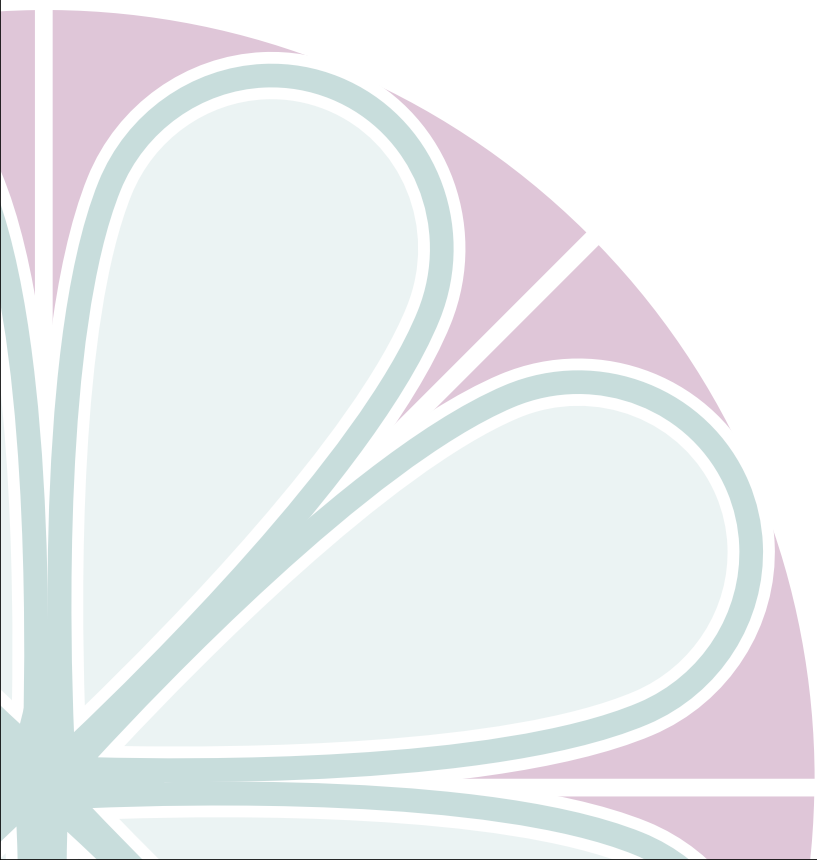


**SHROPSHIRE**  
ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## **Trustees' Annual Report**



**For the year ending  
31st March 2019**

# From the Trustees

A very warm welcome to our first formal Annual Report. As regulatory and governance challenges increase; social media continues to form a larger part of our lives; our new - much more interactive - website; and construction of the masjid nears completion; these yearly annual reports will be a key part of our professionalisation of the charity's governance processes and wider community engagement, replacing the previous informal community presentations.

The past year has been another challenging year for the charity sector and SIF, but it has left us with much to celebrate. Much has happened in the past year and we hope to share some of the key highlights in the following pages. The governance changes, outlined in more detail in the appendices, provide much more engagement opportunities and autonomy for volunteers. SIF associates, the new name for committee members, offers many fulfilling and meaningful opportunities for those wishing to serve the masjid and community.

## Masjid Construction

As will be apparent, the internal work in the new building saw significant progress and we are very grateful for the effort of brother Sarwar Ayub for his dedication as project manager. Often there is frustration at the slow pace of work but there are always good reasons for any delays. The key factor of course is financial resources. Since the very beginning, the trustees have always been financially prudent and only committed to any work if there were funds available. This often has knock-on impact on cost of construction, especially around the heating and mechanical work, for which original quotes date back to nearly 8 years! There are also always technical issues, often caused by phased work, that are only later picked up when work restarts. Nevertheless, key features this year saw the lighting, and ceiling tiling work nearly completed. The few gaps are purposely left, to allow connection to the heating and ventilation air handling units to be connected. CCTV and fire alarm and other security features were installed.

The domes in both halls were also fitted. On the original plans these were to be installed prior to the roof going on. As these were fitted many years later, the original specification had to be altered and the domes redesigned and fitted piecemeal in situ. The wuzu and toilets areas are virtually completed, with some accessories to be fitted over the next few months.

There were some technical issues around the roof which hindered the installation of the heating and air conditioning plant. A new platform had to be designed and once fitted will house some heavy equipment. If all goes well, we should have full heating and air conditioning in place before the autumn chill starts.

We are in the process seeking quotes for the mihrab and dome decorations and carpeting. The latter has vital importance as it is the main feature of the halls, in constant use and needs to be both comfortable and hard wearing. Given the layout of the main hall, it is highly desirable that we seek a bespoke solution.



## Tan Bank

As we get nearer to full usage of King St premises, with 5 daily prayers, the future of Tank Bank masjid needs consideration. A month-long consultation was initiated, followed by an informal focus group meeting with representatives from the original founder families. The terms of the consultation were quite explicit in that firm ideas needed to be supported by detailed funding rather than wishful thinking. A useful summary of issues to consider was made available via the website. Unfortunately, there was very little response, highlighting the difficulties in coming to a suitable outcome. The focus group resulted in many different preferences, with the only consensus being that whatever happens it should stay as a religious entity. Until further consultation is carried out, brother Nasir Zaman kindly offered to pay for all utilities until a decision is made about the future of the site. Meanwhile thanks to the volunteer brothers who look after the building and its cleaning.

## The Bungalow

The strategic vision for the king street site envisaged the "Bungalow" as a major community hub for activities for adults, children, and the wider community. After decades of neglect much work was needed to renovate and refurbish it. The windows and fire exit doors were replaced. The internal space was gutted and rebuilt to suit future planned usage. The whole building was rewired, and data communication cabling installed. The former storage space has been converted into toilets, with 2 adjoining small rooms and a large hall providing multi-usage spaces. A small kitchen caps the renovations. Painting and fitting of toilet area and small kitchen is due to take place in the next few months. We are reviewing the heating arrangements that will provide the most cost-effective option. Once fitted, the bungalow will serve as the hub for Kidz club and additional classes and community activities.

## The "Garage"

The building known as the "Garage" continues to serve many purposes. Apart from serving as the main storage area and providing space for some activities such as fundraisers downstairs, the upstairs is used most days of the week. The decision to install toilets proved very beneficial. Initially the rooms were used by the girl's madrassa, and now serve as the hub for the Sunday Arabic classes, the kidz club,

and various activities by the sisters, such as halaqa meetings. The large room has modest amenities for refreshments. The two small rooms host meetings of trustees and volunteers. The plan is to increase usage of these rooms.

## Future Construction

For us the future practically means the next 12 months. Depending on funds, after the carpeting and other internal work identified above is completed, the focus will be on providing a purpose built funeral and body wash space for the whole of the Muslim community in Shropshire.

The designated space will be on the side of the Garage, utilizing the medium sized storage area, partitioning, installing all the services, and fitting in body storage chillers and washing table. The main garage hall will serve as the janaaza space. This phase of the project is very dear to us all, as some day we will all need it.

Finally, the main entrance doors to the building need protecting from the weather. Various ideas are being considered and further details, and appeal for its funding, will emerge soon.

## Telford Islamic Academy (TIA)

The TIA continues to thrive, under the auspices of maulana Suleman and his dedicated team of teachers. The facility to accommodate both boys and girls has proved to be very popular with parents, who often struggled to drop off and collect boys from Tan Bank and girls at King St.

Currently, there are 6 classes, three for boys and three for girls. The classes run from 5-7 weekdays.

In the past there has been some frustration for new enrolments, with new parents missing the enrolment date and having to wait a whole year. This is no longer an issue and children will be able to enrol in September or January terms.

We recognise there is some pressure for older children in combining their school work and daily attendance at the madrassa. We share the concerns of parents who wish their children to excel in their secular education whilst seeking important Islamic education. We are therefore in early consultation about the option to either move, or offer the option to have, an intensive 4-hour block study on Saturdays for the 12-16-year age group.

We are also conscious that there is nothing formal for post 16 provision and we need to provide some opportunities for children to continue their broader Islamic education.

The TIA also hosts school visits throughout the year and this year saw increased requests to visit. The feedback has always been very positive. The new website will showcase schools visiting on an ongoing basis.

We recognise the current set up is reactive, as the requests come from schools themselves, as well as being limited to primary schools. We need to work harder to be proactive and visit schools as well as extending this to secondary schools and colleges in the county.

Lastly, a few words on an issue of importance to parents – that of the forthcoming inclusion of RSE in primary schools from 2020.

There has been much hysteria, misreporting, misinformation and negative publicity in the media.

Whilst it is true that DoE has made relationships education & SE compulsory, the onus is on headteachers how they wish to implement this. Crucially the Act does not make introducing compulsory sex education in primary schools. Headteachers must consider the view of parents and the religious background of pupils must be considered when planning teaching. Unfortunately, some headteachers and their teachers have their own agenda and will go much further than the Act requires. Parents therefore need to know what the Act says themselves, rather than relying on secondhand opinions, and then engage in positive and constructive dialogue with their children's school. Further information on the Act can be found on the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>

Events and Activities



Earlier this year, as part of the nation-wide initiative led by the MCB, we had our second "visit our mosque" day in March. We joined 100s of mosques around the UK in opening our doors to the community.

We had a very good response, with well over 100 visitors from all walks of life - local

town and borough councilors, several mayors, teachers, faith groups as well as general members of the public. The main hall had displays based around fundamentals of Islam, basic beliefs and the 5 pillars. Several volunteers were on hand to answer any questions. Several talks were scheduled and there was free literature available.



Trustee Shaukat Ali with some of the Open Day "Discovering Islamic" literature in the background

The lady's hall had hot drinks, snacks and various stalls including a centre piece - The Telford 50 celebration quilt. Crafted over many months, with a small grant from Telford and Wrekin council, a team of ladies, painstakingly crafted a unique piece of craft to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Telford. It went on display

around the borough. Thank you to all the volunteers.

The annual event requires a significant amount of work and for this reason, it is likely we will take part every other year, rather than yearly.



Stuwa Ladies - The Telford 50 Quilt

Open day stalls in the ladies hall





The year saw the formal incorporation of STUWA under SIF governance, following several years of working under the SIF umbrella.

Shropshire and Telford United Women's Association (founded in 2006) encourages and empowers women by providing Health, Education and Spiritual awareness. The organisation will continue to work together with SIF to provide community Religious, Health, Social and Educational Services. It is a voluntary group run by women from diverse backgrounds.

STUWA has helped in fundraising and raising awareness in Community Cohesion. It has successfully established various sustainable projects and activities; such as Kids Club, Youth Circle, Coffee Mornings, Swimming and Tai-Chi at King Street.

STUWA kicked started the project to renovate the derelict bungalow building at the back of the Mosque by securing a small grant and goods in kind pledge from local organisations such as Wicks and Veolia, to create a Community Hub for all. Working with Volunteer It Yourself (VIY), a team of young people helped to demolish parts of the dilapidated internals of the bungalow. SIF took over the refurbishment once that funding was used up and funded much of the renovation to near completion. Once completed Stuwawill help to deliver Physical Health, Mental Health, Social and Educational services. This 'Community Hub' will be a place to bring Communities together and will be used by the entire Community.

We welcome expressions of interests from all sections of the community wishing to utilise this facility.

### Arabic Language, Tajweed & Islamic Essentials classes

Arab language classes, tajweed & Islamic classes are held every Sunday during term time and continue to grow. From initial informal sessions, these have grown into much more formal classes.

Organised by Sister Dr Ekrem Khalifa and supported by several qualified native Arab speakers, these classes compliment the formal TIA provision. Currently children age 7-12 attend these classes but interest has been shown to extend this to 5 year plus too. Now the limiting factor is space, but once the bungalow is available for full use, more space will be available as the Kidz club will vacate the upstairs rooms in the garage.

There were also teenage and revert sisters' classes and meetings. Plans are in the pipeline to extend tajweed and Arabic language classes for adult girls and older ladies.

Lastly, we were touched by the outpouring of support from the local community following the terrorist shooting attacks at mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, during Friday Prayer on 15 March 2019. Some of the message are below.



Some messages of support from the local community

There were many other messages of support and comfort from all sections of the community and other faith groups. A strong message went out that there is no place for hatred and bigotry against any community and certainly no place for violent actions such as those in Christchurch. A message sent via email offered some further comforting thoughts.



Know that you are in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

## Fundraising, Strategic governance and Financial statement and Annual Accounts

### Fundraising

We continue to enjoy reasonably well diversified sources of funding. The bulk of day to day expenses are paid via the Friday (Jumma) collections, typically generating around £3k per month. The two Eid collections each generate £6-7K. We also have several collection boxes in various shops, and they generate small amounts.

We have had one major fundraiser during the year in Birmingham and that generated about £40K. The pledged amount was somewhat higher but as usual many people, due to personal circumstances, were unable to honour it. Some donors made pledges to donate over several years and we are still receiving installment payments from these.

We also get between £2-3K via our online PayPal account, as well as small amount of standing order payments. We are actively encouraging more people to set up £15-20 monthly standing orders.

Over the years several members of the community have given loans (quarz -e - hasna) for 2-5 years. We paid back £15k during this year. If anyone can set aside unused funds for a few years, please contact the trustees.

Gift Aid has been a significant source of income for SIF but it is complicated and requires very precise records and consumes a lot of time. To date we have received about £80K in gift aid and it is estimated that some £60-70K has been unclaimed over the past 15 years due to lack of information on donors, unsigned gift aid forms.

It is important to note that we can only claim gift aid if a donor has paid tax equivalent to the amount claimed. It is the tax paid that we claim back.

For example, if person donates £800, we can claim £250 in gift aid if £250 tax has been deducted. If donors do not pay tax or not enough, please do not sign the gift as we cannot make a claim.

We hope to make significant progress to claim gift aid for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 so prepare to be approached for help to allow us to do this by providing timely and accurate information. Our yearly target is £20K and treasurer Dr Shaukat Ali and volunteer Shahad Purwaiz are working on the claims.

Specific appeals are likely to be the main source of large funds going forward, and one such appeal for the carpeting is currently in progress. Further appeals will be made for entrance door canopy, dome decorations, mihrab and the next priority - funeral services - and in future years for the second floor of the masjid.

Having carried out an internal review of our fundraising programme, we will continue to monitor and adapt over the coming year to ensure the charity continues to generate funds to finance its plans and operations.

Towards the end of the financial year we were able to arrange to accept card payments. This is an increasingly convenient way to pay as there is less cash being handled by people, as reflected in our disproportionate cash donations on Jumma in relation to the number of attendees. If you do use less cash, please note we now accept card payments before and after every Jumma, on major days such as Eid and other fundraising events.

A further initiative we might consider is Payroll giving, whereby those in work can have their regular donations taken at source ie before any deductions are made. This means we will not have to claim gift on that amount.

We are open to people organizing fundraising events themselves such as sponsored walks etc.

We rely totally on your goodwill and generosity and our performance and successes throughout the year would not have been possible without the donors, local and afar. Many of our most generous supporters either do not live locally or moved away many years ago but they continue to support us, and they are a vital part of keeping our Charity going.

## Challenges

Among the challenges faced by all charities is the increased scrutiny of the Charity Commission and the introduction of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018. Added to this has been increased due diligence by banks to ensure that funds generated in this country by charities do not end up financing unlawful activities abroad. For the latter, we have taken the decision not to raise funds for any overseas purposes, either directly or indirectly via third parties.

In the case of the GDPR, we do our best to ensure that we are compliant, reviewing all our policies, as part of our robust due-diligence processes. Breaches of GDPR can be very costly for organisations, with fines of tens of thousands of pounds for small charities, millions for very large charities, and as we have seen big companies such as British Airways and Marriot hotels fined over £100 million each.

Many members of the community unfortunately do not understand the regulations and have no experience of the charity sector or organisations. This ignorance is frustrating as it wastes trustee time due to spurious requests from the less informed to "see bank statements", "ledgers" etc. For clarity, we would remind all members of the community that lay members have no right of access to internal documents, accounts, invoices, list of donors, or bank statements of any organisation. These are restricted to designated authorized entities only.

One should not have to repeat the above because most of us donate to several charities and would not dream of asking to see their internal records or see their bank statements. Many of us hold shares in companies, and whilst we are legally co-owners of those companies, as individuals we have no right to any their internal data.

So we would remind members of the congregation, we donate and volunteer for the sake of our akhira and community but this does not confer any special rights viz-a-viz access to internal data.

## Governance & Regulation – meeting the needs of today.

We continue to live in a period of significant change which requires us to be vigilant in our delivery of our objectives.

Regulatory scrutiny around conduct of charities remains in sharp focus and we continue to embed a supporter focused culture across the Charity through the delivery of our strategy.

During the past two years the public expectation to ensure good guardianship and management of charitable funds has become heavier, and the legal and regulatory framework surrounding that expectation has become increasingly onerous.

The past year has been a busy year for us with considerable regulatory change and we have no doubt that 2020 will be equally challenging.

As we are seeing raised expectations and a tighter framework for charity governance with an increasing deluge of laws and regulations, our obligations to comply with best practice has increased exponentially, and a priority for the trustees was to review our governance structure and assess whether it meets our needs and the regulatory bodies, and to consider what needs to change. Our deliberations led to the new governance structure that came into effect last year, replacing a loosely made up committee, with a much-focused volunteer structure.

We also introduced strict monitoring of events and activities via the introduction of a booking form (CAET – Classes, Activities, and Events) form for all events and activities that organisers have to complete. This extended to jamaat visits in response to safeguarding concerns. All volunteers in any substantive roles will undergo DBS checks too. These measures are part of our evolving on-going compliance, safeguarding and monitoring processes.

## Trustee Training

It is imperative that we as Trustees are effective both individually and collectively to enable the Charity to fulfil its charitable objects.

Training in the past has fallen short of expectations, with only one trustee attending formal external training regarding charity law updates, and a range of factors in relation to governance including key sessions on:

- Trustees governance responsibility and liability in determining our charitable purpose.
- Assessing our risks on finance and compliance.
- Data Protection and Fundraising, knowing what we need to do.
- What we need to do to meet the challenges that we face.

The trustees and several volunteers did take part in a safeguarding and media session offered at King St. Next year appropriate efforts will be made for all trustees and key volunteers to attend relevant training in particular training that enables the Trustees to pay due regard to the regulatory guidance and things we can do to stay compliant and remain up to date to run the Charity with integrity for its long-term success.

In summary we will endeavor to stay equipped with the practical techniques and essential knowledge to develop robust and comprehensive compliance plans which are consistent with the requirements of legislation and standards. Meanwhile we continue to remain disciplined in the management of the Charity; exercising strict controls to help us improve the overall effectiveness of the work of the trustees and ensuring that the Charity is well run and fit for purpose.

## Appreciation

We are a well-respected charity in the county and we firmly believe that what makes us are our many dedicated volunteers (too numerous to mention individually) who generously give their free time. We are also proud of the high levels of employee engagement.

On behalf of the Charity as a whole, we thank everyone who has helped us in our work and look forward to building on this success next year.

Our work and achievements are only made possible by the generosity, commitment, passion and enthusiasm of all those who support SIF. We give our most sincere thanks to all who have given to us their support over the year, with more to come in the future.



*The garden  
outside the  
bungalow*

## Financial statement and Annual Accounts

### An overview of our 2018/19 performance

#### Auditors

A resolution to appoint Bagri & Co Accountants as auditors for the ensuing year was passed at the Annual General Meeting of the Trustees.

The Trustees have ultimate legal responsibility for our charity and work to ensure good governance, with the help SIF volunteers. Our key performance indicators are summarised below. For further information, please see the full financial accounts in this report.

We conclude another year in a reasonably strong financial position. Although it is becoming harder to raise money.

**Income from donations decreased by £15,251.82 to £123,623.31 (2017/18 - £138,884.13).**

**Income from school fees remained similar to previous year.**

**Gift aid of £22,054.07 was received. Total Income increased by £4,118.18**

**Expenditure, excluding construction decreased from £54,726.93 to £50,343.41**

**Construction expenditure of £146,247.32 at King St raised fixed assets for the site from £1,138,300.87 to £1,284,548.19.**

**Total fixed assets (King st and Tan bank) increased to £1,504,548.19.**

**Cash balances at year end were £57,025.89**



# The Shropshire Islamic Foundation

Registered Number: 1112127

Charity Correspondent

TELFORD ISLAMIC CENTRE  
88 - 90 KING STREET  
WELLINGTON  
TELFORD  
SHROPSHIRE  
TF1 1NZ

Shropshire Islamic Foundation  
**ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING**  
**31 March 2019**

ACCOUNTANTS REPORT

The annexed accounts have been taken from the books, records and vouchers supplied to us; there were no discrepancies found and in my opinion reflect a true and fair view of the financial affairs of the Shropshire Islamic Foundation for the year to 31 March 2019.

.....

Date

28/4/2019  
.....

Bagri & Co., Accountants

.....

Date

28/6/2019  
.....

For & on behalf of  
Shropshire Islamic Foundation



## Shropshire Islamic Foundation

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2019

<b>Income</b>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Donations	123,632.31	138,884.13
School Fees	27,599.99	28,539.15
Gift Aid	22,054.07	-
Other Income	-	1,744.91
	<u>173,286.37</u>	<u>169,168.19</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Wages	31,617.35	29,563.51
Cost of Fundraising	160.00	7,817.15
General expenses	5,726.01	4,175.18
Utilities	11,488.65	7,052.58
Legal & Professional	1,312.90	5,486.20
Subscription	-	426.21
Bank charges	38.50	-
Open Day	-	206.10
	<u>50,343.41</u>	<u>54,726.93</u>
Net movement of funds	122,942.96	114,441.26
	<u>173,286.37</u>	<u>169,168.19</u>

Shropshire Islamic Foundation

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 March 2019

	<u>2019</u>		<u>2018</u>
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
88 - 90 King Street	1,284,548.19		1,138,300.87
41 Tan Bank	<u>220,000.00</u>		<u>220,000.00</u>
	1,504,548.19		1,358,300.87
<b>Current assets:</b>			
Debtors	354.00	354.00	
Shropshire Islamic Fund - general account (320)	34,594.92	91,509.40	
Telford Central Mosque Trust Fund (513)	2,457.99	798.57	
Shropshire Islamic Fund - building account (260)	<u>19,618.98</u>	<u>2,794.68</u>	95,456.65
	57,025.89		
<b>Liabilities:</b>			
Creditors	<u>300.00</u>	<u>426.40</u>	
Net current assets	56,725.89		95,030.25
Loans	<u>20,000.00</u>	<u>35,000.00</u>	
<b>Net assets</b>	<u>1,541,274.08</u>		<u>1,418,331.12</u>
represented by:-			
<b>Capital account</b>			
Balance 1st April 2018	1,418,331.12		1,303,889.86

## Appendices

### Structure, Governance and Management

#### Governing instrument

The charity is governed by The Trust Deed, 2005.

#### About the Trustees

The Trustees are legally responsible for ensuring that the charity works towards its Charitable Objectives. As per the Trust Deed, there are three trustees. They are all volunteers with expertise and experience in a range of fields ensuring that the members reflect the breadth of knowledge required. For example, our founding trustee, Dr Qureshi, has led fundraising efforts since the charity's inception, tapping into his vast network nationally. Recently retired, he was a GP for over 40 years, and has huge experience of serving on professional bodies, networking and community engagement. Our "newest" trustee, Rashid Hussain, is a local property developer, with huge knowledge of tradespeople, property development and of course local knowledge. Dr Shaukat Ali, who oversees administration, finance and the website, had served 8 years as trustee of a national charity prior to becoming a trustee of SIF. He is currently in his 11th year as trustee of another national charity. He is board director of 2 international professional bodies; he served 9 years as governor of New College and 8 years as primary school governor. He served 7 years on a Telford & Wrekin Council Scrutiny Committee as community member as well as serving 12 years as local councillor and has set on numerous other committees in various roles. Based on their experience and knowledge, the trustees collectively set the overall strategic direction and tone of the Charity.

Having well skilled and competent trustees providing ideas to keep the work moving forward means that we do get more done. We stay in daily contact via social media and meet informally weekly, more formally once a month and hold at least 2 formal Trustee meetings a year with a well-structured agenda to review the work, including finances, consideration of health and safety, risk management policies and performance to ensure that the Charity is on track to meet its objectives.

The Trustee are supported in their work by numerous volunteers, most notably by the project manager, Sarwar Ayub. All decisions reached are widely consulted on (even more so via the revised structure) and decided by a majority vote of the trustees.

The Trustees give of their time freely and no trustee receives any remuneration. The Charity holds trustees Indemnity insurance cover of £1,000,000, but the cost is not separable from the total cost of insurance.

#### Recruitment and appointment of Trustees

The number of Trustees is fixed at 3 as per the Trust Deed. This is appropriate for the size of the charity, but future needs are always under consideration. The policy of the Charity has always been to ensure that a variety of expertise exists amongst the individual Trustees. The membership is intended to ensure a balance of skills and experience relevant to the various sectors of the Charity and operational needs.

Upon a Trustee retiring recommendations for prospective new Trustees are generally made as a result of personal knowledge of the current Trustees. The considerations are a mixture of current and future needs of the Charity, the skills and experience of a potential trustee, their time commitment, professional and personal background and standing, personal disposition, past dealings with the charity, trustees, the community etc. All trustees undergo strict DBS checks and usual scrutiny to ensure they are fit and proper persons and have not been engaged in any illegalities, extremism, or divisive activities that may bring the charity to disrepute.

## Governance Review

### Background

The previous year saw a major strategic review of governance. The following is a copy of the circulated document that set out the business case for the restructure. "It had been 13 years since The Shropshire Islamic Foundation was established as a charity, and its governance instrument – The Trust Deed – came into force. Since that time the purpose and objectives of SIF have evolved. After many difficult years, some when no meaningful progress was visible, we are inshallah nearing the completion of phase 1 of the new mosque. Operational and usage issues are taking over an increasing proportion of the trustees' and committee resources.

It is timely, and necessary, therefore to review and reflect on governance issues and the design/structure of the charity. This includes, but is not limited to, the need for a committee; the role and remit of the committee; the policies needed to meet the increasing level and diversity of demands on our services; and the usage of our premises by our multicultural community etc.

As with any organisation, many internal & external factors are forcing change. Success brings with it many challenges. One of the biggest drivers is the increased scrutiny from our regulator, the charity commission. Given events and media scrutiny over the past decade, all charities but Moslem charities especially, have come under unprecedented pressures to demonstrate appropriate policies and that procedures are in place. Recently the General Data Protection Regulation Act came into being, with the need for clear policies about how we handle and who has access to, our data (donors, pupil, staff, parents, third parties) and communication with our donors, and indeed all data we, as a charity, hold. Banks too are increasingly under pressure to due diligence of accounts and transaction, forcing us to demonstrate transparency. Huge amounts of time have been committed to this over the past 2 years. HMRC are also targeting Moslem charities and we have a long history of HMRC queries that have taken up huge amount of time. Government legislation around extremism, security, safeguarding too bring their own problems and pressures.

Internal pressures include a much more multi-cultural and multinational make-up of the Mosque attendees, and their different needs, as well as multi-usage requests for use of our buildings.

Tensions have also arisen by issues not previously envisaged. For example, in the past due to a largely South Asian - mainly from the Indian sub-continent - congregation that did not understand Arabic, views of what is "Islamic" were parochial.

The presence of native Arabic speakers has highlighted gaps in many areas such as Tajweed. Diversity in the background of the community and congregation inevitably has meant a multi-interpretative perspective of Islamic views and by extension its practices. The different socio-economic backgrounds, domestic and work commitments of parents have led to different expectations and needs for their children's Islamic education. For some, the traditional broad-based, structured, 5 days a week didactic teaching practices of the TIA (madrassa) are the best mode for their children. For others, a narrower, more focused (for example focus on learning the Quran with Tajweed and meaning) weekend mode of delivery is preferable.

All of the above have a direct impact on current practices and provide areas for reflection for the trustees, requiring a re-think of what we do, how we do it, and then plan for the next decade.

## The Executive Committee

All mosques have some sort of operational teams to run the day to day business. Usually these come under the broad heading of “the committee”. The Pakistan Welfare Association and subsequently the Telford Central Mosque Committee, served this role well over many decades. During that time the work of the committee was basic, centred around maintenance, opening and closing of building, paying bills and the provision of a standard madrassa, providing basic Koranic reading and Islamic teaching. Consequently, its members were mostly a small group of elders and regular worshippers.

When the Shropshire Islamic Foundation was set up, there was a clear need for a change in the profile of the committee, not just to comply with Charity Commission regulations and external bodies but also due to the complex building needs of a new mosque and community hub. Over the past 10 years or so, many members have served on the committee, many with distinction, others, to be frank, to make up the numbers. It has become clear that over many years, despite a very large committee, the workload is unevenly shared and basic duties and tasks expected of an operations team are either not being undertaken satisfactorily or not getting done at all. It is clear “the committee” structure lacks focus, is lacking in transparency and accountability in terms of roles and duties and it is not a “fit for purpose structure” to meet the needs of the charity. In many cases in the past, the committee structure has been, to some extent, used for politicking, with members having little or no intention to make any concrete contribution. Committee engagement and discipline has suffered too, with some committee members citing “community” concerns, as a pretext for personal agenda.

The trustees too have reflected on their changing roles and obligations and see the need for “more of a hands-on approach”, certainly in the short & medium term, until new practices cement, become habitual and levels of maturity and commitment in employees and volunteers emerges. In reflecting on our current practices and leading change and transformation the trustees are proactively and visible demonstrating active engagement with all stakeholders and responding to current and future needs of the charity.

Coupled with the above, as phase 1 of the building project nears completion, the needs of SIF are changing due to the changing mix and makeup of the congregation and its users referred to earlier. The trustees are aware that many members of the community want to contribute to the work of the mosque and associated activities but may not want to be part of a formal structure, attend meetings, involve themselves in paperwork and policies or commit to it for long periods of time. Many committee members in the past have joined eager to serve but leave soon after, feeling frustrated in being unable to fulfil their original intension of

servicing the masjid and community. Others leave, having underestimated the time commitment required. This is natural as people may wish to join a committee, with the best of intentions, but find work and family commitments prevent meaningful contribution. To facilitate this and rectify the above shortcomings in governance, the trustees have put in place a revised structure proposed, as shown in diagram 1. There will no longer be a “committee”, instead the basic structure is that SIF will have a number of focused volunteer teams, with a clear focus on designated duties. Members will be designated as SIF Associates or SIFA for short.

The number of teams is not restricted and will change and evolve to suit business and operational needs. The composition of the voluntary teams will be evolving and rolling, so that experience and expertise is retained and passed to new volunteers, as they join or leave the teams or indeed move to a different team. Each volunteer team itself will select a team coordinator, on a rolling basis (ideally every 6 months) to coordinate day to day operations of that team. The duties, roles and responsibilities and level of decision making of each volunteer team will be clearly stated and will be co-created with input and oversight from Trustees.

More volunteer teams can be set up, as required. Members can join teams for a minimum of 3 months and remain for long as they are able to commit and fulfil the duties of that team. Members unable to fulfil their duties will be required to take a leave of absence until they feel able to commit time again.

Volunteer teams would probably have 3-6 members but there is no pre-determined minimum/maximum limit (duties and common sense will be the guide). Each team will meet as often as they need to. They may choose formal or informal communication.

Oversight and co-ordination among, and between, volunteer teams, will be undertaken by a Non-Executive Chairman (NeC), who will serve a 1-year term. The NeC position will be open to any member of a voluntary team as well as others. The detailed role, duties, ability, capacity and background of the NeC will be set out separately. Key skills however will focus around administrative, managerial experience, and leadership experience gain in the charity, public and private sectors. The appointment will be subject to a formal process, led and overseen by the trustees and possibly one or more external members. The role will be advertised once volunteer teams are in place, set of duties of teams agreed and seen to be working. In the interim period the Trustee will provide oversight, on a rolling basis.

There will be a regular Trust group meeting. Members of this group will consist of trustees, NeC (once appointed) and optionally, one representative from each volunteer team (on a rotating basis).”

Note: The structure below has been in operation since 2018.

