



If Anyone Can, Highfields Can!

What's Inside

Highfields Summer 2015

Page 02

Welfare Rights

Page 02

Highfields Festival:
Celebrating Diversity &
Unity in the Community!

Page 03

From Unemployed to Employed

Page 03

Talent Match Highfields

Page 03

Free Work Club

Page 04

Celebration of Successes

Page 04

Highfields Business
Association AGM

Page 05

Highfields Our Place

Page 05

Business Support

Page 05

Activities for Young People

Page 06

and lots more ...

A very challenging year but our journey to economic independence continues!

It's been said that a week is a long time in politics and as for the last year, it's taken up much of our creative energies to ward off the city mayor's determined and unmerited attacks on our Centre. In his blatant quest to bankrupt Highfields Community Association, it seems he's not averse to victimising the wider communities in Highfields through his actions on several service related developments,

Since gaining community governance status in December 2010, our:

1. Turnover has increased by 360%
2. Expenditure has increased by 494 % (inclusive of a one-off pension deficit payment)
3. Staff team has increased by 40%
4. Over 400,000 users in 4 years (2011 – 2014) & exceeded all contractual targets
5. Open to the public 7 days per week over 326 days per year
6. Provided 5000 activity sessions in 2014, averaging 16 people per session
7. Member of 5 successful, externally funded service consortiums
8. Highfields Centre's pioneering community cohesion work resulted in it championing 'Celebrating Diversity and Unity in the Community' long before it became common parlance in both local and national discourse and reflected in both its staffing and usage figures, with HCA staff comprising last year of 59% Asian, 21% African/Caribbean, 12% White and 8% Other and reflected in its people usage pattern, with 73% Asian, 16% African/Caribbean, 4% White and 7% Other
9. 91% of our users said HCA's services were excellent to good
10. 98% of our users said they would continue to use HCA's services
11. 97% of our users said they'd recommend our services to their friends, family, etc
12. Gained national accreditation through the achievement of the Social Enterprise Mark, Investors in People, Matrix, Advice Quality Standard and other national kite marks
13. Successful lead applicant for Highfields Our Place



Scan the QR Code
& join us online

400,000

Number of Users of the
Highfields Centre

page 6

2,379

People attended the fun
packed Highfields Festival

page 3

continued from page 1

Just a fraction of the statistics on page 1 would suggest a remarkable set of achievements to be celebrated and utilised as a benchmark for equivalent developments to be effected elsewhere in this city but as we now know, it's not a view shared by the city mayor!

His dictatorial actions have resulted in not only a £510,000 cut in the Centre's budget but more importantly, the removal and jeopardising of well established pre-school and adult learning services in this area. The level of the reductions effected has meant us having to restructure our operation to ensure not only a continued and meaningful level of service provision (see inside pages) but also, the Centre's ongoing viability.

The understanding and support of our staff, service users, Governing Body and supporters from near and far has made this possible and a big thanks to you for the same!

Your support over the past few months has been as invaluable as your support over our 13 year journey to raise £5 million pounds, redevelop the old Centre and bring it under community governance and we'll look forward to receiving that ongoing support over the next phase of our Centre and our communities' development.

*Locality Convention
(Curve, Nov 2014)*



Welfare Rights Adviser's Action Saves Client £4000 Appeal Charges!

A client had applied for a UK resident's card as an Indian national. His wife is working and holds Portuguese nationality. All the necessary paperwork was submitted by the husband to support his application. This included his wife's wage slips, bank statements and other supporting statements. The Home Office refused the application as it stated that it did not believe that the wife was working. It was claimed that they had made various attempts to contact the company over the phone but that there was no response. It was further claimed that they had also undertaken a Google search of the company name but could not find anything.

Our Advice Officer asked for a re-consideration of the application. She also pointed out that there are two factories at the same address on different floors. It was also made known that the factory where the wife works is registered with Companies House and she had sent them the Company Registration number. Having sent the letter to the Home Office in January '15, there was no reply by March '15. Our Advice Officer called the Home Office to check on progress and was informed that it was not sure whether the compliance team was going to look into it.

It was deemed necessary by our Advice Officer to make a formal complaint as the Home Office had charged £55 and yet no searches had been carried out. The Home Office back tracked and issued our client with his visa. They also apologised for the delay in the reconsideration taking place and for not meeting our expectations on this occasion.

If our Advice Officer had left this case unchallenged, then our client would have had to Appeal against the decision. This would have cost £3000 to £4000 for a solicitor and could have taken up to 8 months for the Appeal to be heard. During that time, the client would not have been able to work and it would have had damaging repercussions on the whole family.

SPORTS

ELDERS' GROUP – The sports team continue to work with the elder's group to help improve their daily lives through a programme of gentle exercise and social activity on a weekly basis. This programme will be increased to 3 days a week from October and all enquiries are welcome.

NEW SESSIONS – The sports team have welcomed Leicester City Football & Leicestershire/Rutland Cricket Club who both run satellite clubs from the Centre on a weekly basis.

SPORTS PROGRAMME – The Centre runs regular weekly sessions of Badminton, Table-Tennis, Football (5 to 12 years) and Basket Ball - all enquires welcome.

FITNESS SUITE – The Centre's Gym & Sauna open daily with sessions for women only, as well as mixed sessions. All enquires are welcome.



Highfields Summer 2015 Activities Programme

Summer 2015 Activities at Highfields Centre was extremely popular and very well attended. The four week summer programme funded by Highfields Community Association ran from 10am – 1pm for 4 weeks, commencing 20th July. It consisted of numerous creative methods and interventions utilising arts, crafts and sports.

This year's programme was supported by local young volunteers Zainab Patel, Hanefa Osman, Humaira Patel & Mohammed Yukub. A huge acknowledgment goes to 15 year old Yusuf Aboobaker, another local young person who has been attending sports & youth activities at Highfields Centre since he was 5 years old. He expressed an interest in helping out during the scheme and whilst it was challenging for him, he was determined to continue and has shown huge development as an individual. The whole experience has provided him with skills, knowledge and abilities that will help him progress in life.

We have delivered summer activities/programmes at the Centre for over 25 years and will continue to do so in the coming years. Please get in touch with Jay Patel if you are interested in getting involved in future programmes.





Fifth Annual Highfields Festival 2015 a Resounding Success!

The Fifth Highfields Festival took place on Saturday 15th August 2015 between 12 noon and 6pm. Well over 2,000 people attended a fun packed Festival. Highfields Centre had taken the lead in pulling together partner agencies from across the area to put on this major Festival.

The Festival was formally opened by Cllr Abdul Osman (Assistant Mayor and HCA Governing Body).

The community fair with over 40 stalls and the Children's, Arts and Sports' zones all proved to be major attractions, with the highlight being the music entertainment from the outdoor stage which incorporated the Festival's theme of Celebrating Diversity and Unity in the Community. Scintillating performances from Tanni Browne, Durgesh Parmar's Indo-Fusion Band, Dreamettes, Zimbabwean Choir and Red Stripe were well supported by local young artists who enthralled the packed audience and it featured the cream of Leicester's local young artists.

Some comments from this year's Festival attendees:

'It's been fantastic, just can't believe we've been able to get all the different communities together in one place!'

'It's really well organised and in comparison to last year, there's so many more people here!'

'Lots of fun activities for whole families to get stuck in to'

'Yes, what a fantastic day. Really enjoyed it & it takes a lot for me to enjoy something let me tell you.'

'Prices good and affordable, welcoming for all ages.'

'Wonderful atmosphere of togetherness.'

'Thank you to all the staff at the Highfields Centre for a wonderful festival.'

'What a great day had a lovely time. Can't wait for next year.'

'Highfields Festival was massive, the best festival ever, looking forward to next year.'



From Unemployment to Employment!

From September to December 2014, we delivered a Level 2 Youth Work course accredited through Aim Awards. Thirteen Talent Match young people who were unemployed for 12 months or more registered onto the course. Eleven young people completed the course and gained the Level 2 qualification. Ten of the young people either gained employment or set up their own enterprise within a month of completing this course. The course not only provides you with a qualification to work with young people but also develops you as an individual and helps you realise your true potential.

If you would like to register for the next course commencing in September 2015, please contact Jay Patel or Aysha Ghanchi, LIKE us on Facebook, send a message and we will get back to you or simply just pop into the Centre.



Talent Match Highfields

We are in our 2nd year of delivering this new programme and very proud of our achievements so far, as we have exceeded our programme targets.

Efaz Ahmed is one of the many young people who have been supported by this programme and here's his story: Before Talent Match, I was unemployed with not many qualifications but voluntarily running a football academy for boys aged 5-14. Talent Match staff at Highfields Centre provided me with the information and support to access various courses such as Get Started delivered by the Prince's Trust and Highfields Centre's Level 2 Youth Work course. Currently, I have 10 qualifications and have gained employment through the Step Up programme. My aim is to use sports to help young people to develop interpersonal and transferable skills to prepare them for the future. I hope to bring out the best in young people, motivate them and help them build resilience. If anyone is aged between 18 – 24 years and looking for support in gaining employment, then please get in touch with Jay Patel or Aysha Ghanchi or drop in during our Talent Match sessions from 2pm – 5pm every Wednesday.



Celebration of Successes at Adult Certificate Presentation Evening 2015

We have been proudly celebrating our adult learners' successes for over thirty years and this year's event was attended by 150 learners on 7th August.

Priya Thamotheram provided a short introduction and welcome and spoke of the long tradition spanning over 30 years of adult learning provision at Highfields Centre. He said the Centre is committed to providing adult learning provision and will be seeking funding opportunities to develop new programmes at the Centre over the coming months.

Aiyub Zamakda who manages HC's adult learning provision spoke about the importance of lifelong learning and the contribution it makes to peoples' lives. He mentioned key benefits of learning to include: personal development, acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant for employment, developing self confidence, health benefits, helping people to make informed decision in their lives and acquiring new skills, so that people can increase their independence. Highfields Centre had over 550 enrolments over the last year, with nearly 10,000 learners and over 1,000 classes and with a retention and success rate of 95 per cent!

The Adult Services department continues to provide a valuable service aimed at the unemployed and those seeking to enter the labour market and in spite of the Council's funding cuts, the Centre is still providing

Advice Services to help people access benefits, housing, debt, immigration and general advice.

Rafique Patel, Chair of Highfields Business Association and a guest presenter said: "It is absolutely fantastic to see you learning and commend you all especially with your responsibilities."

Jon Ashworth MP gave out the certificates and congratulated each and every learner for their efforts. He commented: "I am deeply proud of you, proud of the staff, tonight's your night, enjoy it" and in recognising the work of the Centre and its staff, Jon gave his assurance to support the Highfields Centre. He said "If Highfields Centre didn't exist; we'd have to invent one!"

The 2015 Student of the Year Award was presented to Khatija Mahomed, an ESOL learner who has shown tremendous commitment and dedication over the last year and on a range of criteria, she had scored the highest marks to warrant this year's award.

For the third consecutive year, we provided the 2015 Business Awards, with the New Business of the Year award presented to Mumtaz Ahmed from Elegance Beauty. In the Creative Business of the Year category, the award was presented to Ziyaad Lorgat from Firdose Limited.



In her closing remarks to learners, Dr Iris Lightfoote, a guest presenter, Chief Executive of The Race Equality Centre and Interim HCA Chair said: "We need to continue to work together towards our aims. Help us to come together, moving forward positively and come back next year."

EXCITING NEW DEALS AT HIGHFIELDS CENTRE

FUNCTION ROOMS (Main Hall/ Kitchen/Lounge) from **£40.00 per hour or £150 for 4 hours** - special offers now available for smaller functions, (conditions apply).

TRAINING/MEETING ROOMS – WITH WI-FI/PROJECTOR/SCREEN - available 7 days per week at very competitive prices.

NEW EXCLUSIVE USAGE of OFFICES, STUDIOS and ROOMS - we now offer designated rooms/spaces/studios at competitive rates – for all enquiries, please contact us on 0116 253 1053.

Free Work Club Sessions for the Unemployed

Our weekly work club sessions have been designed to help individuals to identify employment opportunities, develop their CVs, make important contacts with employers, provide access to the internet to look for jobs and to help clients with job application forms.

Our staff can also offer advice and information on relevant skills and training opportunities to enhance your prospects of finding suitable employment.

Starting in September 2015, we're also planning to offer Confidence Building and Computer Skills for Job Search courses.

To join the Work Club session that runs on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1:00pm-3:00pm, please come to Highfields Centre or call us for more information on Tel: 0116 253 1053.



Highfields Business Association's (H-BA) First AGM

As a part of our business engagement policy, we launched H-BA in January 2014. The organisation held its first AGM last October. Guest Speaker at the event was Corin Crane, Chief Executive of Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership. We also had presentations on locally available grants and on a major European Union funding application, Maximising Economic Potential.

An Executive team (see photo) headed by Rafique Patel of Bond Solicitors was elected to develop the Association and it aims to;

- ♦ Promote the benefits of local businesses based in the Greater Highfields area of Leicester
- ♦ Provide a networking opportunity for businesses to share experiences, do business together and peer learning.
- ♦ Raise issues faced by local businesses and make representations at local and national level.

Contact us on 0116 253 1053 to find out more and don't miss out on this great business development opportunity.



Highfields Our Place - Going Further!

Highfields Our Place aims to give local people more power over local services and budgets in our neighbourhoods, aligning these with the other resources that the community can bring. In recognition that we share many similar problems with fellow communities, Highfields led a partnership of Leicester's 3 Our Place projects called 'Going Further' that included Saffron Resource Centre in the South of the City and Cooke-e Learning and Beaumont Lodge Community Association in the North.

We are working together to plan and then provide a Community Wi-Fi service that could give vital on-line access to everyone in our community that wants it at a price that people can afford. With Government forcing all applications for support on-line, yet with multi-national web based services being expensive, this community Wi-Fi project could be an essential life-line for many in Highfields and beyond.

Building on Highfields leading role in Our Place, and in recognition of the fundamental problems that many people have to face, Highfields Centre was elected by nine advice service providing community organisations from across the city to lead on a £5.2 million European Union bid for resources to help those furthest from employment secure work, including self-employment. Called Maximising Economic Potential, the project includes Highfields Centre, The Race Equality Centre, Shama Women's Centre, Bangladesh Youth and Cultural Shomiti, Somali Development Services and Pakistan Youth and Community Association. The support our centres` would give would be intensive and include advocacy that is fighting vulnerable local people's corners against unfairness, inequality and unhelpful bureaucracy.

Finally, and having recognised the hopelessness caused for many people being in work yet still in poverty, Highfields Centre along with our local partners is working with the International Ethical Trading Initiative to support those trapped in illegal working conditions.

Business Support

FIRDOSA - is a new UK based brand aimed at creating luxury leather cases for the holy Qur'an. The idea for Firdosa came 12 months ago in September 2013, whilst collecting my children from evening Arabic classes; I noticed many were carrying their copy of the holy book with no external cover to protect it from the elements, though some did have a cover.

I researched online and in local Islamic shops what was on the market and found there was only a one size fits all option (there are various sizes of the Qur'an (holy book)) mainly aimed at children.

I set apart designing a prototype based on a heritage design traditionally produced from cloth, and after researching different materials found leather to be the perfect choice, aimed at an adult market. I have also produced a more vibrant range for children from wool felt. I needed funding to get the product to market and contacted Highfields Centre. Alfred Bawak (Business Adviser) helped me to put a business plan together and successfully applied for the Enterprising Leicester project. Alfred was instrumental in listening & understanding what our business was trying to achieve & then he gave valuable advice accordingly & help with completing the application form for the Enterprising Leicester grant. His help & support was very valuable as he helped Firdosa acquire the grant for key essentials when starting a business ie a computer & marketing & product materials.

I would definitely recommend Highfields Centre's Business Support service to anybody who is seeking to start or expand a business, as Alfred is a very helpful & knowledgeable individual.

CLEAR SKIN - I (Mumtaz Ahmed) have been involved in hair and beauty for the past 13 years. Building from past experience, I wanted to create an ambience of peace and tranquillity, from a home based salon offering customers various beauty treatments from facials, waxing, threading, make up and IPL laser treatments, as there's a gap in the market with people now more conscious than ever before of their appearance and there is not enough supply to keep up with the demand for IPL laser treatment in my targeted area.

I needed funding to help source the machine. On Cllr Abdul Osman's recommendation, I contacted Highfields Centre for assistance.

I would like to say a Big Thank you to Alfred for his reliable and prompt service that he offered. From the onset, he kept me well informed, never let me down with arranged meetings or agreed schedules when creating my Business Plan which I could never have completed without his constant support. He gave me the confidence to turn my dream in to a reality

Without a clear business plan I would not have been able to apply for an interest free loan. My business plan was extremely beneficial to the set up of ELEGANCE Beauty Room, as without it I could not have obtained the funding required. With Alfred's help, we created a fantastic business plan which not only gave creditors an insight into my estimated income but also helped me establish realistic amount of clients I will have to treat to establish my goal. I have been granted a **£15,000** interest free loan by the Sir Thomas White Charity and my objective was achieved! I've recommended Alfred to many others and will always be thankful to him for helping me to turn a thought into a reality. I am extremely pleased with the help and support received. I would also like to thank Cllr Abdul Osman who provided me with Highfields Centre's details at a New Business seminar, as I wasn't aware this service was available so close to home.

Activities for Young People

The youth team have had an extremely busy year providing a range of informal educational activities and opportunities to help young people learn more about themselves and the community they live in. Each term, young people were encouraged to get involved in planning their chosen activities which included:

- ♦ Cooking
- ♦ Discussions on street crime/gangs
- ♦ Drugs' Awareness
- ♦ Female only boxercise
- ♦ Multisports
- ♦ Creative art
- ♦ Educational trips

Each session creatively incorporated elements of the youth work curriculum and developing young people's knowledge, skills and attitudes.

If you would like to attend the sessions or get involved, please contact Jay Patel or Aysha Ghanchi on **0116 253 1053**, LIKE us on Facebook, send us a message and we will get back to you or simply pop into the Centre.



Highfields Centre – 2014 User & Staff Profile

The Centre's ethos of serving all sections of the local community is brilliantly supported by our 2014 user and staff statistics, with the key findings as follows:

- ♦ Male = 44% Female = 56%
- ♦ Asian = 73%; African/Caribbean = 16%; White = 4%; Other = 7%
- ♦ Over 400,000 users have attended various activities and events at HC over the last 4 years!
- ♦ Staff = 25 males & 14 females, with 59% Asian, 21% African/Caribbean, 12% White & 8% Other.

		HCA Managed Services	LCC Managed Services	Total	%
Number of Sessions		3878	1328	5206	16 people/session
Participant Number		67507	13716	81223	100
Participant Gender	Male	31475	4155	35630	44
	Female	36032	9561	45593	56
Participant Ethnicity	Asian	49559-73%	10161	59720	73
	Afr/AC	11910-18%	960	12870	16
	White	2881-4%	616	3497	4
	Other	3157-5%	1979	5136	7
Volunteer Number		23	8	31	100
Volunteer Gender	Male	12	1	13	42
	Female	11	7	18	58
Volunteer Ethnicity	Asian	19	6	25	80
	Afr/AC	2	1	3	10
	White	2	0	2	7
	Other	0	1	1	3
Staff Number	FT	8	2	10	13
	PT	31	34	65	87
Staff Gender	Male	25	4	29	39
	Female	14	32	46	61
Staff Ethnicity	Asian	23- 59%	19	42	56
	Afr/AC	8-21%	1	9	12
	White	5-12%	14	19	25
	Other	3-8%	2	5	7

Highfields Food Bank – Helping to Ease Hardship

Many food bank clients are low income families hit by a crisis that is not their fault such as redundancy, reduced working hours or an unexpected bill for gas or electricity. Others are experiencing hardship because of benefits sanctions, delays with payment, facing debt issues or illness.

Highfields Food Bank was established with the support of our local MP Jon Ashworth over a year ago to help local people experiencing hardship as a result of welfare reform changes. The Race Equality Centre has, in partnership with Highfields Centre, organised and run the Food Bank. The staff and volunteers from both these organisations have enabled this much needed service to be provided on a bi-weekly basis.

Non-perishable food is donated by local people, schools and agencies. We have also received limited funding from the Spinney Hills Ward Committee and faith and trade union groups. Volunteers from all backgrounds help to run the food bank by packing, sorting and distributing food.

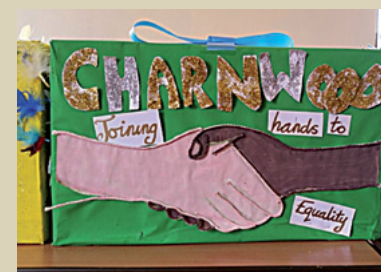
We are particularly grateful to the children, parents and staff from Charnwood Primary School who have very recently collected and donated food. Their School Assembly on the theme of Eid was well organised and the children who took part showed great skills and communication abilities in speaking to a large audience. The children's contribution to the collection of food is to be commended.

Highfields Food Bank provides basic emergency food items to anybody who:

- ♦ Lives either in Spinney Hills Ward or in the Highfields area (bounded by London Road, Evington Road, St Saviours, Vulcan Road, Nedham Street and the Midland Mainline) and,
- ♦ Is experiencing immediate or urgent financial hardship due, for example, to a reduction in income caused by the impact of austerity measures or restructuring of welfare benefits.

If you or someone that you know are experiencing financial hardship and live in the Highfields area, please contact Highfields Centre on tel: 0116 2531053 to access help.

Our staff will arrange a meeting with all clients and for those eligible, we will refer to the next food bank session



Highfields Community Association
Highfields Centre
96 Melbourne Road, Leicester LE2 0DS
Tel : 0116 253 1053 Fax : 0116 253 8597
E-Mail: info@highfieldscentre.ac.uk
Website: www.highfieldscentre.ac.uk

Follow us on:

[@H_fieldsCentre](https://www.facebook.com/H_fieldsCentre)

[f.com/pages/Highfields-Centre/108420119204590](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Highfields-Centre/108420119204590)

