

# BEMSCA NEWS

## A Happy New Year from the Team at BEMSCA

This year we're welcoming the Chinese Year of the Horse — a time said to bring extra energy, independence, and a spark of adventure. The Horse is the seventh animal in the 12-year cycle and is linked to the Earthly Branch symbol 午. People born in a Horse year are traditionally described as lively, quick-thinking, and full of enthusiasm, and those same upbeat qualities are believed to influence the year itself.

## Saying Goodbye to Ping



We have some important news to share with you. After an incredible 17 years supporting the needs of the Chinese community with BEMSCA, Ping will be heading off on an extended travel adventure.

We're truly sad to see her go, and we want to express our deepest gratitude for her dedication, warmth, and commitment to BEMSCA and to all our Chinese members and friends. She will be greatly missed, and we wish her all the joy and excitement in her new journey. With Ping's leaving us, we'll be recruiting a new Chinese Community Worker as well as sessional staff in the new year. Please help us spread the word, your support makes a huge difference. And of course, we'll once again be celebrating the Chinese New Year together. We hope you'll join us, get involved, and maybe even volunteer to help make 2026 one of our best years yet!

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- BEMSCA Health Focus
- Members AGM & EGM Meetings
- Upcoming events Jan-Mar 2026

## BEMSCA at Christmas 2025



*Christmas carols lead by Lizandra Williams and Minster Lois Francis*



## Reflection on 2025

As we reflect on the past year, 2025 stands out as a significant and hopeful milestone in BEMSCA's 33-year journey. It has been a year in which we have worked hard to move the organisation onto a more sustainable footing, at a time when the need for our services has never been greater. This progress has only been possible because of the generosity, trust and long-standing commitment of our funders, some of whom have supported us faithfully over many years. As we enter a new year marked by increasing pressures on donors, trusts and grant-making bodies, we want to begin by offering our heartfelt thanks. Your support has enabled us to continue delivering vital services to the people we serve and their families during what remain deeply challenging times. Despite decades of inconsistent service funding and delivery, alongside exceptionally strong engagement and participation from our members, BEMSCA remains on the periphery of being recognized as a mainstream service provider. We serve a relatively small population across the city and beyond, yet our impact is significant and enduring.

As a community, we have learned to be self-reliant and resourceful, generous with our time and unwavering in our commitment. For many years, volunteers, trustees and staff have stepped forward to fill gaps left by limited access to mainstream services, often with little or no funding, simply because the need was there and could not be ignored. Special thank-you to those staff members whose dedication and work ethic sustained services during periods when there were very few paid hours available, we salute you and recognise your invaluable contribution. To our volunteer drivers, administrators, secretaries, trustees, befrienders and outreach links, your dedication and community spirit have been instrumental in the growth and development we have achieved. Without your vision, commitment and generosity, much of what we now take pride in would not have been possible.

Our work is rooted in creating spaces where cultural difference is respected, where people feel safe and valued, and where contributions to the wider community are recognised and celebrated. Now more than ever, as services are reshaped and funding is repurposed, we know that marginalised and excluded communities' risk being pushed further to the edges. History shows that when resources diminish, these communities are often the first to lose out.

Thirty-three years on, BEMSCA remains resolute. With determination and compassion, we will continue to serve, to welcome all, and to offer a space at Fairfield House. On behalf of our members, trustees, staff and volunteers, we extend our sincere thanks to The National Lottery, The Roper Family Charitable Foundation, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Quartet Community Foundation the Postcode Lottery and other funders. Who have helped us continue our services to Elders across Bath and North East Somerset.

## Members Feature



Samantha Walker is a Bath-based journalist with over 30 years' experience; she has written for a wide number of publications and websites including the Bath Chronicle, the Voice and the Jamaica Gleaner. She was also editor of the Chronicle's Weekend magazine, deputy editor of Bath Life and is the founder and former editor of the Bath & Wiltshire Parent Magazine.



MONDAY JANUARY 12 - SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 28 2026



Bath Central Library,  
The Podium, Bath, BA1 5AN.  
@invitation\_exhibition2026



Heritage • culture & BEMSCA present:



## INVITATION: AN EXHIBITION

A beautiful photographic exhibition celebrating  
the culture, lives, legacy and impact of Bath's  
first-generation Caribbean community.

"Wi likkle but wi tallawah!"

INVITATION! This is her first exhibition and will celebrate the culture, lives, legacy and impact of Bath's first-generation Caribbean community.

### BEMSCA Health Focus:

*Diabetes in Black and Asian Communities:*

Diabetes continues to be one of the most significant health challenges facing our communities—and it disproportionately affects Black African, Caribbean, and South Asian people. In the UK, people from these backgrounds are 2–4 times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes compared to their white peers, and often at a younger age. This means our community carries a heavier burden, not just in numbers, but in the emotional and practical challenges that come with managing the condition every day.

One issue that is often overlooked is diabetes distress—the worry, frustration, and emotional strain that can come with living with diabetes.

Studies suggest that up to one in three people with diabetes experience significant distress at some point. This emotional impact can affect motivation, self-care, and overall wellbeing just as much as the physical symptoms. Because of these realities, diabetes will remain a major part of BEMSCA's health and wellbeing programme for 2026. We are committed to making sure our community receives the support, information, and services it needs.

### Supporting members with Diabetes, local Research Partnership:

**Participants Needed** – Your lived experience and voice matters. As part of this on ongoing work, we are partnering with QMUL Centre for Primary Care and the University of Bath Psychology Department on an innovative new project. The team is developing a digital support tool designed specifically to help people manage diabetes distress and better navigate the emotional side of living with the condition. This collaboration reflects our continued commitment to ensuring that solutions are culturally informed, accessible, and shaped by the voices of the people they aim to support. To help us and the research team develop this tool, we are seeking adults with Type 2 diabetes to take part in short interviews. The team are especially hoping to speak with.

## LIVING WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES CAN BE TOUGH...



Many people experience frustration and emotional stress called diabetes distress

Help us create a new digital health tool for diabetes distress.

We need:

- ✓ volunteers aged 18+ from Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon or Wiltshire
- ✓ with type 2 diabetes, to take part in an interview (Teams, phone on in-person).

People from South Asian, African, and Caribbean communities.

This is a valuable opportunity to help create a tool that may help thousands of people in the future. Free transport and shopping vouchers will be provided to all participants as a thank-you.

### Interested in Taking Part?

To join the study or to find out more, please contact BEMSCA:

#### Telephone:

**BEMSCA:** 01225 464165

#### Email:

admin@bemsca.org.uk



## We are Recruiting: Chinese Community Support Worker

30 hours per week | Bath

Do you speak Mandarin  
and/or Cantonese?

Are you passionate about  
supporting older people and  
families in the Chinese  
community?

BEMSCA is looking for a  
Chinese Community Worker  
to help shape the Next  
Generation of our services.

You will:

- Support Chinese elders and families
- Deliver activities, advice and outreach
- Work with health, social care and community partners
- Help reduce loneliness and promote wellbeing

We offer:

- Competitive salary (30 hours/week)
- 28 days' leave (pro rata)
- 6% employer pension contribution
- Flexible working & training opportunities

Location: Fairfield House,  
Bath, BA1 3QJ

## Sessional Care & Support Workers

Flexible Days and hours  
available.

Apply now – make a  
difference in your  
community.

**How to apply:** Send a  
covering letter and CV to  
[admin@bemsca.org.uk](mailto:admin@bemsca.org.uk)

## Annual General Meeting (AGM):

The members AGM will be  
held on **Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup>  
February 2026**. Please  
join us in shaping the future  
development of the  
Association and other  
Association matters  
including acceptance of our  
annual accounts.

**Time:** 11:00 & starting at  
11:30. **Location:** Fairfield  
House, Partis Way, BA1 3QJ

Following the AGM we will  
be holding an **EGM** to  
discuss and ratify changes to  
the Association's existing  
Constitution.

## What's on Main Events Jan- Mar 2026:

### Jan 2026

5<sup>th</sup> - BEMSCA re-opens  
19<sup>th</sup> :

- Age Uk meets BEMSCA members
- Arts & Crafts with the Holburne museum

26<sup>th</sup> - Diabetes Sessions  
with University of Bath

28<sup>th</sup> - Click Café

### Feb 2026

2<sup>nd</sup> - AgeUK talks on "NHS  
Appointments"

9<sup>th</sup> - AgeUK talks on  
"Scammers"

16<sup>th</sup> - Chinese New Year

23<sup>rd</sup> :

- Silver Time Legal talks  
on "Inheritance Tax"

## In Remembrance of lost members:

Mrs Jean Utta  
Mr Griffith  
Dalton  
Jones  
Mrs Gordon



## Additional News:

Jamaica Hurricane Melissa  
support, thank you to all for  
your donations.

## Membership Notice:

Annual membership renewal  
commencing on the 6<sup>th</sup> April  
2026.

## Find us:

