

Statement on Oadby & Wigston Town Centre Area Action Plan,

By Oadby & Wigston Muslim Association

Introduction to Oadby & Wigston Muslim Association

The Oadby & Wigston Muslim Association (OWMA) is a registered charity (Charity number 1108355), and has been in existence for over 15 years.

Currently, we estimate the Muslim population to represent between 10-15% of the local Oadby/Wigston community, with some areas of concentration of Muslims reflecting much higher proportions. The OWMA is a voluntary, not-for-profit organisation that is the representative body for the Muslims in the Oadby and Wigston area, representing the majority of the Muslim population.

The Oadby Community Centre consists of the Central Mosque of Oadby and Wigston and the Community Centre area. These facilities (especially the latter) are open to and utilised by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Oadby Masterplan

The OWMA endorse the Oadby Masterplan, on the following assumptions:

- There is acknowledgement and recognition of the OWMA's right to a dedicated like-for-like, secure, exclusive and accessible place of worship in Baxter's Place
- The OWMA must be consulted for any changes in and around Baxter's Place

OWMA: Established Organisation

The OWMA has represented the Muslims of Oadby and Wigston for over 15 years, and has built up a strong and collaborative relationship with the following groups in the local Borough as well as wider Leicestershire:

- Multi-faith groups
- Oadby Stakeholder's Group
- Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
- Local schools
- Social services
- Police
- Primary Care Trusts
- Other charities locally

Oadby Community Centre: providing services to the whole community

The OWMA has a long and successful track record for providing essential community services for the whole community (ie Muslims and Non-Muslims) at the Oadby Community Centre.

Some examples of the many and varied services provided (or planned) at the Oadby Community Centre (run by the OWMA) include:

- Health Awareness programmes (eg Diabetes, heart disease, smoking awareness, drug awareness, mental health awareness)
- Crime prevention programmes (eg helping the police with local issues, reducing teenager crime, teenager activities to keep them off the streets)
- Highlighting Global Issues (eg protecting the environment, OWMA stand against terrorism)
- Multi-Cultural Issues: Promoting regular multi-faith activities, respect for other religions, awareness of Islam (eg Eid functions)
- Elderly programmes eg coffee mornings, advice centre
- Youth Club events eg sports activities(football tournament)/competitions
- Fundraising for worthwhile causes eg tsunami appeal, BBQ 'Summer Sizzler' for charity, Japan earthquake appeal
- Registered funeral director for Muslims
- Muslim School Oadby: supplementary school for youth
- MP Surgery (for local MP)
- Hosting the Oadby Forum meeting on multiple occasions
- Hosting multiple interactive school visits to learn more about Islam

One of the most important consequence of the OWMA moving into the newly formed Oadby Community Centre a number of years ago has been the drastic reduction in crime in the Sandhurst Street area, as evidenced by the police crime figures. We are very proud of this achievement and we work very hard with the local residents and police to keep crime down in the area. This has been acknowledged widely with the local residents in and around the area, and the wider Oadby community.

The OWMA has invested a lot of money in the Oadby Community Centre, to make it a viable and vibrant Centre, including working with the Borough Council's architects to ensure the external appearance of the Mosque and Community Centre is in keeping with the local architecture and environment.

We need to work closely with the Oadby & Wigston Borough Council to ensure we have adequate space to provide essential services for the community and prayer facilities for the local Muslims. We are currently oversubscribed with the danger that the Mosque and Community Centre being too small to serve the need of the local community in the future, and need to discuss the future growth of the Centre.

Summary

The OWMA is looking forward to working closely with all stakeholder groups to ensure the success of the Oadby Masterplan, which it expects to serve the whole community, and which respects and upholds the current position of the Mosque and Community Centre in the Sandhurst Street area.