



# Brushstrokes

## Community Project

*April / May 2023*



Rebecca Skinner  
Comms & Marketing Officer

Dave Newall from Brushstrokes was lucky enough to receive an invite to King Charles III Coronation, and was in the Abbey for the event. Below he shares more about his experience...

It was a wonderful privilege to be at the Coronation at Westminster Abbey on Saturday, what an amazing atmosphere and event, but what struck me most was the recurrent theme of service and the diversity of those invited to be part of the event.

The music, the words and the symbolism of all that took place reinforced the duty of the King to serve, uphold justice and act with mercy. The reminder that Christ came to serve and not be served, and that the King should recognise his servant responsibility was striking.

In the midst of Royalty, Lords, Chief constables, Celebrities and politicians, to be there with 449 others who are ordinary folk, who work in various capacities, on behalf of the community was humbling. I felt it said something about the kind of society King Charles wanted to acknowledge and encourage, a society where we put the needs of others before our own and seek to stand with and for those who are on the margins of society.

Whatever people think about the Royalty, I'm sure we can all agree that in putting the service of others as a guiding principle is something to celebrate. I feel fortunate that in my role, I get to work with so many who daily take responsibility to serve and give to others of their talents, time and resources. I know this is true for so many of us at Father Hudson's too.

While we face many challenges in our work in terms of policy, perhaps a lack of resources, restrictive legislation, through those everyday opportunities to express welcome, care and solidarity we can show there is a better way and be champions of a new community of appreciation and care with service to others at its core.

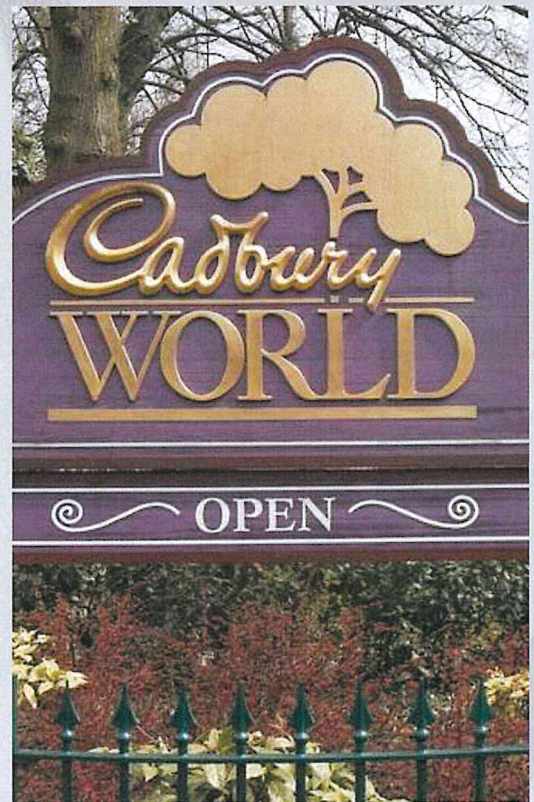


*Rebecca Skinner*  
*Comms & Marketing Officer*





**On the 11 of March a fascinating trip was organised for our Ukrainian clients to help the families forget about all the serious issues they are facing and just to have a bit of fun. The excursion was to Cadbury World where chocolate we all like is made. Adults and children got a chance to learn how the factory was founded, how cocoa beans are processed and how finally favourite chocolate bars appear. Kids had a lot of fun playing different games and taking part in various activities, adults could practice painting with chocolate. Everyone ate a great deal of chocolate and got sweet presents from Cadbury.**



*Kateryna Kovalchuk*





# Better Pathways Project

*Better Pathways Project for better outcomes for people who are NRPF (Those with no recourse to public funds)*

**Funder:** Barrow Cadbury

This research project into the lived experiences of those with NRPF and the problems and the challenges faced by them is to be run by Brushstrokes Community Project in Smethwick, West Midlands. Brushstrokes takes over the project from Asirt, Birmingham where the project initially began in 2021. The project will run at Brushstrokes from April 2023 until May 2024 and will try to examine best practice for statutory and voluntary sector around those with NRPF. Brushstrokes has experience working with migrants including considerable experience with those who are NRPF.

**Project aims:**

The project aims to shine a light on the lives and experiences of people who have 'no recourse to public funds' and to develop better pathways for them through work with local authorities, children's trusts and local voluntary groups. The project also aims to identify good practice in relation to the challenges faced by those with NRPF and make recommendations. And finally, the project aims to build relationships with the local statutory and voluntary bodies working in this area and look to reach out to contacts and networks more widely beyond the sector to disseminate good practice.

**Project outcomes:**

The project has a series of outcomes to deliver. It aims to do this with the help of a steering committee made up of academics and representatives from statutory bodies and voluntary sector to advise. Furthermore, it aims to set up a service user advisory group including those with lived experience of NRPF. These two groups will help identify the challenges faced by those with NRPF and to explore examples of best practice responses that can be promoted and disseminated. Further to this, the project aims to conduct primary research with clients and NRPF community members through focus groups, to identify areas of particular concern and challenge, then analyse and disseminate these findings through written reports. The project also aims to hold information sessions on rights and responsibilities relating to those with NRPF. Finally, through the advisory groups and the focus group research, the project aims to create best practice charter to identify and promote best practice. There will be a launch event held for the report and charter bringing together practitioners in voluntary and statutory sectors.

**Contact:** If anyone would be interested in this participating in this research through the steering committee, service user advisory group or as a research participant, please contact Dr Anna Lockley-Scott ([anna@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:anna@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)).

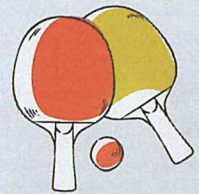


# Community Activities

## Welcome Wednesday sessions – Bringing people together!

I have been attending the Welcome Wednesday evenings for five months, and the experience has been fantastic. There's a variety of different games to enjoy such as table tennis, table football and chess. Due to me going every Wednesday, my skills in table tennis have improved dramatically and I have been meeting new people and constantly learning social skills. Food and drinks are also offered at this event, 10-15 people turn up to these events, and some come on their bikes given to them from Brushstrokes. The nationalities of the people who come are very diverse, those being Indian, Pakistani, Arabic and Iranian. People who first attended the events were quite shy and reserved, in time by going to Welcome Wednesdays their confidence has improved dramatically.

By Bally Kang (Member of the Service User Panel)



## Football, Fun and Fitness!



Attending the football sessions has been a very enjoyable experience, and being an avid football fan this works perfectly. My mental health has also improved dramatically from playing football as well as my fitness levels. My football skills have developed a lot since going weekly, my shooting range and my passing has come along quite well. There are a wide variety of different ethnicities, those being from the Middle East, Asia, South America and Europe. It's great to see different nationalities playing football and hearing them speak in their native language as I also learn whilst I'm playing football. Through this activity, people who consistently attend the sessions also receive football boots for free. The great thing about having this event is that it brings communities together and helps create a great atmosphere for people to enjoy and relax, forgetting all worries and anxieties.

By Bally Kang (Member of the Service User Panel)





## Art & Craft Sessions get off to a creative start!

This is a very new event which has started, which brings out everyone's creative side. Learning to draw was an exciting yet odd experience for me as I have not drawn for many years. The art tutor helped people tune into their artistic nature, she was very helpful, positive and relaxed throughout the whole event. We had a great turnout and people thoroughly enjoyed the whole session. It was great to see everyone's designs and drawings, having a great laugh. The food and snacks offered to people certainly helped everyone keep cheerful and energetic. I used templates to help me draw some creative pictures on glass jars, the tutor was very helpful and boosted my confidence when painting.

By Bally Kang (Member of the Service User Panel)



## Men's Group Gardening Sessions!

The first session of the men's gardening group went very well. We did lots of tidying of the garden area and the planters, and we sowed specific seeds which we wanted to plant. The men's group is a very good project to support mental health, get people to enjoy nature, and also get people to be more active. This project is a regular weekly session on Wednesdays. Many people also got involved with painting planters and expressing their creative side. We have time to meet new people and we aim to learn about how to look after plants.

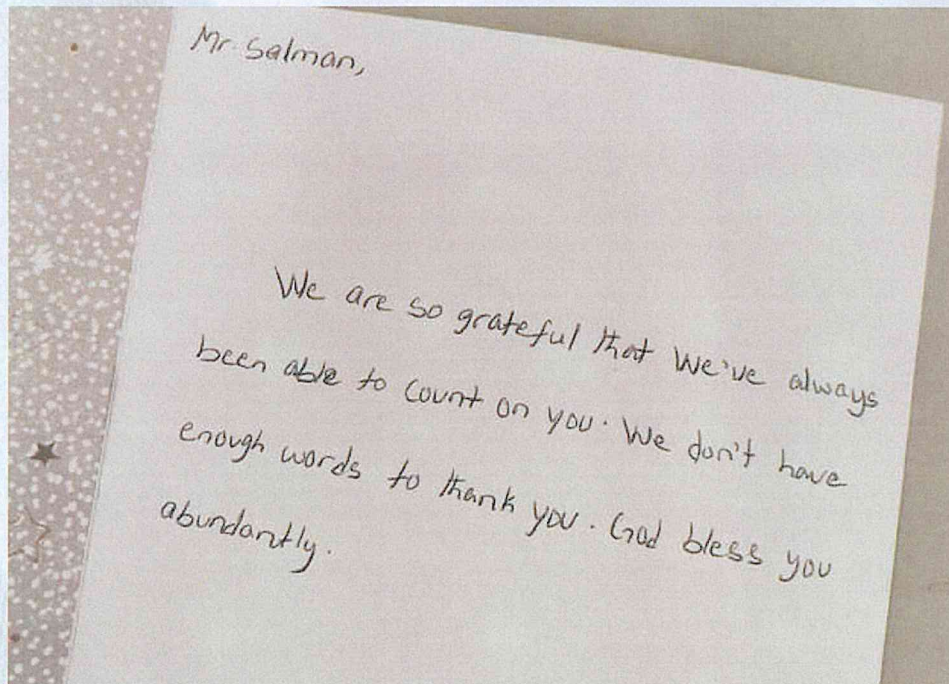
By Bally Kang (Member of the Service User Panel)





## Brushstrokes Appreciations

Our immigration adviser Salman received a very kind card from a client of his, thanking him for all of the advice and support he has given them.



## EU Settlement Scheme Advice

Brushstrokes continues to provide advice and support for individuals who need help to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme .

If you arrived in the UK prior to 31.12.21 and have not yet applied for yourself or your children, or you have pre-settled status and you are nearing 5 years residency in the UK and need advice on what to do next please contact us via [info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk) or call 0121 565 2234.

Our team or advisers continue to provide a monthly EU Settlement Scheme session at Christ Church, High Street, Lye , DY9 8LF every last Thursday of the month from 10.00 - 16.00





# BRUSHSTROKES BIKE PROJECT



## From scrap yard to roads

As the weather improves brushstrokes is keen to get people cycling. We organised a big bike fix and clear out at the end of the month where old bikes were restored by the people who will own them, providing a cheap healthy option to travel. Part of this is to encourage everyone to dust off their old bike or grab one of ours and drink tea eat samosas and burn it off on a bike



## A wheely good time!!

Scores of people turned up to the Bike distribution and repair session as they were very eager to receive a bike. The bikes given out to the public were themselves donations from other people within our generous community. Salman, one of the employees at Brushstrokes, helped repair numerous bikes in the hall, whilst Bryan was also a helpful contributor, repairing and giving away the second-hand bikes to a wide range of service users. Due to such a high number of people wanting to receive a bike, we had to implement a 'one bike policy' system where only one bike was given for each family. We were delighted to provide bikes to so many people as we are well aware of the great benefits that bike ownership can offer. A big thanks to the volunteers who supported the session!

## BIKE CLEAR OUT REPAIR DAY

COME JOIN US FOR TEA, SAMOSAS AND SPANNERS!

We will be stripping, repairing, and giving away bikes with attendees.



Contact Bryan on 07827258680 for more information.



Brushstrokes 253 High Street  
Smethwick, B66 3NJ  
Saturday 29th April  
10AM-3PM





# Eid al-Fitr



Eid al-Fitr's name comes from an Arabic term which translates as the "feast of breaking the fast" and, although not usually a public holiday in the UK (unless, like this year, it falls on a bank holiday), it is for many Muslim countries.

The celebrations will begin with prayers at dawn, which usually take place at a mosque. Eid has its own special prayer, which is designed to be performed in a congregation.

It is traditional for Muslims to gather together in a park to celebrate breaking their fast, with large-scale events and festival food (particularly sweet treats), prayer and stalls.

After Eid some Muslims decide to fast for the six days that follow. This stems from the Islamic belief that a good deed in Islam is rewarded 10 times, thus fasting for 30 days during Ramadan and six days during Shawwal creates a year's worth of goodwill.

# Easter

Easter, also called Resurrection Day, is a holiday among Christians which is a celebration of Jesus Christ returning from the dead. Christians believe that it is the holiest day in the year. Some people who are not Christians celebrate it as the beginning of Spring.



# Vaisakhi

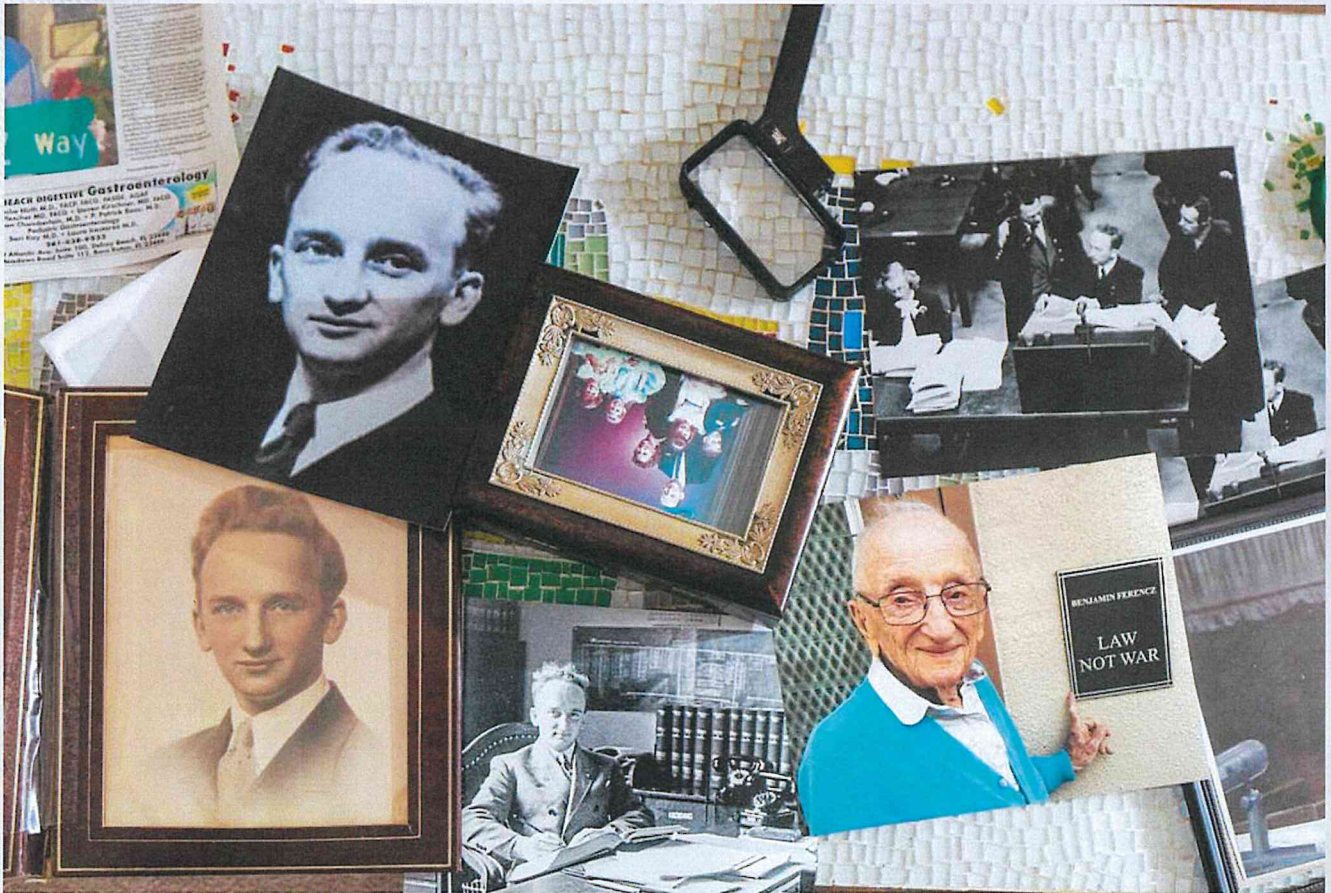
Vaisakhi is often misrepresented as a harvest festival or even the Sikh new year but it is actually a festival which celebrates the birth of the Khalsa. In April 1699 the 10th Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj tested the commitment of thousands of Sikhs. The story goes that at the festival, he came out of a tent carrying a sword and said that any Sikh prepared to give his life for his faith should come into the tent. Five men disappeared into the tent, and the Guru came out - alone - with blood on his sword. However, the five men came out from the tent, unharmed and wearing turbans. These five men have since been known as the Panj Pyaare (five beloved) and became the first members of the Khalsa.

Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick, hosted celebrations on Sunday 23rd April on Smethwick High Street. The festivities started at 11am, with langar being served throughout the day and volunteers practising the act of seva (selfless service). There was also a number of funfair rides and stalls for visitors to browse.





# Benjamin Ferencz



***"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." – George Santayana***

Last month saw the passing of Benjamin Ferencz

At 27 years old, with no trial experience who entered the courtroom at Nuremberg in November of 1945. He was tasked with holding to account a regime that had slaughtered millions and tried to annihilate his own people. Acting as chief prosecutor, Ferencz secured convictions against 22 Nazis.

The Nuremberg trials marked a watershed moment in the history of modern human rights law. Never before had an international tribunal sought to hold global leaders to account for starting a war and carrying out crimes against humanity.

Benjamin a refugee said "We were both refugees who emigrated at a young age and grew up in tough neighbourhoods. We both taught ourselves English through friendships and subtitled movies."

Ferencz was keen to leave behind multiple lessons for young people, including the importance of speaking your truth even when no one's listening.

Three pieces of advice he was always quick to dish out to anyone who would listen. "One: never give up. Two: never give up. Three? Never give up."

**Rest in power Benjamin Ferencz**

You can watch a short interview here:

<https://youtu.be/MJTUEJxDmcc>





**Brushstrokes**  
Community Project

**Immigration & Asylum  
Drop In Advice**  
Mondays 9.30 till 12.30  
Benson Hub Benson Road  
B18 5TD  
\*\*Term time only





Get cost of living tips and advice to your phone  
Add us on WhatsApp - 07585 997453  
AND TEXT YES



TO UNSUBSCRIBE TEXT STOP  
[www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell)


Struggling with your rent?





**LET US HELP YOU!**



If you're struggling with your rent then we're here to help.  
Call us on 0121 737 5148 for advice



**BECOME AN ASYLUM GUIDE VOLUNTEER**




Are you interested in helping Asylum Seekers? Would you like to learn what more can be done to help them? Then you may be the ideal person to become an Asylum Guide Volunteer!!

Why not come along to our Asylum Guide induction on  
Thursday 8th January and Wednesday 11th January  
(between 10am - 2pm)

Where we can explain how you can play a part in helping those that need some guidance.  
(Refreshments will be provided)

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ATTEND  
Please contact  
[abqa@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:abqa@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)  
or call 07570346848







**Contact us:**

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Website: [www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](http://www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)

Brushstrokes receives support from:

