

NEW SLIC DEVELOPMENT FAQ'S



1. How much money has been raised for the new build so far?

Over the years, a significant amount has been raised, but funds have also been used for the initial planning phase and council applications. Currently, the Building Fund stands at £550k, and other SLIC funds total approximately £1.4m. The total amount for the complete new construction is estimated to be between £10-12m however we are able to breakdown the project into phases. The total cost for phase 1 is £4.5m which would provide us with a masjid that we can utilise whilst we complete the other phases.

2. Why has it taken so long for the project to begin?

The project has been in the planning stages for many years, with planning permission only recently granted in 2022. Prior to that, multiple designs were proposed, and there were delays due to regulatory approvals, fundraising challenges, and ensuring the right long-term strategy for the masjid. The project was considered a major project by Lambeth Council and therefore subject to 'political interference'. The project is now ready to proceed once we reach our financial target. What we do not want to do is start the project but then have to stop due to lack of funds.

3. Is the money being managed responsibly?

Every penny of SLIC's funds is accounted for. To ensure financial stability, £1.5m of SLIC's general funds was invested in a commercial property, generating returns to sustain ongoing masjid expenses while protecting our assets. The Building Fund is a separate account used exclusively for the new construction. As a charity our accounts are available for the public to view on the Charity Commission website (<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/263535>). The Masjid has a number of dedicated accounts for specific purposes and funds in that account are only used for that specific purpose, for example new centre account, zakat account, funeral services account and so on.

4. Why haven't pledges been collected sooner?

The feedback we have received is that people prefer to fulfil their pledges only once construction begins. The management has therefore waited until we are ready to begin construction before reaching out to donor pledges. We have now started the process to actively follow up on outstanding pledges as we are now ready to begin demolition of the current site and start construction for the new centre.

5. How much more money is needed before construction can start?

We need to raise £2.5m for the completion of phase 1 of the construction, however we aim to start the project within the next six months if we have enough pledges or secure loans from donors. We must reach our target within this timeframe otherwise our planning application approval will expire and we would have to apply for an extension causing further delay.

6. Why was £1.5m invested in a commercial building instead of using it for the new build?

The investment, which has been collected by general donations and income streams over the years, ensures SLIC's long-term sustainability, a strategy used by many masjids. By generating income from the commercial property, we reduce reliance solely on donations and help cover ongoing masjid

expenses. The Building Funds, however, is ring fenced and dedicated solely to the new development and has not been used elsewhere.



7. Why hasn't there been regular communication about the progress?

We acknowledge that communication could have been improved. This has partly been due to the lack of progress over time in the planning phase and delays from the council planning department. Going forward, we commit to full transparency:

- **Regular Updates** – We will provide regular financial reports, progress updates, and clear breakdowns of donations.
- **Public Engagement** – We will hold Q&A sessions, town hall meetings, and create a WhatsApp broadcast to keep everyone informed.

8. How can the community be sure their donations will be well spent?

We are committed to full transparency and will provide regular reports on how every donation is used.

9. Who is responsible for overseeing the new build project?

The SLIC committee is working closely with brothers from West London Islamic Centre (WLIC), who have experience with similar projects. We encourage you to visit their masjid or see their website (<https://www.wliconline.org/>) to see the vision we are working to build, with their help and guidance. They have generously supported us for the past three years, offering their time for meetings, planning, and visits all free of charge. May Allah reward them for their kindness and dedication.

10. What costs have been incurred to date?

Just over £400,000 has been spent since 2010 on architect fees, planning, transport, and other consultancy costs. This is a large-scale project that requires detailed reports for Lambeth Council's approval, which we now have. Please note that this is a much lower figure than one would expect for a project of this size due to our efforts to obtain the best value for money and many brothers donating time and effort for free.

11. Why don't we build something smaller for around £5 million instead of a £10-12 million project?

This is a valid question which we have pondered over for some time and also sought expert advice on, and we want to be open about why a smaller scale won't work:

1. The Current Building is Not Fit for Purpose:

- The foundation and structure of the existing building cannot support additional floors.
- Modifications to the structure would require costly reinforcement.
- The masjid doesn't meet modern building regulations for fire safety, ventilation, or disabled access.
- Short-term fixes would only delay the inevitable need for a full rebuild.

2. The Demand Has Outgrown the Current Space:



- Jumu'ah and Eid prayers are already over capacity, with people praying in stairwells and outside.
- We need a proper Madrasah with enough classrooms for our children's Islamic education.
- The current wudu and toilet facilities are inadequate for both men and women.
- The community is growing rapidly, and we are planning for future generations, not just today.

3. The Full Project Cost is £10-12 Million, however Phase 1 costs £4.5 Million and requires another £2.5 Million to start:

- The total project cost is for a world-class masjid, community centre, youth space, and educational hub. For now, we only need £2.5 million to start Phase 1.
- Phase 1 will focus on constructing the core masjid structure, providing a fully functional prayer space, and meeting essential safety and accessibility standards.

4. Smart Financial Planning – Avoiding Short-Term Fixes:

- A smaller development would still require millions in fundraising, but it would be limited and temporary.
- Instead, we've secured planning permission for a full redevelopment, saving money in the long run by doing it right the first time.
- This approach ensures the community won't need to fundraise again for another rebuild in the future.

Summary

The Sahabah (RA) didn't build temporary masjids—they established lasting Islamic centres for generations. Just as the founders of this masjid moved from a house to a larger place in the 1970s, we are now taking the next big step for the future. This masjid will serve as our Sadaqah Jariyah for generations to come. Let's invest in a house of Allah that will serve South London for the next 100 years, Insha'Allah.

Note: This is a working document that will be updated as information becomes available.