

The Year of Youth

In 2022, when the heads of Commonwealth governments met in Rwanda, they declared 2023 ‘The Year of Youth’, a year dedicated to youth led action for sustainable and inclusive development reaffirming their commitment to ensure that the Commonwealth’s focus is firmly placed on the empowerment of young people, who make up more than 60 per cent of the 2.6 billion people in the Commonwealth.

We are pleased to confirm that on 12 March 2023, the Birmingham Commonwealth Association (BCA) met with Prof Geoff Thompson MBE FRSA DL to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Youth Charter, (a UK based international Charity and United Nations NGO based in London, of which Geoff is Founder and Chair) which, in its 30th anniversary year aims to provide young people with an opportunity through sport, the arts, culture and technology to develop in life with a view to combating youth social problems such as educational non-attainment, health inequality, anti-social behaviour and the negative effects of crime, drugs, gang related activity and racism.

Commenting upon the MOU, Keith Stokes-Smith, BCA Chair said “ We cannot afford to neglect young people; we need

to find better ways to address the challenges they face and address them. We need to better facilitate their ability to contribute to and participate in society and to empower them to make a difference as well as providing a positive environment around their life style and circumstances to enable them to avoid some of the issues, in fact, ideally, all of the issues mentioned above.”

The BCA will work with others and within its own resources to contribute as best it can in the achievement of the charters aims.

Prof. Geoff Thompson commented “This MoU reaffirms the Youth Charter’s Global #Call2Action to engage, equip and empower 50 million young people of the Commonwealth as part of the legacy of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. This initiative will bring the all-important collaboration and partnership that delivers major games that can also now be mobilised to deliver legacy benefits to young people locally, nationally and internationally, in particular those from disaffected and disadvantaged communities.