

# BSCMS making a positive difference



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**BSC Multicultural Services**  
Supporting over 50 nationalities



## FEATURE

# A festival's impact on Ipswich

Celebrating Ipswich's diversity has remained firmly at the core of the Multicultural Festival

A mainstay of the town's summer calendar, the festival has evolved over the years.

The first iterations of the One Big Multicultural Festival date back nearly three decades ago when it was known as the Annual Bangladeshi Community Day and held indoors at the New Wolsey Theatre.

After growing in popularity and attendance it was decided to rebrand the event when it became known as the Big Multicultural Festival 13 years ago.

Since 2012, the event has been held annually at Alexandra Park, Ipswich, with around 8,000 people of diverse backgrounds attending the festival every year.

The festival showcases cultural diversity through music, food and sports, as well as hosting more than 40 stalls inside an information marquee.

Councillor Sandy Martin, leader of Labour Group at Suffolk County Council, said: "When we see in the media some of the divisions, misunderstandings and hatred stirred up between

people from different countries, ethnic backgrounds, political and religious traditions, it would be easy to despair.

"The answer is positive action. "I am certain that BSC Multicultural Services, working over the last 27 years, has made a major contribution to bringing people in Suffolk together across those divides, helping us all to learn from and trust one another, and providing support and information to a wide range of people.

"And on top of all of that, they have brought fun to our community through the Multicultural Festival and other events.

"So, I am delighted to have been able to help find them some financial support."

There is also funfair for children, sports competitions, raffle prizes, health checks and food from around the world.

Sponsor Dr Sachin Karale, director of SAI Estates, said: "SAI Estates has been proud to support the Big Multicultural Festival over the years and also sponsor this supplement.



Large crowds gathered in Alexandra Park, Ipswich, for the return of the Big Multicultural Festival

"Cultural diversity has been reflected in BSCMS's work over the last 27 years, and this festival is a prime example of their contribution to promoting diversity through food, sports and music.

"My company is happy to support this important and much-needed work."

This festival is very much valued in a diverse town and county where over 80 languages are now spoken.

The organisation says that feedback from attendees, stallholders, artists, sponsors, partners and other stakeholders suggests the festival has had a positive impact on how people in

Ipswich, indeed across Suffolk, view themselves and others.

Mojlum Khan said: "Diversity and multiculturalism are very much valued in Suffolk.

"By voting with their feet and attending this festival in their thousands, local people continue to champion cultural diversity and co-existence like never



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FEATURE



Images: ANDY BIGLIN PHOTOGRAPHY/LUCY TAYLOR

before! Long may this continue.” The event has been sponsored by a number of businesses this year including SAI Estates, 405 Cabs, Kerseys Solicitors and Ipswich Mortgage Centre. Rofu Miah, director of 405 Cabs, said: “405 Cabs has now been involved with the Big Multicultural Festival for many

years and we are delighted to be sponsoring this supplement. “Ipswich is an increasingly very diverse place and the Big Multicultural Festival promotes diversity through food, sports and entertainment, which we appreciate! Very best wishes for a successful event on August 31 2025.”



Festival sponsors and supporters



Sachin Karale



Rana Miah



Rofu Miah



Councillor  
Sandy Martin



Jane Riley

Another long term supporter is Jane Riley, senior partner and solicitor at Kerseys. She said: “Kerseys Solicitors are proud to work with BSC Multicultural Services and to support the One Big Multicultural Festival. “The Festival is not just about celebrating Ipswich’s diverse

communities - it’s about recognition and respect as well.” Rana Miah, director of Ipswich Mortgage Centre, added: “Ipswich Mortgage Centre is delighted to support Big Multicultural Festival 2025. “Our company values and ethos align very much with that of BSC Multicultural Services.

“Ipswich is a great multicultural town and this annual festival represents diversity and inclusion through food, sports and music, which are common to all cultures! “We want to thank the BSCMS team for their hard work and we are honoured to be involved with this amazing festival.”

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FEATURE



IN PICTURES

Photographer **Lucy Taylor** was on hand to capture the best of the action from the Big Multicultural Festival's return



# 7<sup>th</sup> Suffolk BME Business Awards 2026

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for Voluntary Service

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BSC Multicultural Services  
Supporting over 50 nationalities



FEATURE



### 7<sup>th</sup> Suffolk BME Business Awards 2026

We are pleased to announce that nominations will soon open for the 7th annual Suffolk BME Business Awards. The awards aim to highlight the contribution and achievements of BME businesses in Suffolk.

[www.bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk](http://www.bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk) | Charity no. 1104502 Registered Company No. 508836

Award Categories			
Business of the Year (Catering)	Female Entrepreneur of the Year	Businessperson of the Year	Charity of the Year
Startup/New Business of the Year	Health Champion of the Year	Community Business of the Year	Judges Special Award of the Year
Business of the Year			



BSC Multicultural Services  
Supporting over 50 nationalities



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

### How to nominate

To nominate a business or person for any of the categories, download a nomination form: [www.bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk](http://www.bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk)

### Find out more

Contact Mohammed Alam 07932 644466 or Mojum Khan 01473 400081  
Email [mohammed.alam@bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk](mailto:mohammed.alam@bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk) or [mojum.khan@bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk](mailto:mojum.khan@bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk)  
Or visit [www.uos.ac.uk/business](http://www.uos.ac.uk/business)



## FEATURE



Chairman Boshor Ali

# Meet the BSCMS team

An opportunity to meet the staff who help run this busy community organisation



Treasurer Mahbub Alam (Shamim)



Trustee Howard Pugh



Trustee Farhana Julie Begum

**M**ohammed Alam, Centre Manager, said: "BSCMS now supports people of more than 60 nationalities in Ipswich and Suffolk, and more than half of our clients are women.

"We are here to help and support whoever needs us, regardless of their background."

Mojlum Khan, Funding Manager, said: "We are fast approaching our 30th anniversary and what a wonderful journey it has been. "Despite many ups and downs, BSCMS continues to offer a range of services to local people, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our society."

Mr Alam added, "In recognition of our work, we have received dozens of local, regional and national awards and honours.

"This would not have been possible without our staff, trustees, volunteers, supporters and funders."

Shayra Begum, Senior Advice Officer, explained, "Suffolk is now more diverse and this is reflected in the make-up of our client base.

"Through drop-in Support Services, one of our key projects, we now deal with more than 2500 cases each year; more BME

women are now accessing this service."

Tina Ali, Finance Officer, stated, "I am delighted to have been a part of the team and witness the positive difference we have made in Ipswich and Suffolk over the last 27 years."

Noman Siddiqui, Outreach Officer, added: "I work directly with older people through our Befriending Scheme and it gives me much pleasure to see the practical difference we make to people's lives."

Kohinoor Bibi and Rupa Ahmed are Carers Project Officers. "We organise culturally suitable respite breaks for our clients, young and old, men and women", pointed out Kohinoor.

"We also outreach into different communities throughout Suffolk to raise awareness of the caring role and offer one-to-one support, where required, and work closely with Suffolk Family Carers," added Rupa.

**BSCMS staff are really looking forward to celebrating its 30th anniversary in a few years' time. To find out how you can get involved or help BSCMS, please contact 01473 400081 or visit [www.bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk](http://www.bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk)**



Centre manager Mohammed Mainul Alam (Shahin)



Company secretary Mojlum Khan



Trustee Koysoor Miah



Outreach officer Noman Siddiqui



Trustee Manik Miah



Finance officer Tina Ali



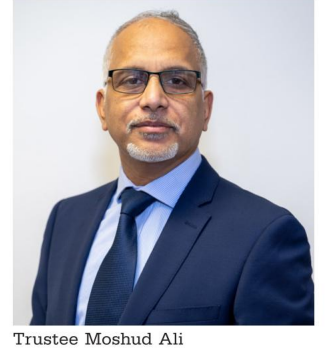
Senior advice officer Shayra Begum



Carers project officer Kohinoor Bibi



Advice officer Saleha Ahmed (Rupa)

Trustee Moshud Ali  
Images: ANGLIA PICTURE AGENCY

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# Impacting lives for nearly 30 years

Looking back on nearly three decades with immense pride, the charity has been at the heart of creating impactful projects for communities living across Suffolk, Clarissa Place reports

**T**ime does fly when you are dedicated to help your community.

BSCMS was established in 1998 by a group of local volunteers including the late Azizur Rahman, AKM Mahbubul Alam, the late Jill Stewart, Syed Junab Robbani, Boshor Ali and Mahbub Alam Shamim, among others.

The team have been based at the Grade I listed building in Tower Street since they opened and the building underwent its first renovation in a quarter of a century this year thanks to funding from the National Lottery and the Rope Trust to improve rooms on the ground and first floor.

Mr Ali, who is chair of the group, said, "Founders of the charity felt there was a gap in social, educational, health and wellbeing, and capacity building services and provisions for growing ethnic minority people in Ipswich and Suffolk.

"We had no idea how successful we would be."

As it has grown, BSCMS has planned and delivered numerous innovative and impactful projects, which has benefited tens of thousands of people across

Suffolk.

This includes drop-in support services, training project, carers project, befriending scheme, supplementary school, sports project, Global Food & Pita Festival, the annual Multicultural Festival and Suffolk BME Business Awards.

27 years later, BSCMS 'has become a valuable charity in Suffolk, working collaboratively with statutory and voluntary organisations to provide help and support to local people,' noted Mahbub Alam Shamim, Treasurer of BSCMS. "I want to thank our present and previous trustees for their dedication and commitment", he added.

Among the current trustees are Julie Begum, Moshud Ali, Koysoor Miah, Howard Pugh and Manik Miah.

For its contribution, BSCMS received recognition locally, regionally and nationally including The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services in 2022, invited to 10 Downing Street by the Prime Minister and to Buckingham Palace by HM King Charles III.

Its chair Boshor Ali also received an honorary doctorate from University of Suffolk in 2024.



The society receiving the prestigious Queen's Award. Inset left: Boshor Ali, chair of BSCMS, received an honorary award from the University of Suffolk. Image: ANDY BIGLIN/ANGLIA PICTURE AGENCY/GREGG BROWN

## BSC Multicultural Services through the years

**1998**

BSC established by local volunteers Organised first Annual Community Day in Suffolk

**1999**

Becomes a registered charity

**2004**

Successfully delivered 3-year BME Training Project funded by LSC

**2005**

Received all-inclusive finalist award from LSC

**2006**

Became a Company Limited by Guarantee

**2007**

Awarded MATRIX accreditation

**2010**

Recognised by NHS as one of three outstanding projects in the country MATRIX accreditation renewed

**2011-12**

Awarded 'Best Community Organisation' in UK by Channel S Won Healthy Ambitions Award Highly Commended Award from High Sheriff of Suffolk Invited to Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee garden party, Sandringham House

**2013**

Successful fundraising dinner, Shelley's Restaurant, Suffolk New College providing equipment for

Supplementary School.

Bangladeshi Supplementary School Sports Day

**2014**

Achieved Bronze Quality Framework Award from National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education

**2015**

Achieved Silver Quality Framework Award from National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education

**2016**

Winner of Working Together Award from Suffolk Community Foundation

Initiated Suffolk BME Business Awards 2016 in partnership with University of Suffolk

**2017**

Successful delivery of the Sporting Citizenship Programme in partnership with Inspire Suffolk Brought communities together through Sport (One Community Sporting Citizenship Cup) with Inspire Suffolk, in partnership with Suffolk Constabulary, B.I.F.A & ISCRE

**2018**

Working Together Award and High Sheriff's Award Celebrated 20 years of BSC

Met with HRH Prince Edward

**2019**

Received High Sheriff's Suffolk Voluntary Organisation of the Year Award

Formally changed name to BSC Multicultural Services (BSCMS)

**2020**

BSCMS's response to Covid-19

**2021**

Received Suffolk Award from High Sheriff of Suffolk in recognition of outstanding service to the community during the Covid-19 pandemic Inclusion in EADT's Suffolk 100 as a leading organisation making a difference to peoples lives

**2022**

Recipient of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

**2023**

Celebrating 25 years of BSCMS Invited to 10 Downing Street Charity Champions event Invite to King's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace Winner of National Award from English FA

**2024**

BSCMS chair awarded honorary doctorate by University of Suffolk Equity champion award from NHS Suffolk



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FEATURE



To our unsung heroes - thank you for your talent and time

The charity has paid tribute to hundreds of unsung heroes who join them for projects and events throughout the year, writes Clarissa Place.

Like many organisations, BSCMS relies on the work to run day to day with a team of part-time staff supported by more than 150 volunteers who give their time, talent, effort and energy to make every event a huge success.

Without its volunteers, BSCMS would not be able to plan and deliver its projects and activities, especially annual events such as the Global Food & Pita Festival, Big Multicultural Festival.

At this year’s multicultural

festival alone, 50 people volunteered their time.

Volunteers also lend their time to support the organisation’s BME Business Awards, and community engagement events across Suffolk.

Mohammed Alam, said: “We want to thank them for their on-going dedication and commitment.

“Over the last 13 years, 100s of volunteers contributed their time, talent, effort and energy to making Global Food & Pita Festival a huge success.

“Thanks to our large pool of volunteers from all walks of life, Big Multicultural Festival has become a great success.

“This has enabled this festival to become a permanent fixture in Suffolk’s cultural calendar!

“Our volunteers in Lowestoft, Sudbury, Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe and Newmarket have also helped BSCMS with its regular Community Engagement Events across the county.

“We take this opportunity to thank them for their help, support and co-operation.”



Zibah, Doxa and Godwin Gad of DZ Bespoke Catering.

Image: LUCY TAYLOR



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