



**We are four young women of Harehills but today we shall  
be as the voices of the spirit of Harehills. We are also known  
as Alice, Fay, Eva and Ella Mason**

**1. I'm the voice of Lockdowns past-I share with the words of a mother coming to terms with that dreaded lockdown last year.**

*As the realisation of current unprecedented times unfold  
 Insightful but damning facts are repetitively told  
 Bog roll stacked, pasta and rice sold out  
 "Hand sanitiser, face masks, mandatory 2 Metre rules apply,  
 Cheer, clap, pray for our NHs folk, not to die.  
 No hugs, no kissing, no type of touch or stroke,  
 Fashioned is the soul in depression in the morn and lonely by noon.  
 Cancelled flights, life through a window, surely there's a vaccine soon.  
 Devastating and uncertain has become the new language for all  
 Bored., anxious, no gyms, sorry lads no football today,  
 Around the world people are suffering, Yemen may be starving  
 And yes red, white and black lives still all matter.  
 So, if someone sneezes or coughs you better scatter,  
 We need Time to heal, pay gratitude or get zoomed out  
 Even mums are uniting the street through WhatsApp,  
 Yet anxiety and domestic abuse is scarily on the rise  
 And death won't be the only price.  
 Of our selfish attitude and pride that won't allow us to comprehend  
 That covid isn't the end  
 Uncle may be dead and I couldn't make the funeral you see,  
 There's more to it than knowing the family tree,  
 So, whilst I'm in lockdown and schools' teachers aren't there to tell me GET Creative,  
 I refuse to improvise and be a vegetative  
 Leave conspiracy theory galore, forget 5 G,  
 It's about taking my head out of the I cloud.  
 Together in our struggle, let us be proud  
 I'm still breathing, we are still alive, praise be God.  
 (originally written by Hamida Najib)*

## 2, I'm like the voice of Winters present; These words do express my current mood.

I know it's dark and summer days are behind us. Summer skies have turned and faded away. Autumn came by, the leaves did fall. So now the frost of Winter calls. Snow has fallen, storms have passed. And spring is several months away.

And with the passing of the year gone by, we hear Talks of lockdowns variants, Migration debates, talk of death, loss. Hate and racism in sport. It doesn't help with the continuous local bad press too. There is plenty to challenge our wellbeing and happiness but my goodness how incredible is human resilience.

Since the dawn of time, we have survived in the harsher ice ages, the heat of the Arab deserts and the depth of the rainforests. As a race we have harmed one another and compassion, kindness, teamwork, patience and love have seen us through our worst times, our ugliest times, our humanity shines through as a collective race, a human race, I may add.

But they say that home is where the heart is. Like a family, it's not perfect, it doesn't need to be. *Our shared home, our chosen desert, forest or plain is the hilly inner city red brick streets of Harehills. We are often looked down upon as a place unsafe and unneighbourly. Sure, we have our challenges, who doesn't?*

*But stood right now, in the presence of this tree, we are all gathered, the definion of Harehills. We are from all walks of life. Many have come from far abroad, we have many tongues, accents, palates and faiths and yet Harehills is our vessel of security, our melting pot of colour, foods and cultures.*

*Look at the many chai houses and friendly cafes, the yummy Asian sweet centres, the middle Eastern bakeries a restaurant galore. You can start from one end of Roundhay road and have travelled half the globe by the time you reach Compton library.*

*The minarets steeples, the red brick, Banstead Park, depends where you look to see beauty. Everyone thinking Harehills is a horrible place to live look at how much fun we've had every Saturday at the youth club or the boat trip we had earlier this year*

*For such a young ward we have so many youth hubs, clubs and even a goat farm, activists assemble and Roundhay road alone houses so many support hubs. Look the many young people here in the cold. We all came together whoever we are, now stand by this tree and love the place w call our Harehills home*

**3, And lastly, I am the voice of Christmas to come; let me end this reflection  
with the wise words of a local girl:**

As we move forward let us hope  
Let us sing, smile and toil.  
Of hope I hear it being said,

As long as there is wonder  
And willingness to change  
Our Futures may be altered  
And destiny rearranged.

As long as there are dreamers  
Believers, doers and movers,

Who see a future Harehills bright  
We know that there is a promise

That will let us all sleep proudly at night  
The road to recovery is going to be long  
Don't let me lie in my own song

It might not happen quickly  
But through the coming days  
We will see small sparks of changes  
In often subtle ways  
You simply need the feeling  
Of hope within our beating hearts  
And look how where are all standing,  
To welcome the winter restart!

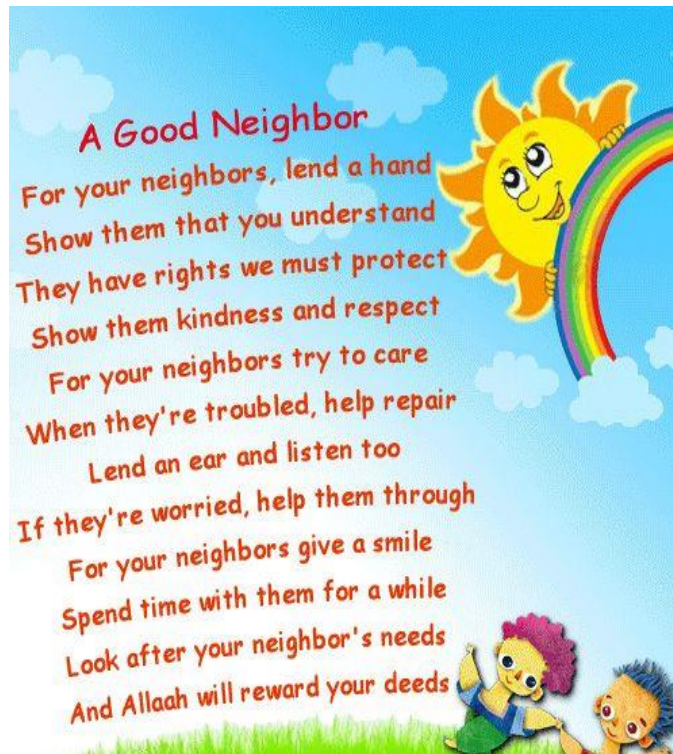
Come on, Bring Harehills into 2022,  
We remain your welcoming melting pot.

#### 4, Other voices, additional poetry read by Talha and Sumayah Shah, this is what spoke to their souls

free

last year  
this girl  
this girl you see  
she was not a refugee  
but just a child  
who loved to read  
to walk with grandma  
by the sea  
the nights were loud  
they had to flee  
so now  
we call her refugee  
she is a child  
may she be free  
she could be you  
she could be me

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#### When Winter's Here

I think the months of winter are  
The finest of the year.  
Snowy days, blowy days-  
Aren't you glad they're here?  
Sleds go coasting down the hills.  
Snowmen stand and stare.  
The pond is fine for skating,  
And snow is everywhere.  
Snowy days, snowy days,  
Come when winter's here.  
Whitest days are brightest days,  
Of the whole long year

Elanor Hammond

