

AHMA Community Centre factsheet



Who are the AHMA?

The Altrincham and Hale Muslim Association began with the Altrincham Muslim Association in 1992, and formally established in September 1995. The Islamic Cultural Centre was established in the former St David's Church on Grove Lane, Hale when the association was small in numbers. As the Association has grown, it has provided a place for people of all ages, nationalities, schools of thought and knowledge.

The Association has worked with the Altrincham Interfaith Group, as a founding member and subsequently became a charity in 2004. The Association is regularly involved in the wider community and regularly opens up their current site for community events and charity fundraising activities. The association is proud of the work it has done to bring together the different communities of Altrincham and in supporting local and regional good causes.

The Association is committed to working with the local community, including local schools and hospitals.



Urgent need

The local Muslim community has seen significant growth in recent years. With up to 500 worshippers at peak times, the AHMA has outgrown their current base at Grove Lane.

As a consequence, there is a compelling and urgent need for a bespoke community centre for the local Altrincham and Hale Muslim community. We commissioned property professionals to consider a range of alternative sites and no other better located, suitable available site exists. Thorley Lane, especially in terms of convenience of location, ticks all of the boxes in terms of providing space for a bespoke, quality building.

The Thorley Lane site

Part of the Thorley Lane site benefits from an existing planning consent and already has a number of established commercial uses, which would be better suited to a brownfield site. The land is unsightly and has been used for general waste, including the storage of old cars. As a consequence, the land has become contaminated.

The site is contaminated with Asbestos waste material, spills of fuels/oils and other potentially dangerous liquids. Himalayan balsam is present over much of the site. Causing, or allowing, a Schedule 9 species to spread into the wild is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This species should be eradicated from site.

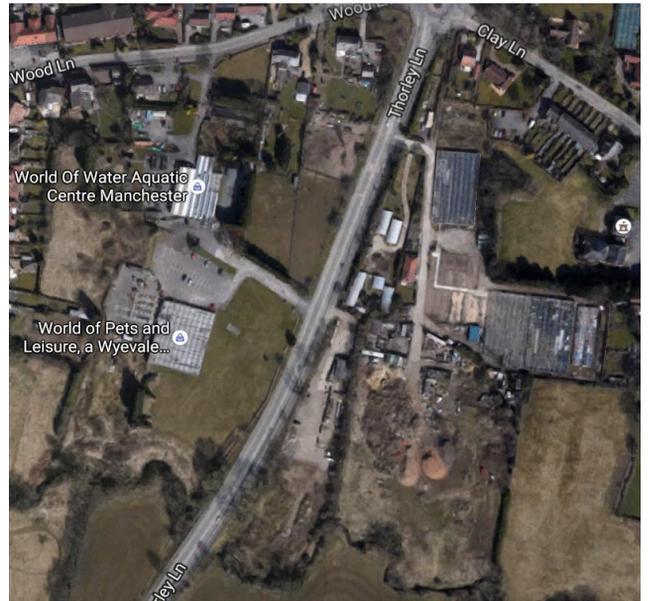
Our proposal is not just about a new building, but also the wider site. We will remediate this land and through careful planting we will increase biodiversity on the site.

Why Thorley Lane?

A robust site search has been undertaken by professional property consultants. There are no other available and suitable development sites, in an accessible location to serve the Altrincham and Hale Muslim community.

What will happen to Grove Lane?

Should planning permission be granted for a new community centre, activities at the existing the Grove Lane centre will cease and an appropriate redevelopment will be planned



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The proposed community centre



How the building will be used

The proposed new multi-purpose community centre on Thorley Lane will be open to all. As well as being a place of worship, the centre will include facilities for the local community such as, a crèche, meeting rooms, parent and baby groups, youth clubs, a café and a Garden of Contemplation.

Although we will not apply for any alcohol or music licenses, it is our intention to make rooms available to local community groups and charities to hire. We believe that this would be a real benefit to the area. The new centre will be the region's base for Mosaic, the Prince's Trust charity. It will also house Nisa Nashim, the government supported project for promoting inter-faith relations of Muslim and Jewish women.

Thoughtful design

The building is modern in design, akin to a 'Pavilion in the Park'. The community centre will be circa 2,000 sq m over two storeys for the main building, with and a connected single storey café building to the rear – separated by the Garden of Contemplation.

Considerable thought has been given to the layout of the site. The building will be lowered into the landscape at the most discrete part of the site, to ensure it sits sympathetically in its surroundings. By making use of existing tall trees and significant new planting, this will create better green open space.

Car parking

For much of the week, the numbers of visitors to the centre will be relatively low in number. At the front of the centre we will be providing a tarmac car park with 29 spaces, including 9 disabled spaces. To respect the 'green' aspect of the site and to improve biodiversity, we are proposing to use 'grasscrete' (which allows grass to grow) for the remaining 136 spaces.

AHMA in the community

The AHMA is a registered charity (currently as the 'Altrincham Muslim Association') which is committed to working with the wider Altrincham and Hale community. Integral to the values and beliefs of the AHMA is the importance of social justice and social cohesion and working in unison for the common good. The Association is a founding member of the Altrincham Interfaith Group and we have historically been an active group within the local community.

Through local volunteers and pioneered through the young adults and teenagers, the AHMA has raised money for local and national charities, assisted in providing care for local people in need such as the homeless and encouraged political engagement.

Community outreach

AHMA has recently raised money for many charities some of which include:

- Pictor House School, a local special education needs school, through a family fun day
- Mayor's charities - we helped to raise money with the Mayor of Trafford by organising a community event
- The DEC, Wellington School, Oxfam and TFC through our annual quiz
- The Brain Tumour Charity
- Marie Curie
- St Anne's Hospice



As an active member of the Altrincham Interfaith Network we have worked hard to help in the mutual understanding between local faith communities. We attend and host regular interactions. AHMA has been at the forefront of uniting faith communities to work together for the common good.

The AHMA girls youth group is an example of how our talented young girls have driven the ethos of the AHMA, towards helping others and belief in a plural and just society.

Their work includes:

- National Sadaqa Day - a Carers Pampering Day, where carers from around Altrincham were invited to the community centre to celebrate the incredible work that they do in looking after others. As a small thank you, the girls provided tea, cakes , hand massage and facials!
- Raising money for Marie Curie
- Friday food sales for The Brain Tumour Charity
- Feeding the homeless within Manchester
- A climb of Mount Snowdon to support the fantastic and vital work at St Anne's Hospice.
- Raising money to encourage young girls to play sports in the third world.
- Bringing together young people from all faith communities to develop a 'mural of peace'
- Inviting local politicians to help the girls understand and encourage political engagement, as well as holding our politicians to account!