

# ANNUAL REPORT 2009

## **St John's Centre Staff, Volunteers and Management Committee**

### **Staff**

Christine Aspinall - Centre Project Manager  
Anita Ward - Centre Administrator  
Shani Kaur - Crèche Supervisor  
Jasbir Kaur - Crèche worker  
John Ward - Cleaner & maintenance worker  
Ally Fogg - Old Trafford News Co-ordinator  
Elaine Eland - Old Trafford News Administrator

### **Volunteers**

Evelyn Cosham – office volunteer, hall bookings  
Louise Dunn – office volunteer, I.T. tutor, hall bookings  
Emma Wilton – office volunteer, ESOL volunteer  
Georgie Carleton – sewing tutor  
Nawal Agyaar – Arabic Tutor  
Cath Wade – Gardening  
Safa Eljak – Esol conversation

### **Management Committee**

Rev. John Hughes – Chair  
Colin Barson – VCAT, member of standing committee  
Evelyn Cosham – St John's PCC, Treasurer  
Gulnar Khan – South Asian Families Association, member of standing committee  
Stuart Webster – Blue Sci  
Rachael Harrison – former WEA tutor, members' rep  
Louise Dunn – member's rep  
Asifa Ahmed – ACE Women's Group, members' rep  
Polly Williams – Trafford African Caribbean Group, members' rep  
Mike Quinn – Basic skills volunteer, members' rep

## **AGM 2009 – Project Manager’s Report**

The Centre is in its 27<sup>th</sup> year and has continued to serve the people of Old Trafford in many ways over the last 12 months, enriching, engaging and enabling people and groups to come together in an atmosphere of trust and support.

The Centre continues to embrace the richness of diversity in Old Trafford and contribute to community cohesion and integration, though this is not undertaken in a specific way, the opportunity that the Centre creates for people to meet together and get to know one another helps to build a strong integrated community.

The Centre has helped many people to gain skills and confidence this year through attending courses and volunteering which will enable them to go on to further education or to enhance their employment chances. The Centre continues to provide paid employment for local residents working on the core project, Old Trafford News and the Crèche.

Although we have had another successful year, we are always looking to the future, and wish to build on our success.

Many of our local residents are facing an uncertain future as a result of the economic down turn. It is central to their well being that St John's Centre remains as a 'beacon of hope' to individuals and families who are vulnerable and marginalised.

### **Courses/Activities**

During the day we have been able to offer a wide variety of courses and activities (26 in total) that help people build their skills, confidence and capacity to help them to engage more fully in their community, and increase their chances of paid work.

#### ***Multi Skills Project***

This was funded by Barclays Wealth and aimed at those who are harder to engage, to give people a taster of different skills free of charge. The project ran over 10 weeks and was a huge success, enabling 16 local residents to develop different skill sets including DIY, Computers, Basic Skills and Confidence. The students were able to progress to other relevant courses at the Centre to further enhance their skills. A celebration event was held at the end of the project to award Certificates, toolboxes and inspirational books.



## ***DIY/Furniture Renovation Course***

St John's, in partnership with Faiths4Change, HBA, Harvest Housing & Grass Routes project, raised funds to put on a bespoke course tailored to meet the needs of individuals who wished to learn how to use power tools and gain transferable skills that would enable them to refurbish pieces of furniture to save them from landfill, do some home repairs to save money, build something for the home or - as in the case of Mel, one of the students - a kennel for her new dog.



## ***Computer courses***

We have been able to offer many and varied computer courses for the community: Beginners, Intermediate, Web Design, Desk Top Publishing, Internet and email.

In addition we have 2 sessions per week where people can come and learn about UK online, a government initiative to get people using the internet for the first time, a good introduction if you have never used a computer before.



## ***Organic Gardening***

The group have transformed the neglected allotment space at the back of the building and are using a Poly Tunnel donated by the 'Grass Routes' project to enable all year round growing



***Our First Strawberry*** - thanks to the hard work of Cath the gardening teacher and to the dedicated gardeners. The group are only a few, but it's great that they are making good use of the space and it's wonderful see things starting to grow, like potatoes, beetroot and onions and our very first strawberry,

## User groups

Many community groups use our Centre as their base, including: Old Trafford Boxing Club, Brownies, South Asian Families Association, Step Saturday School, Capoeira, New Way Forward mental health support, Trafford African Caribbean over 50's, Old Trafford Credit Union, and more.

One of the roles that the Centre has been able to fulfil is to enable groups to develop using space at the Centre, and has acted as an 'incubator' for projects such as Old Trafford News. This year we have been able to support St John's Singers, Peacebuilders, the After School Cafe, and continue to provide office space for Faiths4Change.

We provide space in the evenings and at weekends to community groups who themselves offer a great service to our community.

The Centre has been used for numerous community events (Neighbourhood forums and consultation on the congestion charge), fundraisers, community weddings, parties and lots of other celebrations; there has been an increase in people wanting to use this facility.

**Attendance figures:** There has been an increase in members and new joiners for Courses and activities at the Centre for 2008. 305 students registered on the 2008 database, compared to 216 in the 2007 figures.

Average attendance daytime – 489 per month

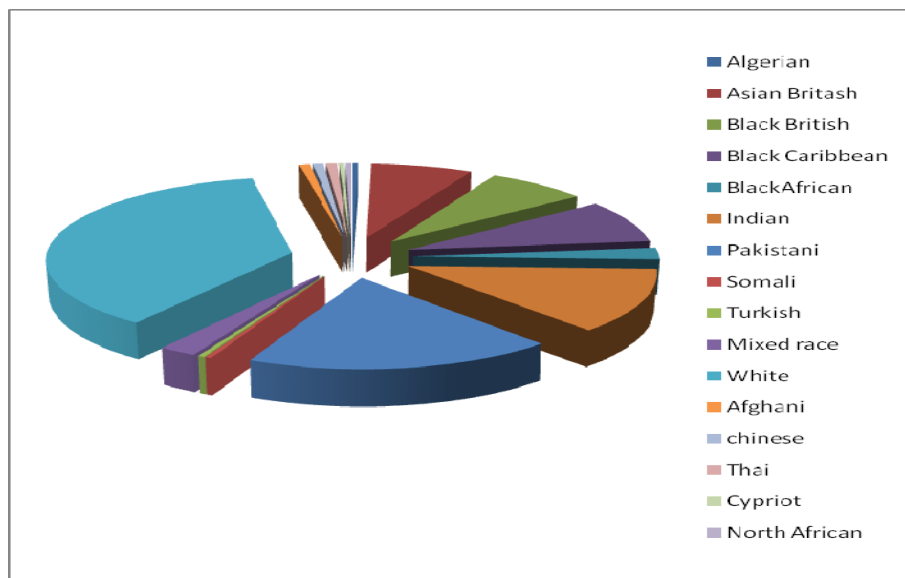
Average attendance user groups eve/weekends – 587 per month

Average attendance Weekend parties/weddings etc – 1000 per month

**Diversity of users:** Ethnicity largely reflects the make up of the community.

305 students filled in registration forms. 18 students stated their ethnicity as 'other' .

21 students did not state their ethnicity



**Ethnicity Breakdown  
Courses & Activities 2008**

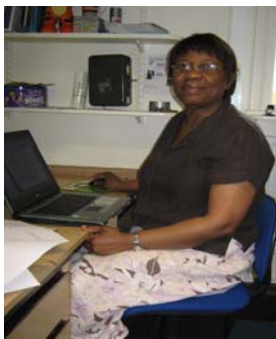
## Volunteering at the Centre

In the last year we have had to rely heavily on volunteers to help us run the Centre. We have been very fortunate in that we have some excellent people on board with us giving of their time during the week, undertaking many of the duties and supporting paid staff.



We have been able to provide volunteering opportunities to people in the following areas:

- Esol conversation,
- Arabic
- Gardening,
- Sewing
- Computer workshops
- Supporting tutors
- Office support



We have also been involved with local schools, enabling young people to undertake their work experience.

We have worked with student placements who need teaching hours as part of their courses

Our Management Committee is made up of volunteers who give of their time cheerfully and freely.

We hope to develop volunteering further at the Centre further as part of our longer term strategy.

**Crèche:** The Crèche continues to go from strength to strength, with 72 new children registered from January to December 2008, and 42 children from January 09 to the present. Many crèche sessions are full to capacity (7 children) and we have unfortunately had to turn away children due to the crèche being full.



Since our last AGM, crèche supervisor Shani Kaur and assistant Jasbir Kaur have worked hard to maintain good relationships with parents and carers. We held a coffee morning in February which was attended by several parents and their children.

This gave parents the opportunity to view their child's development files and discuss with staff their child's progress.

During the coffee morning we asked parents for their comments on the crèche.

All feedback was positive, with one parent saying her son was so upset and unsettled that she was considering dropping out of her course, but with help and support from crèche staff she persevered and he is now a very happy and settled little boy and misses us when he is not here.



Another parent said 'I'm very happy with the crèche, but it needs to be bigger.'

Last August, crèche staff organised a day trip to Llandudno, mainly for crèche parents and families – 53 people went on the trip.

In September Shani and Jasbir are enrolling at Trafford College to do a Foundation Degree in Early Years Studies. By 2012 they will both, hopefully, hold a BA Honours. This is a great testimony to how St John's Centre has helped two members of the community to develop – Shani & Jasbir were both unqualified when they started working with us.

Employment opportunities have been provided for 2 other members of the community within the crèche setting on an add hoc basis to cover sickness and training, enabling them to gain valuable experience for future work.



Shani and Jasbir will be holding another end-of-year crèche party, as others have been very well attended and a lot of fun.

The Centre wishes to expand the crèche facility in the near future to meet the high demand. We recently undertook a feasibility study and had plans drawn up to put in a bid to CYPS for some capital funding to build an extension onto the building so that we could offer 14 places instead of just 7. Unfortunately this was unsuccessful, but we have the plans (available to look at in the Centre).and are seeking funds elsewhere.

**Strategic Development:** Since funding for our ERDF project finished early in 2008, we have found it difficult to secure funding for continuation of the project.

In June last year Richard Johnson, an independent consultant (funded by CUF/NWDA 'Faithful Enterprise' grant), produced a report looking at how the Centre could sustain itself into the future.

The report suggested that because of the competition and uncertainty around securing grants we should 'learn to earn' from our building, and so in the last year the Centre has continued to grow and develop itself using the 'social enterprise' model enabling the organisation to be less 'grant dependent' and more self reliant.

In order to do this we have had to make many changes within the set up of the organisation.

We have formed a Marketing sub group and though we have a fair way to go yet, are learning to raise our profile and 'sell ourselves' far better than ever before.

After an 'away day' for the management committee and staff in November last year we formed a new strategy group who are starting to bring together the vision for the Centre over the next 10 years with short, medium and long term plans developed.

These include plans for the extension of the crèche provision, for which a feasibility report and architect's plans have been completed. In addition a brand new website has

been designed for the Centre, allowing groups to promote their activities and put in a link to their own website if they have one.

A celebration event 'Building on our Success' will be held as part of our Annual General Meeting in June 09 where people will be able to find out how we want to develop the Centre for the future.

**Funding:** We have been part funded by an Earmarked Grant from TMBC for a number of years, which has enabled us to lever in funding from other sources to support our work with this vulnerable community.

These grants have recently been reviewed and the process has been changed. The Centre has had to make an application for this grant which, if we are successful, will be from October 2009 initially up to 31st March 2011; we would then have to re-apply for a further 3 years.

If the application is unsuccessful it will be an enormous blow to us, as we have been able to use this funding to lever in further monies needed.

We continue to be supported by Manchester Diocese and have grants from their 'Parish Mission Fund' to contribute to staff posts at the Centre. Children In Need have part funded our crèche facility this year – this funding will continue to Aug 2011.

In addition we have had a number of small grants for specific projects from the following: Barclays Wealth, Cash for Action, Faiths4Change, Harvest Housing, North Trafford Sports Fund, John Grant Davies Trust, NLDC.

**Old Trafford News** continues to go from strength to strength, and in addition to its quarterly Community Magazine has given training and support to many volunteers. Lottery funding for the project comes to an end in June 2010 and Ally Fogg – editorial co-ordinator for Old Trafford News - will be putting together a business plan in the near future, this will include plans to make them more independent and self sustaining. (See full report attached).

### **Fun & Fund Raising:**

In addition to fundraising for the project itself, we have raised funds for charitable causes by putting on a Christmas Panto and by dressing up and selling cakes for Red Nose day.



*Red Nose Day March 2009*



*Cinderella December 2008*



The pantomime this year was 'Cinderella' The brilliant script was courtesy of All Fogg.

The cast were mainly staff, but were joined by an intrepid tutor, a community volunteer and the Chair of the Management Committee (Name withheld to avoid embarrassment).

St John's Brownies were involved too and played a brilliant part as the Prince's personal body guard. We even involved the local PCSO.

The pantomime ran for 2 nights this time. It was really hard work, but great fun for all and was enjoyed by 200 people from the community

In all we managed to raise £408 for Barnardos and Comic Relief.

**Thank you:** Thanks are due to many this year, not least the Volunteers on whom we have depended to support the work of the core project; their commitment has enabled us to continue with a full service whilst we have been short staffed.

A big thanks to our management committee and sub groups, for steering us through this year of challenge and change.

Thanks to all our partners, associates and supporters,

Thank you to the staff for all their support, hard work and dedication to the project.

**Christine Aspinall - Project Manager**

*Partners & Associates  
2008/9*

*St John's Church  
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council  
Trafford College  
Community Learning Trafford  
VCAT (Voluntary Community Action Trafford)  
Faiths4Change  
Manchester Diocese Church & Society Dept  
Workers Educational Association  
South Asian Families Association  
Asian Community Equality  
Blue Sci  
Community Development Initiative  
Trafford African Caribbean over 50's Club  
Helen Britton Associates  
Trafford United Credit Union Ltd  
Peacebuilders  
Seymour Grove Health Centre  
Grass Routes*



*Enriching lives in our community*