



22nd October 2020

Open Letter to Didsbury Mosque Community Re: A Petition Circulating in Social Media

Asalam Alukum,

A petition came to our attention, which appears to have started on 21/10/2020, titled: "Worshipper "BANNED" from Didsbury Mosque, Manchester...unfairly"

The petition does not mention the name of the person banned, it merely refers to this person as "GAC spokesman".

It is appears that the author of this petition has been sadly misinformed about the various allegations.

We would like to remind ourselves and all of the responsibility of not spreading false allegations and blemishing the reputation of an old established respectable charity and mosque.

Allah (s) says in the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

O you who believe, if a dissolute person brings some news, verify it first lest you attack a people ignorantly and later regret what you had done. (Surah 49, Alhujurat, Ayah 6)

The author of the petition wrote:

"THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTED INVESTIGATION BY GAC IS BEING STALLED:
In this instance, the spokesperson for this community supported "investigation," with GAC, is the individual that is banned for 15 months and threatened with a further 5 year ban if he enters the mosque, or steps on the carpark...FOR SIMPLY DOING HIS "DUTY-BOUND" INVESTIGATION THAT THE "TRUSTEES," "CEO" AND "CHAIRMAN" GAVE PERMISSION FOR AT THE START.

The investigation was initially started by the Charity Commission, they flagged up a lot of irregularities, thus resulting in their almost 1 year of investigation 2017-2018, after which it was then passed onto GAC to continue." [End quote]

We would like to clarify that in February 2018, the chair of Manchester Islamic Centre at the time, wrote to the GAC, which was formed in Jan 2018, and asked them to carry out an investigation. This act by the chair at the time was unconstitutional. The board of trustees were not consulted and never approved such step.

The chair was since removed from the chairmanship and later from the trust in accordance with the constitution. So to state that the Trustees and CEO gave permission, as the petition

claims, is totally wrong. The Charity Commission are fully aware of this incident, as well as the removal of the ex-chair.

Regarding the second part of this false allegation,
The facts are:

1- The Manchester Islamic Centre, Didsbury Mosque has NEVER been subject to any investigation by the Charity Commission.

2- Due to some false allegations which was sent to the Charity Commission, the Charity Commission first visited our Charity in April 2018, (Not May 2017, as the petition wrongly states), and conducted a thorough check to our records. After which, we kept in constant communication with the Charity Commission for almost 2 years, which resulted in an “All Clear” given to our Charity, and rightly so. Had they have come across any misconduct or mismanagement during their checks, they would have started a Statuary Inquiry, which is in other words, an investigation. This has never happened, and any person can contact the Charity Commission to verify this fact.

For those who are interested to know the REAL reason behind the ban, it is the following:

We believe and have evidence that the so called GAC spokesman referred to in this petition is behind most of these false allegations circulating our centre. The trustees and management have been patient with him for a long time, since early 2018, and never had the intention to ban anyone from coming to the Masjid. Sadly, the patience exercised by the management was interpreted as weakness. Recently, the so the called GAC spokesman stepped up his blemishing campaign both, inside the Masjid and on social media. He acted in complete defiance to the policies of the centre, thereby creating mayhem, confusion, division amongst the community and mistrust in the management. However, his last action where he threatened to hit one of our staff was actually the reason behind his ban. Initially, he was banned for 3 months. Yet, after a day of his ban, and in clear defiance of the management decision, he entered the centre without permission, which prompted the management to extend his ban for another 12 months.

We would like to take this opportunity to correct the incorrect information written in this petition , we provide the following facts:

1- The first visit to Didsbury Mosque by the Charity Commission was April 2018, NOT May 2017.

2- There has never been an investigation by the Charity Commission, as stated earlier.

3- Suppose for argument sake, that there was an investigation, and suppose that the Charity Commission found irregularities, would any person in their right mind believe that the Charity Commission would ask the so called CAG (unrecognised gathering) to do its job. This is utterly illogical, and if the Charity Commission had any concerns they would have issued a statuary Inquiry and would have conducted their own investigation, and would not pass such responsibility to an unrecognised body.

The trustees, management and the wider community of the Manchester Islamic Centre and Didsbury Mosque have a responsibility to protect the reputation of this great Charity that has benefited the Muslim Community for over 50 years.

We reserve the right to legally pursue anyone pushing out false allegations and lies.

Wasalam Alykum..

MIC Trustees