



Bonny Downs  
community association

# IMPACT REPORT 2019

[www.bonnydowns.org](http://www.bonnydowns.org)



# BDCA vision and facilities

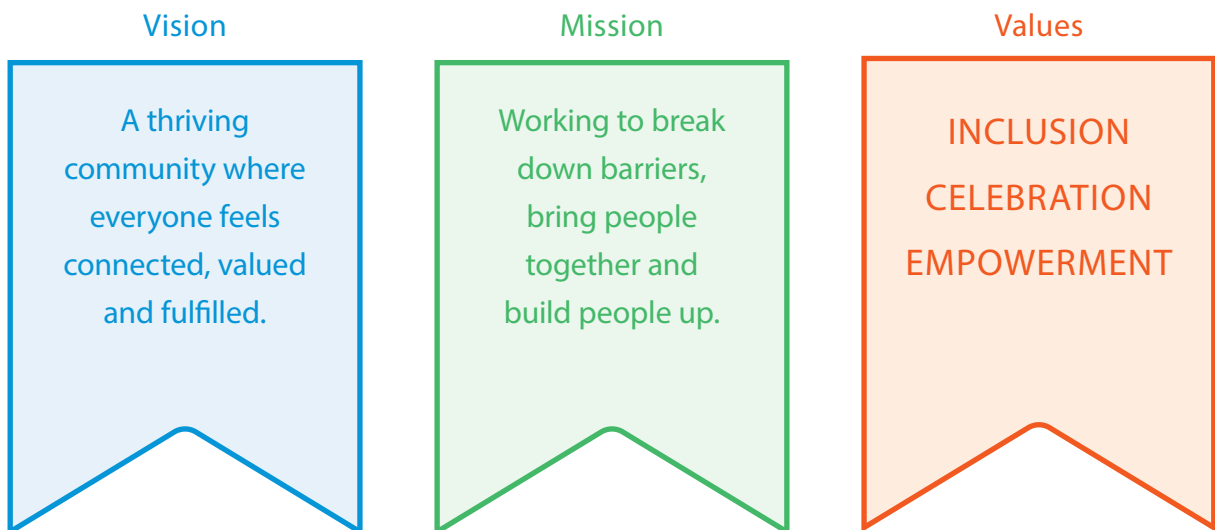
Bonny Downs Community Association (BDCA) is a dynamic community-led charity that has been serving the residents of the London Borough of Newham since 1998. Our charity’s motto is, “working together to change lives and transform our community” and we support people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. Across all our services, we strive to help people connect together, get healthy, reflect on wellbeing, learn new skills, give back, celebrate more and support each other.

Over the past two decades BDCA has renovated four previously dead, disused spaces into lively local hubs: The Well Community Centre, Flanders Playing Field, Bobby Moore Sports Pavilion and The Grow Together Be Together Community Garden. These transformed venues provide a home for a wide array of community groups including sports clubs, faith groups, tuition schools and charity projects.

## Before and after



Our own team of locally-based staff and volunteers deliver targeted activities in our venues for people of every generation from children and their parents, young people and elders too. We also run programmes providing accessible sports, healthy food, poverty support and volunteering opportunities. These projects help us realise our vision, achieve our mission and live out our core values.



# Looking Back



## DAVID'S REPORT

Elections are decided on the basis of a simple question: What's in it for me? But rather than focusing on whether we will individually be better or worse off, our charity is all about working together to change local lives and transform the community we share. We believe "it's better to give than receive" although this can seem counter-intuitive. Time and again our volunteers say: "I'm the one that benefits the most from the time I give." It's a privilege to watch our diverse team from so many backgrounds and heritages, who share this passion for the common good, unifying together to improve our neighbourhood. Despite the fact we are facing unprecedented challenges of poverty and hopelessness here in Newham, I genuinely believe that when we join forces we have the power to overcome obstacles, build bridges and see people flourish. Thank you to all who help us fulfil this vision.

David Mann,  
Chair



## PETER'S REPORT

I am very proud that here at BDCA we choose to adopt a glass-half-full approach to the challenges of life. Yes, far too many people in our community struggle with issues that are difficult to face and hard to ignore, such as homelessness, crippling debt, isolation, addiction and poor health. But there is hope, and a determination to focus on what's strong in our community above what's wrong. As you read the pages to follow, I hope you get a sense of the colourful, complex, challenging but amazing community we share. This past year, BDCA's fantastic team of staff and volunteer launched three new projects, including better support for our priceless volunteers, a "Building a Stronger Britain Together" project to tackle extremism and a "Building Connections" project using sport and courses to combat loneliness. I hope you enjoy reading about our work, and that it inspires you to join us on our journey.

Peter Laing,  
Chief Executive



## CHELLE'S REPORT

I was delighted to be appointed into my role as Chief Operations Officer this autumn as part of BDCA's new leadership restructure. Some of my recent personal highlights include: 1) Frontline staff undertaking customer delight training to ensure we pass the "Would I be happy for my mum to receive this service?" test and make everybody feel valued, supported and fulfilled. 2) Our cross-project work gathered momentum as we welcomed our new Volunteer Coordinator in April to recruit more helpers across BDCA, and hosted an inter-generational ministerial visit event, volunteer appreciation meals and four interfaith community garden parties to celebrate local diversity. 3) 2019 also saw BDCA's first ever staff survey, which confirmed we have a highly engaged, dedicated team and generated fantastic ideas for making BDCA an even better workplace in the coming year. Bring on 2020!

Chelle Coulton,  
Chief Operating Officer

# Overview of our impact in 2019

82,124 recorded visits to our facilities

69 community groups hired BDCA venues as their base

8,579 hours of BDCA led activities/services provided

2,448 unique project attendees

43,980 project attendances

91 local people were employed at BDCA

158 volunteers

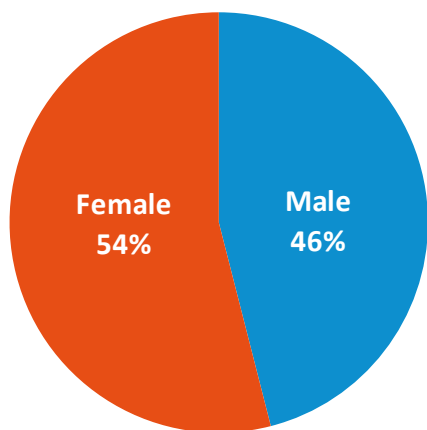
6,704 volunteer hours invested

£72,068 worth\* of volunteer hours given

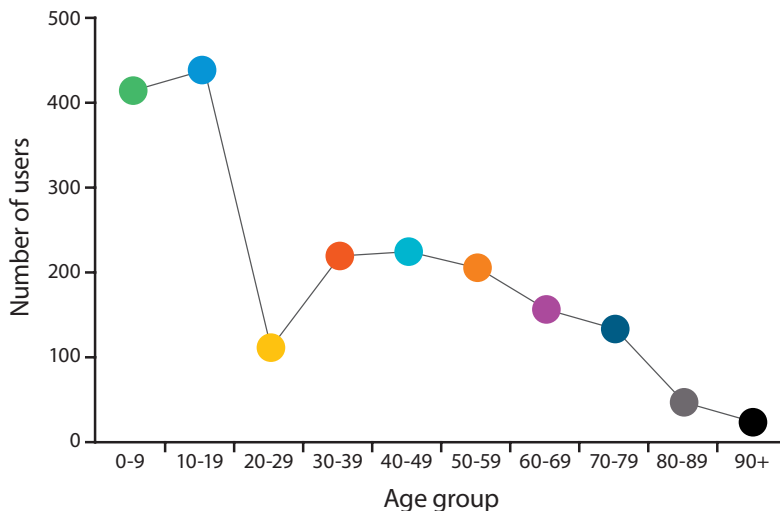
\* at London Living Wage rate

The charts help to illustrate the demographic breakdowns of the participants who completed registers at BDCA-led sessions between 1st October 2018 and 30th September 2019. Please note that these charts do not include the people who access our facilities for other services or those who preferred not to share their diversity data with us.

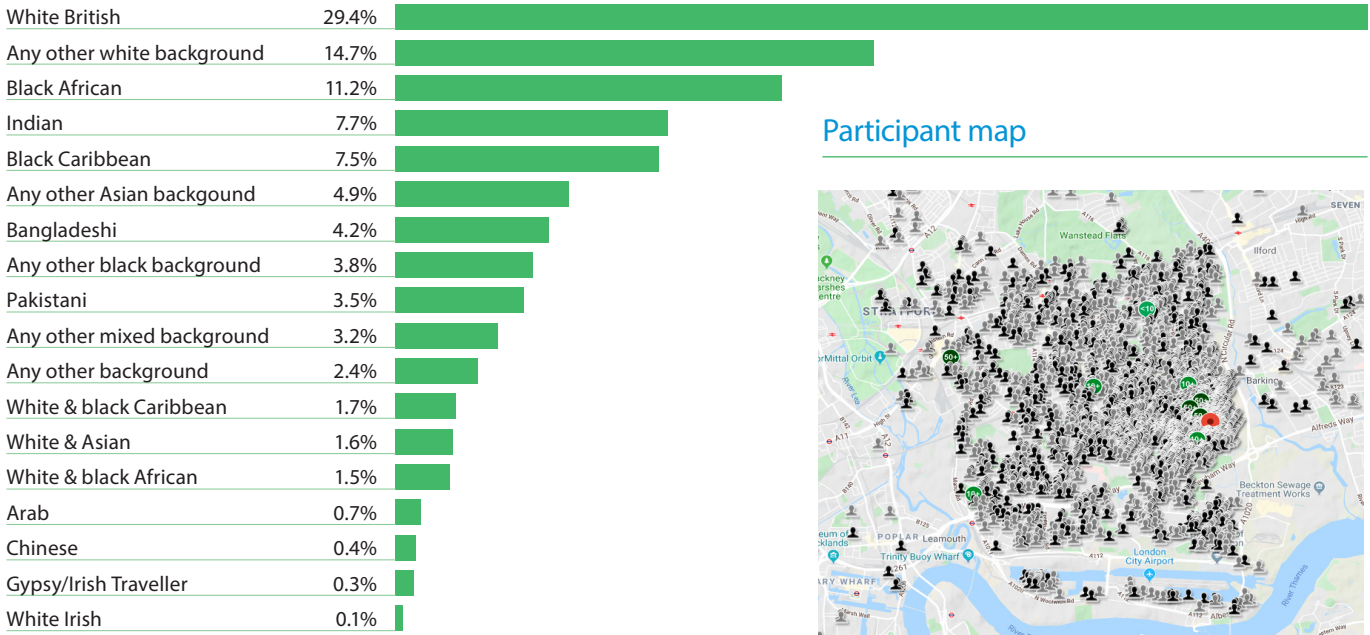
## Gender



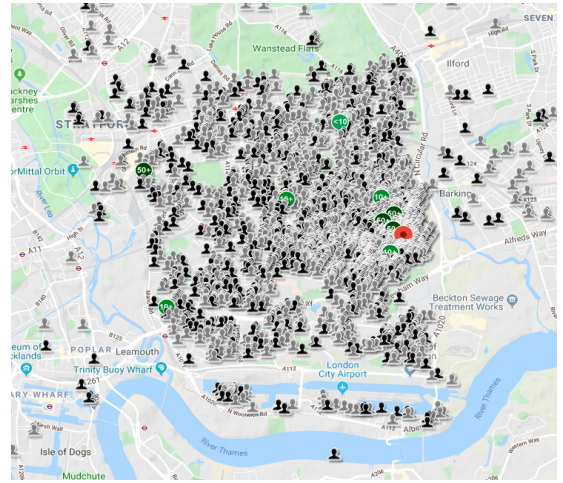
## Age



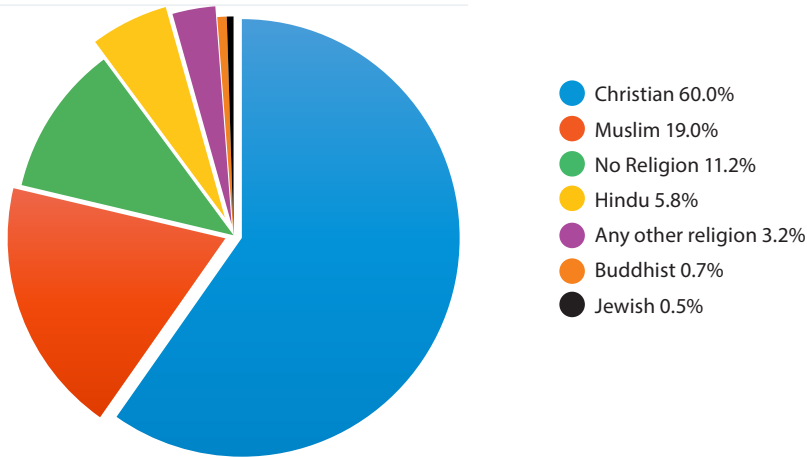
## Ethnicity (largest – smallest %)



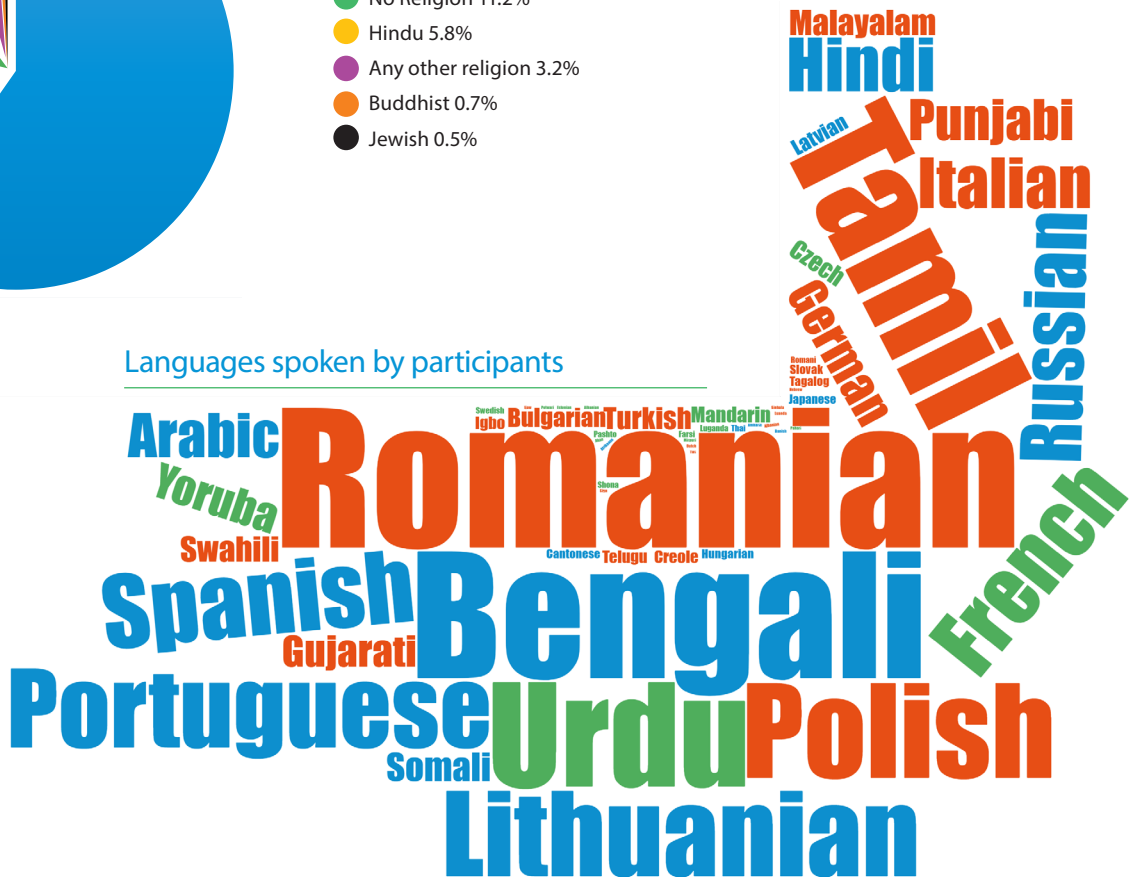
## Participant map



## Religion (largest – smallest %)



## Languages spoken by participants



# CONNECT

"If I didn't have this place to come to, I would be stuck indoors just watching telly and having no one to visit."



BDCAs are passionate about helping people of all ages to build friendships with neighbours from different backgrounds, so we host toddler groups, gardening clubs and a community café where people can meet new friends and strengthen their support networks. According to Age UK, older people in Newham are at 'extremely high risk of loneliness' so we have tackled isolation through coffee mornings, outings, a lunch club, activity afternoons and special events to help elders connect to their community. We also linked up with local charities, statutory services, faith groups and health services to help more lonely people in need.

## 2018-19 Project Highlights:

**88,217** total attendances by **4,606** unique people during **11,687** hours of our connection-building activities:

**Three Course Christmas Dinner** for 100 older people with a performance by local school choir.

**Free Breakfast** where 200 residents met Mimms Davies, then Minister for Sports & Civil Society.

**Social Outings for Retirees:** Norfolk Broads boating, afternoon tea and two coaches to Southwold seaside.

**Families originating from across the world** enjoyed 3 x weekly play groups and a free theatre trip.



"What I love about being here is that it's so inclusive, the gate is literally open to anyone whatsoever, regardless of ability. It's really interesting to build relationships with so many different people."



# GET HEALTHY

“My fitness class is a lifeline. Its free, I’ve met loads of people. It gets me out the house and I’m more active now.”

Exercise is absolutely crucial for our health but too many people in Newham are physically inactive. So BDCA has delivered a wide range of free sports activities to get people moving together in order to improve their health and wellbeing. We have a women-only fitness class, yoga class with crèche, free sports for homeless adults, gentler exercise groups for older people and Walking Football for veterans. We also work to improve local people’s diets, through our café and community garden where volunteers grew 250kg of food, which is the equivalent of 3018 meals worth £1,312!



## 2018-19 Project Highlights:

50,654 total attendances by 3,136 unique people during 6,581 hours of our health-promoting activities:

We partnered with [East Ham Leisure Centre](#) so that rough sleepers can work out and wash for free.

Our West Ham United funded [Walking Football team](#) received free Olympic Stadium match tickets.

[Gems Delights](#) took over our onsite café serving freshly-cooked Afro-Caribbean and British meals.

[Over 75 local residents](#) enjoyed all-ability festive football fun at Christmas, helping run off their roasts.

“I was referred to The Well by my doctor about four years ago and it certainly put me on the road to recovery. I made lots of new friends and enjoyed many events/activities.”

"It makes a difference to know there are kind people to help me if needed. I think the staff do all they can to make things better for all who come to Bonny Downs. They make us all very welcome."



# REFLECT

This year, we were devastated by the tragic loss of another young life to knife crime, one of the young people who attended our activities. We are committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of local teenagers through our youth club, BMX coaching sessions and summer mentoring programme to keep kids off the streets. We partnered with Newham Youth Offending Team to run therapeutic gardening sessions and teamed up with Community Albums to help young people reflect on their experiences of knife crime through song. We were blown away by their moving lyrics and proud to help them share their thoughts with the world.



## 2018-19 Project Achievements:

**27,365** total attendances by **2,075** unique people during **4,403** hours of our wellbeing-boosting activities:

**231** people enjoyed relaxing meditation and yoga classes to de-stress, chill out and lift the spirits.

**16 mums** attended 'Feeling Good About Me' self-esteem building art classes lead by local artist Kelly Drake.

**Over 200 youth** played in a memorial football tournament to honour Baptista Adeji, one of our own.

**30 local people** co-created a mural in our community garden to reflect our core value of inclusion.

"I've learned to control my temper and let things go. I've learnt to cook... I'm also helping in the garden. Meeting new people, realising that they have similar problems to you: you're not on your own."



# LEARN

"It enhanced my skills... I want to develop more. It's an amazing opportunity I got to improve my skills."



BDCA champions lifelong learning! We believe it's crucial to build new skills and we should all love to learn no matter our age. So we have led educational forest school-style arts workshops for toddlers, After School Clubs and basic computer skills courses for technophobic elders. We have also offered conversational English, job search support, positive parenting courses and domestic abuse awareness/ safeguarding workshops.



## 2018-19 Project Highlights:

26,174 total attendances by 2,270 unique people during 4,834 hours of our educational activities:

63 Elders learnt basic online skills workshops, reducing age barriers and digital exclusion.

60 people attended our 'Prevent' seminars on spotting the signs of grooming or radicalisation.

17 young people completed our accredited Sports Leadership Awards courses this summer.

86 people got creative at ceramics and craft workshops led by local artist Philippa King.

"I'm feeling more positive because I'm getting good answers. I'm hopeful to get a job. The persistence of staff who teach me is giving me hope."



# GIVE

“The best thing was watching the smiles on the kids’ faces when they received food and love.”

This year, BDCA was delighted to finally get funding to recruit a Volunteer Coordinator after years of this being top of our wish list! We have therefore been able to support lots of new people to invest their time, skills and resources into their community. We’ve had everyone from teenagers on work experience, university placement students, job seekers, corporate team work days, mums on maternity leave, retirees and former project users who want to give back. We’ve also been truly humbled by the generosity of local donors giving food, clothes, toys and money to our support services for neighbours in need.

## 2018-19 Project Highlights:

158 unique volunteers gave a combined total of **6,704 hours** (£72,068 at the London Living Wage).

Our 'Great Volunteer Get Together' lunch spoilt 30 team members with a special lunch.

The **Befriending Project** launch event recruited 13 people to help reach out to housebound elders.

Donors gave Christmas gifts to **160 disadvantaged children** from our Growing Strong project.

**37 new people** gave online donations to our charity through [www.localgiving.org/bdca](http://www.localgiving.org/bdca).



“When you walk in you get a warm welcome. You feel appreciated for the help you give to others.”



# SUPPORT

“I feel so much lighter now and so relieved. I wish I had done this ages ago...I am sleeping now.”

Newham now has the highest rates of homelessness and debt in the entire country so at BDCA we have increased our provision of free money advice and housing advice appointments, and expanded the New Day centre across two sites to support more vulnerable homeless people in need. We gave out our 6000th free food parcel at our foodbank centre in Bonny Downs Church Hall and supported children in need through our Growing Strong Project to help them thrive despite difficult situations.



## 2018-19 Project Highlights:

35,276 total attendances by 3,249 unique people during 6,069 hours of our support services:

Partnering with the [Asda Foundation](#) and [Gem's Delights](#) to give 200 children in need healthy home-cooked meals throughout summer holidays.

Secured Council Commissioning to expand our [day centre for homeless adults](#) to five days per week.

Helping 30 clients take control of a combined total of £325,710 debt in our advice surgeries.

Extended our [free advocacy appointments for vulnerable elders](#) from one day to four days a week.

“They got me off the street and got my dignity back. I’ve got a fulltime job now... Everything’s sorted!”



“Great opportunities for more people to meet, talk and generally more reasons to be happy.”

# CELEBRATE



Here at BDCA we love the power of intentional celebration. We throw annual appreciation events to honour our volunteers and find any excuse to dance, laugh and eat together throughout the year. Our interfaith festivals encourage neighbours to try food from across the world and learn about each other’s religious beliefs. This year our community garden hosted a very special event where councillors, police and families affected by knife crime beat weapons seized by police into a beautiful sculpture; celebrating the transformation of darkness into light.

## 2018-19 Project Achievements:

**16,341** total attendances by **1,174** unique people during **1,716** hours of BDCA-led celebration events:

**33** private parties were held in our community centre, from pre-wedding mehndi parties, Bar Mitzvahs and many birthday bashes.

**300** people came to our ‘Let’s Beat Knives’ event and enjoyed hammering the molten blades into art.

**Community garden parties** marked Christmas, Easter, Eid and Diwali with free food and family fun.

**150 residents** got dressed up for our red carpet premier event showcasing the music videos produced by local youth expressing their experiences of knife crime and suggesting solutions.



“I feel much more confident doing things. I feel a part of the community. We support each other and help is always available. I totally enjoy the events and socials, especially anything related to dancing.”

# What our project users say...

"It is great to see the assistance given to the disabled by your staff. It's a very good club. I really enjoyed myself. Your staff are doing a good job, keep it up."



"The guys in the team have been very welcoming. They are very supportive to each other socially and are more of a family regardless of one's background."

"It has made me understand that sport is for everyone, no matter what age. The best thing about it is the way it makes people feel included in the local community."

"They actually saved my life... without Bonny Downs I would have been dead, I wouldn't be sitting here. The staff got me into rehab. I just got back. They really deserve every support."

"I would like to say a big thank you for their generous support, love and kindness towards my family. This is an amazing project in our community; their help goes a long way."

"For me it's been a massive experience. I didn't see no direction, nowhere to go till I came to this centre. Now my life started getting back slowly, seeing my life coming back again. It's in progress."

"I have built my confidence up and now feel a bit more physically active. I have made many lovely friends. There are lots of places that you can attend but they don't have the warmth of The Well."

# What our partners say...

"Thank you for the work that you do it makes an enormous difference to families."

Anonymous surveyed referral partner.



"My colleagues agree that BDCA is a highly regarded and deeply rooted community anchor organisation who add significant value to the network of third sector initiatives across the borough."

Nicola Mackie,  
Community Neighbourhood Manager, Newham

"During assessment we were particularly impressed with the way in which you combine being a grassroots, user-led organisation with a professional, forward-thinking approach. Staff are passionate and engaged and it is clear that the project provides holistic support and much-valued sense of community."

Henry Smith Charity,  
current funder of our Children and Families Project.

"Highly relational and responsive to individuals' needs. It provides a warm, genuinely welcoming environment where people feel safe, valued, and respected, have their basic needs met, their dignity restored, and begin to build trusting, working relationships with staff. This model is predicated on staff who are vocationally-minded, creative, focussed on the individuals with whom they work rather than rigid targets and processes, and committed for the long-haul."

Compost London,  
Independent Assessors

"As local MP, I am a committed supporter of the positive work of BDCA. I have visited its projects on many occasions, and I have seen for myself the benefits of their committed, imaginative and creative work."

Rt Hon Stephen Timms



## What our staff say...

- 85% feel fulfilled and happy in their job
- 85% feel their contribution is valued
- 97% feel their work makes a difference to the local community
- 97% are proud to say they work at BDCA
- 91% would recommend BDCA as a place to work
- 94% feel that colleagues are dedicated and good at their jobs
- 100% understand what BDCA is about and what we're trying to achieve
- 100% feel we offer high quality services to our users
- 91% agree BDCA is a diverse and inclusive place to work

"I love my job. It is a pleasure to play my part in realising the vision."

"I love working with BDCA. I can be pioneering and innovative."

"I love the community and the opportunity to work alongside a diverse workforce."

"I love working here and never felt so happy in a job before."

"I am proud to be part of a multi-cultural, multi-faith team representing a wide range of age groups. I am glad that we empower so many previous users/volunteers to step up into paid roles."



## Case Studies

Please note that we have hidden the names of our project users to protect their confidentiality:

M is 14 years old and was referred to us by Social Services because both his dad and his mum suffered with mental health issues and the family was experiencing food poverty. He was on a Child Protection Plan for neglect and the social worker told us that there was little attention or stimulation offered at home. Whilst with us, he opened up and revealed to us about the gang culture that he was being drawn into. He was with us every day throughout the summer and said he felt "safe" with us.

D is a single pensioner, who had accrued £38,000 of debt when her business failed. We were able to support her with pension claims and Housing Benefit and got HMRC fines wiped off. The matter was being dealt with by lawyers and D was facing going to court. She felt unable to cope and ashamed that her venture had not succeeded. We helped her apply for bankruptcy and create a weekly budget. The threat of court is now relieved and she has reunited with her family again, without the shame and fear.

T had been out of education for a year but showed natural flair for leading sports while volunteering at our summer scheme so we offered him a two year apprenticeship starting in September 2018. He is now paid to help us referee Walking Football matches, lead table tennis tournaments in a local homeless hostel and teach football skills to children in our After School Club. He is working towards a coaching qualification and hopes to become a professional football coach one day.

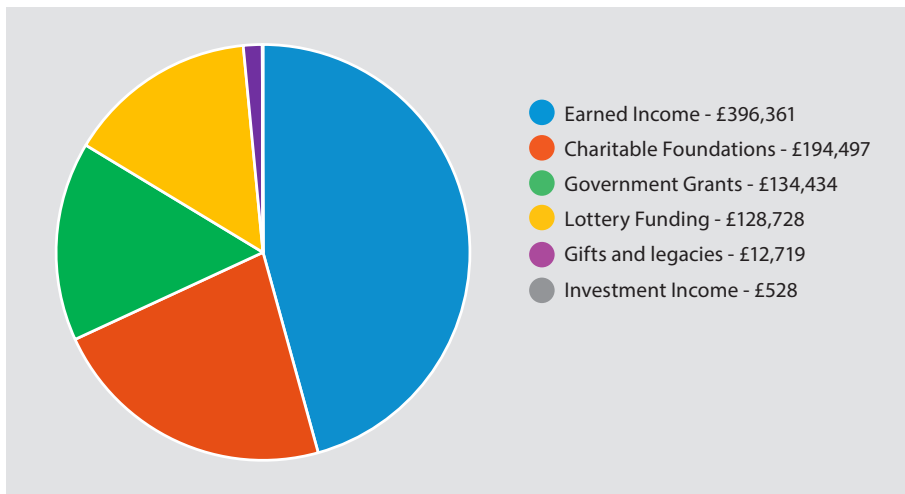
M was suffering from severe depression, battling an alcohol addiction and struggling to cope with the sudden loss of his mother. His relationship then broke down and he lost his job. He found himself sleeping rough at Stratford Shopping Mall for three months until he was signposted to our New Day support centre. We made a referral to NEWway Night Shelter and offered free showers, laundry and food as well as financial advice and housing advocacy appointments. We helped him to register with GP and get specialist addiction support. We assisted him to complete an online catering course that helped him work in a local restaurant so he is now saving up to move out of the hostel into a permanent place.



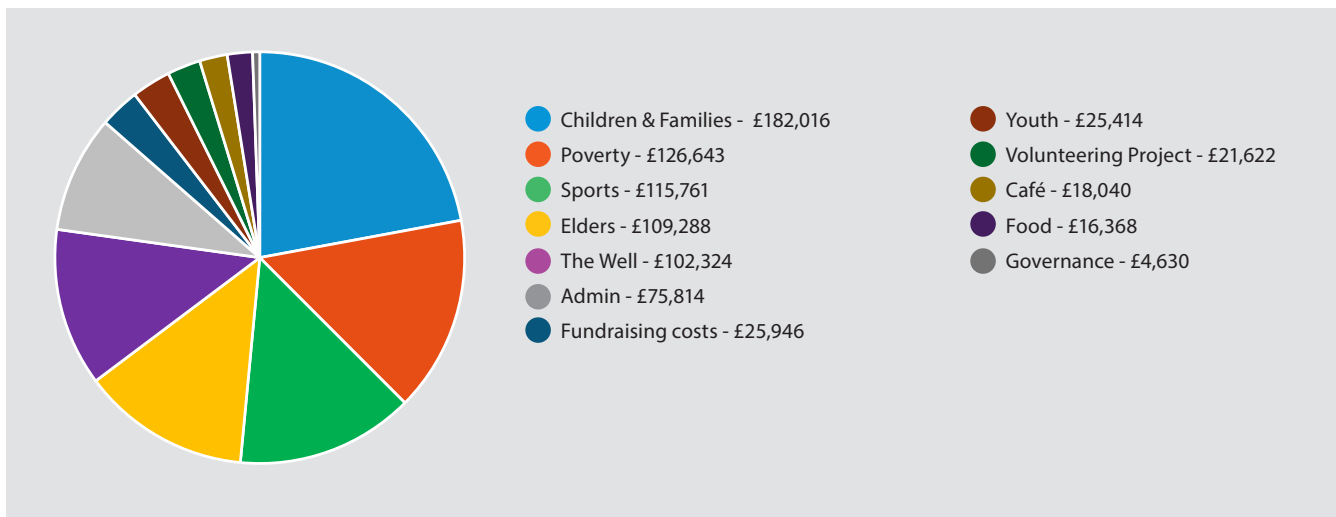
# Finances



We are delighted to report that we have seen another year of financial growth and finished the year ending 31/03/2019 with a healthy surplus of £43,401. The increase in our income was due to another year of careful financial planning, prudent investment and increased income generation. So for example we continued to invest in sustainability-boosting social enterprise initiatives and saw our level of self-generated income rise from £393,880 in 2018 to £396,361 this year. All of our surpluses are reinvested into the work of the charity, helping us to continue changing lives and transforming our community.



If you would like full details of our charity finances please feel free to download our organisation's audited accounts from the Charity Commission website.





# Meet our trustees...



David Mann (Chair) is the founder of BDCA and has over 25 years' experience of pioneering community activism in Newham. He is a local resident, Senior Pastor of Bonny Downs Baptist Church and helps lead several other community projects across the borough, including: West Silvertown Foundation, Bridges, Britannia Village Primary, Oasis Academy Silvertown, Community Albums and Newham Cricket Club.



Neil Jepson (Vice-Chair) is a Senior Associate at the General Counsel's Division of the Financial Conduct Authority, on the committee of International Lawyers for Africa and member of the SJ Berwin LLP charity committee. He is a Newham resident and local school governor who formerly volunteered as a teacher in Kenya and as a human rights lawyer in India.



Patricia Isaac lives in the neighbouring borough of Barking & Dagenham and has over 20 years' experience as a Qualified Social Worker specialising in protecting children and advising the courts. She was a former colleague of BDCA's current Safeguarding Supervisor and was recently promoted into Senior Management. Her two sons have also benefitted from BDCA's youth programme.



Pauline Varughese is an Oxford graduate in Maths and retired teacher who gave many years service to our local sixth form college supporting young adults from disadvantaged homes. She is an Associate Lecturer with the Open University and volunteers every week at BDCA's debt centre as a qualified advisor helping free people from stress and poverty.



Matthew Porter is a local resident and has been with BDCA since the start. Matthew has experience in the fields of human resources and community development and currently works for local capacity-building charity Transform Newham. He is also trustee of our key partner charity: NEWway Project night shelter.



Michala Dobiasova has a first class law degree and international work experience in both the legal and banking sectors. She is a local resident fluent in five languages and brings first-hand user insight as a mum of three and attendee at BDCA's Children & Families Project. She also volunteers as a Citizen Journalist for our local Council publication, the Newham Magazine.



Nigel Brook is a qualified Project Manager and Healthcare Professional with extensive experience in delivering complex projects. A long-time Newham resident, Nigel is active in community projects in table tennis, refugee assistance and a community choir.



Brian Dexter (Treasurer) is a Management Accountant, having qualified in 1989, and a local resident. With extensive experience in the commercial sector, he currently works as Finance Director for Alfanar and Wen as well as holding a CIMA Practising Certificate. He is also a trustee of two other local charities: Bridges Homeless Support and Survivors Together.



**BDCA STAFF:**

Ammar, Amy-Jess, Ana, Andrea, Andreas, Angie, Ashley D., Ashley E., Becky, Ben, Bernie, Bethany, Breyarnna, Cameron, Carla, Chelle, Chidera, Christian, Chuk, Clem, Deepa, Diana, Dillon, Ebenezer, Fatema, Faraqat, Fred, Holly, Jack, Jazmae, Jeff, Jess, Joey, Johannes, Joshua, Judith, Justina, Karen, Kevin, Khadija, Kyeisha, Leigh, Ludmila, Lulu, Lucie, Lydia, Madelein, Madiha, Malathy, Maria, Marian, Martha, Maryam, Maureen, Megan, Melissa, Mercy, Michael, Michelle, Miriam, Nathan, Ofrah, Paris, Patrick, Paula, Payal, Peter, Philippa, Raphaella, Rehana, Rhea-Anne, Rima, Robana, Rukhshi, Sahar, Sarah, Shabana, Shanice, Shirin, Stacey, Steve, Sulthana, Susan, Tonte, Tommy D., Tommy M., Tracey, Travis, Wendy, William and Yeshayah.

**BDCA VOLUNTEERS:**

Alan G, Alan O, Alexia, Ambra, Amina, Amir, Amy, Ann, Annmarie, Antoine, Anvesh, Ashmita, Asiya, Audrone, Barbara K, Barbara L, Beata, Bethany, Bharti, Bradley, Breyanna, Brian D, Brian R, Bridget Mary, Carla, Carol F, Carol H, Christina, Christine, Edgar, Daisy, Darragh, Daron, Dave, David Q, David Y, Denise, Diana, Doreen, Dorothea, Eileen, Elizabeth, Ellen, Emlin, Ethlithia, Farhema, Finnian, Fiyaz, Fleur, Gemma, Geoffrey, George, Gionna, Graham, Halimot, Hannah, Harjinder, Hazel, Ian, Ivy, Jake, Janet A, Janet C, Janet J, Jasmine, Jason, Jaswant, Jemma, Joey, John L, John W, Josephine, Judith, June, Justina, Karen, Kasia, Katy, Keren, Kevin, La'Shay, Lavine, Leigh, Madelein, Mahesh, Linda B, Linda K, Lulu, Lydia, Lynn, Mandla, Margaret A, Margaret E, Maria Lujan, Marian, Marion, Mark, Martha, Martin, Mary, Matthew, Maureen, Max, Max James, Melissa, Menelik, Michael P, Mick, Michelle, Mick, Mohammed I, Mohammed M, Mustaqim, Nicholas, Nigel, Norma, Olga, Oliver, Paddy, Paul, Pauline, Payal, Pearl, Peggy H, Peggy R, Rebecca, Rodney, Ron, Rona, Rose, Ruby, Ryan, Sarifa, Seetha, Shakila, Shawn, Syari, Tahirjan, Tawheda, Terence, Terri, Travis, Tyson, Valerie Mary, Victoria A, Victoria O, Virgilio, Wendy and Zuweira.

www.bonnydowns.org  
 info@bonnydowns.org  
 0208 586 7070  
 @bdca247  
 facebook.com/bonnydowns

