India, said, real service to God is through giving gifts, especially to the hapless, giving gives profound joy to the giver and brings us closer to God. And the second takeaway was what John Lenon had 'imagined'. A world sans borders. religions, boundaries and countries. This cross-border act went on to prove that perhaps it is not so difficult to create a world where truly borders and walls do not need to exist, where all lives matter.

Happy new year to you all!





# **Cooking Up A Storm!**

Food is an integral part of the cultures we represent and so is the sharing of it!

## **Baking With Kids**

Our kids baking class took the cake!



The kids enjoyed making cookies and decorating them. They each went home with the cookies they made (what was left of them anyway!) and a goodie bag. We hope to do more activities for kids when it is safe to do so.



## A Class-y Affair: Pakodas, Samosa and more!

Our cooking classes with adults were a huge success too! Participants gave us such lovely feedback about the kitchen, the class and, of course, the food. When it was safe to do so with limited numbers, we have had three classes between August and October of 2020. Participants learned how to make Samosas, Pakoras and Aloo paratha, all to rave reviews (as pictured above).









## COOKING CLASSES AT AAC

...(the) written recipe, along with the way that the ladies hosting the group demonstrated the technique, and their secret hints and tips of course, have proven invaluable to me personally, to inspire confidence and give me the knowledge and skills needed to be able to pull off a (relatively) successful recreation of what the ladies in class made.



Register Now: bit.ly/AACReg



Saffron

Kitchen

My family and friends have been very impressed with the authenticity of the samosas and next time I make them, I'm going to try another suggestion from the ladies, and maybe do a keema filling - I can't wait!



# Saffron Kitchen, Our Crowning Achievement!

Our community kitchen provided more than 1500 meals in the first 6 months of being in operation.

## Need for Community Meals

Work towards Saffron Kitchen started in June of 2020, after the team at the Asian Association zeroed in on what our community and the surrounding local area needed most.

Seeing the effect that lockdown and the pandemic was having on elderly community and association members, young families and otherwise stable incomes, the Asian Association decided to focus on meeting the needs that were most obvious - low-cost meals that were freshly made and nutritious.



Part of our team in the beginning of July 2020

With funding acquired from Rural Action Derbyshire via their 'Feeding Derbsyhire' programme, Saffron Kitchen was born! Our list of subscribers includes people from all walks of life, who just needed some support whether it was for reasons of limited physical mobility, financial constraints, respite due to various reasons or shielding due to the pandemic.



Team member Lauren making deliveries in July 2020

Our efforts have been covered in the Derbyshire Times, Hasland Magazine and Your Chesterfield to name a few! We are grateful to all our supporters, funders and service users!

## The Running of the Kitchen: Who, What, When and How!

By far our most valuable asset at Saffron Kitchen is our staff and volunteers! We Over the last 6 months, we have built an efficient, reliable and downright fun team that manages the operations seamlessly under the guidance of Sushri Wells, the Secretary of the Asian Association.



Our delivery Volunteer Vicky



Delivery volunteers Martin (L) and Chris (R)

# Accessed with the service of the ser

#### How It Works:

The monthly menu is released and promoted the week before it comes into operation, giving service users enough time to see what they would like to order and when. This menu is carefully curated based on the ingredients we have available through our food partners, the knowledge of our team and the feedback provided by service users themselves (which is why Sausage and Mash makes it back into the menu every month as a crowd favourite!).

At 9:00 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, our team assembles at the centre. All our meals are prepared from scratch in our newly refurbished kitchen on the centre's premises.

Our amazing delivery volunteers come in just before noon to choose their delivery routes and receive their hotboxes. All the food is in the hands of service users by 1:00 p.m. so it can be eaten hot and fresh!

(L) Delivery Volunteer Diana posing next to a familiar face on our standee!

(R) Delivery Volunteer Saniay





Members from the very first team at Saffron Kitchen: (L to R) Sushri, Lauren, Joanna, Shruti, Sharan, Mita and Sanjukta





## **A Quality Team**

We are so happy to have been able to make the food we have!



Cook and are passionate about what they do. We are extremely happy with how they have progressed over the past year and we are excited to see what they do in the future."

Samantha, Rural Action Derbyshire





## **Christmas at the Saffron Kitchen!**

The Centre's kitchen was buzzing on Christmas day, with freshly made meals going out to people on the day of! The menu was a choice between paneer kebabs, green chutney, naan or roast turkey with veg. Christmas is always better when spent with family and friends and we were lucky to have been able to spend it with friends and colleagues for a good cause.



## **Feedback for Saffron Kitchen**

Oh absolutely delicious! I liked having the veg curry and the pot of yellow split Dahl as well. I was going to leave the cake for tea but I've had a bit off it and I'm not sure I'll resist until teatime! Xx well done you fantastic team xx

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A happy Xmas to all of you at Saffron kitchen. You did a wonderful Xmas lunch and we are well and truly stuffed! You must have started preparations very early so much appreciated on Xmas day too. Just finished washing up after an after lunch siesta! I hope you all managed to have some lunch too! Thanks again

The best apple pie I have ever tasted, you should make individual ones and sell them..

**\_**................

I just wanted to say what a great job you and your meals on wheels team are doing. The meals are fantastic! They are really tasty, great value for money with really generous portions and delivered to doors for £4.50.

#### I enjoyed Monday's lunch. Most meals last me 2 days which is great. I am looking forward to the next menu. The meals are lovely and much appreciated.

I would like to thank you and your team for a most delicious lunch today. It was the best Indian meal that I've had since living in England in 2000. The fact that the chicken in the curry was cut into smaller pieces than in a restaurant was great as it's great as we get older.





## **Keeping Connected Through It All**

Throughout the lockdowns of 2020, we made sure to keep connected through various networking activities with organisations, causes and charities across Chesterfield and North Derbyshire. Here are a few events and activities that kept us connected!



The goal of the Asian Association in 2020 was to maintain the momentum of staying connected. We hope that we have achieved this during this time.

We have been regular participants in Leadership and general meeting of the Derbyshire BME Forum organised by Links CVS. Through these Forum meetings, we have had the opportunity to discuss racial inequality, provide input on racially motivated crime in Derbyshire, make links with other community groups to provide any assistance we could and more valuable inroads into better communication and representation of our communities in local and wider issues.

We attended and contributed to the Children and Young People's Network

Meetings also held by Links CVS to see how we could better equip ourselves with information and contacts to run suitable and useful events and activities for younger members of our community. These meetings provide a platform for individuals and organisations to share the work they are delivering. We were happy to make contributions to these meetings thanks to the Kids' Cultural Exchange project we conducted along with Fun Learn School in Kolkata.

We have also maintained contact with the Derbyshire Carers Association to ensure that we are up to date with the support we can provide to our carers as well as the support DCA can provide to them through what has been a challenging year.

Our secretary Mrs. Sushri Wells and our Centre Manager, Shruti Vispute conducted cultural diversity training for members and attendees at an event for Derbyshire Voluntary Action (DVA) staff in partnership with Links CVS and the 9 other BME Forum groups. We provided instrumental input into the BME Sitting service project that is in development by Links CVS at present. We believe this service is timely, wellthought out.

We also assisted local mask-making organisation Shelagh's Sewing Circle by selling masks on their behalf to help them fundraise.

We are already proud partners with Plastic Free Chesterfield and have signed their Plastic Free Pledge to maintain our goal of reducing purchase and use of single-use plastics.

Amongst our own organisation, we made sure to conduct regular meetings with Trustees of our organisation, who have provided invaluable support and feedback on all the projects and activities we have undertaken.

We look forward to maintaining these connectection with local government, other charities as well as Links CVS so that we can keep abreast of the services and support we can provide to our own members, staff and volunteers.

## Keep an Eye Out For...





#### First-of-Its-Kind Culturally Appropriate Sitting Service in Derbyshire

Links CVS is working to develop a pilot BME Sitting and Respite Service. Links CVS plans to work in collaboration with the 10 member organisations of the Derbyshire BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Forum (of which we are one) in the planning and delivery of a culturally appropriate sitting service and daytime respite provision for those desperately in need of care.

The people who will benefit from this service will be vulnerable adults living with chronic illnesses and/or disabilities and their carers from the diverse BME communities. The difference the project aims to make will be far-reaching in relation to the social and health inequalities faced by these people. More on that soon!





# **Members: The Cornerstone of Our Association**

As an association, we are nothing without our members; we see it as our duty to stay in touch, listen to you and provide support and information wherever possible.

## **In Fond Rememberance**

We lost two important members of our association in the last six months. Their loss lies heavy on us and we offer our deepest condolences to their families and friends.



Dr. Om Chawla



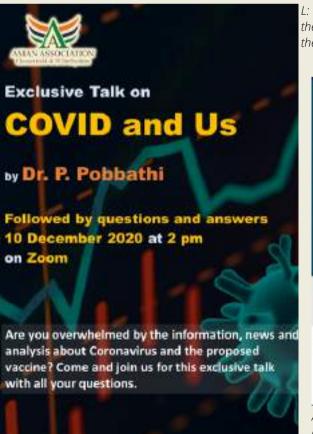
Everyday in some small way Memories of you come our way. Though absent, you are always near Still missed, loved and always dear.



Dr. Awadh Sharma

## **Activities with Members**

Throughout the lockdown, we have made our best effort to provide befriending, mental health first aid and any physical and emotional support to you, our members. We also conducted informational workshops on Cyber security and COVID-19 vaccinations that we hope you found useful.



*L*: *Dr*. Pobbathi, a member of the Association, made a timely talk on the vaccine and the efficacy of its different variations. He also answered questions towards the end of the talk.



On Microsoft Teams | Date: 1 December 2020 | Time: 02:30 PM To Register Email us at : asianassociation@obtmail.com

Above: Representatives from the Police Commissioner's office made a presentation on how to secure in your activities online.





## 'Grantwatch' June 2020 - December 2020

A look into the funding that has made our work possible and kept us going!



#### Lottery Grant

Having recieved this grant in a three-year agreement in 2019, we were fortunate that our funders agreed to allocate a proportion of this funding to go towards refubishment of the centre for the use of Saffron Kitchen.

#### Co We

#### **Coalfields Regeneration Trust**

We received an extension of a grant from CRT that has helped immensely in covering staff and other costs to ensure that Saffron Kitchen could support service users during the winter months.



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#### **CBC** Discretionary Grant

This grant was a lifesaver for our Association. Due to the pandemic, we had to cancel events that would have otherwise brought in important amounts of income. This grant helped us recover from the loss of deposits and other costs towards cancelled events in our annual calendar.



#### DCC Public Health - Covid 19 Fund

This DCC Public Health Fund went towards helping us market and publicise our online events and Saffron Kitchen as well. So if you see the quality of our marketing has improved, then this funding more than likely contribute towards it!



#### Co-op Grant

We are very proud to have been selected as a "Co-op Cause". When Co-op members who have selected to support our cause buy selected Co-op products and services, 2p for every £1 spent goes into their membership account. And Co-op donates the same to our cause. Are you a Co-op member? Please do sign up to support us and our many projects!



octive derbyshire

#### The Commissioner's Vulnerability Fund

The Commissioner's Vulnerability Fund has been setup to improve the lives and safety of vulnerable people and their families across Derbyshire. This grant was made available to projects which support the PCC's ambition to create safer, more engaged communities. We are grateful to have received it.

#### Tackling Inequalities Fund - Active Derbyshire

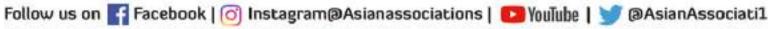
Active Derbyshire helps connect, influence, collaborate and enable opportunities for people to be physically active as part of their everyday life. Their Tackling Inequalities Fund was used to fund our Zoom Yoga sessions. These classes were instrumental in allowing us to offer members and non-members the opportunity to maintain mental and physical health during the majority of 2020.

#### Our Thanks and Gratitude

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to Links CVS for their assistance and advice, Grassmoor Glass and Specsavers for their generous donations, Matlock Print and the Digital Print Co. for their printing expertise, Shelagh's Sewing Circle for masks provided, our service users for their generosity in positive feedback, our volunteers for their time dedicated and to every one of our supporters who send us their their goodwill. We look forward to your continued support, friendship and kindness!



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