



COMMUNITY LINKS BROMLEY

ANNUAL REVIEW 2021 - 22

Supporting Voluntary Action



Chair's Report

Achievements and Performance

Janet Tibbalds, CLB Chair

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Page 1 images left-right: Living Well Bromley team members; Round the World Challenge participants; MyTime active physical activity programme; The Maypole Project team members

In our previous report we reflected that it was the final weeks of 2019/20 that defined the year for CLB, as the world felt the impact of Covid-19 in spring 2020. The pandemic, and the measures put in place to deal with it, presented acute challenges for the sector and our members.

We faced similar challenges during 2021/22. We began 2021 during the UK's third national lockdown. It was a particularly tough start to a new year for everyone, following a challenging 2020. The year ended with the country emerging from the Omicron wave of the pandemic and facing rapidly rising living costs, on the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing climate crisis.

Locally, we can be proud of the way our members, our local communities and our service responded. We have grown our audiences across all social media platforms, secured substantial new inward investment into the sector, coordinated volunteer assignments for the vaccinations clinics and highlighted best practice at conferences and events.



It is our view that the response of the voluntary sector and volunteers has remained a shining light in dark times.

A small and resolute team of staff and volunteers have delivered this work. During the year, we said goodbye to Diane Diamond, our long serving volunteer manager and Carmelo Di Maria, who worked on a fixed term contract to develop our public facing database Simply Connect Bromley.

Diane worked for the service in a variety of capacities for over 25 years. Her contribution and assurance was vital during the pandemic, where she played a key role in the volunteer mobilisation and deployment. Her experience will be sadly missed, but we wish her all the best for her retirement.

In delivering our many services, we have been helped by our volunteers. Their contributions continued to be invaluable, and our thanks go to them.



Despite the changed context within which we have operated, our focus remains unchanged. To support, promote and facilitate the development of a strong, diverse and effective sector in Bromley, we manage and co-ordinate a number of different activities towards this focus. They include:

- Information, advice and guidance
- Funding and investment
- Volunteering
- Strategic partnership
- Strategic voice

Information, advice and guidance

We provide the sector with relevant, appropriate and timely information, advice and guidance in order to build capacity and support its role within the community. This consists of regular news updates, the distribution of a weekly electronic bulletin, and the provision of a dedicated website for the sector.

We remain committed to growing our audience across all communication platforms and we are pleased to report that we have achieved growth on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. During the year, we also added a LinkedIn platform to this provision to promote local Third Sector job opportunities.

We have provided training and support, particularly for smaller and newly formed groups, on a range of topics including governance and trustee support, creating constitutions, writing funding applications and advertising their services. During the year, 22 briefings/seminars and workshops were provided.

Our direct support to organisations was accessed by 233 organisations, a 12% increase on the previous year.



CLB outreach session to local Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR) and Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) UK group

233

organisations provided with direct support

12%

increase in our direct support to organisations on the previous year

CASE STUDY:

Royal Mencap Society - Round the World Challenge

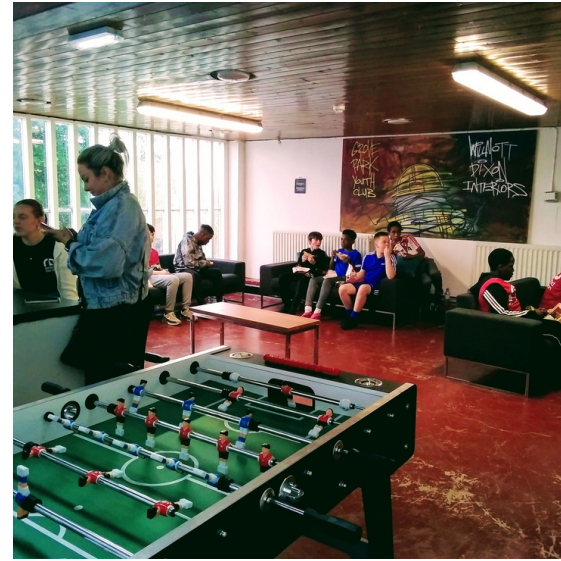
Community Links Bromley (CLB) led a bid alongside Bromley Mencap, MyTime Active and Palace for Life Foundation to apply for funding from Royal Mencap to take part in the Round the World Challenge. The fund supports people with a learning disability to get outside and get active in a way that is flexible, fun, and empowering. The funding enabled a series of activities and events to be provided, initially free to those over 16 with a learning disability

- 146 participants registered
- 3,100 hours of activity were logged
- 51 participants completed around the UK, 18 completed around Europe and 3 people completed the around the world challenge

A celebration event was held in October to bring all participants together. Short videos of the programme in action have been posted on the CLB website and YouTube. Importantly, many participants remained active after the funding ended.



Funding and Investment



Projects funded by Bromley and Lewisham COVID-19 Giving Scheme. Left to right: MyTime active physical activity programme session; Grove Park Youth Club youth-led-holiday programme; Living Well Bromley debt advice and support session

Our funding work remains important to ensuring that the sector continues to thrive in Bromley. We undertake horizon scanning and signposting to ensure the sector receives timely information about funding opportunities; provide advice on bid-writing; as well as leading on and facilitating sector-wide bids to attract and secure resources into the Borough.

This year, we worked on a number of collaborative bids, hosted workshops on different funding streams, promoted opportunities such as the DCMS Youth Covid fund and advised charities on their bids. This resulted in new investment to the sector from the National Lottery, the Local Trust, London Sport, London Youth,

the NHS's National Development Programme, the Greater London Authority and the then Southeast London Clinical Commissioning Group. It meant we were able to deliver a grants programme of £237,500 to charitable organisations in both Bromley and Lewisham.

Much of this work is driven by collaborative partnership work and so we are grateful for the support of Blueprint for All, MyTime Active, Bromley FC Community Trust, Bexley CVS and the Bromley Children and Young Families Forum.

The impact and difference this funding made for both organisations and communities was highlighted in our Impact Reports on the Direct Line and Clarion Funding, as well as in our Pandemic Impact film.

We continue to be the Local Trusted Organisation (LTO or accountable body) for the Mottingham Big Local Refocused project. This enables the community to access funding from the Big Lottery Fund to support projects and interventions which meet community priorities. Importantly, we secured Local Trust approval for a further £695,000 investment in the area. This will enable us to recruit another member of staff and begin focusing work on a sustainable legacy for the area.

'Our funding work remains important to ensuring that the sector continues to thrive in Bromley'



Christopher Evans (Chief Executive) and Steve Smith (Funding & Development Officer) celebrate Lottery success!

£237,500

grants programme delivered to charitable organisations in both Bromley and Lewisham

Volunteer Support



CLB visit to Bromley Mencap group at Glades event



CLB outreach with Link Community Cafe in Orpington Baptist Church

Our service continues to encourage volunteering and support volunteer involving organisations. We do this by supporting the recruitment of volunteers through operating a volunteer centre for the borough. This provides practical advice and guidance on all aspects of volunteering; raises awareness of the benefits of volunteering; provides a database of current volunteering opportunities and a volunteer online portal and phone line for people looking to volunteer.

In meeting these objectives, we:

- Hosted two volunteering expos as part of the "Borough Thank You" to volunteers, attended by the Deputy Mayor of LBB Cllr Tony Owen and Leader Cllr Colin Smith

- 565 people expressed interest in available opportunities
- Distributed thirty-three volunteering updates to 1088 register volunteers
- Promoted over 127 different volunteering vacancies
- Worked with 52 different volunteering involving organisations
- Hosted six Volunteer Co-ordinators Network meetings
- Supported the four vaccine clinics by assigning 4080 volunteers to 989 clinic sessions. that included The Civic Centre and a clinic in Penge

As members of NCVO, London Plus, COIN and the Volunteer Centres Managers' Network we are able to engage with other volunteer centres both nationally and across London. This has offered us opportunities to maintain up-to-date knowledge of volunteering trends across the country and to be able to influence national and London plans for volunteering in the future. We share the knowledge we have gained through our bi-weekly e-bulletin and Bromley's own network of Volunteer Managers.

“ Thanks so much for organising last night's event. It was really interesting and I am very pleased I was able to join. Thanks for your help with that.

Attendee at Volunteering Fair, June 2021

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Strategic Partnership and Voice



As a service, we strive to facilitate and develop the voluntary sector role in strategic partnerships throughout the borough. In part, this is achieved by ensuring that the sector is represented by the Voluntary Sector Strategic Network ('VSSN'), a network of organisations for engagement and influencing on key borough and multi-borough partnerships and at local forums and boards including, but not limited to:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Adults Safeguarding Board
- Borough Resilience Forum
- Borough Partnership
- Bromley Business Partnership
- The Borough Equalities Partnership Board
- JSNA Steering Group

Through these partnerships, we work to highlight changing and emerging social and community needs and work with the sector, public and private agencies to address them.

To inform this work, we undertook a survey of the sector, produced a state of the sector report and undertook Pulse Check surveys. This intelligence was shared with partners that included the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergency Partnership.

Our thanks to the many respondents who told us about your challenges including those relating to trustee vacancies, skills gaps and funding.

We continued to act as the accountable body for the Bexley and Bromley Young Londoners Fund Local Network.

The network helps organisations supporting young people to work collaboratively and share best practice. In meeting the programme requirements, in partnership with Bexley Voluntary Service Council and Bromley Children & Families Voluntary Sector Forum, we coordinated two cross borough forums on "Better Working Together in a Post Covid World" and on "Strengthening the Local Voluntary Sector".

A successful application was made to the GLA for a year's grant to follow up the work on the Young Londoners Fund. This was a partnership application with Bexley CVS and the Bromley Children and Young Families Forum.



To promote good practice, we hosted and coordinated a **Recovery and Renewal – The Role of the Third Sector in post pandemic health and social care conference** in September 2021. Featuring speakers from the GLA, CCG, mental health services professionals and community leaders involved in delivering health & wellbeing services, the event highlighted the positive work of charitable and voluntary organisations during the pandemic. It also explored how systems can be transformed to improve working relationships between statutory health providers and local communities to improve health care design and health outcomes.



Financial review



The team worked hard to keep costs within budgets and to secure external funding to support the delivery of services to the sector. As highlighted on page 4, this work resulted in substantial new investment in the Mottingham area, as well as ongoing investment from the GLA and the Cornerstone Fund to develop and deliver projects to support young people and health.

We continue to obtain our core funding from the London Borough of Bromley. However, we remain committed to diversifying our sources of funding and are pleased that this year we secured funds from twelve different funding sources. It means that the core funding enabled us to secure 72.5% of our funding in 2021/22 from other sources.

As a service, we are extremely aware of the financial pressures experienced by our funders and, as such, the trustees want to thank our core funders, the London Borough of Bromley, for their continued support.

The strategy of our organisation remains one which aims to have core funding from local authority and to enable on-going development through project funding from large funders like the Big Lottery and charitable trusts.

Our aim is to ensure that we can give confidence to stakeholders that the charity's finances are being managed effectively and can also provide an indicator of future funding needs.

Reserves

The Unrestricted Reserves carried forward, of £102,405, represent an 8.5% increase on the previous year (£94,332) and show that the Trustees' plans set out in previous Annual Reports to increase our reserves are on target.

Investment Policy

Community Links Bromley continues its practice of prudently maximising all potential sources of revenue by keeping under review its banking arrangements and interest rates on a regular basis.

Reserves Policy

The levels of reserves held are regularly reviewed to ensure the charity is able to meet its obligations. A target of three months running costs had been set, which is approximately £95,000. We are pleased with progress to achieve this figure.

Year ending	2021/22	2020/21
Income Resources	£578,049	£606,520
Resources Expended	£555,620	£506,674
Net income	£22,753	£99,846

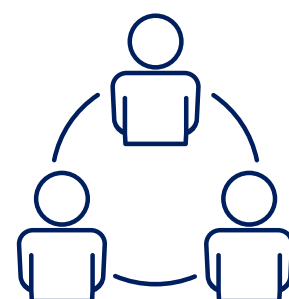
8.5%

increase in our Unrestricted Reserves carried forward from previous year



Future Developments

Our financial performance over recent years has allowed the organisation to build our reserves to a healthy level. We will continue to build on this sound foundation.



Key developments for the year ahead include:



Developing a new voluntary sector forum



Reintroducing regular face-to-face networking events for members, including the development of a conference programme



Continuing to deliver organic growth in membership with targeted growth in non-members



Continuing our work to develop and grow Simply Connect Bromley as the go to resource for organisations and the public to find out about services in the local area and get involved in local activities



Positioning ourselves and the sector to understand emerging opportunities and challenges arising from the development of the new South East London Integrated Care System

Our Thanks

As a CVS, we recognise the important role our partners play in assisting us to improve and develop our services. During the year, we worked with many other providers and community and voluntary groups.

This year, we would like to thank a number of partners. The following list is not exhaustive, but our thanks to:

- Chelsea Way and the team at Blueprint for All
- MyTime Active
- Bromley FC Community Trust
- Bexley Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)
- Bromley Children and Young Families Forum
- Bromley Mencap
- London Plus
- NAVCA
- The Voluntary and Community Sector Emergency Partnership
- Our Collaborate partners - Merton CVS, Enfield CVS, Metro/GAVS and Hackney CVS

We are indebted to the support of our volunteers, so a big thanks to those that supported us during the financial year:

Angela Morgan, Peter Castledine, Sarah Coyler, Aminata Janneh, Seetha Lakshmi Natarajan, Vandana Gandham, Charlotte Connolly and James Oliver

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(previous staff members)

Diane Diamond, Volunteering Services Co-ordinator

Hugh Stultz, Health and Wellbeing Transformation Project Co-ordinator

Carmelo Di Maria, Simply Connect Project Development Worker

Jane Walker, Mottingham Big Local Refocused Administrator

Community Links Bromley

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