

ELREC NEWSLETTER



PROMOTING EQUALITY - FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION - FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS

From the Chair Foyzol Choudhury MBE MSP

“ Welcome to another quarter of ELREC’s newsletter. A year has gone by in lockdown and an end is finally in sight. The lockdown has started to ease slowly and we should have normality back from the 21st June 2021. I know its been difficult for many people and communities but I want to pass my regards to all those who have stepped up during this time to help others, our front line staff, and all those involved in helping us get through these difficult times.

ELREC has been working hard as always, and the last 3 months haven’t been any less challenging.



Our Covid related work is still ongoing in regards to food boxes for those in food poverty in Edinburgh, we continue to support on average 45-60 families each week, thanks to funders, volunteers and Fareshare. During this time we were made aware of many families facing digital poverty, with limited or no devices thus in January 2021, we allocated 82 digital devices to families in the city with the help of Connecting Scotland.

Our staff continue to work from home but we have skeleton staff managing the office during this time. The projects are all doing well despite the conditions, they have adapted well and continued to provide their services the best they could. We have also been working in partnership with other organisations to help deliver their projects to BAME communities during this quarter including Edinburgh Community Food with their Healthier Me project aimed at helping people manage or lose weight and make healthy changes to their lives by providing them with a food box of fresh items for 12 weeks. Staff have done a great job delivering this work which has been a huge success for all. So well done to everyone involved.

We are also thankful that our funders have been supportive and understanding during this period, allowing us to modify or postpone some of our work due to Covid 19.

Our Annual General meeting took place online on the 28th April 2021, great attendance and inspiring speakers as usual.

Our [Annual Accounts](#) and [Report](#) for year ended March 2020 are available on our [website](#).

Honorary Members

Honorary Patron:

The Rt. Hon. Frank Ross, Lord Provost
of the City of Edinburgh

Honorary President:

Prof. Sir Geoff Palmer DSc OBE

Board Members

Chair: Foyso Choudhury MBE

Vice Chair and Convenor of Personnel

Subcommittee: Shami Khan DL

Treasurer: Cllr Carl John

Company Secretary: Rajnish Singh

Convenor, Membership Subcommittee:

Jessica (Zonghong) Yang

Convenor, Finance and General Purposes

Subcommittee: Irina Lazarenko

Convenor, Volunteering Subcommittee: Azra
Sharif- Qayyum

Convenor, Education Subcommittee:

Magdalena Sajnaga

Board Members: Irshad Ahmed, Shahid Riaz,
Rana Shams

Staff

Office Manager: Parveen Ishaq

Administrator: Franciele Sobierai

Finance Officer: Adrian Barbascompa

Equalities Engagement Project: Mizan Rahman

Support and Advice Service: Parveen Ishaq

True Colours Project: Didem Kaner Ural

Open Arms Project: Mitra Rostami

Communities for Conservation Project Lead:

Jean- Matthieu Gaunand

Community Link Officers (CLO):

David Tai- Chinese CLO

Ewelina Lukaszek- Polish CLO

Fahmida Huczewska- South Asian CLO

Verena Aedo- Spanish CLO

About us

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional
Equality Council (ELREC) founded in
1971, is a voluntary body and charitable
company made up of individual
members and representatives from
wide range of organisations. ELREC has
a remit to work across the areas of City
of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian
and West Lothian Councils.

Our Objectives

to work towards the elimination of
unlawful discrimination
to reduce inequality and promote a
culture of human rights
to promote good relations between
persons of different groups without

We pursue our aims through

Engagement with communities of
protected characteristics
Complaint aid for victims of
discrimination and harassment
Support for communities in influencing
change by facilitating interaction between
communities and authorities
Consultancy on equality policies,
procedures and delivery of customized
training on equality matters.

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional
Equality Council (ELREC)
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Charity Number: SC007896
Company Number: SC183419



From the Honorary Patron - Lord Provost Frank Ross

The pandemic has dramatically affected everyone's lives over the past year and I send my deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones, and my best wishes to all who have been affected and are fighting the virus right now. As we all marked the anniversary of the first national lockdown it was a time for us all to pause, reflect and remember. It's also a time to look ahead and consider the steps we can take towards healing.



As Lord Provost, I've always been proud to represent our diverse and vibrant city. I've never been prouder than this year. A year

when essential services had to be adapted in double-quick time to support the city's most vulnerable residents. A year when communities across the city grew closer than ever in response to the crisis. And a year when residents' commitment to helping each other get through the difficult times saw the Citizens of Edinburgh crowned winners of the Volunteer of the Year Awards in tribute to their efforts.

In the weeks ahead we will hopefully see some of the current restrictions lifted, and a bit of normality return. Vaccines are the way out of this pandemic and with the vaccine programme now well underway I would encourage people to take up the offer of a vaccine. It's vital that we all protect ourselves so that we can protect others too.

There is a difficult road ahead of us but I'm sure that by continuing to stand and work together, Edinburgh will recover.

The input of Edinburgh's interfaith groups will remain central to this and I want to take this opportunity to thank all ELREC staff, its board members and volunteers for all their hard work over the past 12 months and wish them all the very best for the year ahead.



From the Honorary President - Prof Sir. Geoff Palmer OBE

The last year has been associated with large changes. The sad killing of George Floyd and the Covid-19 pandemic have influenced many of these changes. I extend sincere sympathy to all those who have suffered and thank those, such as NHS staff, who have helped to reduce this suffering.

I had the honour and privilege to speak at a Black Lives Matter event in Edinburgh in 2020. The people that attended supported the fight against racism and I referred to the Henry Dundas statue which stands in St Andrew Square in Edinburgh. I stated that statues should not be toppled, they should carry plaques which state the truth. The 200 years old plaque on Henry Dundas' statue did not state the truth as regards his involvement in prolonging the abolition of the slave trade (1792 to 1807). Also, when I was asked what the public could do about reducing racism, I said that when faced with racism, it should be called out and rejected.



Soon after the Black Lives Matter event in Edinburgh, Edinburgh Council reconvened the Dundas plaque committee and a new narrative was produced for the statue of Henry Dundas. For the first time in 200 years, the evil deeds of powerful politician Dundas in prolonging the abolition of the slave trade were recorded on the plaque that would be attached to this statue. Various pro-Dundas people have made invalid complaints against the new narrative but in March 2021 the Council confirmed the new narrative for Dundas' plaque. This narrative outlines his role in "gradually" abolishing the slave trade. "Gradually" really meant an 'indefinite delay' in order to maintain the profits from the slave trade and the enslavement of African people. The new plaque will commemorate the sufferings of the millions of Black African people who were made property (chattel slaves) by British law. As a result, slave owners were given £20m then (about £17b now) as compensation for 'their property' when the slaves were emancipated in 1833. Many people in Edinburgh received compensation for their West India (Caribbean) slaves. Sir John Gladstone from Leith, the father of William Gladstone, the Prime Minister, received about £83m in today's money for his slaves. ELREC is located on Forth Street in Edinburgh and two addresses on Forth Street received slavery compensation money.

Dundas was not only a slaver; he was also President of the Board of Control. He controlled the East India Company which made profits for Britain at the expense of Asian people. It is astonishing that the pro-Dundas people who have criticised the Council and I, as regards the new plaque, supplied no valid evidence to support their complaints. This kind of racist attitude to our history must change. Their attitudes confirm why the truth should be placed on the plaques of historical objects. Such plaques educate the public and will help to remove prejudices which sustain racism. As an extension of this work on slaver Dundas' plaque, I had the great honour of accepting to chair a new Edinburgh Slavery & Colonisation Review for Edinburgh Council; a new Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums Steering Group and a new Historical Review Steering Group of Edinburgh University. It is hoped that the outcomes of these activities will educate children and adults about our history and will improve inclusion and remove racism.

From the Board

Cllr Carl John, Treasurer

Well, the dark dreich days of winter are behind us and spring with all its new life is here with us. The older I get the quicker time appears to pass.

Since the last newsletter Scotland has changed quite a bit. We have vaccinated over 50% of our population and can meet family members in our homes. Places of worship have been able to welcome more inside buildings and Scotland have qualified for the football euro finals for the first time in decades.

Also we have held a Scottish Parliament election and elected 5 members of minority races to invigorate and represent a fairer cross section of our population.



I must mention that our ELREC Chair Foyso was elected as a list MSP for the Lothians, well done! ELREC held a zoom AGM which was well attended and very successful and had participation from the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and several councillors from the Lothians. It is good to report that despite COVID, ELREC thru the hard work of our staff and board members continued to carry out ongoing projects and obtain funding for some promising new ones. I thank everyone who carried out valuable work in our name . Whoever you are may your god protect you and guide you in your help of our fellow brothers and sisters. Keep safe.

Rajnish Singh - Company Secretary

This March we completed one year of the start of Covid lockdown in UK - almost entire world started the lockdown around the same period. Last one year had been something that none of us imagined even at the start of 2020. And when it started we did not expect it to last for one year and still a big risk.

Last year had been extremely challenging for the world impacting almost all aspects of the lives and livelihood. It is an appropriate time to reflect on the year gone. The initial phase was of extreme panic and confusion so the complete lockdown



was absolutely necessary step to give space and bandwidth. And we had see-saw of hopes and despair in terms of situation throughout the year - it seemed like we were out of the woods in October/November but then the UK variant of the virus pushed us back a number of steps and almost a full lockdown from December onwards.

There were many key developments that helped us manage the challenge within UK but in my opinion the two items stand out as key. First was the financial support that was

extended in terms of furlough scheme right at the start of the pandemic and continuing. Second and most important is the roll out of vaccination from early December 2020.

The extent of impact on economy is so huge that no government can support to completely mitigate the impact but the furlough scheme in UK played a very big role in reducing the impact specially in terms of job losses and keeping the economic levers oiled to get it moving whenever the situation permits. The financial support has helped a number of businesses to survive until now and helped people manage their personal finance in an extremely challenging times. The magnitude of support was not ideal for most who were impacted but definitely helped survive and under the situation a positive. Unfortunately this crisis is another one which has more adverse impact on the people who were below the poverty lines and would take longest to get back on track. Therefore, I would expect the government would spend a lot of focus and resources in aligning the tapering off these supports along with the momentum in the economic activities.

The development and roll out of vaccine within one year of the start of pandemic is a huge credit to scientists and the support structure. The vaccination roll out from 8th December was one of the best positives that one could have expected in 2020. The vaccine roll out plan is very impressive in terms of the numbers vaccinated until now and we can now see light at the end of tunnel with adequate support and patience from all the residents. The NHS had always been an excellent institution but this crisis has demonstrated to all how good and critical they are in terms of everyone's health and well-beings.

It is unfortunate to hear about resistance to the vaccination in certain BAME communities based on some false rumours and misplaced beliefs. We should all support the vaccination drive by the government and encourage all around us to go for it when offered. There is no better option right now than this in terms of saving lives and there is no bigger cause in the world than to help save lives. Please make sure you motivate all around you to support the initiative.

Extend my gratitude to all at the forefront - NHS doctors, nurses & staff, scientists working on the vaccine, all the key workers to keep our civic life going. And wish we would all see our life back to normal at some point of time in 2021. Stay Safe and Keep following the regulations outlined by the government.

Police Scotland – Message to Communities



As you will know our Equality and Diversity team at the Prevention, Intervention and Partnerships Team carry out a wide range of work in relation to hate crimes and in the supporting people who have been the victims of hate crime in Edinburgh. Our team monitor all recorded hate crimes and incidents in Edinburgh every morning and ensure that contact is made with every victim, to offer advice and guidance from an E&D officer, along with the offer of referral or signposting to appropriate support service or partner organisation. This work transcends all protected groups and in some cases ELREC staff have been able to offer that assistance.

Much work has been carried out in recent weeks, further to our last update. This has revolved around supporting families who have been victims of race-related anti-social behaviour and the provision of inputs and training to partners and stakeholders in relation to hate crime.

We became aware of a family in the north of the city who have been victims of racially motivated anti-social behaviour. The support from an E&D officer, along with community officers, quickly instigated a multi-agency meeting which has resulted in a high level of support being put in place and actions carried out, which has provided reassurance to the family and addressed the problem, thereby having a positive impact on their quality of life.

Following a hate crime input delivered to the Thrive Edinburgh network, the issue of hate crime perpetrated towards the Gypsy Traveller community was raised. Following this our team have delivered Third Party Reporting training to MECOPP staff in an effort to raise awareness of hate crime within the community and to provide encouragement and accessibility of reporting to those who have been the victims of crime. Our team will be providing ongoing support to MECOPP to maximise the awareness of this facility and provide advice and guidance. Following this training our officers facilitated an input from the Gypsy Traveller Liaison Procurator Fiscal Depute to staff from MECOPP. This was aimed at addressing queries around the processes of the criminal justice system and the potential outcomes following a court case.

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic we have provided significant focus on our Chinese and South East Asian communities, raising awareness of hate crime and offering support. This saw the emergence of a valuable partnership with East and Southeast Asian Scotland (ESAS). The culmination of this new partnership saw members of the group being trained in Third Party Reporting which, although Edinburgh based, has provided a national mechanism for members of the community to report hate crimes and incidents.

An officer from the department has recently provided an input to the Syrian Refugee Men's Group in Edinburgh and has also been on touch with a representative from the Sudanese community with the intention to provide an input on hate crime.

Our team facilitated several question and answer sessions with staff and young people connected to LGBT Youth Scotland. This was highly successful and was replicated with groups supporting young people with learning disabilities. This has allowed young people from our communities to speak with police officers in an informal setting and allow them to set the agenda and lead the conversation. This is intended to break down barriers, build confidence and trust, raise awareness of hate crime and encourage reporting.

We are proud to announce that we are the first division within Police Scotland to sign up to the LGBT Charter, facilitated by LGBT Youth Scotland. Over the next 12-18 months we will be working towards achieving the charter award and will keep you updated on any significant work that may be of interest.

Our team recently visited Craigour Park Primary School to meet with their newly formed Equalities Group. We were shown round the school and the surrounding area by pupils involved in the group and have confirmed dates for hate crime inputs to be delivered to their P5, p6 and p7 pupils in May.

As you may know, we have community officers throughout the city who are designated single points of contact for places of worship. These officers have been engaging with mosques during Ramadan ensuring that the offer of support and guidance has been made.

Looking forward, we have plans in place for more third party reporting training, hate crime awareness inputs and will be commencing our work on the LGBT Charter which we will tell you more about on our next update. We are also excited about joining in Upmo student workshops, meeting adults with learning disabilities and autism.

Manager's Update

The last quarter of 2021 has been busy for ELREC with projects, and preparing our annual accounts for year ended 2020. However its been good seeing some lockdown restrictions lifting and a sense of little 'normality' appearing. As you may already know and seen online, ELREC has been involved in some Covid specific work during the lockdown, with the help of staff, board and volunteers. During the lockdown we also became aware of many families who were in digital poverty and had one or less device in the home.



During January and March 2021, we distributed 82 devices to families facing digital poverty, thanks to Connecting Communities. With life moving online, digital poverty and many disparities becoming more apparent and evident thus the why we wanted to help with this in our small way . During this period our Open Arms projects funding period ended at the end of January 2021, however we were successful in securing further two years funding. All the remaining projects have been doing well and continue to work both online and in some adapted ways.

Our support and advice service has been busy with many queries from helping access grants, covid funds and support, help with unsocial behaviours and racist or hate incidents and crimes. We continue to work with the Police and other partners and supporting those in need, the best we could.

ELREC is a kickstart gateway and we have been awarded 40 placements.

The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to create new jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment.

ELREC will take on 15 of these placements. The placements will be up to 25 hours per week and paid the National Minimum wage and lasts for 6 months.

Its been a year of Covid and lockdown, and a difficult time for many who have lost loved ones but it's also made us appreciate, and value much more. People have come together to fight a common cause, and humanity always wins. We are all in this together.

Support and Advice

ELREC's support and advice is a free impartial service run by volunteers. We provide advice and support on many issues such as housing, benefits, discrimination at work, accessing public services and much more. The lockdown of this quarter has brought the usual enquiries and some new ones such as :

- *how to report racism at a school
- *help dealing with bullying at school and liaising with council and school



ELREC Food Project

Our food project has been running since June 2020 and still going strong, we have been supporting on average 45 to 60 families each week living in Leith, Edinburgh and the Lothians. We received many donations that has allowed us to keep going with the project. Thanks to our partners Edinburgh Community Food, Fareshare and Leith decides, Unity, and our volunteers for delivering this work during this very difficult and challenging times.

Please donate what you can, and help us keep doing this important work for our community:
gf.me/u/ywi2fm



True Colours

Hello from the TRUE Colours group!

Welcome to our new volunteers Xander and Tommy!

As you know, some of the social distancing rules are still in place. We are being extra careful indoors, so True Colours keeps offering online workshops for schools and youth clubs. Please contact admin@elrec.org.uk if you are interested.



The Leaders group in Drummond Community Highschool have successfully completed their Peer Education program with True Colours and have become Leaders of Equality. Hooray! The Leaders group organised two online events for their peers. One for S3s and one for S1s. They presented and discussed racism and LGBT. I was delighted to be invited and very pleased to be able to contribute to both events. We are now looking forward to the remaining workshops with the Pupil Voice group!

True Colours workshops for volunteers and work placement students continued. All members of our group have now become peer educators as well.

From September, we will welcome four new additions to our team, work placement students from Napier University.

The group had a chance to provide input and feedback on the new bullying policy and share case studies in task force and sub-group meetings with Inspiring Scotland and Edinburgh



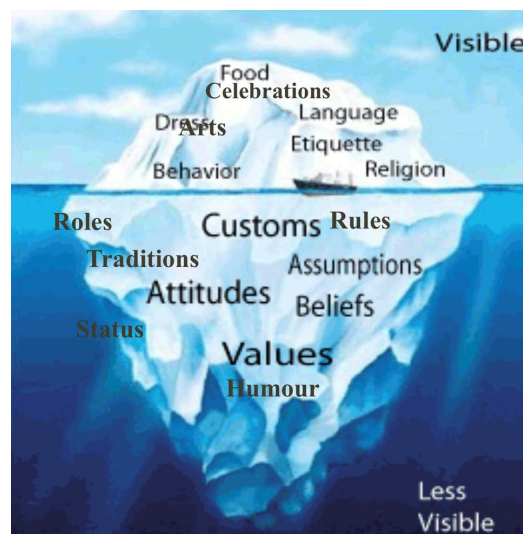
Pupil Voice Equalities workshops 2020-2021



Edinburgh & Lothians
Regional Equality Council

Tuesday 10 November P3&4	Multiculturalism & racism
Friday 4 December P1&2	Hate crime
Monday 18 January P3&4	Stereotypes
Tuesday 23 February P1&2	Islamophobia
Wednesday 24 March P3&4	Immigration & refugees
Thursday 22 April P4&5	Conclusion & Equalities policy

These workshops are all part of the Pupil Voice meetings.



@TrueColoursEdi



/truecoloursgroup



@truecolours

City Council.

As always, we are looking for volunteers - this time to work from home - to help us work towards a more understanding and accepting society. TRUE Colours volunteers have a chance to raise awareness about human rights and equality, and to talk about issues that are important to them and improve public speaking skills, develop confidence and work with like-minded people from different backgrounds. All are welcome!



Didem Kaner Ural

TRUE Colours and No Hate Network Project Coordinator

didem.kaner@elrec.org.uk

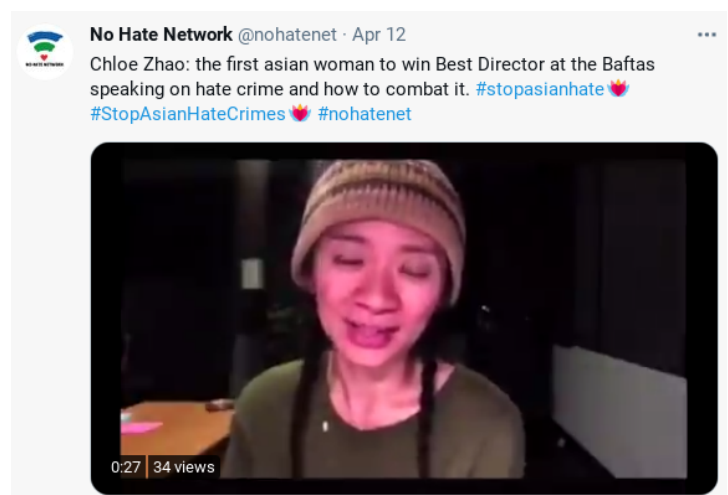
No Hate Network



Greetings from No Hate Network group,

We aim to tackle online hate speech by creating memes, captions and short videos.

Hate speech can be about almost anything, but the most common are targeted on race & ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation and (trans)gender identity. It can take different forms such as verbal threats, name calling, offensive language, using derogatory terms. You can see online hate speech on social media, in texts or comments under a post, in emails, in online gaming, on video sharing platforms.



Our volunteers created a number of social media posts over the last few months. The project is currently on pause but we hope to be back soon! In the meantime, please take a look at what we have done so far.

Please follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to see our work, and join us with a few creations yourself!

Didem Kaner Ural
TRUE Colours and No Hate Network Project Coordinator
didem.kaner@elrec.org.uk

Funded by the Uber Moving Forward Grants Programme, administered by Foundation Scotland.

Uber



@nohatenet



/nohatenetwork



@nohatenet

Communities for Conservation



"There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew." – Marshall McLuhan

Energy

Since the April 2020, Community Link Officers have helped 155 BAME families to save energy at home with numerous clients who switched to green suppliers, received free boilers and other energy efficiency measures through [Home Energy Scotland's Warmer Home Scotland](#) grant, and learned how to use energy more efficiently. With the lockdown, home energy use has increased significantly and the demand for support and advice is only growing. There are [many ways](#) to save energy at home and become more energy efficient.

Climate Awareness

Climate change is happening, and we can all do our bit. In February, we organised a '[Climate collage](#)' workshop attended by 15 participants. We also organised a talk by Alister Hamilton, Director and Chair of Electric [Vehicle Association Scotland](#) "Driving Scotland To an Electric Future" which raised awareness and understanding of electric vehicle and was attended by 29 participants. In March, we screened '[After tomorrow](#)', a sequel of the film '[Tomorrow](#)' that was attended by 71 participants. We received excellent feedback! In May, we screened '[The Troublemaker](#)' viewed by 77 registrants. Films are a great way to raise awareness.



/ELRECC4C



@ELREC_CFC



@elrecuk



Edinburgh-Sustainable-Meetup



ELREC Edinburgh & Lothians

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a presentation slide from EVA Scotland (Electric Vehicle Association Scotland) titled "Driving Scotland to an Electric Future". The slide content is as follows:

Scottish EV Registrations, year to September 2020

A total of 3,976 pure EVs were registered in Scotland

Top 6 models by number of registrations

- Tesla Model 3 (1,303)
- Nissan Leaf (483)
- MG ZS (386)
- Kia Niro (358)
- Hyundai Kona (289)
- Renault Zoe (246)
- BMW i3 (235)

Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) Plug-in Grant Category 1 models registered for the first time.

The chat window on the right shows a discussion about charging times and service stations. A participant named Arhiana asks a question about charging times, and another participant, Peter, responds that it takes 80% in 45-60 mins. Arhiana then asks for more details, and Peter explains that it depends on the car and the charging station. Arhiana also mentions that she is looking at high costs and needs to be done to subsidize the costs if she wants to enhance uptake of EVs, especially in the current post-covid situation where a lot of people have been disadvantaged economically. Peter responds that second-hand cars are what is the drawback in quality of mechanics with use and time in an car.

E-bikes Library

Over the last quarter, our ebike library has been extremely popular. Since April 2020, 117 community members have borrowed ebikes, 5,706 miles have been cycled and 9 people have bought an ebike after trying one out. We now have 19 electric bikes that are available for three weeks loans. If interested in borrowing one, please email cfc@elrec.org.uk (first come first served).



"I work in a council nursery and the electric bike has helped me immensely with the daily commute to work in times of COVID. I have applied for a loan to buy an e-bike and waiting to hear back on the decision. If the loan gets approved, I will be able to get the new bike before the schools reopen after Easter holidays!"

"Just wanted to say big thank you for the ELERC effort especially their staff who are always encouraging people to take part and very welcoming, will definitely borrow the ebicycle again and hopefully soon give up my car."

Check with your employer if they are part of the [cycle to work scheme](#) which would allow you save you 25-39% on a bike.

Check out the [Energy Saving Trust](#) interest free loan which can help you purchase a new ebike.

Bike buddies

With Paths for All funding, Leanne and Sam have joined us as bike buddies. Since February they have trained 27 participants to cycle on the road. Are you nervous about riding on Edinburgh's roads?

We can pair you up with one of our experienced bike buddies!

Whether you need to cycle to work, college or local shops, your buddy will help you become a confident and competent cyclist by tackling specific challenges on your chosen route.

To get paired up with a buddy, please email cfceelrec.org.uk or call 0131 556 0441.

If you would like to specifically request a male or female bike buddy let us know.



"My experience with Leanne is fantastic. I started with no experience in cycling and was able to ride a bike independently after two sessions! I gained a lot of experience in short time. Leanne is a great instructor. She put me on ease when I feel anxious, and she knows how to makes learning journey achievable and enjoyable."



"Thanks for the sessions with Sam. Really helped me overcome anxiety on the bike. Today we practiced slopes, even a small slope can be a challenge, so it helped knowing he was there supporting and guiding. This will allow me to go out on road and maybe do a longer bike ride with him. Thanks once again for enabling the BAME community to build more confidence"

Cycling classes

Our Saturday cycling classes started again on 27th March for both beginners and intermediates. You can check the [essential cycling skills guide](#) here and [here in Arabic](#), which we follow during the classes.



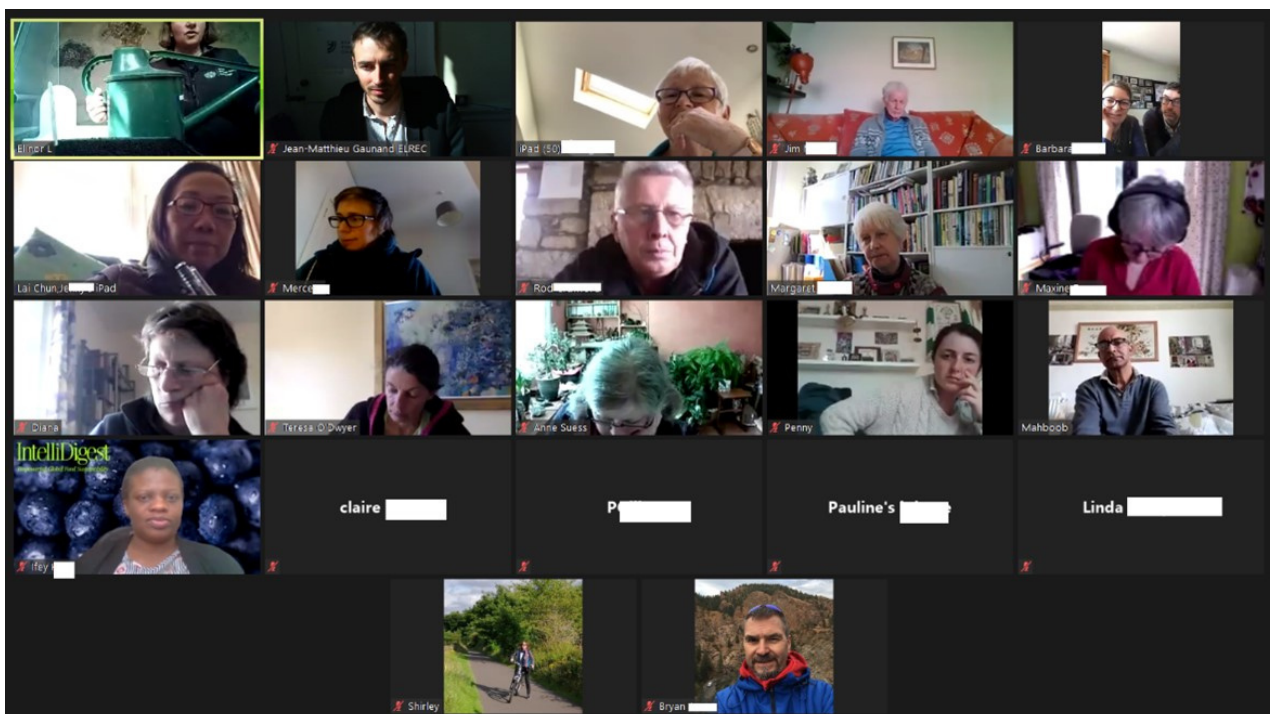
Monday Sewing & Repairing Club

Our sewing club started again on Monday 10th May onwards! Come in on Mondays from 11am to 1pm to repair, alter or upcycle your clothes. You will get access to equipment and expert guidance. If you are interested in joining, please book your space via cfc@elrec.org.uk



Food growing

In February, we started our Friday educational 'grow your own' sessions with Elinor from the Royal Botanic Garden discussing topics such as 'choosing seeds', 'tools', 'soil fertility', 'planning your plot', 'site assessment', 'seed sowing' and more. Most of our community gardens have started again at Iqra, Drumbrae, Wester Hailes, etc.



Hire our electric van

You can hire out our electric van via the [Hiyacar website](#) which will take care of your insurance. We offer a 30% discount to organisations or individuals who can evidence an environmental purpose. If so, please email cfc@elrec.org.uk



Swap shop event

Despite the rain, over 120 people came to our swap shop event at [St Peter's, Lutton Place](#) on Saturday 8th May. A huge thanks to all the volunteers involved and to Granton Goes Greener, our partner on this event! We saved 167 kg of textile, plastic, glass and metal from going to waste!



SOMRA Project

“Supporting meaningful Occupations for Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum seekers” or “SOMRA” is the name of our new Erasmus + funded project delivered in partnership with other European partners. SOMRA offers an innovative approach for tackling two major challenges of the 21st century, namely climate change and refugee crises, by engaging refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in meaningful occupations that transform them into environment role models with a sustainable impact in their new and previous home. More info here: <https://somra.eu/>



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

SOMRA Project



WELCOME TO THE FIRST NEWSLETTER OF THE SOMRA PROJECT

In this issue we are happy to tell you about:

- The idea behind the project
- Our consortium
- Our 1st transnational project meeting
- Our next steps...

THE IDEA BEHIND THE PROJECT

SOMRA - Supporting meaningful Occupations for low-qualified Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum seekers using the Green Entrepreneurship Model is a new Erasmus+ project [Project number: 2020-1-UK01-KA204-079165] that offers an innovative approach to tackle two major challenges of the 21st century, namely climate change and refugee crises, by engaging refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in meaningful occupations that transform them into environment role models with a sustainable impact in their new and previous home.

The main idea of the SOMRA approach is to enable these main target groups to become true factors of change that influence positive environmental habits that are first established on a local and regional level, and eventually beyond the borders of the EU.

Therefore, the SOMRA project will pursue the following objectives:

- I) Facilitating environmental change on local and regional level through grassroots activities organised by green NGOs and the SOMRA participants.
- II) Fostering common values and civic engagement of migrant communities in their new environment.
- III) Offering low-threshold learning opportunities related to environmental measures that increase the employability by strengthening key competences for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

To achieve these aims, the SOMRA consortium will develop three main intellectual outputs:

- The SOMRA Holistic Study Report (IO1)
- The SOMRA Green Entrepreneurship Model (IO2)
- The SOMRA Green Entrepreneurship Training (IO3)

For our Intellectual Outputs please visit our [website](#) and [social media](#).

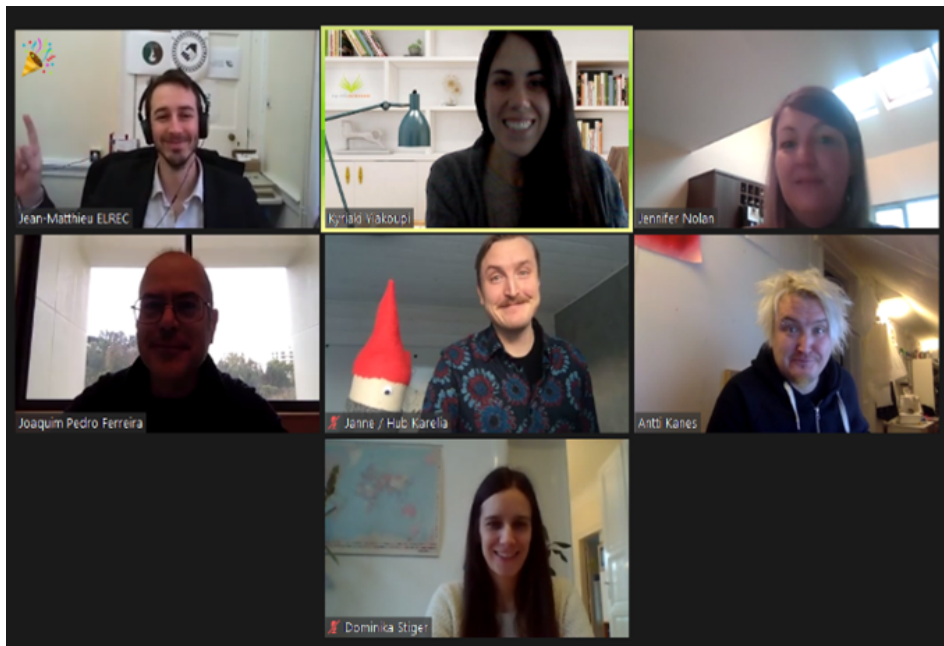
MEET OUR CONSORTIUM

The project is developed by six partners from six different EU countries:

- Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council Limited (UK)
- Auxilium pro Regionibus Europae in Rebus Culturalibus (Austria)
- The Rural Hub CLG (Ireland)

- INNOVENTUM OY (Finland)
- PLAYSOLUTIONS (Portugal)
- CARDET - CENTRE FOR ADVANCEMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY (Cyprus)

The organisations have different characteristics and fields of specialisation, leading to effective cooperation.



1st TRANSLATIONAL PROJECT MEETING

The kick-off meeting of the SOMRA project took place online on the 9th and the 10th of December 2020. The meeting started with a welcoming and a presentation of partners. The development plan of the project including deadlines of tasks and division of work between partners was presented and partners agreed upon all the upcoming activities.

NEXT STEPS...

In the following weeks, partners will:

- Finalise work on The SOMRA Holistic Study Report (IO1)
- Make arrangements for the 2nd Transnational Partner Meeting
- Disseminate the project's website and Facebook

HOW TO FIND US

Visit our website:

<https://somra.eu/>

Follow our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SOMRAEU/>



Open Arms Champions of Health



We are very pleased to announce the second round of funding for our most impactful Open Arms project by The National Lottery Community Fund. This means that we will be carrying on with making impact by providing health improving services to migrant women in our community for another two years.

During this period, we will focus on activities to help our clients be healthier and happier and stronger against coronavirus. We will also have a focus on integration of migrants by facilitating English learning activities for them within a non-formal non-classroom environment. We are particularly excited as we will do this together with our women who will eventually be recognised as "*Champions of Health*".



The service has officially started in May and will continue until April 2023. In the following 2 years, we will sign up 200 women from minority ethnic and migrant backgrounds. Our women will have free access to the following services:

- Exercise classes
- Arts & crafts workshops
- Health forums
- English reading and writing workshops
- Challenges & Rewards
- Fun events

The provision of the activities is mainly online and our clients have the chance to participate in the delivery of the service as volunteers and eventually be recognised as champions. There will be plenty of points, rewards and prizes involved and our champions will receive a certificate and a special reward.

You can sign up or send your referrals to mroostami@elrec.org.uk

Equality Engagement

Diversity in Public Life



Diversity in Public life project was very busy over the last quarter as biggest democratic event, the Scottish Parliament election held on 06 May 2021. Key priority of diversity in public life project was to raise awareness among BME electorate to register their vote so that they can take part in Scottish Parliament election. There was another priority to encourage BME electorate to sign up for postal ballot. It was essential to avoid visiting to the polling station. We have provided one-to-one support to the 45 BME families to register/update their electoral record. Nature of support involved dealing with people's personal information and liaising with the election registration office. Therefore, one to one support has been proven very effective. We have also disseminated information BME candidates and provided support to the BME party members who are willing to take part in campaigning.



We have raise aware ness on how voting system works in Scotland. Relevant Message, posts and information were reached over 500 people.

The information about polling day and covid-19 instruction was disseminated throughout various channel of social media.

Our Covid 19 support and advice work is ongoing among the participants of PLC (public life champion) scheme. Useful information and support was given to the affected families regarding benefit, housing, income maximisation, technical help in accessing useful information and key services online i.e book a Covid-19 test online, online order of prescription, apply for UK passport etc. Over the period, 29 families have received support from the project.

Diversity in the Scottish Parliament Election: At a glance

Scottish Parliament election took place on 06 May 2021. It was great achievement of the BME candidates in this election. Three more MSPs from BME background has been elected this year. Overall participations of public in the election was substantially high despite restriction from the pandemic.

ELREC Chair Foysol Choudhury MBE has elected as a MSP for Lothian at this election. He was first ever-Bangladeshi MSP in Scotland. Also, Foysol Choudhury MBE was first ever Bangladesh Male parliamentarian in the UK. He was also first ever BME MSP in Lothian. We would like to congratulate him for his great success.

CONGRATULATIONS



List of the MSPs from Equalities and Ethnic group

Name of MSPs	Constituency	
Foysoil Choudhury MBE	Lothian region (Lab)	First Bangladeshi MSP
Pam Gosal	West of Scotland (CON)	First Shikh/Indian MSP
Kaukab Stewart	Glasgow Pollok (SNP)	First BME Female MSP
Anas Sarwar	Glasgow Region (Lab)	First BME party leader
Humza Yousaf	Glasgow Pollok (SNP)	First BME Cabinet Secretary
Pam Duncan-Glancy	Glasgow region (Lab)	First wheel chair user MSP
Paul O'Kane	West of Scotland (Lab)	First openly gay MSP

There were more BME candidates ever all over the Scotland at this year scottish parliament election. Thanks to the political parties for taking positive step within their strategic framework to promote diversity within their candidates.

In Edinburgh and Lothians, there were four BAME candidates. Graham Campbell (SNP) stood on a regional list, Foysoil Choudhury MBE (Labour) on regional list, Irshad Ahmed (ALBA) on regional list and Parvinder Singh (All For Unity) on regional list.

You can find your MSPs : <https://www.parliament.scot/msps>

Police Scotland Diversity Recruitment

Police Scotland Positive Action Team will be hosting an online information/recruitment event aimed at people from Minority Ethnic communities across Scotland.

Saturday 5th June 2021, 10am - 12pm

EMBARK ON THIS EXCITING CAREER PATH

JOIN US



This event will give attendees and their families a fantastic opportunity to hear from serving Minority Ethnic officers and their experiences as a police officer in Scotland as well as the opportunity to ask questions. The event will also focus on the recruitment process and the training, with a unique insight in to life at the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan from a Minority Ethnic perspective.

To sign up, please contact the following email address:

recruitmentpositiveactionteame@scotland.pnn.police.uk

If anyone from BAME community, lived around Edinburgh & Lothian, needs any information/support in terms of registration or participation, please get in touch with us, we are happy to help. Contact: Mizan Rahman, Equality Engagement Officer, E-mail: mrahman@elrec.org.uk

Scottish Youth Parliament Election 2021

In November 2021, elections to the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) will take place. The SYP represents Scotland's young people. Democratically elected members ensure that young people's voices are heard by decision-makers. The SYP represents an excellent opportunity for young people to influence the decisions that affect their lives. Recent successful campaigns have contributed to votes for 16 year olds, free bus travel for young people (due later this year), and the move to incorporate UNCRC into law.

We are very keen that we have a range of candidates that represent the demographic of Edinburgh so that a wide variety of voices can be heard.

All young people aged between 14 and 25 years old can stand for election to the SYP, and for all those involved the SYP represents an outstanding learning opportunity. More information is available on the SYP website: www.syp.org.uk , including about their next campaign, Bounce Back, which will focus on the response to the pandemic and its aftermath <https://syp.org.uk/campaign/bounce-back/>

The attached briefing, which we will update fortnightly between now and November, sets out our recent activity to support the elections.

The SYP has produced videos and graphics which can be used to promote the elections: <https://syp.org.uk/about-syp/syp-elections-2021/>

We hope that every young person who is passionate about making a difference, changing things and/or helping other young people will consider standing for election. We are asking youth workers, teachers, social workers and others who work with young people who may be interested in standing to encourage them to find out more - or find out more on their behalf.

For more information, please contact SYP Election Coordinator: Jackie Barr Jackie.Barr@edinburgh.gov.uk. We are at diversity in public life will be happy to help with the nomination, portfolio and campaign etc.

Key dates:

- 1 April to 30 June: Expression of interest to be a candidate, promotion of SYP to schools, youth groups and community organisations
- 1 July to 31 August: Confirmed candidate - interested young people commit to standing for election
- September onwards: Promote the vote - campaigning
- 8 - 21 November: Voting takes place across Scotland

Last chance to apply to the EU Settlement scheme



**LESS THAN
50 DAYS TO
APPLY TO THE
EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME**



Find out more and apply now at:
[gov.uk/eusettlementscheme](https://www.gov.uk/eusettlementscheme)

ARE YOU INTERESTED TO STAND AS COUNCILLOR AT THE NEXT YEAR'S LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTION?

If you lived around Edinburgh and Lothian and member of BME community.
Please contact us and let us know about your express of interest

One-2-One support, advice, logistics and information will be provided.

Contact: Tel 0131 556 0441 E-mail MRahamn@elrec.org.uk

Like us on facebook: [@diversityinpublic](https://www.facebook.com/diversityinpublic) |

www.diversityinpubliclife.wordpress.com

Job Vacancies

Check out our opportunities [here](#).

TRUE COLOURS PROJECT COORDINATOR

Salary: £25,400 pro rata

Hours of Work: 19 hours p/w

Deadline for applications: 5pm Friday 4th June 21

The interviews will be held the week beginning the 7th June 21

The TRUE Colours project coordinator is responsible for implementing the different aspects of the project. The role involves undertaking research on prejudice based bullying and different equality issues, coordinating the project's volunteers, preparing and conducting workshops with young people and youth workers, developing a programme of activities to engage with young people and address prejudice-based bullying in schools across Edinburgh. The post holder will also be responsible for liaising with the funders on a regular basis and for any resources allocated to the project.

If you want to apply for this job, please fill up this [form](#) and send it to admin@elrec.org.uk

MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT ASSISTANT

Based at 14 Forth Street/Homeworking

Length of post will be 40weeks

Part time 16h

Job description:

- To maintain and update ELREC's social media and website with accurate information provided by the projects and ELREC staff (Facebook, Twitter, Website, TikTok etc).
- Post events and campaigns online.
- creating material and posters.
- leasing with projects
- engage with users online and answer any queries.

Person specification

Person specification:

- Passion for social media
- Computer literate
- Graphics editing and video editing desirable
- Good written and communication skills
- Creative with an eye for detail
- Able to manage time effectively and prioritise workload

Additional information

This opportunity is for a young person (16-29 years old) in Edinburgh and Lothians from a disadvantaged background to use their digital skills in this post and manage our website and social media.

Application must be submitted via job centre or skills development.

WHAT'S ON AT ELREC

No hate



ELREC - Third Party Reporting

Covid-19 Community Response

Virtual Reporting

Our office may be closed but we are still open to taking hate reports so please tell us.

Drop an email at Report-hate@elrec.org.uk



UK IMMIGRATION ADVICE

Do you need *immigration* advice?
Latta & Co can grant legal aid over the phone during the quarantine.

Drop and email at tm@lattalaw.co.uk or feel free to call on 07728628008.





Have any clothes needing repaired?
We can fix it. Better than new!

Drop in Mon-Friday 9am to 5pm
at ELREC, 14 Forth St, EH1 3LH

Clothing repair & alterations
Custom tailoring

Personal remaking and tailoring clothes to your individual requirements.
Special orders (dress making, pillows and cushions, chair cover).

Suggested Donation

Phone: 0131 556 0441
Email: cfc@elrec.org.uk




Quality service. Quality Finish.





Saturday Cycling classes

Beginners: 10 to 11am
Intermediate: 11:30 to 1pm

All welcome Fun family time
Health and well being Get new skills
Relaxed learning environment Socialising

NKS, 7 Gillespie st, Edinburgh, EH3 9NH

Book your space now:
E-mail: cfc@elrec.org.uk
Phone: 0131 556 0441
Or register your interest with Al-Furqan

Bikes and helmet provided

Al-Furqan in partnership with ELREC








WHAT'S ON AT ELREC

ELREC Food Support

If you need food, please contact us at 0131 556 0441 or email covideithsupport@elrec.org.uk

Please note:

- The food parcel must be collected on **Friday** between 2pm - 4pm at ELREC's Office (14, Forth Street EH1 3LH)
- to wear a face covering is mandatory.
- Bring your own bag.



MONDAY SEWING CLUB

JOIN OUR FREE SEWING CLUB

- Come to repair and adjust your own clothes
- Learn simple sewing techniques
- Socialise



Relaxed environment

All welcome!



Equipment & refreshments provided

Every Monday 11am- 1pm
 ELREC, 14 Forth Street, EH1 3LH
 Spaces are limited
 Booking **REQUIRED** by emailing cfc@elrec.org.uk
 More info: 0131 556 0441



To know more visit <http://www.elrec.org.uk/>

BULLYING

CYBER-TALKING

STIRRING UP OF HATRED

INCITEMENT TO COMMIT VIOLENCE

HARRASMENT

WHAT IS HATE SPEECH?

Public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, disability, gender identity and sexual orientation.



HOW TO REPORT IT?

- inform the internet platform ie facebook, twitter, snapchat, etc, as user is breaking guidelines
- Talk to someone about it
- Block the user
- If life threatening call 999



AWARENESS IS EVERYTHING

#stophatespeech

FREE ENGLISH CLASSES

Study General English for free
 18:30 - 20:00 on
 Tuesday evenings via Skype

Conversation Class
 Every second Friday via Skype
 18:30 - 19:30

Full attendance preferable

To register contact: franciele@elrec.org.uk
 or mikehell68@gmail.com



ELECTRIC BIKE LIBRARY



Try an electric bike
for up to 3 weeks
£20 hiring charge

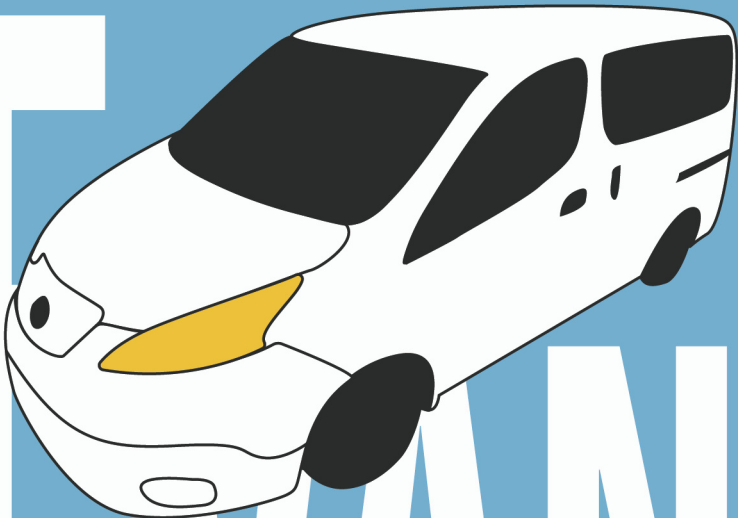
Electric bikes help you:
Save money
Get to places faster
Be sustainable
Improve your fitness

If interested:
Email cfc@elrec.org.uk
Tel 0131 556 0441



HIRE VAN

AN **ELECTRIC** COMBI



Hireout ELREC's
electric van on
Hiyacar website.

Insurance covered by HiyaCar
Nissan NV200
70 miles range
Easy use
Zero emissions
Flexible hire time/days
30% discount for
environmental uses.

If interested:
Email cfc@elrec.org.uk
Tel 0131 556 0441



VOLUNTEER WITH ELREC

As a volunteer you can give your time and skills and get something back in return, whether it is learning new skills, helping to build confidence, having the chance to meet new people, or gaining the satisfaction of helping a cause you believe in.

WHATEVER YOUR REASON IS, WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



A huge thank you to all volunteers that contributed to ELREC in the last months. Your involvement in ELREC is very much appreciated. We are very proud and grateful to have you in our organisation.

Room Hire @ ELREC

You can book our 20-seat meeting room on an hourly basis

for £20 per hour
(reduced rate for small charities

and community groups)

Tea & coffee £1 per head

Please contact ELREC office for

additional information or to

make

a booking.

For more info, contact us:

admin@elrec.org.uk

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK

We welcome organisations to advertise in the ELREC Community Newsletter for:

- Promoting services
- Disseminating flyers
- Campaigns
- Vacancies
- Consultations
- General marketing

This service is available for a contribution of £50-£150 depending on the size and placement of the advertisement.

To find out more, please contact the Administrator on: admin@elrec.org.uk. Our newsletter is published every quarter in March, June, September and December of each year.

Calling for new members at ELREC!

ELREC strives to embody the principles of transparency; integrity; equity; mutual cooperation; and participatory democracy. ELREC welcomes all individuals and organisations who share our aims, visions, and values to join us as members. As a member you will have the opportunity to shape ELREC policy direction; participate in ELREC's annual Management Board election; and attend ELREC events and lectures. Our members also act as links to various communities.

We welcome membership from individuals

from diverse groups as this results in the better representation of all protected characteristics. We would be much obliged if you would consider joining us, as well as helping us by encouraging individuals and organisations known to you to join ELREC.

Please contact our office: <http://www.elrec.org.uk/join-elrec-member/>



@ELRECUK



@ELRECUK



@ELRECUK



<http://>

elrec.org.uk/