

Orlando Fraser

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Head of The Charity Commission

Charity Commission

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Dear Sir,

Re: Interim Manager at Islamic Centre of England

We, the Friends of Islamic Centre are writing to address failures and inadequacies of the interim manager who was imposed by you, the Charity Commission, to run the Islamic Centre of England (charity number: 1058998).

The Friends of Islamic Centre is a grass roots community group, made up of donors, beneficiaries, congregants, and worshippers who use the services and facilities of the charity, and consider the mosque to be their second home. Many of our members have been associated with the charity for over 26 years. The Islamic Centre is where the community comes for congregational daily prayers, for Eid prayers, to break fast during the month of Ramadan, for solemnising marriages, celebrating births, remembering their deceased and where children come about their faith. The Islamic Centre is a community hub where people volunteer to help others and donate towards the up keep of the mosque. The mosque is a part of us, and we are part of the mosque. Our members give life to the charity, in short: we are the charity.

It is clear and obvious that the Charity Commission is dangerously unaware of the needs of the Muslim community who have been attending this Islamic Centre for over 26 years. To appoint a non-Muslim with no understanding of Islam, let alone this particular community is outrageously insensitive. The Charity Commission has not carried out the necessary

research to understand the needs of our community and put in place policies and programmes to meet those needs.

We object to the imposition of a secular individual, who does not understand the needs of our faith community, as the interim manager of the charity. This sets a dangerous precedent for Muslims, mosques and other religious communities throughout the country; that their self-determination and autonomy over their places of worship is at mercy of secular state institutions. In response we say, it is we, the people who have given our time, energy and funds to the centre who make up the charity. It is we who should have a say in how our place of worship is run and managed.

On Thursday 1 June 2023, the Friends of Islamic Centre of England held their own service on the street outside the gates of the Islamic Centre for prayer and in protest against the Charity Commission imposing an interim manager to run the Centre. Around 400 regular users of the Centre attended the protest. The insensitivity has provoked anger amongst the community which was reflected at this function. (Images are attached at the end of this letter). This would not have happened but for the appointment of Emma Moody as interim manager. We are reminded of the divine conditions for custodianship of mosques in the Holy Quran:

“The mosques of Allah should only be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish prayer, pay alms- tax, and fear none but Allah. It is right to hope they will be among the ‘truly’ guided.” (Quran, 9:18)

Furthermore, the accusation that the Islamic Centre brought the charity into disrepute is totally and utterly ignorant of what an Islamic Centre charity is, in its form, function and purpose. The Charity Commission has deliberately ignored the beneficial outreach that the Islamic Centre performs, and it is the Charity Commission and its malign actions which has brought the charity into disrepute. Since their appointment, the interim manager should ensure services resume for the community, instead of concentrating on the views of opponents to the Centre, which include the extreme far right, Zionist organisations and other Islamophobic groups such as the Henry Jackson Society. Their complaints and agenda for our charity’s future have taken centre stage while the Muslim congregation has been cast aside with blatant disregard. Taking this position is completely unacceptable and by default the Charity Commission is instrumental in applying unjust pressure on the Muslim community to surrender their religious freedoms.

We strongly stress that the congregation of the Islamic Centre of England stands firmly with us, the Friends of Islamic Centre. We expect, in the interests of fair treatment and integrity of due process, that you repeal your decision.

Yours sincerely,

Friends of Islamic Centre of England

Images from the protest:



