

Haringey Community Centres Network

General Meeting, 26th February 2025 @ Lordship Hub

Present: Margaret Bonney (Goan Centre), Conall Ó Brolcháin (Mind in Haringey), Dave Morris (Lordship Hub), Debra Mendes (Hornsey Vale CC), Herman Irish, Ibrahim (GIK-DER), Russell King (Chesnuds Centre, and Tiverton Hut), Marian Joseph and James Beckles (Engine Room), Dan Rogers (Public Voice) **Apologies:** Keith Fair (Markfield Project), Lynette Charles (Mind in Haringey), Candy Fernandes (Goan Centre), Andrew Johnson (Engine Room), Daron Osbourne (Wolves Lane), Malcolm Springthorpe (Tottenham Sports Centre)

Chair: Dave Morris Minutes taken by: Conall Ó Brolcháin

1. Updates from Centres present:

Lordship Hub: Council building. In middle of Lordship Rec. Opened in 2013. Good 25 year lease, with 100% offset of specific services against rent. 50 FTE staff. 40 volunteers. A key issue for this specialist eco-building has been repairs, with £120,000 worth of repairs about to be carried out by Haringey Council. Daily café. Free food bank Thursdays. Full programme of activities, classes etc. Base for park groups.

Refugee Workers Cultural Association (GIK-DER): Private building. Provides support predominantly for Turkish/Kurdish community but also people from other cultures who come through the door. Provide many services – community breakfasts, courses for children, young people and adults, women's choir, drama and chess clubs, Full schedule of activities throughout the weekend. Large Hall where people congregate to socialise. 1500 approx are members of the centre but many more service users on top. Organise a large festival in Edmonton every year. In a building that's owned by a private landlord – issue with building being used as a community centre due to licensing. Letters sent out to landlord – landlord decided not to renew the lease. Actively seeking for the Council to find another space that could be used for Gik-Der. None have been found yet, want to remain in Haringey but also looking in Edmonton where there is a potential option. First preference is to stay in Haringey – many members live in Haringey and wouldn't be able to access somewhere else. **Note:** *HCCN agreed to support GIK-DER's efforts to find a replacement site in Haringey.*

Goan Community Centre: Council building. Services and supports the Goan community but also used by a range of other organisations coming from other communities. Providing services such as knitting, crochet, dance, choir, yoga, religious worship, pilates, kids painting, adult karate. Problems at the moment are that it is not being funded at all. Access to funding and making applications is a challenge. Rent out the centre to make up the funds and paying the rent. Lease is approx 12 years – 5 years of which have passed. Used on a regular basis but difficult to run the organisation, managing to keep up with the rent but other issues that need to be addressed – specifically issues with the lift. Brand new building (10 years old). 1st year, lift broke down three times. Assessment took place – it was a second hand lift that was put into the building. Key issue that needs to be addressed.

Tiverton Hut: Council building on estate. Managed by Bridge Trust since 2009. Area in back used for communal growing, refurbished the building in 2019. Predominantly used for growing and cooking workshops. 20 year plus lease.

Chestnuts Community Centre Council building. Managed by Bridge Trust since 2015, in Chestnuts Park. 30 different groups using the building. Lots of spaces in the building. 3

community businesses, Tottenham Talking, and Send Pow advocacy service. 15,000 visitors per year. St Anns Food Hub also hosted there. Biggest issues: old building that needs lots of repairs. Rolling lease – funders won't provide funding due to lease conditions. 15-20 year lease needed. All maintenance and repairs need to be made by Bridge Trust.

Mind in Haringey: Community mental health service with 16 projects operating predominantly from Council building in Stroud Green. 6 years left on the lease. Mind in Haringey responsible for all repairs and maintenance in the building. Main challenges are maintenance of an old building.

Hornsey Vale Community Centre: Council building. Ongoing issues with lease – out of lease since 2015/2016, negotiations ongoing since then. Poor quality model leases previously proposed but not agreed to by the Centre. Circular funding arrangements were in place originally. Sliding scale proposed to cover the rent, Hornsey Vale currently not paying rent bills (along with Markfield Project). Both HVCC and Markfield chosen as 'early adopters' for a newly-proposed model lease – negotiations stalled during the public consultation. Have to do all their own maintenance, plus cover insurance and the rent. Issue with insurance policy also. 2 members of part time staff – getting by on a shoe string. Focusing on hiring out the building as well as community projects and funding. Hall with serious issues with acoustics which makes it nearly unusable for older people. Strategy for the next 12 months is on older people and young people.

Engine Room: Church of England-owned community centre. In Tottenham Hale part of the new developments. 250 year lease, building is the responsibility of the Church of England. Room hire available, 3 halls. A lot of hiring in the building. Fairly new building. No major repair and maintenance issues yet. Recent re-structure of internal admin/organisation.

Additional points raised by Herman: **West Indian Cultural Centre:** closed – currently empty. Never been opened to the public since COVID 19 lockdown. **Goan Community Centre:** When first opened – situation with the lift meant Dial a Ride service ended. **Ward's Corner:** Latin American Market and Wards Corner at Seven Sisters Station. Ward's Corner Community Benefits Society is at last close to getting a lease after a 15 year campaign against demolition and sell off. Preliminary go ahead from Transport for London (landlord) to take over the lease.

Also noted:

Selby Trust is forging ahead in Partnership with the Council with plans for the Selby Village regeneration of the whole site, including Bull Lane Playing Fields (saved after a 40yr-long community campaign).

Living Under One Sun community hub. Council building in Down Lane Park. Vibrant centre, café and outdoor space. Linked to the regeneration of the park. Issues with planned replacement building – transitional lease and long term lease.

Community Spaces Campaign: 4 local free food banks/kitchens have lost their venues and are together lobbying the Council for replacement sites.

2. Leases/rents/repairs etc

Refugee Workers Cultural association: Very important this network covers all community centres not just those leased from the council. Two questions – Is there any vacant buildings that could be used as community centres? Is there a map of community centres / organisations / buildings in Haringey?

Dan PV: The map question comes up a lot. Directory of services that was out of date when it VCS lead was taken over by PV and MiH. In progress but a bigger piece of work that initially anticipated. *Dave Morris:* suggests check regeneration maps of Centres that he recalls were available online 10 years ago. Also, the Community Spaces Campaign is aware of a Council list of currently empty buildings. *Dan PV:* will chase up. *Herman Irish:* Has been difficult in the past to find any information on the community buildings. Good to hear that work is being done by PV on this – please consult with the centre’s network as they may be able to support with information. *Russell:* Have seen a list a couple of years ago but not everything was on there.

Note: See below (at end) the list of Centres on the HCCN list..

3. Council Consultation

Our Network was set up about 10 years ago because of the unacceptable model leases that were then being proposed by the Council. Virtually every Centre was refusing to sign them, and that has continued since. Some Centres have had to close down. 6 years ago the council cabinet changed with a public commitment for more support for and collaboration with the Voluntary and Community Sector. HCCN and LBH officers have held constructive negotiations over the last 4 years to try to rectify the situation, with some degree of success. However there are some sticking points, and relations with individual Centres are still patchy and sometimes problematic.

We, and indeed the whole sector, have been consulted recently over a range of options for future leases that will go to cabinet in April. Sticking point – no option for 100% rent offset i.e. equivalent to the traditional circular funding/peppercorn rents over the last 40 years. We are providing valuable services (at no cost to the Council) that the council can’t provide. Council services don’t pay for the use of the buildings they occupy. The Council just needs to look after their own buildings.

Council says they need to recoup some money and there are funding challenges within the council. They are willing to go up to 80% offset, but not 100%, depending on the services (ie those that align with the goals of the council).

- Length of leases: We say 25 years should be the default – if people want less that could be negotiated, but this should be standard offering.
- Repairs: these should be the responsibility of the Council. The Council say it might depend on the length of the lease.

HCCN have made clear our responses, but now we need to decide next steps.

Deborah: Seems we are negotiating with a department of the Council not the council leadership. Proposes approaching the Council and requesting a meeting with the leader. Research what are all the strategic goals of the council and how the community centres fulfil these at a fraction of the cost it would cost them to deliver.

Dave: Principle has been accepted – just that they are not accepting the 100% reduction.

Russell: Is there a caveat that orgs can’t qualify for if their turnover is over a million? *Note:* this will impact Bridge Renewal Trust and Mind in Haringey.

Dave: Yes that’s the case, and it seems an arbitrary figure to penalise the larger/busier Centres. ***Note:*** We agreed to oppose this Council proposal.

Margaret: Agree we need to consult with the council and ask them for a meeting. Haringey is an equal opportunities borough they need to provide the support to the services providing for these communities. Also need to raise the issue with repairs eg the Goan Centre lift.

Dave: If we meet we will need to discuss generally by principles rather than individual cases.

Dan PV: Agree with the value of the services (the point Deborah made earlier). Council has significant costs and challenges across Haringey in general. Ultimately it's a negotiation around the terms (rent, repairs, leases). He feels that HCCN need to decide if and where we might be able to compromise.

There's 1-2-1 capacity-building support available. Contact hello@haringeycollaborative.org.uk Working on how and what the Haringey Community Collaborative can offer to support HCCN and the VCS community in general. See for example the list the Collaborative recently produced of funding streams relevant to Centres. This was sent to our list. Much appreciated.

Meeting is happening on the 10th March with Dave, Dan and LBH property and leisure officers. Does anyone else want to attend? Herman and Deborah both volunteered.

Action: Write to CEO and Leader of Council inviting them for a meeting

Action: Meeting with officers on 10th March

Action: Agreed to consider to a deputation to the relevant cabinet meeting.

James Beckles: Needs to be solidified what the council is taking responsibility for in terms of repairs. *Dave Morris* – Examples will be given at the meeting to ensure we are covering the issues within the Network.

Russell – what are the council proposing in terms of lengths of leases? We'll need to assess whether the building is leasable? – If there are issues

Deborah: Need to come together as a sector and work collaboratively.

4. Borough of Culture

Council has recognised that community centres are a crucial part of the year of culture 2027 as most things that happen and happen regularly in our centres add greatly to the borough's daily cultural life. When we meet with them we should mention this

5th of March 10am – Caxton Road – Launch of borough of culture facilitated by the Haringey Community Collaborative. *Update: 40 or so attended, including many from community centres.*

5. Islington Community Centres

Deborah: In Islington there's a network called Octopus which supports community centres (14 members). Similar issues to Haringey. They have core funding from Islington Council

Agreed: We agreed to invite them for a future HCCN meeting to see what we can learn from their experience.

6. AOB

Russell – Collective bargaining together to get a better deal: Joe Baker mentions possibility of exploring group contracts for gas and electricity?

Dave Morris: wrote an article about community centres in the Haringey 'Totally Independent' newspaper.

Margaret Bonney: Goan Centres gets great reviews!

Next Meeting: Wed 7th May 2025 15.30-17.30 – at Chestnuts Community Centre

HARINGEY COMMUNITY CENTRES NETWORK (Contacts Feb 2025)

Access To Sports,
African Caribbean Leadership Council,
Bernie Grant Arts Centre,
Burghley Rd Play Centre,
Chestnuts Arts Centre
Cypriot Community Centre,
Citizens Advice Haringey,
Caris Haringey,
Engine Room,
GIK-DER Centre,
Goan Centre,
Grace Centre,
Greek Cypriot Women's Organisation,
Haringey Irish Centre (?),
Haringey Phoenix Group,
Haringey Migrant Support Centre,
Hornsey Vale Community Centre,
Innovative Vision Organisation,
Jacksons Lane Arts Centre,
Jan Trust,
Kori Youth Charity,
Kurdish Assembly,
Living Under One Sun / Down Lane Community Hub,
London Catholic Worker,
Lord Morrison Hall,
Lordship Hub,
Markfield Project,
Mind In Haringey,
North London Community House,
Open Door,
Rise Projects
Selby Trust,
The Community Hub (Wood Green),
Tiverton Hut,
Tottenham Sports Centre,
Turkish Cypriot Community Association,
Wards Corner CBS,
Winkfield Centre,
Wolves Lane Centre

Note 1: 4 or 5 others are on our list but we are unsure what Centre they represent

Note 2: One or two of the above don't currently have a building.