



Highgate
Newtown
Community
Centre

Providing the services
you care about



HNCC Response to Covid-19

1st April 2020 – 1st October 2020

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE OUR
CORE VALUES AT HIGHGATE NEWTOWN
COMMUNITY CENTRE

HNCC, even without a building, provides safe spaces and care for all in the community. While we wait for our building to be completed, we continue to learn what local people want from us; we listen, learn and respond rapidly.

Customer care is central to all that we do. HNCC has established high-quality relationships with every customer, each is an individual, and we consistently strive to take great care to promote a warm welcome.

A food parcel is not simply just a parcel with tinned and dry food. We focused on buying fresh fruit and vegetables delivered to people’s homes with care and dignity.

Throughout the Covid crisis, no staff team member was furloughed. All self-employed tutors who have been unable to work have also been paid.

We believe all team members should be paid at least £2.00 above the London Living wage. By Jan 1st, 2021, this goal will be met. Most importantly we say a huge thank you to our team of volunteers, without whom HNCC is not possible.



CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Our Work before Covid-19	4
Rising to the Challenge of Covid-19	10
Our Volunteer Team	24
Funders	26
Partners’ View	28
Report from the Treasurer	30
We learned about Our Community	32
Coming out of Lockdown - Our New Challenge	34
Somali Community	36
Special Thanks	38
Community Feedback	42

THE TEAM

We are a committed team of individuals who care for what we do and do it with compassion. We’re passionate about people and we are unbelievably proud to be part of a growing charity. As a charity, we also recognise the responsibility to do what we do ethically, fairly and with as little impact on the environment as possible.

We aim to create community projects that will last. As a local charity, we know that our customers expect the best possible service from us. Further, we recognise the value that diversity brings to society and that charities can play a valuable role in promoting it. We fully embrace diversity and inclusivity, and we are actively working to improve our own practices to ensure we have a fair balance.

Welcome to Highgate Newtown Community Centre and partners

INTRODUCTION

STRONGER TOGETHER - OUR IMPACT

Welcome to our report. I am delighted to record that HNCC responded to local people's worries about the virus in February and rapidly worked out what our response should be. We listened, acted and set up a response centre on the Whittington Estate.

We set up a new call centre from scratch to help coordinate operations. We employed a new staff team to manage these – the meals on wheels, sourcing, packing and distribution of food parcels and the collection and delivery of medicines as well as keeping in touch with isolating individuals. Just before lockdown, with a Morrisons Foundation grant and, amazingly, in about a week, we sourced an electric vehicle and kitted it out to keep food hot.

We attracted over 100 local volunteers, many with special skills which we've been able to use, and all who have generously and tirelessly given of their time for those in need in our community. We put in place from a standing start most of the structures needed to run the new service. These arrangements have been developed and honed over time as experience developed. Our staff team were retrained to best support the different focus of our efforts.

I thank them all and the volunteers who gave their time and brilliant skills to this whole operation. I would also like to thank all our funders and private individual donors who have made and continue to make the service possible. "Thank you"!



Highgate Newtown Community Centre puts customer care and monitoring at the centre of all it hopes to achieve. We called over 130 people asking for feedback on the service they have received and about what we do well and what we could improve. We have kept our funders updated on a weekly or monthly basis.

Our plan is to run as many of these services as we can, subject to available funding, throughout the whole of 2021 as the financial crisis and job losses will continue to hit so many local people. We want to support them as much as possible. Many are losing their jobs for the first time. We are confident that we have the skills and determination to continue delivering!

ROBERT AITKEN
Chair

WORDS FROM THE LEADER

I am really proud of the work that Highgate Newtown Community Centre has done throughout Covid-19 to keep our communities and some of the most vulnerable safe, well, and supported. This report is an incredible testament to the spirit and commitment of staff, volunteers and families to help each other and those in need.

This pandemic has shown the incredible strength of our communities and voluntary and community sector, but also the deep need and vulnerability that some of our residents and families face.

Community organisations like HNCC and others, working independently and with the Council, have helped to deliver over tens of thousands of food parcels during the lockdown to people shielding for their safety and those whose access to food was made more difficult. This work has been critical in keeping people safe and well, and has shown that we have to do more together to tackle inequality and injustice in Camden.

HNCC before and during the Covid-19 pandemic has been committed to bringing people together safely, to be sociable and learn new skills. Social distancing does not mean that we have to be lonely, and the work of HNCC and community groups around Camden to reach out to people who are shielding, living alone or in need of care and compassion, is more important than ever.



Being a volunteer is an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience, and I know that community groups around Camden have drawn together the skills and expertise of existing and new volunteers to tackle the challenges we all face – this report shows the incredible contribution of volunteers during this pandemic. HNCC also provides skills, training and experience for volunteers, young people and adults, and this work will be incredibly important going forward to make the most of the resources in our community and give everyone an opportunity to learn and grow.

As this report shows, the work of HNCC brings together the whole community in a huge range of services and activities. I am so proud they are part of our Camden community. The work constructing the new HNCC building is now underway and I am excited to continue to work with the volunteers and staff at HNCC to achieve our shared goal of a Camden community in which everyone is safe, well, connected, and given opportunities to flourish. I want to thank everyone at HNCC for all the work they have done and will continue to do.

GEORGIA GOULD
Leader Camden Council

OUR WORK BEFORE COVID-19

BUSINESS AS USUAL

The Highgate Newtown Community Centre (HNCC) has been at the heart of community life in Camden and Islington since 1978. We offer support to whoever needs it, with specific projects for those who are aged over 60, families with young children and those who are isolated or live on low income.

We pride ourselves on welcoming all – for the lonely and homeless we provide company as well as food with a hot low-cost meal; for the person who may be struggling with depression and mental illness, they may just want a free cup of tea or coffee and a chat to help them get through the day. For the parent or grandparent caring for a small child, we offer support, company and play; and for the young person who has fallen into crime we support them to complete their community service and look to their future.

And, at the start of 2020, we had already risen to the significant challenge of moving all of our services to eight community venues whilst our Community Centre building in Bertram Street was demolished and rebuilt as part of an ambitious £6m regeneration project.



**HIS HONOUR
JEREMY CONNOR**
Patron HNCC



OUR WORK BEFORE COVID-19

OUR PRE-LOCKDOWN SERVICES INCLUDED:

UNDER 5s – STAY AND PLAY

Support and friendship for parents and carers. 8 different play sessions every week with singing, toys, story time, and workshops on healthy eating, dental care etc. More than 4,000 visits by children and their carers each year.

WELLBEING CAFÉ

Arts and crafts, music, dance, exercise, quizzes, nail care, and a hot lunch three days per week at Ingestre Road Community Centre. Special focus on people with dementia every Tuesday. More than 150 people aged 60+ supported each year.

LUNCH CLUBS

Fresh, hot, affordable lunches served 5 days per week in community venues. More than 100 meals served per week for just £2.50. For many, this is the only meal they eat with other people.

WOOD THAT WORKS

Carpentry workshops for children and adults 5 days a week. Working with 3 local schools. Community reparation scheme for young offenders. One-to-one mentoring for children and young people who need a bit of extra support.

CLASSES FOR ALL

- Circle Dancing
- Art classes with our resident artist Angus Anderson
- Fashion House
- Pilates

OUR WORK BEFORE COVID-19

OUR PRE-LOCKDOWN SERVICES INCLUDED:

COMMUNITY ARTS 'CREATIVE PEOPLE' PROGRAMME

HNCC has developed a range of opportunities for people to discover and explore their creative selves through a broad range of art and craft based activities.

With our investment in a properly equipped Art Room and led by our Artist in Residence, our 'Creative People' Community Arts Programme is a reflection of our central position in the community.

MEALS ON WHEELS

In Partnership with Brookfield School, we cooked hot meals for those unable to cook for themselves.

Each hot meal delivered to a resident's home was charged at £2.50 for those who can afford it, and was delivered free to those without income. The meals were delivered by our wonderful team of volunteers in an electric van which was funded by the Morrisons Foundation.

FASHION HOUSE ANITA BROOME

Improve your strength and poise

The Fashion House Anita Broome project gives people the opportunity to learn new sewing skills, brush up existing ones or take on a new project. We created a place where people could come and enjoy sewing, no matter what their experience, a place to share skills and help each other, have a chat and make some great pieces.



RACHEL on left, and ZAHRA



RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

In Mid-March 2020, we closed all face-to-face activities in line with government guidelines. We took the decision not to furlough any staff, but rather to retrain and reconfigure all of our resources to meet the emerging needs presented by the global pandemic and the national lockdown.

By the 1st April 2020, we set up an Emergency Response Centre on the Whittington Estate with a volunteer team of more than 50 people. We knew that for many this might be the first time they would need to ask for help; to enable them to isolate, or cope financially and

emotionally with unemployment and illness. We therefore created a support structure focused on dignity. This included fresh, high quality food, delivered to people’s home where possible to avoid having to queue for food aid, and the opportunity to return the kindness for others when able.

Central to the ethos of our response was the desire to create a service of equals, all of whom can offer help when they are able, and ask for help when they need it.

FROM APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2020 WE:

DELIVERED
2652
FOOD PARCELS TO
3547
PEOPLE

COLLECTED
MORE THAN
700
PRESCRIPTIONS
FOR ESSENTIAL
MEDICATION

SUPPORTED
75
PARENTS/CARERS
VIA WhatsApp
GROUP

DELIVERED
1521
HOT MEALS
TO PEOPLE UNABLE
TO COOK FOR
THEMSELVES

RECEIVED
964
CALLS
TO OUR
HELPLINE

COOKED
NEARLY
600
FREE SCHOOL
MEALS
AT BROOKFIELD
SCHOOL

RECRUITED
114
VOLUNTEERS

DELIVERED
133
CHILDREN’S
GOODY
BAGS

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

FOOD PARCELS

Around 100 food parcels per week were delivered between April and September 2020. Food parcels were targeted to those who have been directly affected by Covid-19, for example those who have lost their main form of income or have underlying health conditions and are self-isolating.

Early on, the decision was made to primarily stock our food parcels with high-quality fresh food bought with money raised from the local community, the local council and trusts and foundations, rather than ask for food donations. This helped us to control the quality and quantity and cater more easily for halal, vegetarian, diabetic and gluten-free diets. We are extremely grateful however, for the additional food donations from organisations and groups.

Each food parcel was tailored to the household size and composition (37% of food parcels were delivered to people living on their own, and 14% were delivered to households of 6 or more people). The food parcels were packed and delivered daily by a team of volunteers which enabled people to shield or self-isolate and removed the indignity of having to queue for support for those who had lost their income.

Case Study:

Emily got in touch with the Food Bank through her local Mutual Aid group. She was desperate. She had three children, one with a serious medical condition, and all the family were shielding, meaning she could not go to work. Her ex-partner was furloughed and stopped paying child support during lockdown. She had no money and did not know how she was going to feed her children. HNCC supported Emily with weekly food parcels and occasional treats for the children. She told us the fresh fruit and vegetables in the parcels were most important for her, as she worries about her children's diets.



RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

HOT MEALS

In partnership with Brookfield School, we cooked hot meals for people unable to cook for themselves. In return for the free use of the school kitchen, our chef cooked – and we delivered – 600 free school meals for children who were unable to attend school but qualify for the free school meal scheme.

Each hot meal was charged at £2.50, with free meals for those without income. All of the nutritionally balanced meals were delivered by our wonderful team of volunteers, who were very aware that they might be the only person (socially distanced) that would be visiting that person that day. Many recipients told us that the daily meal delivery helped them to feel less alone.

Donate a meal to a person in need

Whilst we kept the price of a meal low, there are still people in our community who cannot afford this service. We are asking those who can help to donate meals through our donate button on this web site
<https://www.highgatentown.org.uk/>

Please support a person less able to pay at this time with a donation for hot food through our donation button. One month of hot meals is £65.00

Thank you



Case Study:

Martha is in her 80s. She was in hospital after a particularly bad fall that broke her pelvis. When she was discharged from the hospital her husband became ill and died quite suddenly. This all happened in the first few weeks of lockdown. Her neighbour got in touch with us to ask if we could help with food. We have been sending our friendly drivers daily with a hot meal and a smile. Martha has phoned a couple of times to say how much she appreciates our support.



ISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

PRESCRIPTION AND SHOPPING PICK UPS

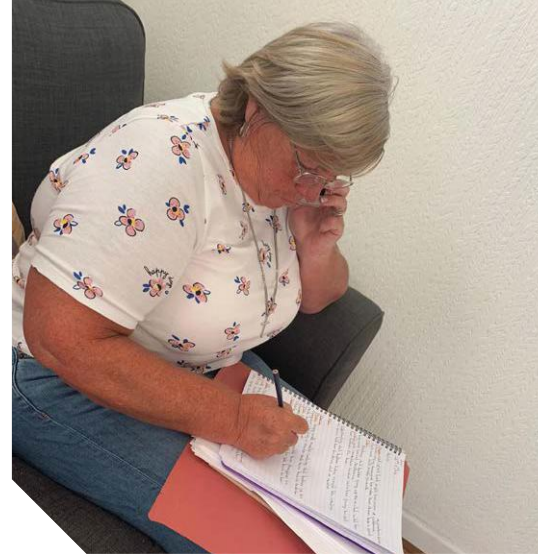
Partnering with Simmonds Chemist, we supported the collection and delivery of 740 prescriptions to people who were unable to leave their homes because of illness, shielding or social-isolating.

Our volunteers also picked up shopping for residents who were unable to leave their homes.

BEFRIENDING CALLS

Unable to see people face-to-face, we kept in touch via the telephone with older community members who previously attended the Wellbeing Café, lunch clubs and other activities. We also offered befriending and additional support to isolated people who had called our helpline, including 40 Somali families who were disproportionately affected by the Covid crisis.

For some, we called to make sure they had support and access to food and medication. For many others who felt very isolated and frightened during lockdown, we phoned them regularly, sometimes daily, to help them stay positive and to support them with difficulties as they arose. This included around 50 people with dementia or who care for someone with dementia and around 40 families from the Somali Community. In total, we supported around 180 vulnerable people with telephone support and befriending. This is a service we plan to continue in 2021 and beyond.



Case Study from Tracy

(a redeployed member of staff):

Frances is an 85-year-old female who lives with many health conditions including COPD, kidney and heart disease. She is a very emotional person who found shielding at home very difficult as previously she was always out doing something and visiting friends. I phoned her up to three times a day so she could have someone to talk to and not feel so lonely. It took a lot of time at first, some of the conversations were really deep and emotional. She was finding it hard to adjust to staying indoors but the calls made such a difference to her mental health and well-being; knowing someone was there to help. I tried to phone her at the same time every day and she told me it made her so happy knowing that when the phone rang at the same time every day, she would know it was me.

ISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

Before the Covid-19 pandemic and with the support of the John Lyon's Charity, we provided 8 stay and play sessions for the under 5s, with essential support and guidance for parents and carers. We supported them with any concerns about any developmental issues in their children or if their family faced financial difficulties or other stresses. We signposted families to specialist services such as speech therapy, children's centres and, working with a local children's centre, we provided a very popular healthy eating project.

From April 2020, the ongoing support from the John Lyon's Charity enabled us to switch to supporting parents and carers through an online WhatsApp group, offering support and advice in the group and individually when required. We provided the children with fun-filled activity goody bags to keep them busy through the long days at home. We also created online nursery rhyme videos and a storytime session, as well as online programmes sent from Camden and Islington's Children's services. These were extremely popular with our youngsters and the feedback was great.

Through the Emergency Response Centre, we were able to send out food parcels to families and carers who really appreciated this gesture and often couldn't thank the project enough. Hello Fresh bags were also donated to the project containing spices and vegetables etc., with all the ingredients to prepare a meal. We added some extra fresh vegetables to make these bags extra special and to help them go further.

The goody bags and Hello Fresh bags were delivered by our wonderful team of volunteers who helped us to reach out to so many families, carers and children.

We hand-delivered 133 activity packs to families – one focused on play and contained arts and crafts materials, party toys, bubbles and pens, and another was packed with fresh ingredients for a cooking activity.

This is some of the feedback received on the WhatsApp group:

JENNIE: THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE GOODY BAG!! ALBIE IS GOING TO BE IN HIS ELEMENT WHEN HE SEES IT XX

KAYREEN: RECEIVED MY GOODY BAG THANK YOU SO MUCH SHE LOVES THE BALLOON XXX

ANDIE: WE RECEIVED OUR GOODY BAG TODAY, THANK YOU SO MUCH, WASN'T EXPECTING ALL OF THAT X

SALLI: THANK YOU FOR THE GOODY BAG, HEATH WAS ABSOLUTELY THRILLED, HOPE YOU ARE ALL WELL

We also filmed an online video of our singing circle time and storytime, to provide something familiar and fun for the children. <https://www.highgatentown.org.uk/under-5s-at-home/>

The feedback was extremely positive:

LULU: HEY THANK YOU FOR THE NURSERY RHYMES TODAY, PENNY ABSOLUTELY LOVED THEM AND THE TIMING COULDN'T HAVE BEEN BETTER AS SHE WAS TEETHING NIGHTMARE TODAY SO WE WATCHED THE TWO VIDEOS ABOUT A HUNDRED TIMES AND SHE REALLY RECOGNISED YOU. GENUINELY, REALLY APPRECIATE EVERYTHING YOU'RE DOING ... IT IS TOUCHING TO HAVE YOU GUYS CARE SO MUCH XX

LYN: THAT'S LOVELY NADINE ... BBC STORYTIME HAVE NOTHING ON YOU XXX

DEBIE: AH NADINE THAT WAS BRILLIANT.

Thank you all



NADINE WINTER
Head of Children
Services

ISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICE

We have always prided ourselves on providing a fun and friendly environment, with a caring service that makes people feel part of a community. Pre Covid-19, in addition to the Wellbeing Café, we provided lunch clubs five days per week and a range of creative and healthy activities for people over the age of 60. We enjoyed many different activities such as creative writing, jewellery-making, massage, nail care, musical events, celebrating different cultures and festivals, and learning how to use digital gadgets. We have enjoyed many day trips to different seaside towns and Christmas markets, and we look forward to doing many more once the restrictions are removed.

Every Tuesday at the Wellbeing Café we tailored our activities for people with dementia and their carers. In the past year, 65 people with dementia enjoyed memory games, puzzles, arts and crafts, a film club, sensory activities, nail care and massage together. We also provide support to older people in our community who have had strokes, older people with disabilities and those who suffer from mental health illness.

When the Covid-19 guidelines forced us to close our services, we began ringing our service users to make sure they were alright and to offer them help with food parcels or a hot meal delivered to their door for £2.50. For some people, our telephone calls have been a lifeline. Tracy, the cook at the Wellbeing Café, and I made daily calls to isolated older people from April to September 2020. These calls have proven so popular that they are something we will continue

in 2021. Some people were offered food parcels, some wanted help with shopping and prescriptions, some just needed someone to talk to, as they were scared and anxious.

At the beginning of the pandemic in particular, people did not know what the future held and were very upset; people were very emotional; they did not know what to do for the best. As time went by, they got restless as most of them were shielding and they had too much time on their hands to think about things without being allowed to meet with other people. This is when we noticed people becoming lonely and feeling very isolated. They welcomed the calls, and said that they looked forward to a friendly voice at the other end of the phone, somebody to talk to, and listen to them. We gave people the time they needed to have a chat and sometimes have a laugh on the phone.

We arranged shopping or meals on wheels, helped them to deal with repairs, solved practical issues, helped them to keep an eye on their health, and signposted them to other help from the Council and other organisations.

Over the past 6 months, some of our members had to attend the hospital on several occasions because of ill health other than Covid-19. We continued to phone them in hospital and stayed in touch with their carers to help them cope with the anxiety and to help them feel less isolated.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

THE HNCC CORONA ART PROGRAMME

The attendees of our art classes at St Anne’s and Hargrave Hall asked if we could provide a weekly art exercise to keep their minds exercised during the lockdown. I was very pleased to do so and started the weekly Corona Class from mid-March 2020.

The weekly Corona Class was offered free, in keeping with the voluntary based principles of all of HNCC programmes through the Covid crisis. 18 class participants received the exercises at the beginning March, but with cross-referrals and introductions from others, the circulation more than doubled to 42 by the middle of July. The age range was 18-92, with 75% aged 60+. The gender profile was similarly mainly female.

A major aspect of the success of this group is that the classes were both regular each week and kept as informal as possible. Participants worked at their own pace, doing any of the classes in whatever order they liked with supplementary images if requested.

In order to keep the classes as accessible as possible, they were designed with the minimum need for technology for participants. The exercises were simply emailed or texted each week. Each participant received an introduction to a subject including some art history to provide context, then a worked example for participants either to copy or apply to something of their own, and finally a substantial emphasis on individual tuition and support. They in return were encouraged

to send photo images of their work to which I would provide feedback both in email and on the phone.

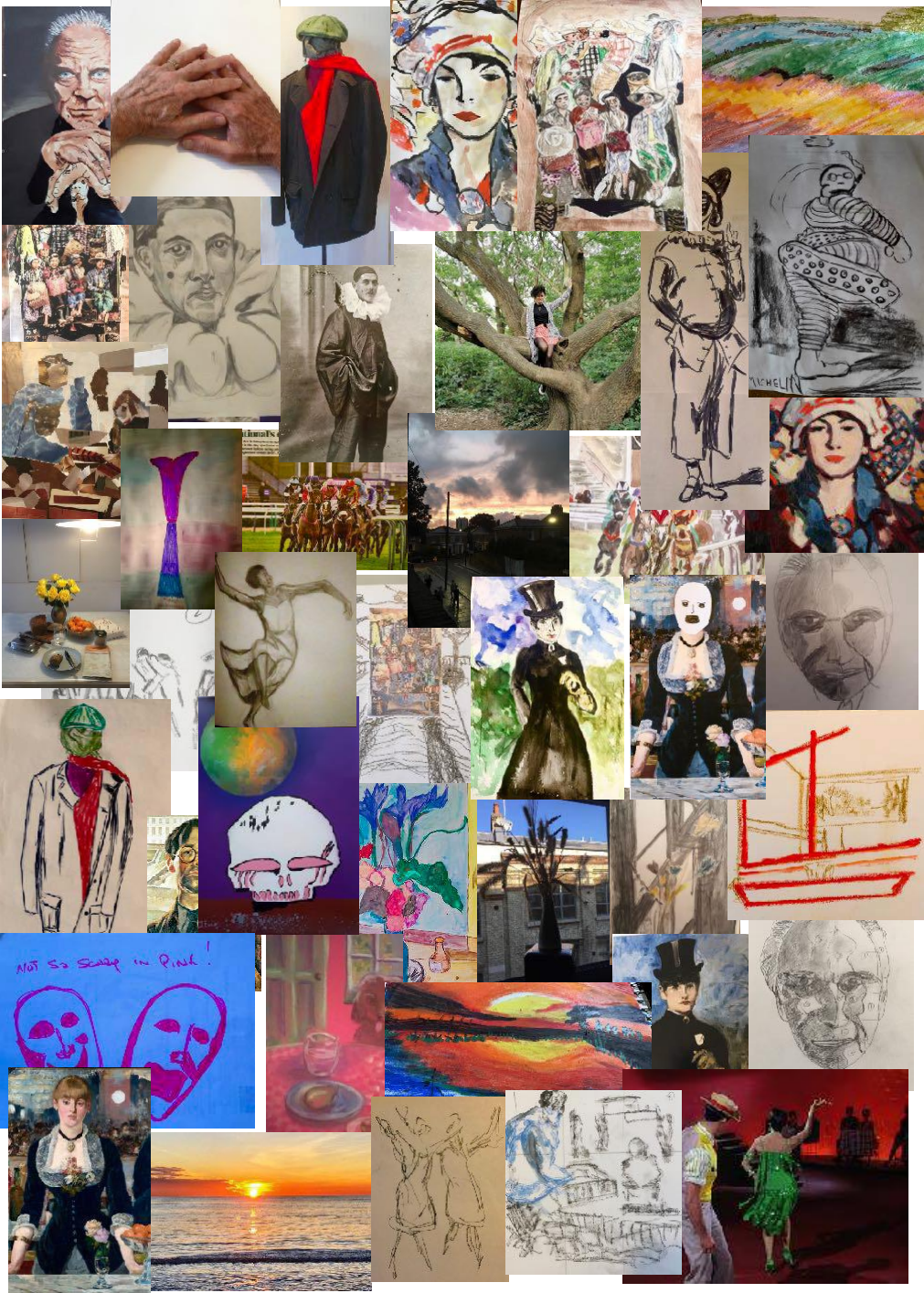
The overwhelming response to the HNCC Corona Art Programme was that it was something to look forward to each week as both a focus of attention and for social contact as it enabled participants to stay connected with HNCC and the wider community.

One of the consequences of the programme has been that we now have a set of 18 exercises that can be renewed and supplemented. They will be used when participants may be unable to attend classes when they restart as we hope, and thus help them maintain their interest and participation whatever continuing uncertainties arise with the pandemic.

And we shall be holding an exhibition of our artist participants’ work as soon as we all meet socially distanced again.



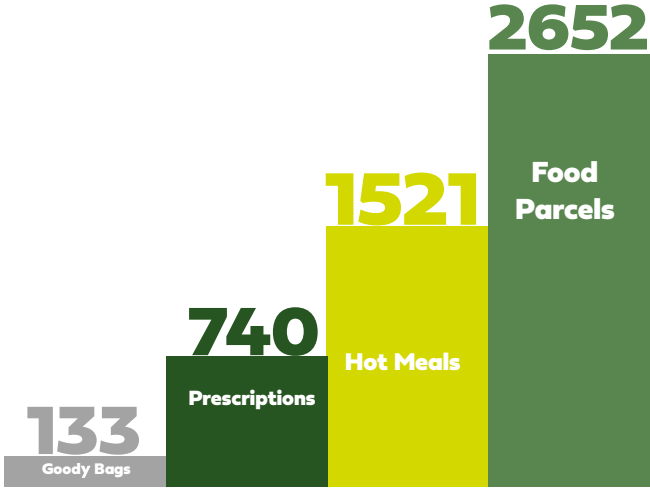
ANGUS ANDERSON
 HNCC Artist in Residence with the Corona Exercise Participant Collage



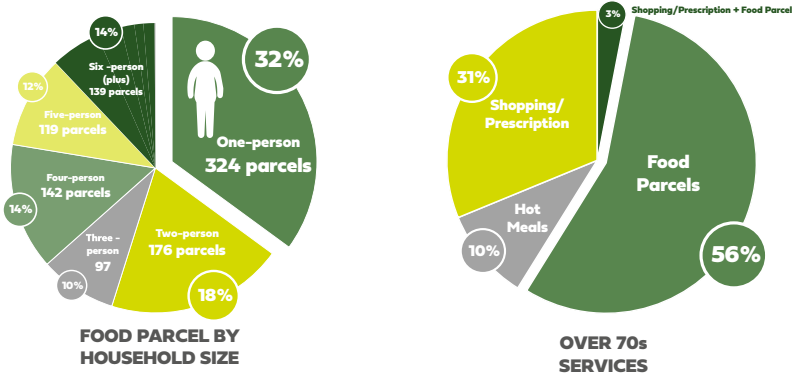
Photocollage of the HNCC Corona Exercises and Participants’ Work

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

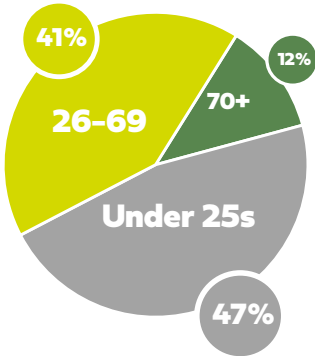
SERVICES PROVIDED



SERVICES PROVIDED



AGE OF ALL RECIPIENTS



OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM

ROLES & SKILLS

We have been blown away by the huge range of skills that our amazing team of volunteers came to us with. A team of 114 volunteers have answered calls, listened to people’s distress, helped us build spreadsheets, sorted food, driven vans, and picked up prescriptions and essential shopping for people, with grace, humour and kindness. We are so thankful and hope that the many new personal connections in our community that have been made will last for many years.

ANSWERING THE PHONES

Our phone volunteers have required very strong communication skills and a clear and calm approach as the person they are speaking to may be in distress and facing lots of different challenges.

ADMIN

Our admin volunteers have managed our emails and filled in our database as calls and requests come in. This volunteer task has enabled us to ensure that we provide the right support to the right resident in the time frame they need it.

FOOD BANK

Our volunteers have worked together to package parcels of food, taking into account diverse dietary needs, and organising the deliveries – carrying out their tasks with kindness and good spirit.

DISTRIBUTING FOOD PARCELS

Our delivery volunteers have been the face of our response service, and for many who are shielding our delivery team is often the only person they see, so their positivity and community spirit has made a difference every day.

SHOPPING AND PRESCRIPTIONS

This service has supported the elderly and sick in our community and so our volunteers have needed outstanding communication skills, kindness and patience.

SOURCING DONATIONS

Our volunteers have helped us to source donations from local residents and businesses. Many have volunteered to be collection points on their streets or estates and in doing so have inspired many donations to the Food Bank.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

CAMILLA MAXWELL-COMFORT

It’s been really rewarding to be a part of the HNCC Food Bank. Initially, I was able to use my graphic design skills to design and illustrate some information posters. Since then I have been giving my time each week to work in the Food Bank helping to pack food parcels and organise all the incoming donations. It feels really good to be doing something positive for my local community. It’s also been really nice to meet new people and see how many have been prepared to give up their time to volunteer for all the various roles that keep the Food Bank running so efficiently.

ABBI BARHAM

This pandemic has given me a lot of time! Usually, I work in events... Long stressful hours with very little time for myself, never mind my neighbours. Volunteering with HNCC has been fantastic... The routine of regular shifts, seeing people and sharing experiences has been great for my mental health. Without my usual job dictating my life, I have found purpose closer to home, made new friends and found the support I needed, right on my doorstep. Meeting so many people who just want to help other people has been a ray of sunshine in a gloomy few months.

KATJA KNOX

Finding myself without a job as a result of Covid-19 then hearing what amazing work HNCC was doing, drew me to want to help in any way I could. Taking the time to help some wonderful people in my community and supporting the incredible people who work here has given me a sense of purpose. Having spent much of lockdown living alone, I now feel like I have a place here. I have felt a drive to build my skills in different areas with the support from those around me. It really is a pleasure to see how motivated and talented the HNCC team is.

TERRY

I have enjoyed volunteering with HNCC delivering hot lunches to those who need it for the last few months. Whilst getting hot nutritious food to people who need it is obviously critical, what I’ve enjoyed most is meeting and chatting to the people on my delivery route. I’m very aware that when I make a delivery, I might be the only person that they see or have a chance to talk to and in times like this that small personal interaction is so important.



CAMILLA



ABBI



KATJA



TERRY

FUNDERS



CITY OF LONDON CITY BRIDGE TRUST

Over the last 3 years Highgate Newtown Community Centre has responded flexibly and effectively to the challenges of delivering services without its Community Centre by re-locating across many venues in the local area.

This has enhanced relationships with other organisations and resulted in an increased number of members of the local community accessing its services.

This model of operation has proved critical and beneficial in preparing HNCC to be able to respond quickly and creatively to the needs of older people in the local community during the pandemic. HNCC has increased its volunteer base and skill set, increased its services – including a meals on wheels service for vulnerable people – secured significant additional funding from all sources and has developed stronger partnerships across the borough to ensure effective and maximum impact from resources available. It is a pleasure to partner with the creativity and dedication demonstrated by all connected with Highgate Newtown Community Centre.

– **KATE MORALEE**
Funding Manager
City Bridge Trust



THE MERCERS' COMPANY AS TRUSTEE OF THE CHARITY OF SIR RICHARD WHITTINGTON

Highgate Newtown Community Centre has stepped up admirably to support the local population during the pandemic, quickly changing its delivery model and finding new ways of working. It has played a vital role in ensuring no one was left behind, providing practical and emotional support to a huge range of people, thanks to its 50+ team of local volunteers. It is a pleasure to be able to support the work focussed on older people, especially as we head into the challenging winter months.

– **DAVID TERRACE**
Grants Programme Manager – Older People and Housing
Corporate Trustee to the Charity of Sir Richard Whittington



JOHN LYON'S CHARITY

JOHN LYON'S CHARITY

John Lyon's Charity would first and foremost like to thank the team at Highgate Newtown Community Centre (HNCC), its staff and volunteers for their determination, hard work, kindness and flexibility in responding to the needs of families across the Camden community; both prior to and despite the challenges of Covid-19. Support networks such as those offered by HNCC are invaluable when you have a young family, and the Charity has seen HNCC adapt its popular Under 5s 'Stay and Play' provision to ensure it is able to keep supporting these families. The feedback within this report truly evidences the impact it continues to have on lives, and that HNCC truly fulfils the role of a 'Community Centre' within Camden.

– **DEBBIE HOWITT**
Grants & Communications Officer
John Lyon's Charity

SUPPORTERS

- Ageing Better in Camden
- All Churches Trust
- Camden Council
- Camden Giving
- City Bridge Trust
- DEFRA GOV Grant
- Highgate Labour Party
- John Lyon's Charity
- Lady Gould's Charity
- Martin Lewis Foundation
- The Charity of Sir Richard Whittington (for which the Mercers' Company is Corporate Trustee)
- Morrisons Foundation
- North London Food Bank
- Oxo Tower
- Pret a Manger
- QBE Foundation
- St Anne's Church Highgate
- St Mary Church Dartmouth Park Hill
- Street Kitchens
- The Antonio Carluccio Foundation
- United Reformed Church Highgate
- Private Individual Donations and Trusts
- GMGG Guru Maneyo Granth Gurdwara
- Bloody Good Period
- Food Bank Aid North London
- Private Individuals' Donations

PARTNERS' VIEW

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN HNCC AND FAITH COMMUNITIES

Introduction

The timing couldn't have been better! I had literally just arrived as the new minister at Highgate United Reformed Church in May 2017, and I think it was a bit later in the same year that I received an Invitation from Camden Council to attend a meeting about the "Camden 2025" report and vision at which some of the findings would be summarised.

We're definitely not the biggest denomination or faith community in our area, but as we focussed on our new priorities we were certain we wanted to work in partnership with others to serve our local community.

It was fascinating to hear that although our area had some of the other social problems which many communities suffer from, nevertheless the number one issue which had to be addressed was **social isolation**.

Partnerships

In the discussion groups which followed it was obvious that, as well as the excellent non-religious groups which were already offering a good service, representatives from churches, mosques, synagogues, etc. felt that they had something to offer in these circumstances – the opportunity for working together in partnership, empty buildings which could be used in a variety of ways, and people/volunteer resources.

I recall one of the founders of the 'Street Pastors' charity sharing with me: this was like the new trinity – a very powerful partnership when Council, Police and Faith Communities chose to work together.

The other main thrust which has at last dawned on many churches and other faith communities is that God is active OUT of the church every day of the week, as well as IN the church on a Sunday morning! A major report in one denomination calls this paradigm shift "Church Without Walls".

So it was that on 6th September 2018 the valuable partnership with Highgate Newtown Community Centre encouraged us to start our Thursday Community Lunch – £2.50 for a delicious 2-course meal in very good company, often with entertainment by the children from local schools who have been most supportive. As has the Harington Scheme, allowing their students to be trained in the new skills of service and hospitality.

Covid Crisis

With the coronavirus pandemic taking a stronger hold in the UK through the early part of 2020, the country had to go into 'lockdown' on 23rd March – church services and other meetings were not allowed in our buildings. But even in these most challenging times during the coronavirus pandemic it was possible to work together – so when buildings were closed, 'meals-on-wheels' was set up, and even more volunteers were found!

However, four months later, with the lifting of restrictions, we were the first centre in our area to carry out a risk assessment and then to restart the lunches. It's never an easy decision in the current circumstances, so there were feelings of both excitement and apprehension. But we restarted the Thursday Community Lunch on 23rd July to the great relief of many of our regulars who gratefully shared their appreciation with comments such as -

"Thanks for opening up the lunches, it's great to see others again."

"It's been fairly lonely during lockdown. I don't get many visits, so this is great."

"This is a lifeline thanks."

Of course our primary concern is for the safety and wellbeing of everyone, so numbers are restricted, and we adhere to social distancing, but customers are sharing that imposed isolation can affect mental health issues and that they find the community lunches a real support in challenging times.

Conclusion

My personal plea is that we simply do not lose this opportunity, but that we continue to build stronger partnerships and working relationships. Now is the time!!!

Thanks for all you are doing,

David E.P. Currie



REV. DAVID E.P. CURRIE
Minister - Highgate United
Reformed Church
(aka Pond Square Chapel)

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Over the years we have been clear about our business model. We seek to run services as described earlier in this booklet for our community which are free or very low cost. Until 2018 we operated in the now demolished Bertram Street building but for the last two years we have transferred them to a variety of locations around our area. Except for emergency support we seek to ensure that our services are financed from specific grants which we obtain from a wide variety of sources (as listed on pages 28 and 29) while the balance of our costs are covered by non specific fund raising and a general grant from Camden. If funding for any of our services cannot be renewed then our policy is to discontinue the service. The total expenditure for our last two years has been just over £580,000, approximately half funded by specific grants

Covid Response

Following the onset of the Covid crisis we focussed our staff and our financial resources on the emergency support described in this booklet. We were able to substantially expand the support we provide because of the truly massive support we received from the public, who donated via our website, and also other crisis funders as listed.

In aggregate we have spent so far (up to September 6th) £97,948 on Covid relief, and expect to spend perhaps around £30,000 more before year end. This figure understates the real effect of our crisis response, as more than 100 unpaid volunteers were involved and a huge

quantity of food was donated. We estimate that the food donated will have been worth about £30,000, bringing the total of food donations up to £91,000.

	£
Paid for food and other supplies	61,000
Donated food (estimated value)	30,000
Distribution & coordination costs	43,000
Fund raising efforts	15,000
Overhead	11,000
(Director and all staff were diverted to crisis)	
Total	160,000

I am very grateful to the team that dealt with this enormous seven day a week distribution effort, which was handled efficiently and financially well controlled.

The cash required for this effort has been funded as follows:

	£
Government DEFRA	30,000
(spent only on food, as required)	
Camden	53,500
(food, advice, distribution & coordination)	
Public donations	60,000
Total	143,500

We expect Covid crisis funding to wind down around the end of this year, while financial resources which have been diverted from 'business as usual' will be reapplied to fund our normal activities. The small surplus of funding we expect could be applied to a continuation of crisis funding or to our normal activities.

Meals on Wheels

Just before Covid became an issue we had started a Meals on Wheels project, with meals delivered by an electric van, and funded by Camden, the Carluccio Foundation, City of London Trust and Morrisons (who donated most of the cost of the van). Funding obtained for this project so far is £99,000. We have learned a great deal about our communities needs from the crisis and we are anxious that this project should continue indefinitely. Indeed we hope that the service can be expanded with a second van, if funding can be obtained.

Thanks

It remains to express my own thanks and that of the Trustees to all those who donated to our crisis effort, whether cash or food. We hope that this publication will demonstrate that the money was well and promptly used. We thank HM Government who donated through DEFRA, our local authority Camden, but above all the public who provided a very large proportion of the funds. The public sent us more than 100 donations, some in two figures, some in three figures and a few in four and five figures. We thank them all.



STEPHEN HODGE
Treasurer



COVID-19 Update

WE LEARNED ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

WE LEARNED, LISTENED AND ACTED

We have learned a lot in the last few months.

We learned that there are more people who struggle to feed themselves and their families than we previously understood. We learned that asking for help is hard. We learned that our neighbours love to help and we learned that people in our area are very generous.

Looking at our community, it has become evident that some people's lives are not easy. The lockdown proved to be the tipping point for a lot of our neighbours:

- The single mum whose ex-partner stopped paying child maintenance in March
- The man who has been working for the last ten years on a zero-hours contract and has had no work since March
- The lady who lost her job in March, but had only become self-employed last year, living in rented accommodation and six months pregnant

These are just a very few examples of the people we have met through our Food Bank in the last few months.

We began our Covid-19 response on the 1st of April 2020. We set up very quickly, thanks our local councillors making funding available for the project, and coordinating our efforts with local groups including the local branch of the Labour Party and local Mutual Aid groups, who recruited lots of volunteers.

There are three strands to our Covid-19 Emergency Response.

1. **Prescriptions and Shopping:** We organised volunteers to collect prescriptions and do shopping for people who were advised to shield under the government guidelines.
2. **Hot meals:** Lulu, HNCC's lovely Community Lunch cook, very quickly started preparing meals for people who could no longer get out and about to the Community Lunches, and many who were ill or recuperating. These were delivered by volunteers daily, in our brand-new Meals on Wheels electric van, generously funded with a grant from Morrisons. We linked with Brookfield School, who generously gave us their kitchen to prepare the hot lunches and, in return, Lulu prepared the school meals and meals for children on free school meals in the local area, which were also delivered by our volunteers.
3. **Food Bank:** Our Food Bank was set up to ensure that people felt that they were being thought about and cared for. The focus is all about healthy eating and wellbeing. We prioritised fresh fruit and vegetables in the food parcels and managed to achieve this through the very generous donations from the local community. Peter, our supplier, brings us beautiful fresh produce direct from the market twice a week and we distribute to local families. We always include breakfast, enough ingredients to have dinner and light food and snacks for lunches. We get a lot of feedback from families about how lovely the food parcels are and what a difference they have made.

We are very proud that we were able to make a difference to these neighbours when times were hard and look forward to working with many of them as volunteers in the coming years.

We took the lead with Kentish Town Community Centre and Castlehaven Community Association to apply for a grant from DEFRA. This grant was for £30,000 to be spent on food over eight weeks. With this grant, we purchased 19,704kgs of food, which enabled us to provide 134,564 meals for residents from Camden Town, Kentish Town and Highgate.

The Food Bank has been generously supported by the local community. Some of our volunteers organise collections on the streets where they live and encourage their neighbours to add items to their shopping lists for the Food Bank. Holly Lodge Community Centre has a donations box and others have sent home deliveries directly to the Food Bank. We are very grateful to all our neighbours who have donated so generously to make the Food Bank work.

We are also very grateful to Naomi Russel and Food Bank Aid: North London for their generous weekly donations.

It has been a steep learning curve and a privilege to meet so many new faces and to be able to help with household bills and a new food project that will be subscription-based and member-run.

We have met many of our neighbours who require help in learning English. As part of our community Conversation Project, we have started to run English classes online with an ESOL teacher. We hope to expand this service in the coming months. We are starting an appeal to raise £35,000 to help us deliver a community where people feel empowered to solve their problems themselves, ask for help and help each other. We want everyone to feel included, and will be employing an outreach worker who will engage with our Somali, Bengali and other minority ethnic neighbours. We aim to make our community strong, resilient and able to withstand whatever comes our way. The work we have done during Covid-19 is an excellent starting point for this, and we are looking forward to the future.

For more information and how you can support email magshncc@gmail.com

MAGS O'REILLY
Operation Manager HNCC

COMING OUT OF LOCKDOWN – OUR NEW CHALLENGE

JAN LEEMING NOW READING THE NEWS FOR HIGHGATE NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE

I was delighted to be asked to support this fabulous project. HNCC are a wonderful, dedicated team who have responded and treated every person as an individual with kindness and respect.

The public have really got behind them with donations of food and money and I will be carrying on supporting their efforts into 2021. The fresh vegetables brought for every food parcel add quality and a chance to have a healthy diet rather than just tinned food.

I look forward to joining you at events planned once we are through this Covid crisis which has caused so much pain and loss of life.

I fully support Andrew and his team and I look forward to heading up the Christmas appeal in the Ham and High.

Best wishes



JAN LEEMING

Our target
for winter is
£35,000
please donate
online!

www.highgatenewtown.org.uk



THE RT REVD ROBERT WICKHAM
BISHOP OF EDMONTON

27 Thurlow Road, London, NW3 5PP
bishop.edmonton@london.anglican.org

Tel: 0203 837 5250

From the Bishop of Edmonton

7/9/20

Highgate Newtown Community Centre's contribution to the flourishing of the local community is significant, especially in providing much needed support as a result of Covid-19. As the report clearly demonstrates, the work of HNCC is built upon creative partnerships, and I am delighted that the Christian community plays its full share in this wider partnership through supporting and encouraging volunteering, through the use of church buildings and by providing much needed funding.

As the Bishop for Camden, and as a Patron of HNCC, I urge our churches, other faith communities, institutions and individuals to work in support of the life enhancing projects associated with the centre, to enable their long term sustainability. The opening of our new facilities will lead us to new opportunities to serve the local community, and we hope that you will play your part as our story develops. Please offer your full support, as we seek to bring hope, friendship, and empowerment to the people of North London.

+Robert Edmonton

The Rt Rev'd Robert Wickham



The London Diocesan Fund includes the Bishop of London's Fund & Associated Organisations.
The London Diocesan Fund is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Company Registration Number 150856.
Charity Registration Number 241083. Registered office: as above. VAT Registration Number 444 0847 52.

SOMALI COMMUNITY

HNCC are very excited to have met many new neighbours during the lockdown. Meeting these neighbours has inspired us to start a Community Conversation Project and reach out to neighbours to make our Community Centre more accessible. Led by Nafisa Guleid, we have been talking to our neighbours from the Somali Community on Zoom twice a week. These conversations cover topics such as mental health, healthy eating, community support and general wellbeing.

Life for many minority ethnic families has been extremely challenging during the Covid crisis. A lot of families felt the stress of having their children at home, having to support them with school work often without access to the internet, limited computers, usually one per family, and limited English speaking skills. These problems were made more significant by overcrowded living conditions.

The Somali community have been particularly badly hit by Covid-19, and often took a long time to recover after having the illness, incredibly hard when they also had to look after children. Many families suffered bereavements during the first wave also. This has had a detrimental effect on mental health in the community. We tried to do what we could to help by offering love and support through chatting and checking in.

Many people in the Somali community work in low paid, front line jobs, e.g. carers, taxi drivers and bus drivers. Many have no job security, work for minimum wage and are on zero-hour contracts. A lot of young people find it challenging to find employment or engage in school, and some young Somali boys have sadly found a place of belonging in gangs, ripping the community apart and leaving families distraught.

The problems that affect the Somali community did not start with Covid-19 but have certainly been made worse by it. A lot of people feel that they are under attack from the media and the wider community. There is a lot of mistrust within the community, and we often have to encourage people to attend the doctor or hospital, as they are afraid that they will be left to die. Through conversation and the Food Bank, we have reached out to this community. We try to encourage healthy eating by providing the fresh fruit and vegetables that they cannot often afford. This is valuable as it allows us to create trust and interaction that we hope will lead to greater integration.

One of the issues we find is that many of the women are embarrassed to speak in English as they are not confident in their language skills. We set up some Zoom ESOL classes during lockdown to encourage English conversation; this is something that we hope to continue over the next few months.

A lot of the women in the Zoom conversations complained about gaining weight during the lockdown. As part of the interaction, we have exercise classes on Zoom, to get people moving in their own homes, much easier now that the children have gone back to school. We also talk about healthy eating and using healthy food.

Somali women are strong and have a voice, and they want it to be heard. Through our projects, we want to encourage them to talk and integrate into the local community. We have had a lot of fun along the way and have enjoyed meeting these women, and men, many of whom have come out to volunteer for us.

We are very grateful to LB Camden for part-funding this new project.



NAFISA GULEID
Somali Community
Engagement Officer
HNCC

SPECIAL THANKS

COUNCILLORS

Welcome our Ward Councillors –
Trusting HNCC to support local people.



ANNA WRIGHT
Cabinet Member
for Promoting
Neighbourhoods
and Communities,
Labour Councillor
for Highgate Ward

The response launched by the Highgate Newtown Community Centre in response to the Covid-19 crisis shows what can be achieved when a local community centre with a “can-do” attitude teams up with local volunteer networks and with Camden council to take action and respond to need. By mobilising local partnerships and responding creatively to opportunities, HNCC was able to mount a programme of resident support that was not only personal but also efficient and strategic. I am delighted that our team of Highgate Ward Councillors were able to agree local Community Infrastructure Levy funding to help HNCC act fast when needed. I am incredibly proud to be associated with HNCC and its team of wonderful staff, volunteers and trustees.



CLLR. OLIVER LEWIS
Chair of the Children,
Schools and Families
Scrutiny Committee,
Labour Councillor for
Highgate Ward

I am so pleased to be a member of the Board of Trustees at Highgate Newtown Community Centre and to support the important work the centre is doing. Massive thanks must go to Andrew Sanalidro and the whole team for their incredible response to the Covid crisis. I am particularly excited to support the project as it moves into a new phase of supporting the community towards a self-sufficient cooperative model to tackle food poverty as our local residents grapple with the financial consequences of the pandemic in the months and years ahead. Local communities will need creative and imaginative solutions to these issues and that is exactly what Andrew and the team are providing.



SIAN BERRY
Co-Leader of the
Green Party of England
and Wales

The Highgate Newtown team stepped up so quickly to help fill the gaps in support for people in our community when lockdown started. We were delighted as councillors to be able to put funds towards the level of capacity needed and provide some security to the project, but the local fundraising efforts were also really impressive. The way the team has not only kept many vulnerable members of our community safe and supported but also looked forward to build future resilience into the project is a model that many other local areas should be looking at, as we continue through this crisis.



We are all in this together
CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY
HNCC Team

Room on the Broom

We are all in this together
CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY
HNCC Team

HNCC Com
To be filled out by Commu

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Q: WE ASKED: HAS THE HELP YOU RECEIVED HELPED YOU TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING AND PHYSICAL HEALTH?

“Its has been so good to talk to people you know and trust, if I was not able to talk to people I would be pulling my hair out, I would be depressed. I appreciate the call when it comes and I welcome more of this as it keeps me going.”

“Yes absolutely, we are so grateful for any support we can get as I am self employed, I have a partner and two small children and am earning very little during this time.”

“Without the volunteer delivering a food parcel, being nice, and having a quick chat on the door step, I would be feeling very alone and more isolated as I have not seen anybody since I have been isolating. It has been like my birthday again!”

“The help I received from HNCC was amazing because I have a four year old child and a lung condition that makes it difficult for me to go out.”
– Mandy


“Thanks, you have been tremendously helpful.”

“Thank you so much for the hot meals for me and my two boys (7 & 11 years old) whilst I was sick.”

“Just talking to someone sympathetic has made me feel better. I feel totally on my own and it has only got worse with lockdown.”

“I guess it did if you think about it – it supported me – bit of a lifeline.”





*“What is important
is not what happens to us,
but how we respond to
what happens to us.”*

- Jean-Paul Sartre

For more information about HNCC new build
and services please email: andrewhncc@outlook.com

www.highgatentown.org.uk

PLEASE DONATE TODAY AND SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CHARITY

Charity Number: 290712