

Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association

Registered Charity Number: 1155620

Annual Report from April 2018 to March 2019



ORFA AGM Tuesday 21st May 2019 6pm Town Hall St
Aldates Oxford

Cover picture from the Westgate Cultural Meridian panels by Adam Dant www.westgateoxford.co.uk

Information about ORFA:

Patrons: Iain Chalmers, Mahmoud Hawari, Karma Nabulsi, Sir Stephen Sedley, Avi Shlaim and Yasmin Sidhwa.

Trustees: Barbara Schofield (Treasurer), Tony Richardson (Chair), Joe Carter.

Meetings: Monthly – every third Tuesday of the month 6.00 pm to 7.30pm at Oxford Town Hall. Subgroups work together on projects.

Contact: Via the website, email: orfa_info@yahoo.co.uk

Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association has been working since 2003, and became a registered charity on 4th February 2014

On March 11th 2019 the official Twinning Agreement between Oxford and Ramallah was signed by Mayor Colin Cook and Mayor Musa Hadid at Oxford Town Hall in the presence of the Ambassador Husam Zomlot. The new Twinning will work through the ORFA committee but will have a separate structure as well and be called Oxford Ramallah Link.

Thank you to all our friends and contacts in Palestine who continue to support our friendship link and show us immense hospitality when we visit and work tremendously hard to organise the Palestinian side of the visits. And a big thank you **to all** the many organisations, individuals and groups in Oxford who help in so many ways to ensure that our work continues.



This Annual Report covers the period up to March 2019. Events after this date will appear in next year's Annual Report

April 28th 2018 Fundraiser: JUMP UP! Raised money for the **Dabke Dance visit** from Palestine and **Three Peas Charity**, who support Syrian Refugees (in Greece). Social evening of music, dance, food and a raffle. Organised with Mahaba Café and a big thank you to Mahaba musicians, Shakosi, Ali and Hatem of Oxford Dabke Dance Group plus support from Father Philip who allowed us to use Richard Benson Hall. We charged £5 entrance and raised £964 in total. £500 was sent to Three Peas Charity.

REPORT - DABKE YOUTH VISIT FROM RAMALLAH 27th June to 8th July 2018



This successful visit, relied on the energy of our visitors and the support and enthusiasm of so many local organisations and individuals. We are very grateful to the following organisations for their financial and/or general support: Palestine Unlocked, Unite the Union Cowley Plant Branch and South East Region, Oxford City Council Cultural Fund, Arura Faringdon Friendship Association, Oxford University Museum Service and many other groups and individuals.

Performances and Workshops As part of the Wolvercote Village Festival we were invited to the Wolvercote Young People's Club. This was the group's first performance in Oxford and there was also a lovely workshop with some of the Wolvercote Morris Dance group. We visited the Pitt Rivers and Natural History Museums and had an introductory talk about the museums and a special viewing of Palestinian textiles and embroidery. There was an interesting and extensive discussion with the curators. This was kindly arranged by the Community Engagement Officers at Oxford University Museum Service.

Saturday 30th - From 3pm to 4pm the dancers gave a performance and ran an informal workshop in the Atrium at the Ashmolean Museum. This was well received, with many people watching from the landings above and also in the Atrium.



In the evening there was a successful public meeting plus a performance and workshop in West Oxford Community Centre.

Sun 1st Cowley Road Carnival. The group danced throughout the procession with watching crowds clapping and dancing. They received a great welcome. Then we went to SS Mary and John Church for a well-attended performance and workshop which was organised by the

Confluence Collective. Then they performed on the Dancin' Oxford - Global Dance Stage to several hundred people.



The following week the group was hosted by the Refugee Resource Women's group. This was a lovely friendly event with delicious food and all the women joined in the dancing. This was followed by an Oxford Youth Dance company workshop at the Old Fire Station.

Unite the Union organised a tour of Oxford Car Plant. The union welcomed us and the group was very impressed with and interested in the robots and level of automation.



This was a very stimulating visit.

We then ran a second workshop with a dance group at South Oxford Community Centre. Through Dancin' Oxford. A small group spoke at Oxford Trade Union Council meeting.

On Friday 6th the group was warmly received by Lord Mayor, Colin Cook. This was followed by a tour around the Town Hall, and an impromptu dance performance on the stage.

In the afternoon we visited East Oxford Primary School to perform and run a workshop. The group performed to the whole school and approximately 150 children chose to join in the workshop. It was a lot of fun and the children enjoyed the workshop whilst learning and practicing a range of skills. In the evening there was a development workshop with the Oxford Dabke group. This was to teach some new dances to our local group which they can incorporate into their work.

On Saturday 7th - Faringdon Grand Peace Fete. The young dancers were the main attraction in this Palestinian themed event. Once again their performance was really well received and the young people joined in many activities after their dancing. The group were presented with a beautiful cloth painting to commemorate the Fete.



Visits and Entertainment Ashmolean Museum, French Circus in Port meadow, Ten Pin Bowling, buying clothes to take home for family, picnic and games in Oxford University Parks, farewell meal and party. Plus a great day out in London: boat to the Tower of London and back to Westminster, Big Ben and ate at a Palestinian Restaurant in the evening.

Outcomes The visit surpassed all our expectations in terms of the outcomes for these young people, through: seeing how much they were appreciated and the support for them as Palestinian refugees, building confidence, providing an opportunity to travel, practicing English and valuing their dancing ability through performance and learning from and contributing to workshops. The visit also impacted on hundreds of local people in Oxford including school children, young people and refugee women and all the people the group performed for, met with, danced with and spoke with. A huge thank you to our visitors!

Oxford Ramallah Official Twinning

The Council made a decision in July to move towards Twinning. Two members of ORFA had spoken at a full council meeting and the idea was received well. Ramallah Municipality generously supported this move towards formal Twinning.

December 17th saw the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Oxford and Ramallah – Mayor Colin Cook and Ambassador Husam Zomlot, signed on behalf of Mayor Hadid from Ramallah.

Council officers worked hard to ensure that the next step of preparing a formal agreement was completed for the visit of Mayor Hadid in March 2019. The official signing took place on Monday 11th March in the presence of Ambassador Zomlot. Many councillors and our next Mayor, Cowley carworkers' representatives, church representatives and more attended the signing ceremony.

At the ceremonies we were honoured to have speeches by Mayor Musa Hadid and Mayor Colin Cook, Ambassador Husam Zomlot, and two of our patrons Avi Shlaim and Karma Nabulsi, who noted the importance of continuing our work with refugees. It was agreed that the signing of this agreement was an historic moment and the importance of making this relationship real and active was highlighted.



The Lord Mayor of Oxford, Councillor Colin Cook said: “I am very glad to be signing this agreement today on behalf of Oxford City Council. It is the culmination of over 15 years of work by the Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association building links between our two cities. The signing of this agreement marks a new phase in our relationship and I wish it every success in the future.”

The Mayor of Ramallah, Mr Musa Hadid said: “Today, through signing this agreement, we confirm that “Together we can make a difference “. It’s only through combining our efforts and bringing together our communities to learn more about each other, network and exchange on the level of the different organisations and associations in towns, sharing our experiences and lessons learned, that we can together build a strong and meaningful partnership. Strong communities exist when members have a shared objective or goal that they want to achieve together. This is a strong belief that we Palestinians hold and that is why I am here today with you.”

Councillor Mary Clarkson, Board Member for Culture and the City Centre said: “I’m delighted that Oxford and Ramallah have come together for the Twinning Agreement signing ... our links with Ramallah have been strengthened. ... I am sure we can learn much from each other for the benefit of residents of both our cities.”





دولة فلسطين

State of Palestine



Reference: RM/7-20609

Date: 27/3/2019

رقم المخابرة: _____

التاريخ: _____

Dear Friends of Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association

Greetings from Ramallah,

I am writing today to express my sincere thankfulness and gratitude for all you have done throughout the past 15 years to make this dream of bringing both Oxford and Ramallah into a Twinning agreement into reality. On behalf of the Ramallah citizens, council and myself, I would like again to express our gratefulness for your dedication and hard work.

I am sure that all members of the Friendship Association are proud to see the fruits of your hard work on ground. I believe this great success now stands as an example on how powerful and influential civil society can be. We are proud too to highlight this example of building a relation with a bottom up approach as we believe this model can drive political changes in governments all around.

Thank you again from the bottom of my heart,

We look forward to seeing you again soon in Ramallah.

Sincerely,

Musa Hadid

Mayor of Ramallah

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www.ramallah.ps

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Councillor John Tanner said: “I am thrilled that Oxford is being twinned with Ramallah in Palestine. Well done to the Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association for building such strong community links between our two cities. This latest twin will create greater understanding and friendship.”

Nikki Marriott secretary of Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association said: “.....both cities have large universities. Our friendship links with Ramallah and the Al Amari Refugee Camp have helped to share cultural understanding through video, dance, youth and women's visit. We look forward to lots more projects.”



Mayor Musa Hadid's Visit From March 8th to 11th We were honoured to welcome Mayor Musa Hadid to Oxford. A programme was arranged which, we hope, enabled Mayor Hadid to see Oxford and to also meet a range of key people who support Palestine. Mayor Hadid attended the Mayor's Charity Dinner where he met councillors and the local MP Annelesie Dodds.. Eugene Rogan, Director of Oxford University Middle East Centre, kindly organised a small luncheon for the Mayor and this was a welcoming and important part of his visit as he was able to meet with a number of people who research and write about Palestine. These included Omar Shweiki the director of Friends of Bir Zeit University and Gwyn Daniel from the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network and Avi Shlaim emeritus professor. The Mayor was accompanied by David Osit a filmmaker who is making a film about the Mayor Hadid.

Mayor Hadid was the guest of honour at a talk about the Palestinian History Tapestry given by the tapestry project founder and there was also an opportunity for him to see the full Tapestry which was stitched in Palestine and the diaspora.

We arranged a meeting with representatives from Oxfam, Oxford Amnesty, Medics and Oxford Brookes University to meet with the Mayor and consider ways of working together.

We are very grateful to the mayor for making this visit to Oxford, it was our pleasure to host him and we look forward to our future link.

British Palestine Friendship Twinning Network - AGM Stafford 23rd Feb S This was a reporting Conference on Activities. The conference dealt with normal business of electing officers etc. TR gave a report on the development and progress of the official Twinning.

**Tuesday 12th March - Public Meeting organised by Oxford PSC and ORFA: Town Hall
Palestinian Childhoods: Children Documenting Human Rights Abuses in Palestine.**

An inspiring and innovative programme that empowers children to be active citizens in Occupied Palestine. Speakers: Riyad Arrar: Defence for Children International – Palestine and Reem Adnan Yaghi and Miran Zahran: Child Researchers and members of the Palestinian Child Council. A collection to support DCI was taken.

Current/Ongoing Work:

Yoga and Martial Arts project Al Amari camp - Toilet and changing room renovation

Classes for children, young people and women in a dedicated space in the Youth Centre. The project leader, Ibrahim, is a mechanic, as well as a yoga and martial arts teacher. He teaches voluntarily and has funded and completed the work to add special flooring and to make the studio look bright and clean. The toilets and changing room really need some work. Funds are needed to pay for doors, plumbing, lighting and electrical works, and tiling and labour for two toilets (one will be child sized).

Why yoga and martial arts? The camp is overcrowded and noisy, unemployment is high, life is difficult and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which works with Palestinian refugees, has had its funding cut for schools and community organisations. The project helps with health, relaxation, building an ability to breathe and think in difficult situations and a place to meet friends in a quiet and safe environment.

“Yoga is fun.”

“Yoga class has helped me to breathe.”

“Yoga helps me to relax and forget about the problems we face in the camp”.

£1000 raised by individual ORFA members organising fundraising initiatives. This money has been given to the project, who are really pleased to be able to start the work. We are aiming to raise further £1000. Hoping that Oxford yoga groups may be able to support the project.

Major projects to be developed for 2020

Palestinian History Tapestry exhibition and sewing visit potentially for Summer 2020 to coincide with the Oxford’s Twinning celebration. Project now discussed with sewing project in Al Amari camp. Aiming for exhibition in the Town hall but this is not confirmed yet.

Linking a school council in Oxford with Ein Areek Basic School’s Council. Ein Areek is an UNWRA school in a village in Ramallah Municipality. We have (in April 2019) met with the head and the school council co-ordinator and we need a school in Oxford to link with. Also exploring a link with a second school council in a Ramallah Municipality school. British Council organiser in Palestine keen to support links by funding visits, teacher exchanges etc.

Develop structure and protocols to enable ORFA and the **new Oxford Ramallah Link** to thrive. Work closely with Oxford International Links and Council officials.

Annual Financial Report April 2018 - March 2019

ORFA Accounts:

Financial period start: 02 April 2018

Financial period end: 01 April 2019

Income and expenditure

Carried forward: £6,414.65

Income: £9,722.97

Spending: £11,992.00

Total (balance) on 1 April 2018: £4145.62

Main points:

1. Most donations are received now through the Localgiving (gift aid automatically processed): **£3,651.87** in 2018/19.
2. Donations were received by ORFA to specifically support the visit of Dabke Dance Youth Group (July 2018).
3. Charity Commission Annual Return 2018/2019 to be submitted with the figures as shown here.

DATE		CREDIT	DEBIT	BALANCE
28/03/2018	Donation through localgiving	46.7		6414.65
18/04/2018	Donation through localgiving	29.15		6443.8
19/04/2018	Unite Cowley Car Plant Branch (£1000) + anonymous donation (£500)	1500		7943.8
19/04/2018	Donation through localgiving	79.75		8023.55
23/04/2018	British Airways Flight Tickets invoice		4627.3	3396.23
02/05/2018	Donation through localgiving	563.4		3959.63
03/05/2018	ORFA fundraiser for Dabke Dance Group visit and Three Peas	964		4923.63
09/05/2018	NM: Deposit for flights £504.00 + WU 1st transfer \$2000.00 (Dabke Dance visit)		2049.8	2873.79
11/05/2018	Donation from Unite South East Region	1000		3873.79
16/05/2018	Donation through localgiving	42.25		3916.04
17/05/2018	Donation from Oxford PSC (£50 chq) & FD (£20 cash)	70		3986.04
23/05/2018	ORFA donation to Three Peas (from joined fundraiser on 28.04.19)		500	3486.04
06/06/2018	Donation through localgiving	198.26		3684.3
12/06/2018	Oxford City Council grant (Culture Fund)	1000		4684.3
14/06/2018	Donation through localgiving	4.6		4688.9
20/06/2018	Donation through localgiving	42.25		4731.15
25/06/2018	Richard Benson's Hall hire for workshop & rehearsals (deposit, returned later)		80	4651.15
26/06/2018	Arura Faringdon (AFFA)'s donation	1000		5651.15
28/06/2018	NM: 2nd WU transfer to Refa (Dabke Dance Group visit)		1637.5	4013.64
04/07/2018	Donation through localgiving	100.48		4114.12
05/07/2018	YH - 50 samosas for Wolvercote Youth Club BBQ event		27.5	4086.62
11/07/2018	Banner from Helloprint for Dabke Dance group / Cowley Carnival parade		33.48	4053.14
17/07/2018	ORFA fundraiser for/with Dabke Dance Group visit on 30.07.18	167.1		4220.24

18/07/2018	Donation through localgiving	89.15		4309.39
26/07/2018	AR - visit's expenses (transport etc. London)		1118.7	3190.69
30/07/2018	Donation through localgiving	935.9		4126.59
01/08/2018	Donation through localgiving	21.06		4147.65
15/08/2018	Donation through localgiving	42.25		4189.9
20/08/2018	NM - visit's expenses (circus tickets, meals in cafes)		935.95	3253.95
20/08/2018	JC - visit's expenses (transport for visits, ice creams etc.)		714.45	2539.5
24/08/2018	Oxford District ODTUC	20		2559.5
30/08/2018	Donation through localgiving	61.7		2621.2
12/09/2018	Donation through localgiving	42.25		2663.45
03/10/2018	Donation through localgiving	140.3		2803.75
05/10/2018	West Oxford Community Association (venue for Dabke Dance Group/fundraiser on 30.06.18)		86.25	2717.5
05/10/2018	Donations from PC £50, MY £150, individual £20	220		2937.5
17/10/2018	Donation through localgiving	42.25		2979.75
23/10/2018	Cowley St. John's (Richard Benson's Hall) - deposit returned	80		3059.75
31/10/2018	Donation through localgiving	298.02		3357.77
05/11/2018	Localgiving membership fee		96	3261.77
16/11/2018	Donation through localgiving	52.92		3314.69
10/12/2018	Charities Aid Foundation cheque - private donation	50		3364.69
12/12/2018	Donation through localgiving	42.25		3406.94
23/01/2019	Donation through localgiving	240.71		3647.65
30/01/2019	Donation through localgiving	186.44		3834.09
06/02/2019	Donation through localgiving	83.3		3917.39
13/02/2019	Donation through localgiving	23.14		3940.53
20/02/2019	Donation through localgiving	62.77		4003.3
25/02/2019	Britain Palestine Friendship and Twinning Network		35	3968.3
27/02/2019	Donation through localgiving	93.5		4061.8
13/03/2019	Donation through localgiving	76.85		4138.65
20/03/2019	Donation through localgiving	47.91		4186.56
25/03/2019	The Palestinian History Tapestry (Mahmoud Darwish poem) - gift for Mayor Hadid		50	4136.56
27/03/2019	Donation through localgiving	9.06		4145.62
		9722.97	11992	

DABKE DANCE YOUTH GROUP VISIT June/July 2018 (12 visitors)

Detailed Account

Expenses	
British Airways Flight Tickets (£427.61 x 12 tickets)	£ 5,131.32
WU 1st transfer to RM (visas cost: £1,200 = £100.00 x 12, travel insurance, travel company to oversee visa application, etc.)	£ 1,545.84
WU 2nd transfer to RM (travel to Amman by AS to collect visas; group travel from Ramallah to Amman etc.)	£ 1,637.51
YH - 50 samosas for Wolvercote Youth Club BBQ event	£ 27.50
Banner from Helloprint for Dabke Dance group / Cowley Carnival parade	£ 33.48
West Oxford Community Association (venue for Dabke Dance Group/fundraiser on 30.06.18)	£ 86.25
AR - visit's expenses (train and boat tickets, bus passes, Heathrow return tickets, meals in London)	£ 1,118.70
NM - visit's expenses (PA hire, transport for visits, circus tickets, meals in cafes)	£ 935.95
JC - visit's expenses (travel expenses to Ramallah from Jordan; transport for visits, lunch, ice creams etc.)	£ 714.45
GD - visit's expenses (transport, gifts)	£ 230.98
	£11,461.98

Donations/grants	
Donation from Faringdon Peace Group	£ 200.00
Arura Faringdon (AFFA)'s donation	£ 1,000.00
Palestine Unlocked contribution	£ 1,200.00
Donation from Unite the Union Oxford Car Plant Branch	£ 1,000.00
Donation from Unite the Union South East Region	£ 1,000.00
Oxford District ODTUC	£ 20.00
Donation from Oxford PSC (£50 chq) & FD (£20 cash)	£ 70.00
Private donation	£ 500.00
Oxford City Council grant (Culture Fund)	£ 1,000.00
ORFA fundraiser for Dabke Dance Group visit and Three Peas on 28.04.18	£ 464.00
ORFA fundraiser for/with Dabke Dance Group visit on 30.07.18	£ 167.10
Donations from PC £50, MY £150, individual £20	£ 220.00
Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) cheque - private donation	£ 50.00
Donations through localgiving	£ 2,440.13
	£ 9,331.23

Agenda for AGM 21st May 2019 6pm

1. Financial Report (Treasurer and Trustees)
2. Distribution of Annual report and website updating
3. Twinning and Current work
4. Ideas, future plans and fundraising.

Through the Charity Commission ORFA charity is classified as:

- Working in the area of education and training, arts/culture/heritage, human rights/religious or racial harmony or diversity.
- Working with the general public/mankind.

ORFA's Charitable Objects are copied below as adopted: (CONSTITUTION ADOPTED 18 OCT 2011 AS AMENDED ON 19/11/2013)

TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS (AS SET OUT IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUBSEQUENT UNITED NATIONS CONVENTIONS AND DECLARATIONS) BY ALL OR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MEANS:

- RAISING AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE ISRAELI - PALESTINIAN CONFLICT IN GENERAL;
- RESEARCHING AND MONITORING ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW;
- EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW;
- PROMOTING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW;
- WORKING TO ELIMINATE ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW;
- WORKING TO OBTAIN AND PROMOTE REDRESS FOR THE VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND THEIR FAMILIES AND INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW.
- PROVIDING SUPPORT TO AND RELIEVING NEED AMONG THE VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW AND THEIR FAMILIES.

2. TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE UK AND PALESTINE, IN PARTICULAR IN RAMALLAH AND ITS ENVIRONS BY ALL OR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MEANS:

- TO PROVIDE EXTRA-CURRICULAR EDUCATION TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE, INHABITANTS AND REFUGEES;
- TO FOCUS ON IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THOSE IN NEED, ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH AND REFUGEES.
- TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY EDUCATIONAL TEACHING MATERIAL, BOOKS AND TOOLS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EDUCATION OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTH AND REFUGEES.
- TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS AND RESOURCES.
- TO HELP THE COMMUNITY BUILD SUSTAINABLE AND LOCALLY MANAGED EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.
- TO BRING PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS TO OXFORD TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION IN A WAY THAT IMPROVES THEIR SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT HOME AND ABROAD.
- TO PRESENT MATERIAL IN VARIOUS FORMS TO EDUCATE PEOPLE IN OXFORD ABOUT THE CULTURE AND ORDINARY LIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF RAMALLAH.
- TO SEND GROUPS AND DELEGATIONS FROM OXFORD TO PALESTINE AND IN PARTICULAR TO RAMALLAH AND ITS ENVIRONS TO IMPROVE THEIR AWARENESS AND TO BUILD COMMUNITY BASED / INDIVIDUAL CONTACTS BETWEEN OXFORD AND RAMALLAH.

