



LEEDS GRAND MOSQUE

Leeds Grand Mosque Annual Report 23/7/2004 – 25/9/2005

**In the name of Allah most Gracious most merciful
Praise be to Allah the Almighty and peace and blessings be upon his prophet Muhammed**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh,

It gives me great pleasure to present the annual report for activities and work that has been done for the period starting from the first day the current management committee started its work on the 23rd July 04 until today.

The Islamic foundation appointed me as a manager of the mosque on a voluntary basis on the 9th of July 2004. I was requested to form the management committee from a number of volunteers. The management committee was formed from a number of brothers and a sister of whom two resigned later for personal reasons.

The current committee consist of:

1. Chairman - Zaher Birawi
2. Secretary -Qasim Nawaz,
3. Treasurer - Fida Al Bayati
4. Da'wa and Islamic awareness - Zunaid Karim
5. Social activities - Firas Al-Rawi
6. Women and Public relations - Raghad Altikriti
7. Maintenance & Project Development -Hikmat Walid
8. Intellectual and Educational activities - Basem Samman

The main aim of the committee was to maintain the mosque and serve the Muslim community in Leeds. Accordingly an ambitious work plan was put in place and the Management committee has put great effort to achieve the set objectives and fulfil the plan. There have been 15 management committee meetings during the past year to follow up various projects and activities.

Amongst the projects and activities that have been achieved are:

- Development of the house attached to the mosque
- Basement refurbishment
- Annual Islamic Exhibition
- Open day for the public
- Improvement in public and community relations
- Ramadan and Eid Activities
- Memory of prophet's birth (PBUH)
- Communication through the mosque's website and mailing list
- Marriage and new Muslim services
- Many activities carried out following the events of 7th of July

- Other activities supervised by different sub committees

Main obstacles faced:

Although there was a lot of interaction and contribution from the community, it was not enough to meet the ambitions of the management committee. Therefore, we consider the lack of human resources as one of the main obstacles faced during our work. All members of the management committee are volunteers which limits the ability to meet all that we desire to accomplish. Also there was difficulty in finding committed people to formulate well established subcommittees and often the same few people doing much of the work.

The second obstacle was the critical financial shortage which we managed to deal with by the support of the community. As you will see from the financial report included, we still need your continuous support to enable us to accomplish the essential projects needed.

Main future projects:

- Youth and community centre/ multifunction hall
- Moving from voluntary based work to employment based work as a requirement for development and improving performance
- Improving the mosque's website (design, contents, interactivity)
- Improving relations with the authorities and governmental departments
- Maintain enough financial resources for the mosque's projects and activities
- Carry out maintenance and developmental projects especially the ones that are at the initial stage of implementation e.g. (roof, central heating, bicycle sheds, display boards, safety and security measures and improving disabled access services.)

A final Word:

We hope that we have been able to carry out the responsibility towards the mosque and the community to the best of our abilities, resources and time limits bearing in mind that all of the management committee are volunteers trying their best to serve the house of Allah (SWT) and meet the needs of the Muslim community in Leeds.

If we have gained any success in what we were set to do then it is from the blessing and guidance of Allah the almighty firstly and as a result of your cooperation and support secondly. However, if there were any shortcomings and faults, that would be from ourselves and we ask Allah (SWT) to reward us all and forgive our shortcomings.

Finally, we encourage you to bring to our attention our mistakes and faults to enable us to evaluate and improve our performance accurately. Let our example be the great companion Omar Ibn Al-Khattab - May Allah be pleased with him- who always said: 'May Allah have mercy upon a person who enlightens me of my faults and mistakes.'
Wassalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah

Your Brother

Zaher Birawi

The Chairman of the Mosque

1) Duties Supervised Directly By The Chairman:

1. Managerial Work:

- Forming the management committee of the mosque
- Conducting regular managerial meetings
- Preparing an inventory and organising stores in the mosque
- Maintenance of the general cleaning of the mosque
- Supervising the mosque's website and the mailing list through our webmaster Br. Bilal.
- Communication with the community through the notice boards in the mosque.
- Corresponding positively towards reaching out to Muslim communities celebrations e.g. thanking letter to Asda and Adams stores for showing festival celebrations
- Providing the office with appropriate equipment e.g. computer, printer, projector, laptop etc.
- Providing insurance for the mosque that includes building insurance and public liability insurance.
- Correspondence and communication with different organisations and individuals e.g. Islamic Foundation, Rahma Foundation, Omar Welfare House, Sheikh saif, Al-Maktoom Foundation
- Evaluation process through conducting Questionnaire and analysing the data collected
- Dealing with consultations and Fatwas received directly or through the mail with regards to various issues and directing them to appropriate channels
- Receive groups and individuals visiting the mosque throughout the year
- Organising a General public meeting in the mosque on 13.10.04
- Conducting Marriage contracts the average of 1 contract per month
- Dealing with new Muslims issues in cooperation with Leeds New Muslim Project on average of at least one new Muslim every month
- Consultation meeting with regards to the extension project of the mosque.

2. Representing The Mosque In Several Activities

- Main gatherings organised by the council following 7/7
- Attending the Yorkshire and Humberside multi-faith meeting in Queens Hotel
- Representing the mosque in the opening ceremony of the multicultural library
- General interfaith meeting in civic hall after 7/7
- Meeting in Hamara centre with other Islamic organisation and individuals to discuss the Muslim Youth Forum
- Participate in the meeting with the Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety Hazel Blaers; it was an opportunity raise the community concerns with regards to the government's policies.
- Leeds Bereavement Forum Conference
- Leeds Peace Forum

3. Youth Activities:

- Arranging with the Yorkshire District Scouts Commissioner and leaders to make a presentation to the community about scouting in the UK and how to start a scout group based in the mosque.
- Providing Maths classes for SATs and GCSE for both girls and boys
- Charity Jumble sale and fun fair activities organised by a group of children from the mosque.
- Organising a youth consultation under the title 'Voice of the youth' with the aim of engaging the youth and responding to their needs.
- Jointly organising 2 youth camps, one with MAB and the other with Shabab Club.

2) **Public Relations and Media**

1. **Public And Community Relations:**

a. Organising events:

- Arranging iftar for business men during Ramadan
- Organising a multi faith meeting with Mark Carol the head of faith and equality department in the home office at the mosque to inform the government executives of tensions on the ground and impact of knee-jerk measures.
- Arranging for the community information bus to visit the mosque to provide opportunities and information for the community and to recognise the role of the mosque as a community centre

b. Hosting events:

- Hosting several community meetings for local and national organisations e.g. LNMP, MAB, Iraqi league, Kurdish society, MCB, etc.
- Hosting Utrujj course 'Living with the Qur'an-Summer Beehive Launch & Registration.
- Hosting the exceptional meeting of the Central Working Committee (CWC) of MCB for a full day following the events of 7/7
- Hosting Leeds Deaf Group activities
- Hosting the Anthony Nolan Trust (for bone marrow volunteers) when large numbers of Muslims gave blood to be potential bone marrow donors

c. Meetings and visits:

- Meetings with Muslim leaders – including MCB, Hamara, Leeds Muslim Forum, Leeds Muslim Consortium and Leeds Muslim Council
- Meetings with police on different occasion either at the police station or the mosque to ensure positive response to the community needs.
- Meetings with councillors and other official figures from the council with regards to supporting future projects.
- Meetings with Leeds Voice to find ways of obtaining funding for certain projects
- Meeting with a big Indonesian delegate from Nahdatu Ulama Party
- Visit of Minister for Justice of Norway – in conjunction with Councillor Kabir and MP Greg Mulholland. It was a very interactive discussion that included representatives from Leeds New Muslims, Utrujj, Right Start Foundation, Leeds Muslim Forum, FOSIS and Inter Faith Group.

2. **Media activities:**

- Releasing statements regarding events – immediately after 7/7 and also following police activity in Leeds inc evacuation, collective statements with other Muslim groups organised by Leeds Grand Mosque.
- Hosting the press conference organised to address the media with regards to the community reaction shortly after 7/7 by Iqbal Sacranie the General Secretary of MCB.
- Carrying out tens of media interviews -TV, Radio, Journals, etc.

- Dealing with the media following the Panorama programme and issuing appropriate statements on behalf of the mosque and in conjunction with other local organisations.
- Sending a complaint letter to the BBC general director with regards to Panorama programme.
- Sending a petition signed by hundreds of community members to the BBC, local MP's, Home office complaining about Panorama programme.

3) Secretarial Activities – Oasim Nawaz:

Main Activities:

1. Calling for meetings and preparing meeting's agenda by consultation with the chairman
2. Take the minutes and distribute them to members
3. Following up the decisions taken by the committee and preparing an action list for duties assigned to different members
4. Keep the minutes after endorsements in a specific file.
5. Correspond with others according to the management committee decisions or the chairman's instructions.
6. Playing a major role in the main activities of different sub committees
7. Playing a leading role in the activities following the events of 7/7
8. Supervising the process of Khutba translation and delivery

Suggestions:

- Work closer with own community first and task small to medium group of congregants with being ambassadors to Islam from this and other mosques.
- Need to identify priority links and set deadlines to achieve objectives from working with such links such as funding and opportunities to share in projects promoting good.
- Setting up more focused sub-committees to support each committee member such as a fundraising function for Treasurer, Summer Projects Coordinator for Education, Youth Liaison for Social, Exhibition Committee for Da'wa etc.
- Promote training where special skills required e.g. dealing with media.

4) Da'wa and Islamic Awareness Report - Zunaid Karim:

Main Areas of work:

1. Develop/improve facilities for English speaking people attending Mosque
2. Forge new relationships with local community, schools and government authorities (MPs, Fire, Health, Education, etc.)
3. Interfaith Groups

Main Activities:

1. Develop/improve facilities for English speaking people attending the Mosque

- Ensuring regular translation of Khutba into English, both after Khutba, and on posted website.
- Increase in English circles including children circles and Sheikh Judai's monthly Question and Answers circle.
- Leeds New Muslim Project (LNMP) using mosque for management meetings and storage allowing easy access to relevant leaflets/information for people interested in Islam.

2. Forge new relationships with local community, schools and government authorities (MPs, Fire, Health, Education, etc.)

- Local community: Car parking and traffic flow has improved around the Mosque thanks to the efforts of people who regularly put out cones.
- We have planning permission and funding for a notice board/ sign that will inform people of activities and also have a message/Quranic verse or Hadith to raise awareness amongst the general public.
- Good links now with Education Leeds (we have had information sent out via their intranet, and schools newsletter), and early links with Waste disposal (clean-ups), and councillors, Health, University's, Fire. The schools exhibition official opening was the key to starting these relationships, and the internet based booking system was very professional and well received.
- Clean-up (2 days) went well, local people passed encouraging remarks.
- St John's Crypt. On occasions during Ramadan we sent left over food to this homeless shelter.
- Exhibition Open Day: Achieved primary aim of ensuring exhibition was complete on time, and also benefit of having up to 20 Non-Muslims coming in and having a look around.
- Mosque exhibition area/School workplace visits: Following the highly successful schools exhibition (30 schools, 1000 children) many schools workplace advisors have suggested we should have a permanent exhibition or a programme that can visit schools or the workplace. The LNMP have already started planning for a schools programme.

- Receiving visits from governmental departments to facilitate services to meet the community's needs e.g (NHS department, council funding bodies etc)
- Hosting a number of courses raising awareness about Islam e.g. Kauser Ti and Utrujj

3. Interfaith Groups

- The mosque continues to be involved with the Interfaith Forum and hosts events. This mainly is via Dr Alkatib.
- Receiving visits to the mosque from various groups mostly non-Muslims explaining to them about the basics of Islam and the importance of the mosque to the Muslim community
 - a. interfaith students from Leeds universities
 - b. researching students from Leeds universities
 - c. European youth group visiting places of worship
 - d. other different groups for educational visits to the mosque

Suggestions

- Volunteers list according to their skills
- Visual screens so hard of hearing can follow translation. This was piloted during Ramadan with reasonable success.
- Improve advertising (in general) and encourage more English speakers to get involved.
- Separate office/space preferably with external access so people seeking information can do this without being nervous of entering Mosque area.
- A small minority of people still park badly blocking roads, pavements and both car parks. Need to get police, legal advice as to ticketing, using warning stickers, or clamping. Hiring a security guard/ parking attendant for 2-3 hours each night of Ramadan should be considered.
- Need to develop stronger links with Education Leeds/planning and local community/housing associations. Need to improve links with media in general to get more positive media coverage of Islam.
- Need to make contact with resident groups directly and also better advertising and then identification (we now have t-shirts with logo's, but need a bigger print of 'Leeds Grand Mosque Volunteer')
- Need to get more involved with support groups in general, particularly homeless, refugee's and asylum seekers.
- Better advertising (local residents associations, local schools) and consider open day (games, Food stalls etc..)
- Better notification in Mosque of forthcoming events.

5) Social Activities Report – Firas Al-Rawi

Main Activities:

1. Ramadan Activities:

Last Ramadan we had 4 Iftars per week (a total of 16). This was done for the first time in a buffet style and was run professionally by Br Mansour and a group volunteers, may Allah be pleased with them. Left-over food was packaged for students to take home after Taraweeh as has been done in previous years, but on occasions food was taken to St. John's Crypt, a shelter for the homeless.

The Social committee executed the following programmes during the month of Ramadan:

- Tea and coffee service after Taraweeh prayer – daily
- An open Fiqh circle for Sheikh Judai – week 1
- Our children in Ramadan – week 2
- The day of victory – week3
- The night of repentance- week 4
- The night of Qader – 27th of Ramadan
- The awards ceremony – 29th of Ramadan
- Issuing two newsletters during the month
- Quran competition – (with an increasing number of participants).
- Educational competition
- the introduction of written translation using the projector.
- Recognition ceremony for the exceptional volunteers during the month

2. Eid Celebration:

- It was the biggest event the mosque has ever experienced with over 650 people attending the celebration. There was a very nice program with games for children and teenagers in the community centre.
- Traditional dress show for children up to 12 years old
- Family Eid celebrations including children show, nasheeds, funfair for both children and adults and providing Crèche facility.
- A survey was conducted and the questionnaire reflected the success of the event

3. Celebration of The Life of The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

The celebration was a successful event The attendance reached around 300 people although children weren't allowed , a fact that stopped many people from attending.

4. Other Activities:

- Graduation ceremony for those whom graduated from their courses
- Organising a Family day out to Blackpool

- Arranging a BBQ trip for the volunteers in the Islamic Exhibition with the management committee members (funded by the committee members not from the mosque resources)
- Welcome Gathering dinner for brothers and sisters who were starting their studies at Leeds universities
- Eid Gifts purchase and distribution
- Organising a welcome party for pilgrims on their return from pilgrimage
- Arranging swimming sessions for brothers
- Farewell ceremonies for the active community members on their leaving
- Jumble sale organised by one of the sisters

6) Educational Activities Report - Basem Samman

Main Activities:

1. Arranging a talk on 'The Contribution of Muslims towards Human Civilisation'
2. Lecture about miracles of the Quran
3. Organising memorizing and reading Quran circles (Al-Furqan School) for young Muslims.
4. Organising Quran Summer Club for children
5. Sorting the books and re-arranging the library ready for community use
6. Organising up to 10 periodical study circles during the year for children, youth and adults in different languages
7. Co-organising a computer course about learning the hardware of computers and how to install a computer.

Suggestions:

- Establish an audio/visual and books library and keep it running by allowing borrowing of its resources.

7) Women Section - Raghad Altikriti

Main Activities:

1. Ramadan Activities:

- Supervise the Iftar serving in women's section
- Decorate nursery and prepare materials
- Run the nursery daily during the month of Ramadan
- Arrange rota for supervisors during Taraweeh prayers
- Arrange 2 Q&A sessions with sheikh Judai'
- Play an important role in the fundraising campaign (sponsorship vouchers)

2. Eid Activities:

- Prepare Eid Breakfast for attendees of Eid prayer
- Participate in the cleaning and preparation of mosque the night before Eid
- Supervising women section during Eid prayers
- Supervise the women section in Eid party(food distribution, child care, questionnaire distribution...etc)

3. Children And Youth Activities:

- Supervising and running the Quran Club for children during summer holidays
- Provide child care facilities and service teams during the ceremony of the prophet's Birthday (PBUH)
- Organising a trip to the science museum (Magna) for children who participated in the Quran summer club and a recognition ceremony for the participants where certificates and presents were handed out.
- Supervise children circles and activities

4. Educational Activities:

- Participate heavily in running the Islamic Exhibition for schools and in hosting different groups to raise Islamic awareness
- receive non-Muslim women groups and individuals requiring more information about Islam.
- Organise circles for sisters in both Arabic and English languages
- Supervise youth circles and activities
- Applying for future IT course for women in partnership with Arab Women Society

5. Participate in supervising and organising most of the main activities arranged by the mosque

6. support and witness a number of sisters converting to Islam

8) Maintenance and Development Report -Hikmat Waleed:

Main Activities:

1. Projects carried out:

- **Maintenance and refurbishment of the annex (The mosque's house).**

The monthly running cost of the mosque is £3300. This is only partially covered by the weekly collections. However, the need for the mosque to have a regular source of income is of paramount importance. The house was in a very poor condition and a total refurbishment was needed. The house has been converted to 2 flats; 3 bedroom flat and a 5 bedroom flat.

- **Basement repairs and refurbishment.**

The basement has been flooded twice in the past 5 years which made it in an unusable condition. The continual state of dampness could have had detrimental effect on the structure of the basement. The cause of the flooding was determined and a complete solution was installed to prevent further floods in the future and a complete refurbishment of the basement was done.

- **Following up the installation of the Sound system**
- **Temporary repairs to the roof**
- **Maintenance of the drainage system**
- **Fixing soap dispensers in toilets**
- **Installing lightings to the front of the main hall**
- **Continuous garden maintenance**
- **Painting the mosque railing**
- **Installing water coolers**
- **Installing two new combination boilers for the central heating in the bathroom/entrance and the kitchen /side hall areas**

2. Projects at initial stages of implementation:

- **Central heating.**

The main hall of the mosque, which can accommodate up to 400 people, is currently heated with outdated, inefficient gas heaters. The women's halls, which accommodate 200 people, has small electric heaters that are expensive to operate and inefficient to use.

The aim is to provide a central heating system that will heat the mosque adequately and efficiently. This will reduce the running cost of the mosque. At the moment we have 3 quotes for the project which vary considerably (14000 to 40000) in cost. We are in the process of finalising the specifications and taking independent advice to pick the quote which suits the mosque's needs.

- **Roof maintenance**

The mosque's roof is leaking from many areas and quick fixes are not a viable solution in the long term as the problem will keep occurring. We have a quote for a radical solution which will completely solve the problem of leaking flat roof with a guarantee for 20 years. Work on this project will start before winter season Insha'Allah.

3. Smaller Projects:

At the moment we have planning permissions and the architect drawings for two projects which we are currently looking for quotes and contractors.

- Bicycle shed/rack
- External display board.

4. Future projects:

- Building a multi-function hall/ Youth & Community Centre
- Audio-visual system and translation
- Disabled access and facilities
- Toilets upgrade