

Haringey Community Centres Network: 15 November 2023 @ The Engine Room

Present: Dave Morris, Lordship Hub; Tejas Patel TJ, Community Hub, Wood Green; Andrew Johnston, Operations Director, The Engine Room; Sally Gimson, Director of the Culture Strategy – lead London Borough of Culture 2027, Haringey Council; Talia – local government graduate trainee programme for 2 years; Keith Fair, Operations Manager, Markfield Project **Apologies:** Daisy Byaruhanga IVO; Leyla Laksari, LUOS; Deborah, Hornsey Vale *Sally gave apologies for:* Yasmin Choudury & Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp; recently appointed Assistant Directors for Culture, Libraries and Haringey VCS Service

Note: HCCN negotiation meeting of 12 September with the Council – We approved the HCCN report.

1. Cultural Strategy with Sally Gimson Sally explained that the plan is for a Cultural Strategy to go public in March 2024 once it has been through Council. The Council intended to apply for the 'London Borough of Culture' fund, a £1.3 million pot of funding which would be part matched (£600k) by the Council. Newham and Barnet are the competing Boroughs.

Food, culture, creativity and supporting small business. Idea is for a cultural strategy to align with other council strategies. A lot of spending takes place in other departments. Missing lots of opportunities as lots of events taking place in Hackney and Waltham Forest but not so much in Haringey. No pro-active cultural strategy in place and no curation of cultural events. No clear careers pathways into creative industries. No clear support strategies for arts organisations in the Borough. Consultation has taken place with a range of different cultural communities.

People are clear that culture is about community and celebrating creativity and diversity. Groups are keen to see their own culture reflected more but also see other cultural groups linked in and raised up. Libraries are a bridge into culture. Sally also pointed out that there are currently no LGBTQ venues or major events in the Borough. Music a key element – from the small scale to the large scale – lots of recording studios but no single dedicated music space. However on the plus side 2700 students are learning a musical instrument in Haringey schools and 15 different Haringey-based bands. Haringey Creates and local arts venues share ambition for young people. Strategy's overall goals are:

** Know communities better ** Ensure businesses thrive ** Provide a pathway for careers
** Borough of makers and creators ** Educational outcomes ** Bridge divide between east and west.

Dave explained that there are approx 30 community run centres in the HCCN network. Each enables very many activities to take place. Each Centre present then explained a little of what it did (and circulated programmes) with an arts/creativity/culture focus:

Community Hub Wood Green: Lots of programmes around music across all age groups – centre resources groups. Food plays an important part. Also faith. Work with the south Asian community, and also a nearby Mosque. Plus special events. **Lordship Hub:** Large range of self-run classes, groups and special events in the Hub and park. Plus art exhibitions. Encouraging a culture of community initiative and empowerment. **Markfield Project** Charity for people with disabilities – information advice and support – SENDIAS centre. One-off hires and regular hires taking place. Jewish community are becoming more and more involved. Adult Art Disability Club runs every week (which was of great interest to Council reps). Transition to adulthood for young people with disabilities – CV masterclasses, upskilling and interviewing workshops. Links with with Haringey Shed inclusive theatre group. **The Engine Room** Has a vibrant arts programme with an artist in residence Nailah Daley-Allen running children's and adult art classes which are funded in different ways including with National Lottery and other grants. Also home to Legal Aliens, a Theatre of Sanctuary. **Innovative Vision Organisation** Sent in a brief report. A small centre, with weekly dance groups for children, social groups for the elderly and a soup club - continuously seeking resources to survive.

It was recognised that Community Centres are constantly having to raise money just to survive . Yet we are providing a massive range of opportunities and services to the community enabling and promoting creativity and culture - and hence to achieve its cultural strategy the Council should do all it can to support our sector. Dave highlighted that most community centres are not directly funded by the Council and that many Centres are out of lease due to Council delays in offering acceptable extension terms (currently under negotiation – see below). The income that Community Centres bring in to the Borough is a substantial amount. It had long been argued that the value of services should be offset against the rent which the Council charges.

Sally asked about volunteer numbers. Volunteer numbers will vary across Centres but generally might average c 30 per centre so perhaps 900 Centre volunteers across the Borough. There are volunteers across a wide range of sectors; community centres, friends of parks, libraries, sports groups, food growing groups, small charities, advocacy groups etc. There were 1,000 local voluntary and community groups of all kinds across Haringey, clearly involving many thousands of volunteers.

Parks and Green Spaces and Culture Sally said the strategy was keen to include recognition for events and activities in parks, many of which were creative or cultural in nature. There are 65 local greenspace Friends Groups, who organise hundreds of events each year, and involve maybe 500 regular volunteers. This was a whole other discussion and Sally agreed to discuss in more detail with Dave, who is also the chair of the Haringey Friends of Parks Forum.

2. Centre Brief Reports **Markfield** – renewing the lease and ensuring the Council carries out the repairs they should do are a huge challenge. Still out of lease (for 10 years). **Wood Green Community Hub** – continue to await discussions with the Council over key issues. Having to do their own maintenance and paying business rates on the car park. Will be out of lease in 2024. **Lordship Hub** – has a lease which includes Council doing infrastructural repairs and agreed services offset the rent. Incredibly busy with a packed programme and daily cafe, but still struggling financially. **The Engine Room** - no lease issues, extremely busy with a turnover approaching £250,000 this year primarily through social enterprise income.

3. HCCN negotiations with Council re Centres' leases/rent/repairs Positive meeting with senior Council reps took place in September, with HCCN minutes sent to those officers for amendments (none received). It had been agreed to call a follow up meeting by November. What are the next steps? Jess Crowe is the lead official for the issues being faced by the community centres. Dave will write to the Council requesting an update on progress with the issues raised in September seeking a further meeting to try to move things forward.

A new and sensible Council strategy of support and partnership with the voluntary sector in general and Community Centres in particular has been discussed and consulted over for the last 3-4 years, but is still yet to be finalised. The VCS Service contract tender programme has closed and the new service is due to start 01 April 2024.

4. Any other business AJ expressed concern that developers were not contributing S106 planning gain funding to local community centres but instead that funding was being channelled into Haringey Giving. Concern was also expressed about the S106 amounts being spent on work in Down Lane Park - it is still going through a consultation stage.

Meeting started 2pm. Closed at 3.40pm