

Transcription

“So Pakistan Community Centre was actually built in 1984, and Mayor Hussain helped us open – with the opening ceremony. So we used to pray here, as a mosque, in this centre for nearly ten years, nearly. Before we got the lot from the council – freehold land, you know. Then we started building in parts; first the basement. Then we moved from here to the basement and started prayer there, in the basement. Then after that we started the first floor and so now it’s nearly ten years and the rest is completed.

Because it is a community work and the community is very poor in this area, and we have spent nearly £4.5 million. And we could not get any help from any outside bodies or outside people. So that’s why it took nearly 35 years to build this mosque.

[Interviewer: So, everyone from the community donating and pulling together to get the money to build it.]

Yeah, we were going out collecting money door to door and we also go to shopkeepers, to get money from them also, and we are collecting money every Friday. We’ve got a big prayer meeting every week, so we get some money collected on a Friday. So that was really the only source. Otherwise, we had a house in 44 Keyes Road and that was just used for teaching children and prayer, but the council refused to let us pray there and we had to close it. After we closed it, then we bought this land from the council and started the mosque here.”

Mohammad Zaffar Iqbal was born Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and came to the UK in 1961. He recalled that it was a difficult arrival, as it was a particularly long and hard winter. Mohammad lived first in Hampstead before moving to Kilburn and then Anson Road in Cricklewood. He started work as a freight clerk for British Rail at Willesden Green before moving to Stonebridge Park freight yard for 22 years. He then ran a fish and chip shop on Kilburn High Road for several years.

Now retired, Mohammad is a Trustee and Chair of the Central Mosque at Willesden Green and Pakistan Community Centre (PCC). Built in 1984, people prayed at the PCC for ten years before the mosque was built.