

# The Islamic Centre Newsletter



[www.IslamicCentre.org](http://www.IslamicCentre.org)

Ramadhan 1429 AH / 2008

## Ramadhan Mubarak

*A welcome message from our Head Imam, Allama Mohammad Shahid Raza Na'imi*

"Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Asalaam-o-Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah

Please accept my heartfelt greetings of the coming of Ramadhan. May Allah bless you all with enormous physical and spiritual wellbeing during this blessed month, and grant us all the strength and ability to respect and observe this holy month, with the best of iman and good deeds.

I hope that every member of the Islamic Centre will be supporting our Masjid in every possible way in this month of enormous reward and blessings and continue this support throughout the year."

## Welcoming Note

"It is my pleasure to welcome you all to our second annual newsletter. This year all our activities, programmes and services have made substantial progress. In particular the initiatives taken last year have gone from strength to strength and also become very popular amongst the community members. I feel very proud for the feedback we are receiving from various sections of the community as well as other faith organisations.

Most of our services are delivered by volunteers; it is down to their hard work that we are able to cater for the needs of our community. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of them and hope to have many more volunteers joining the Islamic Centre in the coming year."

Malik Salim – Chairman

## Management of the Islamic Centre

*The Islamic Centre is one of the biggest Muslim organisations in the city responsible for 2 Mosques (Leicester Mosque, Sutherland Street, and the Leicester Central Mosque, Conduit Street), a Madrassa for over 225 children, community and sporting facilities and burial services.*

*To support and extend these services we have a main management council of the Islamic Centre and a number of sub committees.*

### Management Council

The members of management council of the Islamic Centre have dedicated themselves to running the two mosques, community facilities and all the services provided under the spiritual guidance of Allama Shahid Raza and the leadership of Malik Salim. The Management Council is 29 members strong and oversees all work and services carried out at the Islamic Centre.

### Financial Sub-Committee

The General Secretary, Marawat Hussain along with Bashir Ahmed (Treasurer), ZA Malik, the Chairman Malik Salim and the Vice Chairman Harun Jussab oversee all financial matters associated with the Islamic Centre.

### Education Sub-Committee

The education sub committee is responsible for the Madrassa which runs from four sites: The Leicester Mosque (Sutherland St), the Leicester Central Mosque (Conduit Street), Uplands Primary school and Highfields Primary school. The Madrassa provides religious education for over 225 children and is managed by the Education Secretary Abdullah Patel, his assistant Mustafa Khatri and the education sub-committee members.

### Youth Sub-Committee

The Islamic Centre has mobilised our youth to form the youth sub-committee and takes responsibility for providing services geared toward the new generation of Muslims. The Youth Sub-Committee Secretary is Mohammed Ayub.

### Maintenance Sub-Committee

The Maintenance sub-committee consisting of Vice Chairman Harun Jussab, Chairman Malik Salim, Mohammed Hafeez and Hanif Girach who take responsibility for the day to day maintenance and repair of the two mosques and all the facilities ran by the Islamic Centre.

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### **Construction Sub-Committee**

Major structural and construction projects and major repairs are overseen by Malik Salim, Harun Jassab, Mohammed Hafeez, Mohammed Hussain Khan, Sheikh Sarwar, AW Bajwa and Maqsood Ahmed.

### **Funeral Sub-Committee**

Salahaddin Chughtai (Funeral Secretary) has the responsibility for the mortuary and all burial arrangements. This year the sub-committee has dealt with 48 funerals including 3 sent abroad. Sister Raihana Girach and Sister Kulsum Amin have been a great help with the arrangements for the Ghusal of women who have passed away.

### **Niaz Sub-Committee**

All Niaz for the major religious gatherings held throughout the year, the weekly Khatams on Thursdays and the iftari arrangement in Ramadhan are managed by Skeikh Nawaz (Niaz Secretary), Khushnood Ahmed, Ahmed Fojdar, Hamid Khan and Younas Ahmad.

A special thanks to Wali Bhai and his family and relatives who made a significant contribution to the Niaz on the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi.

### **Women's Sub-Committee**

The Islamic Centre Women's Association (ICWA) is managed by Midat Batool (ICWA Secretary), Sabiha Ahmed, Jamila Harun, Raihana Girach and Shamim Jamil.

### **Website Sub-Committee**

The IT infrastructure and Islamic Centre Website is managed by Yassir Hussain and Imran Mughal.

### **Interfaith / Liaison Sub-Committee**

Sheikh Sarwar leads our interfaith and inter-community activities. This sub-committee is responsible for leading the lectures and workshops given to the school groups which visit the mosque (on average once a week) as well as the other groups which visit our mosque. These include Magistrates, Councillors, MP's and other faith leaders.

### **Administrator and Press/Media Officer**

GM Malik takes responsibility for general administration in the office as well as being the press and media officer for the Islamic Centre.

## **Construction (Capital) Costs**

A significant costs is associated with the general maintenance and upkeep of the Leicester Central Mosque and Leicester Mosque, Imams residents, Mortuary and Community/Sports. Current expenditure to keep all this running far exceeds any money coming in from donations and Islamic Centre services (such as the Community Hall).

### **Imam Flat – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**

The first floor flat at 50 St. Peters Road has remained empty for a number of years. As part of the general maintenance programme the flat was renovated. The work included structural alterations, decorating, carpets and a new kitchen.

### **Leicester Mosque**

A major programme of renovation was carried out at the Leicester Mosque (Sutherland St) this year which included the Wuzu area being painted and re-tiled as well as the external walls of the Mosque receiving a new coat of paint.

## **General (Running) Costs**

### **General Maintenance**

There is significant cost associated with the maintenance and upkeep of the two mosques and all the facilities. Many of these are to ensure the Islamic Centre meets legal and health and safety standards. On average **£15,000** a year is spent on lift maintenance, security and alarm servicing, smoke and fire detection systems and all the electrics.

### **Running Costs**

On average **£2,000** a week is used on wages, building and liability insurance, rates and water rates, telephone, office administration, gas and electricity bills and many other cost associated with running all the facilities and services provided by the Islamic Centre.

### **Donation Levels**

Like the rest of the world, the Mosque has had a significant increase in the cost associated with running it. The gas and electric bills alone have doubled in the last 12 months but the donation levels by our Brothers and Sisters remain the same. The Islamic Centre can not function without an increase in your support and donations. Please give generously.

### **Community Hall and Function Rooms**

There is a common misconception that the revenue generated from the community hall and function rooms is sufficient to run all the services of the Islamic Centre. The reality is that revenue generated is used for the actual maintenance and running of the community hall and function rooms themselves. Insurance, fire regulations, health and safety rules, access, heating, electrics, cleaning and upkeep costs need to be paid and a significant proportion of revenue generated is used on this.

You can help by making the Leicester Central Mosque community hall and function rooms your first choice when booking facilities. The main hall can hold 600 people with the downstairs rooms holding 300 and 150 people. Contact khushnood Ahmed to book.

### **Gift Aid**

The Islamic Centre is able to take advantage of the governments Gift Aid scheme with your donations. For every pound you give, the Islamic Centre has claimed an additional 25 pence from the government. The only condition is that you are a UK tax payer. This is a practice used by all charities. As you can imagine this generates a significant amount of additional money for the Mosque from your donations. Please ensure your donations are processed by a member of the management council of the Islamic Centre and you receive a receipt.

## **News, Services and Events**

### **Head Imam Honoured**

Maulana Shahid Raza was honoured with an OBE in the Queen's New Year Honours List this year for his services to the Muslim Community. It is a great honour for us all that our head imam was the first ever to be recognise in this way.

To celebrate this unique achievement, a dinner was held in June 2008 organised by his friends and supported by management council of the Islamic Centre and PYCA.

### **Chairman Honoured**

Malik Salim was made an honorary Alderman of the city of Leicester. He is the first Asian to receive such an honour and recognises his hard work over the years in serving the city and its people.

### **New Alim Joins Islamic Centre**

Moulana Mufti Shakir Patel Misbahi has joined the Islamic Centre from India (educated in South Africa). He has taken on the role of head teacher at the Madrassa as well as deputising for Maulana Shahid Raza. He is a valuable new resource to the Islamic Centre and the management council on behalf of the community extends their welcome to him.

### **Better Access and Extra Car Parking**

The sheer size of the Leicester Central Mosque, the number of people who can pray and use the facilities (such as the community hall) has resulted in one major problem: parking. It has become clear that without additional parking facilities it will become increasingly difficult to expand and support the services and facilities provided.

The management council of the Islamic Centre has been using all its resources to persuade Leicester City Council to sell the piece of land opposite the Mosque on Conduit Street to the Islamic Centre to extend our car parking facilities. There has been some progress and once the City Council agrees, the main task will be raising the funds to pay for the land. We have, with your support, developed this project so far and hope that your support and co-operation will continue.

With previous local administration it has been near impossible to lobby support for the Islamic Centre. With the 2007 City Council elections, came a change in administration. It has become much easier to deal with the current councilors who show a greater understanding for our needs and are more sympathetic.

### **Home Secretary's Visit**

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith visited the Leicester Central Mosque in February 2008 to meet with members of the Muslim community, including members of the Mosque's management council, the Women's association (ICWA) and young people involved in some of the Mosque's activities.

The Home Secretary spent time talking to groups of young people about the work they do with the Mosque, as well as issues such as community cohesion, their careers and experiences as young Muslims today and challenges for the future.

The Home Secretary was taken on a tour of the mosque and its facilities and was impressed with what the Muslims of Leicester had achieved.

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said:

*"I am very proud in my role as Home Secretary to represent all of our British communities and promote and protect the shared values that we have in this country. My visit to Leicester Central Mosque today is a chance to meet with members of the Muslim community and discuss issues of importance here and recognise our shared values.*

*"The British Muslim community has an integral part to play in our communities and in our country. And protecting that contribution to our country and the lives and well being of the Muslim community is an important part of my role as Home Secretary."*

### **MINAB Consultation Event**

The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) held its regional consultation event at the Leicester Central Mosque in February 2008.

Over 120 representatives from Islamic organisations and mosque attended this first stage of national consultation which is designed to obtain views on issues such as the accreditation of Imams, better governance of Mosques and interfaith activity. The information gained will be used to develop and disseminate a good practice guide, setting out the principles and procedures that Mosques and Imams should follow to effectively lead their communities.

### **Free Legal Consultation Service**

Zafar Rafiq, a practicing lawyer for 15 years and partner of the national law firm Cobbetts, is now offering his extensive legal knowledge to the Muslim Community with this free legal consultation service held every Tuesday at the Leicester Central Mosque.

Due to high demand this service works on a strict advance booking basis. Further information on how to book is available on the mosque notice board.

### **Eid Milad-un-Nabi Celebrations**

Despite the attempts by some gutless and faceless people to upset the Mawlid celebrations with a poster campaign, thousands of Muslims turned out for the Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations and procession.

Due to changes in the law, this year marked the first time the Islamic Centre took responsibility for the traffic management of the procession. Thanks to the hard work of all involved, the procession was completed without incident. The police were so impressed by the management and running of the procession, key organisers and team leaders were honoured by the police with the Apex award. The methods created by the Islamic Centre for the management of such events is now recognised by the Police as the 'method of best practice' and are recommended to all other organisation planning processions.

### **Nur of the Prophet Lecture**

Maulana Hafiz Ather Hussain al-Azhari held a special multimedia presentation as part of the Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations exploring the evidence supporting the Prophet of Nur. A copy of the presentation is available on the Mosque website.

### **Ghosia Khatams**

The Islamic Centre has introduced Ghosia Khatams on or around the 11<sup>th</sup> day of each Islamic month. Separate Khatams are organised for our Muslim Brothers and Sisters which sees many people attending. The date of each khatam is announced in advance and information is displayed on the notice boards.

## **Continued Commitment to Religious Education**

Allama Shahid Raza leads Juma prayers, offers a Dars-e-Quran each Sunday and leads all the major religious events and gathering held by the Islamic Centre.

Qari Zawahir joins us each Ramadhan to lead Travah prayers at the Leicester Central Mosque as well offering religious lectures at both mosques.

A weekly Dars-e-Hadith programme is held in English at the Leicester Mosque (Sutherland St) every Saturday evening. Maulana Hafiz Ather Hussain al-Azhari presents this short but informative insight into words of our beloved Prophet (Peace be upon him)

## **School of Cultural and Linguistic Studies**

The School of Cultural and Linguistic Studies under the management of Yusuf Aboobakar and with the full support of the management council of the Islamic Centre now runs classes at the Leicester Central Mosque.

Each weekday evening, young Muslims are offered GCSE classes in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

## **English Heritage Open Day**

Recently, an open day was held at the mosque as part of the English Heritage program. The Leicester Central Mosque is the only Mosque in the City to be included in the English Heritage List. This attracted a good volume of visitors, who were very impressed both with the facilities and services offered by the mosque. The Management are actively involved in building and promoting general awareness within the wider community, which helps to give a better understanding of the values and principles of being a Muslim.

Mashallah, the construction of the mosque and its complex has been undertaken by the Muslims of Leicester for the people of Leicester. Today, Leicester Central Mosque is a prominent landmark within the city of Leicester. We should feel proud of our Masjid Complex and may Allah Tala reward those who have dedicated their time and resources, in order to make all this possible.

## **Youth Group Update**

### **Men's Badminton Tournament**

November 2007 marked the first men's doubles Badminton tournament to be held at the Leicester Central Mosque Sports Halls. Regular attendees to the badminton sessions (on Tuesdays and Thursdays), along with other members of the Muslim community, came together to create 16 teams. A very competitive day resulted in Sajid and Raja Toni winning gold, Imran and Wakar winning silver and bronze went to Shahid and Touriq.

### **Milad Workshop**

Over the past year various Itekaaf/Workshops have been held. These have been tailored to the needs of the children. The Islamic Centre on an on-going basis looks at ways of improving the method of delivering educational material, using many modern teaching techniques available. This enables us to make the sessions interesting and to convey the message across in an effective manner. Practical sessions complement the seminars and speeches.

Our programs are designed to promote the following topics:

Manners, Moral Standards, Respect for Parents/Teachers, General behavior, Environment, Recycling etc etc. Within the workshops we have quizzes and competitions, for which prizes are given to winners.

Children are encouraged to participate in Naat competitions and Islamic Art. Light meals and snacks are provided for refreshments.

The Islamic Centre would like to thank all businesses and Individuals who sponsor such events, the volunteers for all their hard work, the parents for sending their children and the kids for attending. May Allah Tala reward you for your efforts and kindness. Please remember that collectively we make these programs a success. If you have any thoughts or suggestions please feel free to contact us.

## **Skegness Trip**

During the summer an educational trip to Skegness was organised. Initially the plan was to take just one coach, due to increased level of interest, the coach was supplemented with two minibuses. The trip was primarily organised for the Madressa children and their families. The facility was then extended to include other families. During the coach journey, we had Islamic discussions and quizzes. Prizes were awarded to children accordingly. Another aspect of the trip was to promote family values and community cohesion. The age group of the travelers ranged from babies, toddlers, children, adults and grand parents. Thanks to the All Mighty, the weather was great in Skegness and everyone enjoyed themselves. It was great to see everyone sharing and passing food around, like one big family. From an organising perspective, the most rewarding element was that everyone enjoyed themselves and were asking "Where you taking us next". Jazakallah to everyone for making the trip a success. Inshallah see you on the next one....

## **Support main activities**

The Sub-Committee is actively involved in other aspects of mosque activities. When necessary or required, liaises both with the management council and the sisters' sub-committee. Some of the functions have been organised by us and ICWA collectively.

## **Website Update**

www.IslamicCentre.org has fast become on the main methods for our community to stay in touch with the events and activities at the Islamic Centre as well as a being a valuable resource of Islamic Information. Many of our Muslim brothers and sisters use the site to download the namaaz timetables as well as ask questions using the 'Ask an Alim' section of the site.

An ever increasing number of people use the Islamic Centre website at key points in the religious calendar such as confirmation of the start of ramadhan and the date of Eid.

The mosque website is your website. Support it by visiting it frequently and submitting content. We need your ideas, articles, pictures, content and support to ensure the site continues to grow and serve our community on-line.

# Madrassa Update

## Learning and Dedication

The Islamic Centre Madrassa is a well established Islamic school for education and learning, and is attended by over 225 students aged between 4 and 13 on a daily basis. The Madrassa has nine classes across four locations in Highfields, Leicester. The Madrassa students who come from a diverse range of local cultures are able to learn a broad mix of subjects including Arabic, Tajweed and Islamic History. The students, teachers and administration staff continually require the assistance of volunteers who can assist the operations of the Madrassa in a number of ways.

## New Head Teacher

The Islamic Centre recently welcomed a new Head Teacher to join the Madrassa. Maulana Mufti Shakir Patel is a young Alim who has studied extensively at Islamic Schools of Knowledge across India and South Africa. Since his arrival at the Madrassa, Maulana Shakir has made a significant contribution to the children and overall Madrassa activities. Maulana Shakir undertakes weekly class assemblies in English covering a wide range of subjects including Tajweed, Aqeeda and Fiqh. Children have found these assemblies to be particularly beneficial and enjoyable.

## Hifz Class

After Ramadhan, a Hifz-ul-Qur'an class for boys will be re-started at the Leicester Central Mosque site. The Islamic Centre Madrassa has a long history of producing students who complete their Hifz-ul-Qur'an prior to leaving the Madrassa, and it is therefore important that this tradition and achievement maintained by students of the past continues into the future. Parents are invited and encouraged to enroll their children for this class. For enrolment or for any further queries on the Hifz class, please contact Abdullah Patel (Education Secretary) or any member of the Madrassa administration team.

## Islamic History Assemblies

As in the prior year, Brother Farhaan Patel who is a former student of the Madrassa and now a teacher at a local primary school has continued to undertake weekly assemblies to the children at the Sutherland St site. The assemblies which take place on Fridays provide the students with a detailed understanding of their Islamic heritage. Over the last year, topics covered have included:

- The Life of Shaykh Abdal Qadir Jilani (may Allah be pleased with him)
- Isra wa Mir'aj- The Night journey of our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)
- Laylaytul Baarat- The blessed night in mid-Sha'ban
- The importance of fasting- refraining from food and ennobling character

The students particularly enjoy these sessions and it allows them to learn about Islam in interesting ways using English as the medium. Weekly homework is set for all participants which reinforces learning objectives.

## Target Sheets

After Ramadhan last year, each individual student received a target sheet according to their age. The target sheet allows the student to monitor his or her progress against what is generally expected from their age group. The target sheets are also very useful for parents to closely monitor

and actively get involved in their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to regularly monitor their child's progress by referring to the target sheet. Any queries or concerns should be raised with the Education Secretary or the class teacher.

## Examinations and Parents Evening

The Madrassa annual examinations will be taking place in November 2008 followed by a prize and certificate giving ceremony at the Students Jalsa. Parents should encourage their children to begin their revision during Ramadhan to ensure they achieve their full potential during the examinations.

Before the examination period, a parents evening will be held to discuss their child's progress with the child's teacher and other members of the Madrassa administration team. Parents should take this opportunity to raise any queries about their child's Madrassa education and performance.

## Comments from the Students

Recently, a number of students gave some feed back about their views on the Madrassa and its activities. Here are a few of their comments:

*'We are a very enthusiastic and successful Madrassa. Our Madrassa has achieved a lot and our students strive to get the best out of their potential.'* Student Class B2

*'Each Child learns something new every day; we have got a caring environment.'* Student Class G3

*'We have many good Naat readers; the Madrassa helps us learn a lot; we have a new Head Teacher and he is really good.'* Student Class B2

## Note to Parents

### Student Attendance

Although the Madrassa is attended by over 225 children, attendance at the Madrassa at times is not to a satisfactory level, particularly during the school holidays. Absent children miss out on a significant amount of knowledge, particularly the assemblies by Maulana Shakir and Brother Farhaan Patel. Further, students who are absent run the risk of falling behind against their peers and parents are therefore requested to ensure their children are present at Madrassa throughout the year, particularly during the school holidays so that they receive the full benefit of Madrassa activities.

### Student Participation

A number of activities are also organised for the Madrassa children by the Islamic Centre Youth Group e.g. Ramadhan Itikaaf. Children are encouraged to enroll for these unique events as a supplement to their Madrassa education.

### Student appearance

Parents are requested to ensure their children are aware of the Islamic requirements and obligations regarding keeping ones body and clothes clean. Parents must ensure that students arrive to Madrassa with wudhu (ablution), a clean uniform (and socks), and an overall tidy presentation.

### Niaz Distribution in Madrassa

Only home made items with halal ingredients, items from Muslim bakeries, and fruits packed in small bags will be allowed for distribution as Niaz for Madrassa children

## Message of Thanks and Volunteer Appeal

The Islamic Centre would like to thank all the teaching staff and volunteers for their dedicated efforts over the past year particularly Brother Mustafa Khatri, Brother Farhaan Patel, Brother Ashraf Rahil, Brother Muhammad Ayub, Sister Sabrina Aziz, Haji Jamal Suleman, Brother Nisar Arkate, Dr Zeerak Attari and Yahya Bhai Ghumra.

The current volunteer base at the Madrassa is small in relation to the numbers that are required to ensure that the students receive a more desired level of support. The Education Secretary and the Education Administrator require the assistance of more English speaking volunteers to assist them with support activities such as mentoring students, assisting students with homework, assisting teachers by giving assemblies on Islamic topics, ensuring all absenteeism is accounted for, and many more.

If you are wondering how you can really make a difference to your community, then supporting our children in their Madrassa studies provides an ideal opportunity to do just that. Parents and former students of the Madrassa are particularly requested to take an interest. If any brothers or sisters would like to volunteer or would like further information, then please contact the Education Secretary or leave your details on the Islamic Centre website and a Madrassa representative will be in contact with you. InshaAllah your efforts will be rewarded in this life and the hereafter.

## ICWA Update

### Range of Programmes

The Islamic Centre Women's Association (ICWA) has been working hard to expand the range of services the Mosque provides for our Muslim Sisters. In Addition to the regular Dars Programme, ICWA has also organised naat competitions for children, Ladies Mehfil-e-Milad gathering, Ghosia Khatams, social evenings and fund raising events.

### Guests and ICWA Leaders

ICWA has invited eminent speakers like Dr Umme Salma (Scholar of Quranic Studies) to speak at ICWA events. Midat Batool and Nazia Hussain have taken on the responsibility for regular dars programmes covering a large array of religious subjects.

### Encourage Young Sisters

As part of its mandate to encourage our sisters to participate in mosque activities, a social evening was organised for our younger sisters. Its aim to encourage our sisters to talk about issues of faith and the problems they face. ICWA was impressed with their insight and perspective. We hope to make this a regular event.

### Naat Competition

Over 30 children can forward to compete in a naat competition. Encouraged by the sisters attending, the children recited naats and nasheeds with full devotion. Refreshments were served to all guests. ICWA will soon be holding another competition for the young.

## Creative Textiles Course

ICWA organised a creative textile course in collaboration with the Adult Education College. This six week course was attended by many of our sisters who expanded their creative skills using a range of different materials and textile techniques.

## Fund Raising Dinner

A fund raising dinner was organized by ICWA in March of this year. As well as a delicious meal, our sisters enjoyed competitions and Mendhi sessions. The event raised a substantial amount for the Islamic Centre. Many thanks to all our sisters who worked so hard to make this event a success.

## Important Contacts

### General Contacts:

Malik Salim (Chairman) - 07865 044323  
- (0116) 2553867

### Education / Madrassa:

Abdullah Patel (Education Secretary) – 07989 369947

### Community Hall / Function Rooms:

Khushnood Ahmed - 07932 657227  
- (0116) 2923788

### Funeral Arrangements:

Salahaddin Chughtai - 07710 458526  
- (0116) 2554378

### Interfaith / School Visits:

Sheikh Sarwar - 0787 5747086  
- (0116) 2718499

## The Islamic Centre

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