

Haringey Community Centres Network

Meeting 8th April 2021

Dave Morris	Lordship Hub
Dau Aldulpha	Lord Morrison Hall
Leyla Laksari	Living Under One Sun
Daisy Byaruhanga	Vision Organisation IVO 123 High Cross Road
Sarah Miller	Markfield Community Centre
Jo Reilly	Hornsey Vale Community Centre
Debra Mendes	Hornsey Vale Community Centre
Sajda Mughal	Jan Trust
Andrew Johnston	The Engine Room, Hale Village

1. Reports

Innovative Vision Organisation – 1st opening 3 volunteers got COVID. Had some grant funding to adapt the building but still concerned about re-opening safely. Looking for advice on risk assessments, operating safely and to find out if there are any PPE resources that can be shared.

Markfield Project – no group sessions have been running in lockdown – just individual family sessions and online. Now having outside group programmes but hoping later in April to start limited numbers indoor groups. Financially supported by furlough scheme. No progress has been made on the Haringey lease (not had one for several years).

The Engine Room – update on new community programmes which are funded by Haringey Giving and offering Art, Messy Play and Laptops for young people. Ongoing church activity with a mix of people coming and worshipping online. Funding from furlough scheme and from the Haringey Business grants plus income from Nursery which has continued to operate has kept them afloat.

Living Under One Sun – has been open in Down Lane Park for the majority of the period. Cycling and cycle repairs ,half terms and Summer Holiday family programmes of sports , recreations and food growing , 1-2-1 support and referral , Welcome Women leadership projects , access to services ,food distribution and DigitalBuddy and Soul free devices and small group teaching digital access programme , delivering Easter family programme and supporting and now have restarted football club and dance club. Easter programme kick started the café reopening. Crowd funding has been successful. Have not applied for Haringey business grants as they were not sure they were eligible and had not received expected communication after Jan VCS meeting. Community allotment needs funds to be raised to employ gardeners to facilitate sessions; ticking over.

Lord Morrison Hall – activities are currently at 10% of capacity. Small business grants from Council received in 2020 - £3k and £1.4k. Good response from the community – film making groups have used the facility.

Lordship Hub – has been running the café for takeaway which has been surprisingly successful. Winding down use of furlough. Planning to bring rest of staff back in a phased way. Once a week free food giveaway continues. Will be re-hiring facilities from 12 April.

Financially, have benefitted from outside grants. Also raised £30k from public donations last year.

Hornsey Vale – reopen on 12th for children’s activities. Financially surviving following cost reductions and fundraising; but like Markfield do not have a lease at present despite a huge amount of work.

JAN Trust – closed centre couple of days before lockdown. Centre has been closed – observing and watching the landscape. Clients are BAME women and have been affected by COVID so are in discussion as to when to re-open. Providing services remotely to women and their families. Concern over rent charges and the Council’s communications.

Ilse Amlot Centre for Women and Children in Northumberland Park – forced to close due to financial effect of lockdown and lease running out. HCCN had correspondence from a former employee there – seeking to get permission to re-open the premises. Have put in touch with the Council.

2. Discussions with Council

In 2019 and 2020 HCCN meetings with Charlotte Pomery were positive, and there were ongoing discussions about how the Council would support Community Centres– HCCN arguing for a rent holiday extended beyond Sept 2020, support through business grants and possible greater support for repairs. Quite a lot of support through first lockdown. More recently there has been limited response to correspondence including the 9 recommendations the group had discussed with officers last December (see below, at end of the minutes). We are awaiting confirmation of what was agreed and what could be discussed further.

2.1 Rent

First 6 months of lockdown there was a rent-free period in place but centres that are charged rent are still being billed. The continuation of the rent holiday was ‘being considered’ last December but this has not been formally confirmed. Individual centres have had mixed responses but there has been no substantial reply to HCCN emails in 2021. Cabinet paper on LBH/VCS sector policies/relations is due to go to Cabinet in October 2021 following (yet more) consultation with voluntary sector in May 2021.

The VCS lead informed Hornsey Vale they should not expect any further rent rebates linked to national lockdowns 2 and 3 (Q3 and Q4). The best Hornsey Vale could negotiate was a social value discount (on a rent figure higher than most other organisations in the Borough pay). Communications have been received from the debt collection dept of the Council by Hornsey Vale and Jan Trust.

Lord Morrison Hall was sent a bill recently; attempts to communicate with commercial department regarding a rent holiday failed because phone numbers on the bill were not working. No rent holiday for 2020 was ever offered to them. Morrison Hall is billed £2875 per quarter.

Innovative Vision Organisation occupy a shop premises which is part of the commercial property portfolio of the Council. Business rates were waived for one year. They pay £1700 per quarter rent. JR clarified that some centres are in the commercial property portfolio (e.g. Lordship Rec) and some, like Hornsey Vale, are in the voluntary sector portfolio. There was

evidence to suggest that the commercial leases are often issued on more favourable terms than the voluntary sector ones.

Dave Morris reiterated the HCCN position: that the rent holiday should have continued as there is no justification for charging centres when they have been forced to close for reasons beyond their control. Perhaps Council's expectation was that the business grants would be used to pay rent. Insurance companies were also successfully prosecuted by small businesses for not paying out for notifiable disease cover. We agreed that the rent-free period should extend from March 2020 to the end of lockdown in 2021, and an offset for services provided should be adopted asap – Centres are meanwhile encouraged to negotiate.

AJ suggested contacting Charlotte Pomery, Deputy Director of Commissioning and also copying in Geoffrey Ocen CEO of The Bridge Renewal Trust (who also represents Chestnuts community centre), and Zina Etheridge CEO Haringey Council, and Councillor Mark Blake lead member for the VCS sector. This was agreed although it was important to include Poppy Thomas who has been very supportive of the sector through her work.

2.2 PPE

It was agreed that we should also continue to press the Council for cheap or free supplies of PPE.

2.3 Repairs

It was agreed we should press the Council to take more responsibility for infrastructural repairs to centres based in Council buildings during lockdown and beyond. At the Markfield Project a boiler was repaired in 2020 under the terms of the expired lease. However it takes lots of pressing to get work done by the Council.

Daisy reported that there should be a one way system in place in their building but the Council refused to help put that in place and told the charity to claim on their insurance. LL pointed out that the Council has a duty of care around fire exits eg They shared with Nursery boilers – Leyla had to fight to get a boiler replaced at Down Lane Park Pavilion building All Council Buildings repairs now come under Homes for Haringey and you need to make a continual fuss if you are covered by their contract. Homes for Haringey have taken over from Amey. LL says the operational team and manager for repairs still same people

2.4 Waste

Our request had been made that couldn'tthe Council include community centres on list of Council buildings in the Veolia contract for collections? The Council say they operate an 'internal market' for this, but this issue could continue to be subject to negotiations. Some centres have commercial arrangements in place. Hornsey Vale negotiated a better deal with Veolia. There had also been an idea to consider one contract for all centres collectively, but this could take time to consider and manage...

Dave encouraged people to make use of the HCCN communitycentres@haringey.org.uk communal email list to share news, ask for advice/contact info etc from each other.

- 3. Lease agreements** – This was included in the VCS draft policy paper published and consulted over 18 mths back. It is not clear if this paper will form the basis of consultation in May 2021 or whether it will be a different one. Original version agreed to offer 25yr leases to some, and looked at ways to offset rent against a social value formula. Few centres were prepared

to sign the old 'model' lease which was so unfavourable. Lord Morrison had an offer in 2018 which was retracted and the matter is still in court (which had asked the parties to negotiate a settlement). The Council are opposing a new lease.

Innovative Vision Organisation are so concerned about the rent arrears threats they are afraid even try to re-negotiate a lease agreement. Therefore they have had to borrow money to pay rent and are seeking clarity over their future.

Hornsey Vale also out of lease. They are drafting a new contract to put to the Council.. DM planning to present the draft contract to Haringey along with a table of services to be offset against the rent. Expect to have a further meeting in a few weeks time. Debra to share this drafting with the group in due course. The Lordship Hub contract had been seen (including by Council officers) as a potential blueprint for others: Haringey do infrastructure repairs, rent offset to £0 by agreed services provided, and business insurance covered by the Council's insurance. Also an agreement for both parties to work together on common objectives for Lordship Rec. Debra is seeking a partnership approach in the new lease document for Hornsey Vale.

4. Grants

Business grants from central Govt are still available to some organisations through Haringey Council. The one below is the latest – AJ made the point that every charity is a business and therefore should be eligible for grants. The Engine Room had thus far received three business support grants. Email LRSG@haringey.gov.uk to request an application form.

<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/news-and-events/coronavirus-covid-19-haringey-together/covid-19-business-support/financial-support-businesses/covid-19-grant-schemes>

Anyone hearing of other grant streams focused on managing buildings, please circulate to our list; Bridge Renewal Trust (BRT) include more general funding opportunities in its Newsletters.

5. VCS Consultation and Representation

VCS Consultation process will start again in May. Leadership in the voluntary sector seems to be very challenging with very little transparency. AJ made the point that Bridge should not be driving the VCS consultation and that the tender for the support role in the sector in Haringey should be open and transparent. There needs to be a separation between the BRT strategy work and the VCS sector strategy consultation which is expected in May.

Concern was also raised that the GLA £750k funding for anti-violence work with young people in Tottenham Hale did not involve in any way local organisations that had links and work in the area but had gone to BRT. They should be supporting and partnering equitably with the existing centres and experts in the area.

6. Date of Next Meeting

We agreed to call a further meeting once the VCS consultation starts in May so we can discuss a collective response.

KEY INFO FROM CHAT

Laptops for young people: www.engineerroom.org.uk/community/motivate has all the info on the laptop programme

Leyla-Living Under One Sun: please send email to Comms@livigunderonesun.co.uk for me to send you the referral form

Sarah Miller (Markfield): I am happy to share our covid-19 risk assessment with others if helpful. email me at smiller@markfield.org.uk

Daisy Byaruhanga to Everyone : Innovativevisionorganization@gmail.com

Jo Reilly: Daisy, Poppy said at the VCS meeting that she'd help you with a risk assessment - she can send you a template. She might be able to help you source masks from Council supplies

Useful contacts

Poppy.Thomas@haringey.gov.uk VCS lead

Charlotte.Pomery@haringey.gov.uk Deputy Director Commissioning

Zina.Etheridge@haringey.gov.uk Chief Executive of Haringey

Frankie.White@Haringey.gov.uk PA to Charlotte Pomery, Assistant Director of Commissioning T: 020 8489 2035 [Note: many LBH landline extensions aren't properly functioning at the moment]

Business Grants: <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/news-and-events/coronavirus-covid-19-haringey-together/covid-19-business-support/financial-support-businesses/covid-19-grant-schemes>

HCCN REPORT OF JOINT HCCN/COUNCIL NEGOTIATIONS - DEC 2020

We held a highly constructive HCCN/LBH officers meeting - attended by reps from 6 centres and 2 Council officers. The agenda was the nine proposals of ways we believe the Council can help our sector - see below.

We are still awaiting a Council note/response in writing to the 9 points, following which a further meeting is likely to be arranged.

In summary, our proposals and council response at the meeting (in italics):

1. Continuation of the **rent holiday** for Centres, as discussed and agreed during the first Lockdown.

Extension to March being considered. Aim to decide before xmas.

2. **Business rates** to be suspended. Claim forms were expected. [We'd like a list of those Centres who were eligible for either suspension or grant, and who received such].

Further suspensions being considered, eligibility is an issue.

3. **General grants** for maintaining the sustainability of centres. Did these get widely received by Centres? Will grants continue to be issued? [We'd like a list of those Centres who were eligible for the grant, and the amounts each have received up to now].

55 organisations applied for the £500k Govt funding for discretionary distribution by the Council. 5 were not eligible. The rest recd a share based on identified need. Info on Council website about a planned further Govt-funded Business grants pot for places forced to close due to covid-19.

4. Add Centres to the **Veolia contract** for free waste collection on a temporary basis (e.g. designated alongside the other Council buildings that get the free collection service).

Options [eg Council buildings or community rate] to be further considered/discussed with HCCN which might be negotiable with Veolia.

5. Add Centres based in Council-owned buildings to the Council's central **maintenance contract** and tackle repairs at each Centre on a temporary basis during the crisis period.

To be investigated and considered

6. Supply **PPE, disinfecting equipment** and signage that can be used to make centres safe.

PPE is funded by the Govt so Centres could possibly get access. Other safety equipment is bought by LBH services - will see if Centres might be able to buy as well.

7. Provide central advice, guidelines, safeguarding training, equipment and finance to enable community centre kitchens (where they exist) to operate safely and to provide free **hot meals or takeaway packages** to those needing them in all parts of the Borough.

Centres can contact / liaise with Haringey Food Bank Network and also apply for grants from Haringey Giving.

8. Enable the relevant Centres to negotiate the **25-year leases** the Council has recognised are needed and ensure the long-promised rent equity across the VCS is actually delivered.

Recommendations on this were due to go to the Cabinet earlier this year, but suspended due to Covid. May be reviewed and re-submitted next spring - although Mayoral elections in May may lead to 'purdah' suspensions of business. Any Centres needing a new lease can start negotiating.

9. Start to implement the agreed '**social value**' **offsetting-against-rent** process for future rent calculations.

As above.