



Kent Muslim Welfare Association

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MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2PM -5PM SUNDAY 14th MAY 2023 AT GILLINGHAM MASJID.

38 ATTENDEES INCLUDING 10 TRUSTEES. Brothers & Sisters from the local community attended.

- 1) **TILAWAT** – Performed by Br Inam ul Huq.
- 2) **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Brs Zaki Ahmed, Sayed Ishtiaq, Ajaib, Sister Rizwana Shelly.
- 3) **Minutes of the last AGM 2022** were read out by Br Azeem. These were approved by Br Issa and seconded by Br Rizwan Chohan.
- 4) **CHAIRMAN AND GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT** – Br Azeem Nader presented the report by power point presentation. A summarised PDF copy will be available online.

He summarised the ongoing activities such as:

- KMWA volunteers -emphasising the importance of volunteers and the organisation's food distribution initiatives.
- Health and Wellness Workshops: The two health and wellness workshops held in 2002 in collaboration with the Healthy Living section of Medway Council were discussed. These workshops aimed to promote well-being within the community.
- Collaboration with Medway Plus and Sun Pier Gallery: The meeting addressed the collaboration opportunities with Medway Plus and Sun Pier Gallery to showcase Islamic art and culture, fostering understanding and appreciation.
- Eid Events and Growing Muslim Population: Discussions centred around upcoming Eid events, including Eid Salah Jammāt. It was noted that the Muslim population in Medway is growing and very diverse which was evident by the participation of five Jammāt for Eid this year.
- Hosting Schoolchildren, Scout Groups, and Opening the Mosque to Non-Muslims: During the meeting, the association discussed the importance of promoting interfaith dialogue and fostering understanding among different communities. Several initiatives are on-going to engage schoolchildren, scout groups, and non-Muslims in the activities of the Mosque.
- Opening the Mosque to Non-Muslims: Members expressed their willingness to open the doors of the Mosque to non-Muslims, encouraging them to visit and learn more about Islam. This gesture aimed to promote inclusivity, dispel misconceptions, and foster positive interactions within the wider community.
- Events like "Taste of Ramadan": The meeting highlighted the success of past events, such as the "Taste of Ramadan," which provided an opportunity for individuals from different backgrounds to experience the traditions and flavours of Ramadan. It was

agreed upon to continue organising similar events in the future to promote cultural exchange and understanding.

- Brother Azeem on Future Plans of KMWA: Brother Azeem presented future plans, highlighting the desire to continue the excellent work with KMWA volunteers in all fields.
- Extensive discussion (see discussion section) followed on the new Mosque project, acknowledging the significant work still remaining. The current phase is projected to be completed by September 2023, but possibly later. Br Issa summarised the financial situation at present.
- Fundraising Efforts: Members expressed their commitment to increasing fundraising activities. A discussion took place regarding the possibility of a TV campaign and a fundraising event. It was noted that there is considerable competition from other mosques in the Southeast England.

Reports from Brother Faheem, Sister Rizwana, Br Ajaib, Brother Fayaz, Brother Farris, and Sister Momtaz:

- Br Azeem read out Br Faheem's report on Kids@KMWA- events organised such as seasonal nature walks and arts and craft activities. He also delivered Br Farris' report on KMWA Dawah and the Dawah stalls set up in Gillingham Street Angels in Chatham High Street as well as the proposed Dawah Stall in Maidstone shopping Mall. He also delivered Sister Rizwanas report on all of the voluntary group activities and Br Ajaib's report on the schools and scouts liaison group activities.
- Br Fayaz Iqbal presented the activities of the youth HuBB for Muslim young people (males), emphasising the importance of engaging them in their identity and religion. The initiative received unanimous approval.
- Sister Momtaz discussed KMW Sisters' activities and presented the vision for the coming year. Members requested a baby changing facility and a shoe rack, asking for cost estimates to get this initiated. KMWA Sisters were tasked with organising programs such as toddler story time, mental health awareness, support for revert sisters, and a female-focused youth hub to be organised and seek approval from mosque committee.

- 5) **TREASURER REPORT** - Br Azeem summarised the Treasurers report produced by Br Waseem Mirza and also summarised the financial position. A simplified breakdown of the mosque's income and outgoings was presented. Salaries and maintenance/utilities were identified as the highest expenditure categories for the current Masjid in Canterbury Street. He clarified the funds collected during the year against the expenditure on staff wages, utility bills and other bills. He clarified that there was not a large amount of surplus money from which we could draw on for events and providing the facilities and highlighted that the expectations of the community did not match the amount of money contributed.

- 6) **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS** - Akbar Chartered Accountants were reappointed and thanked for their service to the community, with respect to preparation of our annual accounting report, audited accounts, and the staff payroll.
- 7) **ELECTION COMMISSIONERS REPORT** – Br Azeem summarised the election commissioners report and the results of the elections. There were 6 candidates for 4 Trustee posts. The elected Trustees were Brs Agha Naeem Khan, Majid Arshad, Bashir Ahmad, and Waseem Mirza. The election commissioners – Brs Naseem Sheikh and Saeed Khan were thanked for their long service and sacrifice to the BoT and community and the professionalism by which they carried out their duties.
- 8) **ANY OTHER BUSINESS & DISCUSSIONS & QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR & RESOLUTIONS** –

New Masjid: Clarification was asked for regarding the contract with the principle contractor, Ruprai, and the sub-contractor, Cheema, and the financial arrangements between KMWA and Ruprai. It was clarified that the Ruprai owner will front the money to KMWA to continue with the development of the new Masjid, as is his vision, from his own personal wealth. There are no loans or interest involved and it is essentially a karde hasana arrangement. It was further clarified that KMWA are paying back Ruprai as and when we raise the money, and we have been given unlimited time to do this. Furthermore, the pace of the building work for this phase is not reliant on the money fronted by Ruprai (being payed to Cheema) being repayed by KMWA.

There were questions as to whether the payments for the work being carried out reflected the work that has been carried out. KMWA felt that within the technical team and Ruprai contractors, that this could be adequately assessed. The work had been itemised by Cheema and the costs broken down. Brs Faheem (technical advisor), Umair (architect), and Shahid (Structural Engineer) and if needed Br Ghulam Nadat, our Quantity Surveyor, we felt would be able to assess that the payment for the work was in line with the work carried out. It was accepted that it may take many years to pay the money back, but at the same time, there was no time restriction, hence the decision to proceed with the work.

Ongoing Efforts for Cleanliness and Maintenance: During the meeting, concerns were raised regarding cleanliness and maintenance of the Mosque. Members expressed the need for improved upkeep and discussed potential solutions. It was argued that the level of upkeep expected was very difficult for 2 main reasons. Firstly a lack of funds and manpower to help; and secondly the attitude of people who leave the Masjid in a poor state after using it; for example, soiling the toilets and not cleaning up after themselves. It was argued that there is a catch 22 situation - the community contribute and the Masjid is run for them, but their expectations far outweigh their financial and voluntary contributions and the expectation is not realistic. It was argued that responsibility works both ways. Positive suggestions included:

a) Hiring a Professional Cleaner: One option proposed was to hire a professional cleaner to ensure regular and thorough cleaning of the Mosque. This approach would help maintain a high standard of cleanliness and alleviate the burden on individual members. The cost of this will take away from the budget of the mosque.

b) Creation of a Cleaning Rota: Another suggestion put forward was the establishment of a cleaning rota, where individuals and families could volunteer their time to clean the Mosque on a regular basis. This approach would foster a sense of community involvement and shared responsibility for the upkeep of the premises.

Membership Vision and Reforms: Brother Azeem mentioned the vision and reforms for membership, focusing on improving data collection, ensuring accurate and timely renewals, increasing membership, and involving members more in KMWA operations. The proposal to implement push notifications via email for membership renewals received agreement. It was suggested by some Brothers that membership could be free, or there could be a 2 tier membership.

Vision: Br Fayaz argued that the vision presented was not extensive enough and felt that it was important for Trustees each to be given a portfolio to manage. The vision presented was for the immediate future and due to the length of the meeting could only be summarised.

English Bayyan and talks/ communication: This was highlighted especially with respect to the changing demographic of people and the youth. It was felt that there needs to be more catering for English (as their main language) speaking worshippers, and the English Bayyan on a Friday need to have a more fixed timeslot and be advertised in advance.

- Members were encouraged to provide their feedback and preferences regarding the two options, taking into account feasibility and cost considerations.

Members were encouraged to share ideas and actively participate in planning and organizing these initiatives.

Closing: The meeting concluded with Dua, gratitude towards all attendees for their active participation and commitment to the goals of the Kent Muslim Welfare Association.

Azeem Nader, General Secretary KMWA.