



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT: 1ST APRIL 2019 - 31ST MARCH 2020  
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# **The Friendship Café Trustees' Annual Report 2019/2020 (Including St James City Farm and Riding School)**

The Friendship Café aims to provide social, educational and recreational facilities to people in Gloucester in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, as updated on 16th December 2014 and this report intends to give a glimpse of how these objectives have been achieved.

Reyaz Limalia - Chairman  
Mohammed Junaid Ghanti - Treasurer  
Mahmoud M Patel, MBE  
Richard Corfield  
Haroon Kadodia  
Mohmed Iqubal Patel (Retired 31/03/20)  
Ismail Ginwalla (Retired 31/03/20)  
Jenny Kadodia  
Firoza Shaikh (From 03/10/19)



We thank all the volunteers – whatever your role –whether it's painting or mucking out or taking out the rabbits to pet –in boiling hot weather, freezing snow, pouring rain. The minibus drivers, coaches, the tuck shop workers, the parents who help out at events, the young people or students on work experience, the English teachers or general helpers. Our staff and volunteers go above and beyond the call of duty and towards the end of the report we have highlighted just a few of them.

Nothing in this report would be possible without their active support.

This report has been produced as the summary of the financial year 2019 - 2020. Independently examined accounts for each year are available on request or via the Charities Commission website.

A bi-monthly newsletter is available to anyone who subscribes via [editor@thefriendshipcafe.com](mailto:editor@thefriendshipcafe.com).

*Annual Report compiled by Frankie.*

*Photo Credits and Copyright: Reyaz Limalia, David Miller, Aysha Rander, Farouk Mehta, British Equestrian / John Stroud Media, Frankie.*



# COVID 19

There's certainly been a lot of confusion and uncertainty, as nobody was sure at first what to do and how to do it. The Friendship Café decided to close and suspend most of our regular activities when the lockdown began.

We wanted to adapt to the need in the area, as we are here for the community. People from the area organised themselves and came together to create a street rep scheme; there were 102 streets in the area, so that's a lot of volunteers all coordinating through social media and a handful of local key people. Volunteers distributed leaflets and organised support for anyone on their street, such as food and meal deliveries, and we act as the main base for the effort in our area.



[Click here or scan the QR code to watch a video showing the work done at The Friendship Café during COVID-19.](#)



Aysha stopped her usual sewing classes and got volunteers making PPE instead. We filled the Friendship Café with donated supplies from locals as well as supermarkets, and the street reps come to collect and distribute it. We also have two kitchens here, so we have been working with Fair Shares, Black Elders and others and have cooked over 300 hot meals each week for the local community.

We've found that a lot of our established connections have been invaluable at this time, and we've also forged many new connections too. We have to stress that Friendship Café, as always, hasn't been working alone – it's lots of different people and organisations getting together, so credit to everybody – it's not something that one person or group can work alone on.

The work continues at the time of writing, although gradually sections of the centre are reopening.



*“A sense of blessing somebody who's worse off and struggling. To deliver their only hot meal in a day is quite a privilege knowing that I helped feed that person...nobody should go without. I'm probably the only person they see... their faces light up. There is something I can do here having had problems with anxiety myself so this is a good thing for me too, to feel comfortable, accepted and valued. I thought I could help here, I've got something to give.”*

**Gill,  
Volunteer**

**Many thanks to all the people and organisations who have supported this tremendous effort at such short notice.**



# WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

**Aysha Randera**

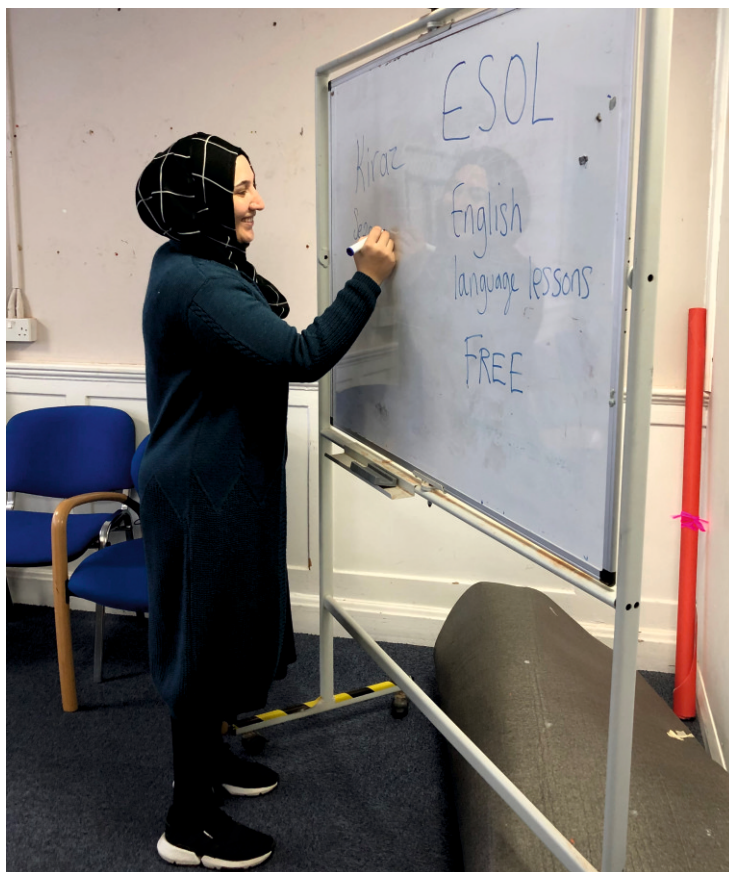
Another very busy year – hopefully the pictures will give a glimpse of just some of the activities that have been going on...

International Women's Day, radio appearances and articles in different media, support during the Covid crisis, the launch of Emma Willis Sewing Studio, blood pressure testing training, walking trips to the Cotswolds, 'Weigh & Go' sessions, promoting opportunities through social media, supporting other groups and giving 1-1 advice: these are just some of the things that Aysha has been involved with, together with other staff and volunteers. Covid stopped the group work, but on-line tutorials and PPE making continued.

To find out more you can stay updated through the ['Emma Willis Sewing Studio' Facebook page.](#)











# MARVELLOUS MUMS

**Razeya Mohamedy**

'Marvellous Mums', a Perinatal Support group funded by the NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commission, in partnership with The Friendship Café, aims to provide a supportive and welcoming environment to all Mums with babies and toddlers under 2 years.

Over the year Marvellous Mums has continued to welcome new mums and we now have over 80 mums and babies registered, with an average of 25 coming per session. This year we have also enjoyed external activities including soft play centres and an 'out of this world' visit to Lunar City!

*"I love coming to Marvellous Mums - it's great being able to talk to other mums."*

*"It's reassuring to know that I'm not the only one that has bad days!"*



At Marvellous Mums, we understand the emotional, social and physical pressures of motherhood and we encourage mothers to support their peers by sharing their experiences and ideas.

This has been even more important during the Covid-19 lockdown phase, in which the Perinatal services went online and the mothers really have excelled in sharing activities, ideas and supporting each other through quite a challenging time.

Health professionals are regularly invited to the sessions to provide information and advice to the mums.

We also hold regular focus groups which have been invaluable to the NHS Maternity team to help shape the future of maternity services at Gloucester Royal Hospital, to ensure they are inclusive to all.

As the numbers have steadily increased, the group has been more user-led and training sessions and activities have been organised following group discussions and focus groups.

This year there have been more external activities organized according to the particular needs of the group to allow the Mums to experience and enjoy activities with their babies, in a safe and controlled environment.

The importance of bonding and building nurturing relationships being key to positive mental health and wellbeing. All activities respect faith and cultural requirements and restrictions

Workshops remain popular and the Positive Parenting and Paediatric First Aid have been well attended and run multiple times throughout the year. The increase in parenting confidence is a positive marker of success.

*“The group is so friendly and welcoming. I didn't know anyone when I first started and now I feel I have a whole new family.”*

*“Happy, positive, friendly, welcoming- that's how I would describe Marvellous Mums.*

*My son and I look forward to Tuesdays!”*

*“Lockdown has been tricky with a toddler and new baby. The online mums have kept me sane with creative ideas and support.”*



# HELPING OTHERS, GETTING HELP



Lots of work happens behind the scenes. Here's just two examples of many of how we have been supported and two examples of how we have supported others.

## AARON ROBINS AND CO TO THE RESCUE

Aaron Robins is a visitor to the farm with his young child. He saw our Facebook post asking for donations towards replacing two of the main farm doors. Aaron contacted us to say that his company, **Openview Doors & Windows**, would **replace and install both doors free of charge!**

We were getting concerned that some of the trees on the perimeter of the farm were on the verge of damaging a neighbour's house and another was poisonous for our livestock. **Tim Rees** is a local resident who runs **treesassociates.com**. Tim wrote a report with his assessment of the situation with recommendations to the City Council, who permitted us to have the trees cut down, subject to replacement with more appropriate varieties.

**Thank you to both Aaron and Tim for their support – as well as many others.**

## SUPPORTING OTHER GROUPS

Over the course of the year we supported groups in different ways including **Elmscroft Community Centre** with some sheep to make their area more colourful, and more distant but exciting **Urban Equestrian** in Leicester, with advice and support - they are hoping to run a similar inner-city riding project to ourselves.

We also advised and supported numerous agencies promoting opportunities including police recruitment, **British Equestrian**, **All Nations Community Centre**, and various **NHS departments**. Many individuals were also supported with everything from simple form filling to support with appeals and referrals to specialist agencies.

## HELP AT THE ALLOTMENT

**Rachel Laffort** works for Fair Shares, but her main base is at the City Farm's allotments where she has taken on the role of promoting all things gardening and growing. The site is coming on beautifully, after a few years of decline and is used by locals and children from the different schools. Great work by Rachel and the volunteers, especially **Community Payback Team** who are involved with much of the hard graft that goes into maintaining the place.





“The advice and support you all have give UEA is literally second to none, we appreciate you immensely”

**FR33DOM Zampaladus,  
Urban Equestrian Academy,  
Leicester**



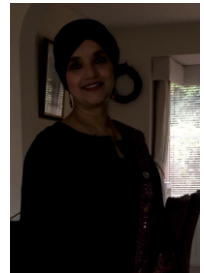
“I’m really inspired by the work & development of the Friendship Cafe, it speaks volumes in the community. Much work needs to be done, and so much can be achieved by working and learning from forward thinking established organisations/charities, locally like yours.”

**Michelle Macfarlane,  
All Nations Community Centre**



“I am an HR practitioner and have worked in the NHS for over 20 years. I wanted to offer my support to Friendship Cafe as it is a valuable organisation which supports all communities and especially the most vulnerable at a time of need, and I want to be part of that.”

**Firoza Shaikh, Trustee**



“Our school has benefitted hugely from our involvement with the Friendship Café, the City Farm and the allotment, despite the current lockdown. Friendship Café provides a safe and child-friendly venue for our attendance celebrations which the children really look forward to.

Class visits are always successful and the volunteers really interact with our children, even those with additional needs. Our children have enjoyed feeding, holding and watching the smaller animals - during lockdown they began a correspondence with the rabbits and guinea pigs!

These sessions are some of the most memorable moments for children and the value of them cannot be overstated.”

**Sam Buckley,  
Family Support Worker,  
Hatherley Infants School**

## **BOXING WITH TOM KERRIDGE**

Celebrity Chef Tom Kerridge came along as part of the series **Get Fit and Lose Weight**. They filmed in our gym with one of our volunteer boxing coaches **Nick Odore**, former Olympic boxer for Kenya in 1992.

[Watch a clip on our  
YouTube Page.](#)



# CITY FARM

2019 marked the **25th Anniversary** of the establishment of the city farm, where we were joined by the famous **Tweedy the Clown** from **Giffords Circus** and the **Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Edward Gillespie** amongst crowds of locals despite the rain.

Our partnership with **Hartpury College & University** continues with regular work experience students and support, many students choosing to stay on even after their compulsory placement hours are completed.

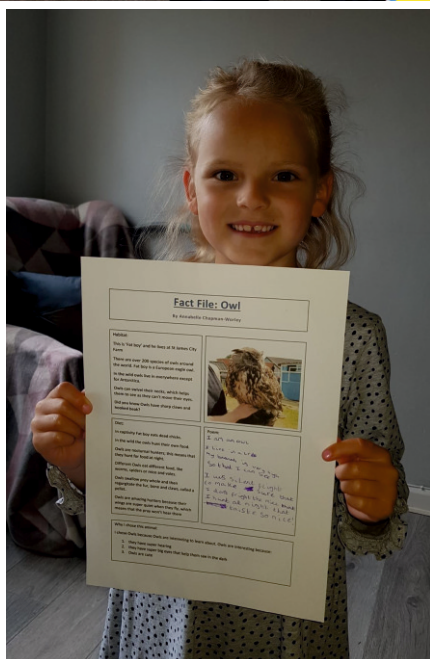


## THE FARM BEFORE

The farm was independently voted as one of the best free days out in Gloucestershire in a survey on **Gloucestershire Live** – a far cry from when it opened 25 years ago.







**Richard Leach gets an award for working with young people.**

**A farm visitor with an owl fact sheet she made.**

**Kulchalee (Leroy Fable) and his young people are regulars at the farm.**

*"I visited your farm yesterday with a young person that I am currently working with and wanted to send a huge thank you to your volunteer Jess who helped this young person handle the rabbits and look at the horses, which she loved. This particular person loves animals and finds handling them very therapeutic.*

*Luke who was over seeing things on site was also very helpful.*

*Thanks again team, I can't wait to visit again"*

**Katie McNulty,  
Family Support Worker,  
Diversion and Placement Support Team**





# RIDING SCHOOL

Just before lockdown, we were thriving, working our way through the long waiting list of eager children. Being so small, we don't have the capacity to teach everyone, so give priority to children who live closest to the farm or facing some particular disadvantage.

Our two closest schools **Al-Ashraf** and **St James** sent in children on a regular basis. In the coming year we plan to partner with another riding school to do trekking in the countryside, thanks to a grant from **The Notgrove Trust**. Apart from being the **first ethnic minority run club** to join **Pony Club UK**, one key development has been the coming on board of **The Jockey Club / Cheltenham Racecourse** who have kindly decided to sponsor us a racing pony and all it's associated costs.

This project has featured on **Racing TV** and **BBC Points West** and we thank all who are involved in supporting us, in particular champion racehorse trainers' **Leech Racing** who have been mentoring our young jockeys with invaluable expertise and giving us access to their fantastic galloping tracks.





◀ Hibba the Shetland Pony visited Al-Ashraf Primary School where she met with different year groups and was used as a living prop for a presentation about horses by farm staff and the Pony Club UK.



▲ Hibba visits the city centre for the 2019 Tree of Light Ceremony.



▲ Hedaya volunteers at the farm and has plans to become an Equine Vet.

BBC Points West did a feature on Zara the Racing Pony. ▼

Hedaya talks to Racing TV about Zara the Racing Pony. ▼



You can view these two videos and lots of others related to the riding school and farm by visiting the [Friendship Café Youtube Page](#).





# BOYS' ACTIVITIES



We started off our year with monthly activities, including 'Ninja warriors, Zorb football, Clay shooting, paintball and an amazing weekend trip to Wales on the UK's longest zip wire.

Covid scuppered all the plans for the rest of the year but rest assured we are planning a come back with socially distanced but hopefully equally exciting activities in the new climate.











# GIRLS' GROUP

The Girls Group is now led by Tracey Zahara Hare and Fouzia Qureshi – up until lockdown during the course of the year they had plenty of outings and trips as well as taking part in Gloucester Day and other community events.

Ice skating, painting, football, climbing out in the woodlands, and making pizzas at the city farm bread oven are just some of the activities that they took part in. 'Having fun' is our strapline and learning and developing our confidence, friendship circles and teamwork is what we are all about.

This year, we are planning more outdoor trips including our own football team.

**To keep updated, send an email to [zahara@thefriendshipcafe.com](mailto:zahara@thefriendshipcafe.com).**

## KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

All our activities are guided by a safeguarding policy to keep our children safe and well.

At the same time as training our own staff and volunteers, we are supporting efforts as part of a collective to try and ensure other organisations in our community have access and support to child protection and safeguarding advice.

**To find out more contact [imran@thefriendshipcafe.com](mailto:imran@thefriendshipcafe.com).**









▲ Tina, the manager, with staff members Abeda and Sharma.



▲ Our Coffee Shop as shown in the BBC Tom Kerridge Lose Weight and Get Fit series

# THE COFFEE SHOP

The Coffee Shop got off to a grand start following its launch. All its main aims were being served – a community meeting space, **friendships** being formed, **advice** from those who **support people into jobs** such as the **GEM project** and the **Forwards Together team** and a welcome to the other activities in the centre and in the area. There was even an appearance on prime time **BBC** with celebrity chef **Tom Kerridge**.

Then just as we were heading towards the 'breaking even point' financially, **lockdown** began. Undeterred, the staff and volunteers worked with **Fair Shares** and others to do as much Covid Support efforts as possible. At the time of writing, the Coffee Shop has **reopened** and moved into the main hall to allow for social distancing.

[Watch a clip of our coffee shop on the show on our Youtube Page!](#)



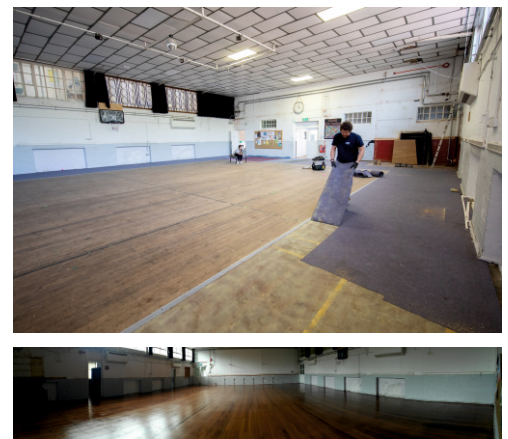


# Some of our Main Supporters...

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Thanks to the **Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, Martin Surl** and **Chief Constable Rod Hansen**, we were nominated for an **award** which meant contractors Willmot Dixon refurbished the floor in the main hall, the start of more improvements to come in the future. The redundant DJ booth was removed and **volunteers** and the **Community Payback** team have started giving the walls a fresh lick of paint.



**We thank you all for your continued support!**





**The Friendship Café**  
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**St. James City Farm & Riding  
 School**  
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