

HARINGEY COMMUNITY CENTRES NETWORK

Draft Report of General Meeting at The Engine Room - Thursday 4th October, 2.30pm to 4.00pm

Note: Date of next meeting

14th November 2018, 3.00pm at The Engine Room, Tottenham Hale

Attendees:

Sona Mahtani, Selby Trust (Chair);
Andrew Johnston, Engine Room (Took notes of Meeting);
Yvonne Denny, Homes for Haringey/Bridge Renewal Trust;
Rose Campbell, StreetTalk;
Amanuel Woldesus, Migrant Resource Centre;
Santhosh Chandran, Community Hub Wood Green;
Tony Brennan, Haringey Irish Centre;
Moussa Amine Sylla, Haringey Community Organisers, Selby Trust;
Adam Gray, Bernie Grant Arts Centre;
Nancy Kofi-Sikah, Creating for Change;
Hesketh Benoit, Haringey Sports Development and Haringey Basketball Association;
Val Karmil and Dave Morris, Lordship Hub;
Jose Kalanda and Gloria Saffrey, CARIS Haringey;
Sarah Miller, The Markfield Project;
Sean Burke, Finsbury Park Rugby FC and Downhills Park Rugby Club;
Colin Bowen, Bridge Renewal Trust; Comfort Bridge Renewal Trust
Theodosia Stylianou and Maritsa Diacou, Greek Cypriot Women's Organisation

Apologies:

Lynn Brackley and Bob Packham, Hornsey Vale;
Isobel Smith, Jacksons Lane;
Maxine Murray, Big Lottery Fund

1. Introductions

Organisations represented introduced themselves. As during introductions, the focus had been on relations with the council on leases etc, the order of the agenda was changed to reflect this as the main area of interest for attendees.

2. Engagement with Haringey Council:

- a) A number of organisations remained concerned about unresolved issues about the length of their leases, if they had a lease, and the shortening length of their lease, where that applied.
- b) It was NOTED that some centres were negotiating leases, and had been offered rent amounts that they were considering in terms of affordability when preparing their business plans.
- c) Some had secured a year off from paying rent, as their business planning resulted in demonstrating unequivocally that the amounts expected were financially unviable, often in deteriorating buildings.
- d) Some had peppercorn rent arrangements that did not require rent charges.

- e) One had secured 250 yearlong lease arrangements as part of site redevelopment, with the developer.
- f) Another interesting model that the council was practicing was that when funding was brought in by that organisations this could be linked in Service Level Agreements and performance against that agreement was offset against rent, resulting in a social value being placed on the group's work and recognition of that social contribution, albeit not in monetary terms.
- g) Social Value was an arena that included aspects that were hard to measure, but the council had expressed interest. It paid for consultancy with Community Matters, yet the conclusions of the Community Buildings Review (2015) did not seem to pick up on those social value reports that each centre produced at some cost to themselves in time and energy, at board and operational level. The Community Building Review (2015) focused on the economic, health and regeneration potential of community centre sites.
- h) The Council now has detailed self-assessments carried out by a number of centres in conjunction with independent critical friend Community Matters, but no feedback has ever been provided to those who had taken part.

The outcome of the review was Council sought to introduce market rent levels with social value providing a discount on the rents staggered from 60% rebate to 0% rebate in a 3 year timeframe.

Centres were signposted to the meeting when at short notice, a deputation, led by the Community Hub, Irish Centre, Selby Trust and Our Tottenham combined their efforts to present the case to the Council:

2015 Community Buildings Review (Item 17) pages 459 till end:

<https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/g7298/Public%20reports%20pack%2014th-Jul-2015%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

2017 Community Asset Transfer (Item 11) pages 172 onwards, the focus of lobbying and feedback regarding the requirements of leases, must have had an impact.

<https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/g8288/Public%20reports%20pack%2003rd-Jul-2017%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Only 2 organisations have been successful with this process so far: Bridge Renewal Trust (125 years long lease) and Kurdish Community Centre (freehold), under the previous administration.

In 2012/13, 2015/16 and 2017/18 there had been Council documents reviewing 31 locations in the Borough. Since 2015 Council's position has mellowed and it is now time for Community Centres to explain how we provide services and how they should be supporting us to do what we do.

It was AGREED that priority should be given to help meeting community needs and therefore community assets were very important in helping enable that, for providers and groups responsible for managing buildings.

g) Updates:

The Engine Room's development enabled a 250 year long term lease with Lee Valley Estates

to provide security and a valuable community resource.

Selby Centre has a 2.3 acre site and is a cul de sac location. 130 community groups use the facility. Currently the Trust is working with architects to look to provide services over a smaller footprint. Discussion over securing a long lease.

The Bridge Renewal Trust runs a community hut and Chesnuts Community Centre which runs at a loss. Chesnuts has lost the stigma of being a place only open for certain parts of the community.

Recently Bridge had held an open day at Irish Centre – over 100 people giving their views on services provided by Haringey Council. Bridge Renewal Trust were able to engage a lot more people than the Council would have been. MIND in Haringey has also been supported by Bridge Renewal Trust. 500 volunteers at Bridge Renewal Trust including in Whittington and North Middlesex hospitals.

Bernie Grant has a long lease and is therefore not affected.

Haringey Irish Centre – lease to 2027 but the Council is seeking to impose a model lease. Council also seeking a 5 year lease. The Council want to be in a position to take back land when they need it. Many of the groups cannot afford increases.

The Community Hub had been given a new request for £17,500 rent a year. Requesting a rent-free arrangement. Cllr Mark Blake meeting on 16th October.

Migrant Resource Centre – moved into Tottenham Hale 2 years ago – serving the local community – legal, integration, and settlement – 23 ESOL courses. Expertise exists within the voluntary sector to assist local government - 30/40% of residents from migrant communities.

Haringey Rugby Club- is a partnership of two gaelic clubs – Downhills Park was identified – have been there 3.5 years. The Council are still seeking to impose a short term lease. All the sporting governing bodies are expecting 20 – 25 year lease. Haringey Legal department have just started talking about the lease. Keen to provide a basic community facility in Downhills Park.

Markfield Community Centre – grade 2 listed building. Derelict for many years, parents raised money to develop. The Beam Engine Museum also had substantial lottery money. 25 year lease ran out in 2009. Right to remain under existing lease with peppercorn rent. Free or very low cost services. A model 10 year lease was suggested – agreement on affordable rent level of £3500 but a lot of extra costs to be loaded onto the centre. 20% decline in income due to cuts in statutory funding. Cannot apply for capital re-development funds.

Lordship Rec – built with Lottery funding – Council have to fulfil terms of a contract from Lottery to maintain the building and various services. As no suitable body could be found to provide this the Friends of Lordship Rec created the Hub Co-operative to take it on. Affordable café, affordable hire charges, barely break even. They have nearly completed negotiating a long term lease with the Council at £20k per annum rent but offset by provision of £20k of agreed services. 25 year lease is minimum required for grants such as Power to Change. Building is a specialist carbon neutral passivhaus building. The Council need to keep their current responsibility for infrastructure repairs and maintenance. Now have a national profile as an exemplary park and building – Friends recently got a lottery grant to promote community empowerment in greenspace throughout the UK.

The Greek Cypriots Women's Group had been offered a range of leases with different maintenance costs. Old building requires a lot of ongoing work. Now seeking a future where maintenance costs are covered.

Turnpike Lane Basketball record number of people involved and involved in basketball leadership due to a small amount of funding from Haringey Council. Has potential to be a covered space. Once again we need to consider widely what community spaces are.

Future discussions:

All are encouraged to consider registering their centres as an Asset of Community Value. Groups were encouraged to look at a national organisation is called Locality www.locality.org.uk and www.mycommunity.org and often there is funding to support the process.

- What are we building capacity for?
- Who is the service for we are delivering?
- How can we build a positive relationship with the Council, particularly now with the impact of austerity on local people and services?
- This is an opportunity to bring a united message back to Council to say they recognise that we offer an unparalleled value to the community.

Big Lottery Fund had been keen to attend the meeting. There is an important Reaching Communities offer.

Mayor of London Volunteers Scheme - AJ suggested there should be an invite to the third sector Manager Amanda Lamb as a number of new funds are being released.

FEM – seeking community workers and health professionals, elderly and LGBT seeking to partner to improve safety for women. Seeking suggestions and ideas. Also supporting work with Missing People. Would be good for community centres to link with people affected.

3. Agreed Actions

- 1) We agree to have a follow up meeting. Aiming to meet every 6 weeks
- 2) We agree to map the resources available locally
- 3) We will engage with Haringey Council to raise a number of these issues
- 4) We agreed to endorse the Haringey Community Centres Network statement.
- 5) We will circulate an explanation of new Council and key officers

4. Any Other Business:

- Other agenda issues will be carried forward.
- Colin Bowen, newly appointed as Director of Haringey Giving, introduced Comfort (Connie) Mante as the new Community Organisation Development Manager at Bridge Renewal Trust.
- Sona also confirmed she was moving on from the role as the CEO of the Selby Trust.

Date of next meeting

14th November 2018 3.00pm at The Engine Room

Note: The above is a draft report, to be amended if necessary at the next meeting.