



Better Connections Project

Fourth Steering Group Meeting

Thursday 17 October 2024, 7.00 PM at Mint Methodist Church

Minutes

Present: Kate Hannan, Mahsin Mahbub, Mathew Jose Mangatt, Alan Quick, Neomi Alam, Joy Okumbor, Fasihullah Hakimi, Shahar Lashkor, Edith Chinnah (ZOOM), Emdad Aziz (ZOOM), Agnieszka Wanowicz, Abhinav Thomas, Said Gholam, Lolita Adolfo, Deborah Morgan, Ion Abuzatoaiei

Apologies: Mahi Ahmed, Muktar Ahmed, Arlene Lewis, James, Chloe Whipple, Ed Shaw, Al-Amin, PS Mike Blackwell-Brown

1. Welcome & Apologies

Joy chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies noted above.

2. Minutes from Last meeting on 11 July 2024

Mahsin and Joy summarised and presented the minutes from the last meeting.

Actions taken since the last meeting:

- Drop-in feedback form has been created and we've started collecting feedback from our beneficiaries.
- The list of drop-in issues has been circulated amongst the community members.
- Six different community events took place since the last meeting.
- Feedback has been collected from these events (except for Todd Gray's talk) both from the organising community and the attendees.

3. Drop-ins - Neomi Alam

- The number of beneficiaries is growing consistently.
- We have a new recruit, Sophie Parker-Rees, who will join us as a paid Case Worker and will work on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while our volunteer, Chloe, will work on Wednesdays.
- Feedback from the beneficiaries suggests they want longer sessions.



Actions:

- *Monitoring feedback from the beneficiaries.*

**4. Events and Physical Activities
(Cross cultural reports)**

1. ACIE to update on DBA events and Badminton – *(Devon Bengali Association)*
 - Hakimi explained that DBA did not hold their summer events this year due to the recent flood catastrophe in Bangladesh.
 - Regular weekly badminton sessions are taking place every Sunday at Wonford Sports Centre, with strong attendance from various communities.
 - DBA is due to have their Victory Day celebration on 12th January 2025 at St James School.
2. FCA to update on EKC events – *(Exeter Kerala Community)*
 - Lita updated us on the Onam festival, which was celebrated on 22nd September at Clyst St Mary Hall. Neomi gave very positive feedback, praising how well the performances were executed and how efficient the event was.
 - Christmas celebration will be in early January.
3. EKC to update on FCA events – *(Filipino Community Association)*
 - Abhinav updated us about the Annual Sports Fest that took place on July 27th and 28th, attended by the Lord Mayor, Cllr. Marina Asvachin, and Bindu Arjoon, at ISCA.
 - On September 20 to 23, 2024 FCA had their Family Fun Day at Tom Roberts Adventure Centre, which was a smaller event within the community.
 - Their next event is Christmas celebration to take place in America Hall on 21st December.
4. Al Souls' Day to NCIE – *(Nigerian Community in Exeter)*
 - Aga explained that the Nigerian Family Fun Day on 21st July at Wonford Community Centre and Playing Field has been a huge success.
 - Cultural Event on 6th October took place in Exeter Football Stadium (indoor).
5. DBA to update on ACIE events - *(Afghan Community in Exeter)*



- Shahar updated us about the Afghan Eid Reunion that took place at the Maer Ground, Exmouth on June 30, 2024. He mentioned that some of the members of DBA has also attended the bbq picnic by the sea.
- Regular weekly volleyball sessions are taking place at Riverside Leisure Centre.

6. Al Souls' Day – 27th October at St Thomas.

5. Year 2 Project Activities Plan:

a. New Physical Activities & Community Events

- Starting from the second year of the project, each community can host at least two events: one that is culturally and historically significant to their community, and another that is more open to the public, such as a sports day or family fun day.
- We're planning to fund two more physical activities:
 - Cricket - Exeter Bengals Cricket Club
 - Football - Exeter Mosque Youth Club
- Martisor, Babele (Old Ladies' Days), 40 de mucenici – 1st to 9th March. Ion from the Romanian community discussed the possibility of celebrating this spring celebration event at the Corn Exchange and applying for funding.
- We are planning to have three Community Panel Meetings:
 - DBA, EKC, and FCA
 - Afghan, Nigerian, and All Souls events
 - Turkish Community Centre in Exeter, Eastern & Southern African Community, and Connecting Romanians

b. School Admission Seminars & Exonians' Sports Fest

- School Admission Seminar:
 - Proposed Date: June/July 2025
 - Trainer
 - Funding
- Proposed Exonian Sports Fest:
 - Week 1: Cricket, Football
 - Week 2: Basketball with children and family activities
 - Week 3: Volleyball



- Week 4: Badminton + Children Activities
- Week 5: Finals: A culmination of the previous weeks' sports activities, bringing together the best performers across cricket, football, volleyball, basketball, and badminton.

Actions:

- *Alan to contact Exeter FC to assist with the Football tournament.*
- *Organise The Exonians' Sports Fest Working Group (February)*

6. Finance Report (Muktar)

- Kate has presented the updated Better Connection Project budget. Please see attached.

7. Electing chair for the next meeting (23rd January 2025)

- Abhinav to chair the next SGM.

8. AOB

- Dr Morgan spoke about a photography project based in the Wonford community.
- She also discussed some potential funding that is available for cancer screening from ICB who have a large amount of funding for promoting screening and signs and symptoms of cancer within diverse communities in Exeter.
- Kate spoke briefly about The New Exonian Project.
- Studio 36: We can have a launch day for our documentary. We can also invite our partner communities to showcase their respective arts/music/performances on the day.