

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS



Moseley Muslim Community Association

Birmingham has one of the most ethnically diverse communities in Europe, Balsall Heath is also one of the most deprived areas in the country. Despite the influx of a large number of migrants into the city, nothing had been prepared to give a home to a strong nucleus of Muslims forming communities in the district.

In 1968, four dedicated individuals established the Birmingham based Muslim Association. By the 1980's there was a need for a larger meeting place, a venue that could encompass social and cultural activities and be attractive to younger people.

In 1984 the Moseley Muslim Community Association (MMCA) raised the funds to buy the Grade II* Listed former Art School from Birmingham City Council

"When we acquired this building lots of people were against the purchase, it was absolutely derelict. The roof had already come down, all the woodwork had dry rot. We had an annexe on the back, that's where we were teaching our kids, and we didn't have enough money to renovate so we started fund-raising. Now we feel proud to have contributed to the preservation of this unique building." Illyas Shaikh

The building had been left empty for some years by the Council. Relying solely on fund-raising, charity and free labour, the MMCA started a slow and expensive repair programme. Fund raising became a nationwide activity, some individuals sacrificing their regular employment in order to work for the community based at the school.

For over 30 years the MMCA has worked hard to establish the building as a community centre

At its peak, the Association welcomed over 8000 visitors annually, including the master of qawwali Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan who performed at a classical concert. The range of activities provided included education, sports, music concerts and summer fetes. Mothers taught cookery and home based handicrafts, youngsters were encouraged in sport and language skills. Foreign Ministers have met for conferences in the building. In the 1990's it helped as a refugee integration centre for Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis and Bosnians, providing a welcoming meeting place in the district.

