

# St Hilda's East Community Centre

ANNUAL REPORT

# 2016-2017





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## 2 About Us



### **Who we are and what we do**

St Hilda's East Community Centre is a vibrant multi-purpose community organisation, providing a wide range of services and opportunities for local people of all ages - from pre-school activities and youth projects, support for older people and carers, to free Legal Advice, volunteering and 'on the job' training placements. St Hilda's works across two sites, our community centre in Bethnal Green and a second site, Sonali Gardens, about two miles away in Shadwell. The organisation both provides a resource for the community in the Weavers Ward in northwest Tower Hamlets, while also delivering borough wide social care services.

St Hilda's East has been serving the community for over 125 years, having been set up as a 'settlement' in the East End of London in 1889. Nowadays a locally managed charity, we continue to provide support and opportunities for those facing disadvantage and social exclusion.

### **How we do it**

At St Hilda's East we believe that our strength lies in our diversity, helping to meet the needs of local people and supporting their aspirations. We also aim to promote understanding between all sections of the local community, offering a setting for multicultural, interfaith and intergenerational exchange.



# About Us 3

## Our Aims and Values

St Hilda's East aims to combat the challenges arising from deprivation and social exclusion in the local community through a range of high quality social, healthy living, educational, and recreational programmes. In all we do, we aim to break down barriers and reduce isolation, enabling access to learning, training and opportunities, empowering people to reach their goals.



### **St Hilda's East is guided by its commitment to:**

- Provide the highest standards of service and continually improve performance
- Actively involve users in agreeing priorities and setting standards
- Achieve equality of opportunity and learning from diversity
- Make the best use of resources
- Develop staff to achieve their full potential
- Work in partnership with others to pursue common objectives

### ▪ **Patron:**

Carolyn Kirby OBE (President of The Law Society 2002-2003)

### ▪ **President:**

Mrs Eve Jardine-Young

### ▪ **St Hilda's Management Board members during 2015/16 were:**

Ms Suzette Barry  
Ms Nandini Basuthakur (Treasurer)  
Miss Arifa Choudhury  
Ms Harriet Edwards  
Ms Naseem Khan OBE (Deceased 8/6/17)  
Ms Alison Klarfeld  
Mrs Jean Locker  
Mr Dennis Twomey (Chair)

# 4 Message from the Chair



The wide range of local and borough-wide services St Hilda's East offers to the entirety of the community – from the youngest to the oldest members – ensures that we have a very clear view of the broader picture and current state of social services provision, and of how our projects fit into this. We have therefore seen how the financial cuts of recent years have reduced the range and scale of this provision. Against this background St Hilda's East, while not immune to reductions in financial support, has worked hard to continue to provide and develop its own much needed services.



When we think of St Hilda's the picture that comes into our minds is of a building, or rather two buildings: the community centre itself and our second site at Sonali Gardens. In reality St Hilda's East Community Centre is people: the dedicated and hard-working staff, the many immensely valuable volunteers and the many and varied users. It takes all of these to make a thriving and successful community centre like St Hilda's.



In this Annual Report you will find detailed accounts of the work done by all of these people, their many achievements and plans for the future. The diversity and range of those achievements is quite striking, as is the scope of their future ambitions. Although it is always important to reflect on our achievements and pat ourselves on the back from time to time, we all know that we cannot stand still and that, if we do not have challenging aspirations for

the future, we risk going backwards. It is that spirit that we approach the year ahead.

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of one of our longstanding Trustees, Naseem Khan OBE, in June 2017. Naseem was a great supporter of St Hilda's East. She was a remarkable and inspiring person, able to operate at the highest levels while never losing touch with ordinary people and the local community, where she did work of inestimable value. All of us at St Hilda's will miss her immensely while carrying on the community work to which she was so committed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Twomey". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dennis Twomey - Chair of Trustees

# Message from the Director 5



The last year has been an exciting time for St Hilda's, with new service developments and external partnerships. From our Under 5s' Project to our care for older people, the organisation offers life changing opportunities and much needed support to a highly diverse community in the East End of London.

We are delighted to be able to announce that St Hilda's has been chosen by The Mercers' Company as its Company Charity for a period of three years, commencing in April 2017. This is wonderful news, bringing financial support for our youth work with girls and young women, and the welcome volunteer involvement of individual Mercers in all areas of the life of our organisation. The Mercers' Company is the largest and one of the oldest livery companies in the City of London, and we look forward to working together in the months ahead.



Our community centre activities grew in August, thanks to a grant from the City Bridge Trust, enabling St Hilda's Food Co-op to expand its operations into a new Community Food and Advice Project. This initiative not only makes affordable fresh food available to those on low incomes but also provides benefits advice to help individuals and families move out of poverty. Meanwhile, other services continued to thrive, from a Rank Foundation supported Guide Group to the Henry Smith Charity funded Boundary Women's Project - providing a combination of ESOL provision, training, and healthy living opportunities. Our Sonali Gardens Day Centre, LinkAge Plus service and Older People's Project provide vital and stimulating care. One of St Hilda's great strengths is its ability to bring together individuals of different ages through intergenerational work: a Searching for Ghosts exhibition launched at the V&A



Childhood Museum in January is testimony to this, featuring inspiring contributions from our older and younger users.

Alongside these positive developments, 2016/17 was also marked by challenges in the area of funding. Reductions in local authority support and increased competition for charitable grants loom large in the life of the voluntary sector. After over twenty years of pioneering community based home care, our Shebadan domiciliary care service closed in April 2017. This news was partly balanced by St Hilda's being awarded a contract to lead a local partnership with the Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets and Community of Refugees from Vietnam, supporting those organisations to provide care in their communities.

Against this background, we are exploring new ways to ensure St Hilda's much needed services continue into the future. The Joseph Rank Trust and Haberdashers' Company have kindly funded a development post within St Hilda's, enabling community fundraising to take place through events such as sponsored walks or through crowdfunding projects – and these efforts show great promise. We are truly grateful for the assistance of our all supporters - from funders and individual donors to much valued pro bono partners, their commitment makes a real difference.

*Rupert Williams*

Rupert Williams - Director

# 6 Advice Service

St Hilda's Advice Service provides residents in the Weavers Ward and surrounding Tower Hamlets area with advice and assistance, focusing on welfare rights, housing and debt. Accredited under the national Advice Quality Standard, the Advice Service is busy, well used and much needed, providing a lifeline to many clients. Advice is available through appointments and drop in sessions, supplemented by telephone advice and home visits. Assistance provided ranges from basic help with filling in forms or advising on and calculating benefits, to more complex issues, advocating on behalf of clients by phone or in writing.



## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- St Hilda's Advice Service helps an enormous number of individuals with the resources of a part time Advice Worker. A total of 801 advice episodes took place during the year, with assistance provided on a range of different issues. Of these 636 were welfare rights matters, 93 debt and 44 housing.
- The Advice Service helped clients on low incomes claim £157,194 in benefits, making a massive difference to the quality of life of individuals and families – from elderly individuals increasing their income through much needed Pension Credit to disabled people claiming Personal Independence Payment.
- In an exciting new development, a weekly evening welfare benefits advice drop in session was launched in August 2016 alongside our newly expanded anti-poverty Food Co-op initiative. Enabled by a three year City Bridge Trust grant, this has increased the accessibility of St Hilda's advice services for people working in the daytime.
- The Advice Service operated against a background of significant changes in the welfare benefits system during the last year. These included Tax Credit reductions, Personal Independence Payments (PIP) replacing Disability Living Allowance, and the launch of Universal Credit. These have caused great anxiety, with reduced income for many individuals and families. Our service has played a key role in supporting clients through this difficult transition, with increased needs for advice and assistance.

*"I had lost hope with my benefits until the advisor helped me win my case."*

## Plans for 2017/18

- Renewal of the Advice Service's longstanding AQS (Advice Quality Standard) quality mark accreditation, confirming the continued high standards of the service. A regular two yearly assessment is due in September 2017.
- We hope to expand the capacity of Advice Service drop in sessions by recruitment of volunteer advisors, liaising with Island Advice Centre's NVQ advice training scheme.
- The Advice Service has strong links with St Hilda's other services, such as our Older People's and Boundary Women's Projects, and will work closely with them to ensure that individuals and families in need receive necessary support.

*"I was in distress having to claim benefits for the first time after a family emergency, but the advisor explained everything and helped me step by step."*

*"I am worried about the new Universal Credit and have come to get advice to help me through the change."*



# Legal Advice Service 7



St Hilda's daytime Advice Service is complemented by weekly evening Legal Advice Clinics. Advice is provided by volunteer City law firm staff to members of the public on a pro bono basis. Open to all in the local community, this service enables those in need to obtain legal advice in easy to access drop-in sessions.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- During 2016/17, 412 drop-in 'appointments' took place at Legal Advice Clinics held in Sonali Gardens in Shadwell. These included advice enquiries on 147 housing matters, 145 welfare benefits, 20 consumer concerns and a range of other issues.
- The value of pro bono advice given during the year amounted to £158,245, indicating the immense contribution made by our law firm partners.
- Volunteer staff from Berwin Leighton Paisner, Crédit Agricole and DLA Piper raised £5,983 for St Hilda's advice work through the London Legal Support Trust's annual sponsored walk in May 2016, with St Hilda's staff raising an additional £4,445!
- St Hilda's East's Legal Advice Service also provided valuable practical experience to Queen Mary University law students, helping to operate a triage system for clients at Sonali Gardens.
- Public education to make people aware of their rights included legal information workshops on Phone Scams and employment rights, delivered by DLA Piper law firm through St Hilda's Older People's Project and Boundary Women's Project.



## Plans for 2017/18

- In an exciting new development, we will develop our Legal Advice provision at St Hilda's East's community centre site. A new partnership with a national law firm will result in a Legal Advice Clinic to run alongside our recently expanded Food Co-op Thursday evening sessions, making legal advice more available to working people on low incomes.
- We hope to continue public education legal workshops for the community. Delivered through our community centre projects, these will bring a wide range of people into contact with information on their rights.



*"It is a very good service, the solicitors were friendly "*

*"I thought they [the advisers] were wonderful."*

*"I was advised by the Carers Centre to come. I was surprised and very happy as I was seen quickly and given very good advice."*

# 8 Boundary Women's Project



Boundary Women's Project works with local women to develop skills and realise their own potential, especially individuals experiencing social exclusion or those facing language barriers. Up to 80 women a week participate in a wide ranging programme of regular activities, from ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, IT sessions and craft training, to Keep Fit and Yoga. The project also has an outreach service, helping individual women overcome isolation and providing one-to-one support.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- With the support of a three year grant by The Henry Smith Charity, the Boundary Women's Project provided a diverse programme of training and healthy living opportunities as well as individual support. 368 women participated in the Project's activities during the course of the year.
- 98 women registered and took part in our language development provision, equipping individuals with the skills and confidence to become involved in the community and wider society. This included Beginners, Intermediate and Higher English levels as well as Building Confidence in Speaking English and IT based Language Support.
- A highly successful A2B London Project (funded by Big Lottery Awards for All) was completed, with participants increasing their confidence and ability to navigate independently around London on the public transport system, learning to ride bicycles, discovering more about health issues and producing an exhibition of their written and photographic work.
- Our training and enterprise activities expanded with 84 women taking advantage of courses, learning new skills in machine sewing and needlework, bag making, patchwork, crochet, print making and basic arts and crafts. Central to this has been the development of an exciting new social enterprise scheme 'Juta Shoes'. Training support is provided to enable women to produce environmentally friendly, hand made shoes, which are then sold on to independent retailers.



## Plans for 2017/18

- Our ESOL provision will be developed, following the launch of a new programme in autumn 2016, the ABC Project, funded by Derwent London Community Fund. This builds on previous learning by teaching practical English and developing employability skills through taking up volunteer opportunities, including within St Hilda's other services such as the Food Co-op and Under 5s' service.
- Boundary Women's Project's health and wellbeing programme will be expanded to actively promote improved mental health. A ground breaking project 'Sangeet' aims to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression through integrating cognitive behavioural therapy with a six week programme of cultural music and group singing.
- In tandem with our regular yoga and fitness sessions we will develop a new walk programme in partnership with Tower Hamlets Health Prescribers and Healthwatch Tower Hamlets, encouraging increased physical activity and use of the local area.

*"I love the English classes. My confidence has increased after joining and feel I can go out on my own now."*

*"The Yoga classes encourage me to come out of the house and do exercise regularly. If I didn't have them, I would be stuck at home every day."*

*"I knew what a computer was but that was all. After coming to classes, not only have I actually switched one on, but I've written my own CV for the very first time."*

# Inspire Mental Health Consortium 9



The last year saw a major change in the area of St Hilda's mental health work, as part of a new 'Inspire' consortium. Led by a sister voluntary organisation, Community Options, the consortium successfully bid for a new Mental Health Recovery and Wellbeing Services Contract, tendered by Tower Hamlets Council and CCG. This exciting development offers community based mental health services for anyone 18 years and over and living in Tower Hamlets, aiming to support those experiencing mental ill health to become independent and reach their personal goals.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- The new Inspire Mental Health Consortium commenced the borough-wide Mental Health Recovery and Wellbeing contract in July 2016, replacing St Hilda's longstanding Bondhon mental health project. The other consortium members comprise: MIND in Tower Hamlets, Bowhaven, Working Well Trust, Beside, Hestia, Praxis, and Vietnamese Mental Health Services.
- St Hilda's Inspire funded Mental Health Project Worker provides one to one support for individuals, while a women's craft workshop and women's fitness sessions are held weekly in our community centre, and a postnatal group activity is held in collaboration with Mile End Children's Centre.
- Activities based at St Hilda's included collaboration with Create arts charity and Reed Smith Solicitors, using art forms such as Photography, Word Play, Visual Arts and Print Making to enable users to express themselves. The theme was 'Who Am I?' exploring similarities among people from different backgrounds and communities as opposed to differences while breaking down stereotypes.
- A successful grant application was submitted to Tower Hamlets Council and CCG for a new user led Boyaan and Go Group (Talk and Go) project, operating in the evenings and weekends. Led by users themselves Boyaan and Go organises community activities such as swimming and cinema visits, while providing peer support and sharing of information.

## Plans for 2017/18

- St Hilda's will work in partnership with other consortium members to provide support, opportunities, and raise awareness of mental health issues. Our Inspire Mental Health Project Worker will provide vital one to one support to individuals experiencing mental ill health, while group activities will continue to develop.
- We hope to work again with Create charity to deliver more stimulating arts programmes in St Hilda's East Community Centre, as well as postnatal group activities in collaboration with Tower Hamlets Children's Centres.
- Following approval of two year funding by Tower Hamlets Council and CCG, the user led Boyaan and Go Group will organise a new programme of 'out of hours' activities, operating in the evenings and weekends, facilitated by members themselves.

*"I never thought that I would like photography, but I really enjoyed myself. The presentation and lunch at the end of the course [provided by Reed Smith] made me feel really special."*

*"I'm dyslexic, so I didn't think that I could write a poem, but the tutor was very patient and helped me. Before I knew it, I had written a short poem at the end of the course [Word Play delivered by Create]. He made it fun!"*

*"I am very happy that I can attend group activities with the help of a minibus as I couldn't get there without this. [Boyaan and Go member]"*

# 10 Community Volunteer Project



The Community Volunteer Project aims to provide volunteering experiences for those wishing to contribute to their local community, and make their time as a volunteer enriching, interesting and fun while also expanding the capacity of St Hilda's projects. The Project involves a wide range of people volunteering – from unemployed individuals, students and school work experience placements, to corporate volunteers, and even volunteers from overseas. We are extremely grateful for the huge contribution they make to St Hilda's projects and services.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- The Community Volunteer Project has been highly successful in recruiting volunteers, with 107 individuals working across all of our projects, from IT support and tutoring for older people to helping in St Hilda's under 5s' activities. Many volunteers were unemployed and gained valuable work and interpersonal skills through their experience with St Hilda's.
- St Hilda's was successful in securing a Big Lottery Awards for All grant to launch a Training and Work Experience Project in January 2017, providing 'on the job' work experience placements and life skills for unemployed and disadvantaged individuals. This complements our existing Volunteer Project while widening our scope to take volunteers who need more support and development. Participants receive structured training alongside time spent volunteering, improving their job-readiness.
- In addition to individual volunteering, corporate volunteering made a large impact on St Hilda's activities, increasing opportunities for the local community. A number of City firms participated in team challenges, including Berwin Leighton Paisner, Crédit Agricole and Columbia Threadneedle. Their contributions ranged from decorating centre premises or running workshops for projects to organising outings and parties for our service users. Meanwhile our longstanding law firm partners ran St Hilda's much needed pro bono Legal Advice Clinics.

*"It's really fun. I leave with a smile and start with one. The Older People's Project is great and I enjoy the games and conversations we have."*

## Plans for 2017/18

- Our Awards for All funded Training and Work Experience Project will continue with a series of planned training courses during 2017, including First Aid, Food Safety and Social Care. Already underway, the Project will provide experience and job-ready skills for at least 50 individuals.
- As Mercers' Company Charity, St Hilda's East Community Centre looks forward to welcoming its members as volunteers, becoming involved in and enriching the life of our organisation. Plans are already underway for decorating our centre premises, developing horticultural opportunities for service users, and an exciting community singing project along the lines of BBC TV's The Choir! We are sure that many more volunteering possibilities will arise over the course of the three year partnership with the Company.
- We aim to strengthen our volunteering links with local businesses in the Shoreditch area surrounding St Hilda's community centre, and work with other local organisations providing volunteer support and training, in order to offer our volunteers the best possible range of experience and skills development.

*"I feel so much more confident after volunteering, it really helps me feel able to work and help people."*

*"Volunteering was great! Everyone was so lovely from elderly people to the children I met at the Fun Day! I will definitely be back again very soon."*



# Community Food and Advice Project 11



Supported by a new three year grant from City Bridge Trust, our Community Food and Advice Project runs a weekly Food Co-op alongside a drop-in advice service. The volunteer-run Co-op provides fresh and affordable fruit and vegetables to the community, while advice sessions provide help on welfare benefits and money issues. A ground breaking anti-food poverty initiative, the Co-op is also a wonderful example of social cohesion, a popular 'hub' bringing together people from the surrounding area.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- Following award of our City Bridge Trust grant, the Community Food and Advice Project was launched in August 2016, extending St Hilda's Food Co-op's daytime opening times to new evening sessions - increasing accessibility for working people on low incomes. An average of 66 people per week have used the expanded Co-op, while 193 people have used the new and much needed drop-in advice sessions.
- 33 volunteers were involved in running the Food Co-op, contributing a wonderful 805 hours of volunteering for their local community. From managing the till, ordering produce and assisting elderly customers with shopping to producing our popular Co-op e-newsletter, we could not do without them.
- The Co-op always plays an important role in promoting health awareness, with volunteer-led healthy living workshops including hands on vegetarian sushi sessions held in the community centre and at an Apple Day on a local housing estate and very popular Beauty on a Budget workshops!
- At the heart of the Project is its aim to combat food poverty, reaching those for whom this is a pressing issue. It provides a lifeline for housebound older people using the community centre who are able to do their shopping and take this home in St Hilda's minibus, while the Co-op is registered with the NHS Healthy Start Voucher Scheme for parents and pregnant women on welfare benefits.

- While operating on a 'not for profit' basis the Co-op aims to be sustainable by breaking even. From healthy apples to freshly grown spinach, it sold £14,766 worth of vegetables and fruit last year, making a small surplus of £162 – an ideal break even result!

## Plans for 2017/18

- To develop volunteering 'on the job' placements in the Co-op for women learning English in our Boundary Women's Project ESOL classes. This will enable volunteers to improve spoken English language skills and increase employability, while contributing to the local community.
- St Hilda's Guides will carry out a "Takeover" during evening Food Co-op sessions, followed by Woodcraft Folk Pioneers doing likewise with an added cake sale to raise funds for our Older People's Project - a great way for young people to learn skills and make a difference.
- A new programme of Healthy Living Workshops including winter themed soup making and summer juicing sessions.

*"I can't get to the shops anymore, so it's very good to get my fruit and veg at the Food Co-op."*

*"I hadn't seen the new things [fruit and veg] before but I've taken these home and tried and I've actually liked them. I now try to get something new every couple of weeks."*

*"I really like learning new skills and being part of the team, I've made new friends here. The Food Co-op is the best part of my day. I love coming here on a Thursday."  
(Unemployed volunteer)*

# 12 LinkAge Plus



LinkAge Plus is an innovative project for people over 50 living in Tower Hamlets, aiming to help people stay active and make the most out of life. Co-funded by Tower Hamlets Council and Clinical Commissioning Group, it operates across the borough from five hubs. St Hilda's works closely with the lead voluntary sector partner Toynbee Hall, running our LinkAge Plus (LA+) service based at Sonali Gardens in Shadwell. This provides a 'One Stop Shop' linking up individuals with other agencies, while delivering group activities alongside outreach support for isolated older people.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- St Hilda's LinkAge Plus worked with an average of 250 older people per quarter during the year, offering both one to one outreach support and group based activities. Our team worked closely with other partners to provide a comprehensive range of opportunities across Tower Hamlets: Age UK East London, Neighbours in Poplar, Peabody Housing Association's Sundial Centre and Toynbee Hall.
- New developments included a LA+ Gardening Group. In partnership with Creative Support social care provider, members have been planting and tending vegetables and flowers. They have named the group 'Happy Gardeners' which is apt!
- A wide range of other activities also take place throughout the week, from a new Line Dancing class set up in partnership with Tower Hamlets Community Homes and Tower Hamlets Sports Development Team to weekly darts sessions and IT training. Regular chair based exercise classes took place during the year, along with a Good Moves health programme for people with long term health conditions.
- A highly popular annual programme of outings was organised, enabling a large number of older people to visit a diverse selection of places that otherwise would not be possible for them, including Kew Gardens, Greenwich, the seaside at Hastings and Worthing, and even the Houses of Parliament!

## Plans for 2017/18

- Our Happy Gardeners group will benefit from a wonderful new planter to be installed by The Mercers' Company in the garden of Sonali Gardens. This will be available for members and Day Centre users to grow vegetables, herbs and flowers, bringing immense therapeutic benefits for all.
- Our team of LA+ Outreach workers will continue to provide vital one to one support for older adults, visiting sheltered schemes, GP surgeries, One Stop Shops and other places to offer their services.
- A new LinkAge Plus men's group is planned, aimed at combating isolation and increasing the involvement of older men in activities.

*"Without LinkAge we all would be lost!"*

*"I have made some great friends through LinkAge, without it I would be looking at the four walls."*

*"A very important service for people."*

# Older People's Project 13



The Older People's Project provides a full day service, playing a key role in reducing isolation and promoting wellbeing. Opportunities on offer include a 'Lunch Club Plus', day care for more frail older people, with a wide range of regular activities from a Computer Club to arts and crafts, outings, an Older People's Healthy Living Group with indoors sports, exercise sessions, and Tai Chi classes - to name just a few! Transport is provided or arranged for less mobile members to take part, while staff also assist users with one-to-one advocacy when needed.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- Over 150 older people used the Project during 2016/17, from regular group activities to one off events. New activities during the year included a Knit and Natter craft group and an Older People's Social Club. A new partnership with Tower Hamlets Sports Development team enabled us to start highly active and popular pensioners' zumba sessions!
- Intergenerational activities included participation in "Searching for Ghosts" exhibition displayed at the V&A's Museum of Childhood, in collaboration with Virginia Primary School and St Hilda's Guide Group. Centred around memories of the Boundary Estate and surrounding area, this produced a wonderful journey into living and past history. Pupils from Bow Boys School also visited St Hilda's, learning recipes from Older People's Project members.
- A series of 10 outings were organised, providing opportunities for less mobile older people to visit a diverse range of venues that would otherwise be inaccessible - from the William Morris Gallery and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (both with assistance of volunteer staff from Crédit Agricole), Brick Lane Music Hall, to the seaside at Southend and shopping trips to Asda! Parties and celebrations also took place, including marvellous summer and Christmas parties organised by City law firm Berwin Leighton Paisner, and a lively Jamaican independence celebration.
- A programme of information workshops included sessions on arthritis delivered by Arthritis UK, St Joseph's Hospice's community services, a Fire Brigade session on fire safety, and London Hospital NHS staff on heart health prevention. The Older People's Project also organised eyesight and audiology checks for older people within the community centre.

## Plans for 2017/18

- A new 'Out and About' programme of outings supported by a grant from The Grocers' Company. Volunteer assistance from Crédit Agricole and other corporate companies will help us to implement this, enabling older people to access and enjoy public spaces and amenities.
- The Older People's Project will develop singing as part of its activities, including plans for intergenerational joint music sessions with Year 3 primary school children - and participation in a mass singing event with other community centre users and members of the Mercers' Company.
- A new Older People's Healthy Living Group programme of activities, including a summer walking group encouraging outdoor physical exercise and health.

*"I like coming to St Hilda's because it helps me socialise and meet new friends."*

*"St Hilda's makes such a difference. It means I'm out of the house, and meeting other people."*

*"They really understand my needs, and the food is great!"*

# 14 Sonali Gardens Day Centre



Sonali [Bengali for 'Golden'] Gardens Day Centre offers person centred day opportunities to older people from Bangladeshi and other communities. A Tower Hamlets borough wide resource, it provides care and support throughout the week at St Hilda's second site in Shadwell. A team of bi-lingual Bengali speaking staff provide culturally appropriate care and facilities, with activities promoting independence and wellbeing. The Day Centre also offers access to primary care. Accessible transport is used to enable housebound and users reduced in mobility to come to the Day Centre and enjoy its services.



## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- Last year 103 users accessed services offered by Sonali Gardens Day Centre. Our Monday to Friday Day Centre provided 40 places daily, supplemented by weekend day care provision offering up 12 places per session.
- A cultural music programme took place, with highly popular singing sessions, including traditional Bengali music from the 1960s and visiting musicians. Much loved, these interactive sessions bring older people's memories to life, with mass participation by Day Centre users!
- Off site outings were organised, greatly enjoyed by service users who would otherwise not be able to get out and about. As well as shopping trips, destinations included Kew Gardens and Southend Seaside.
- Healthy living and personal independence are central to the service provided by Sonali Gardens Day Centre. Health awareness workshops were organised in partnership with other organisations during the year, including cancer awareness and a session on how to use continence pads in partnership with NHS Public Health.



## Plans for 2017/18

- Along with the LinkAge Plus Happy Gardeners group, Day Centre members will benefit from a wonderful new planter installed by The Mercers' Company in the garden of Sonali Gardens. Service users will be able to grow vegetables, herbs and flowers, bringing immense therapeutic value.
- Following the successful experience of a previous 'Nakshi Katha' (traditional Bengali embroidery) project, Day Centre members plan to embark on a knitting project, producing woollen gloves, caps and scarves.
- A memories project was started during 2016/17 and we will continue this, capturing and recording the life stories of Day Centre users, experiences and living histories that would otherwise be lost.

*"The Day Centre has helped me to stand again."*

*"I would never have gone on something like this if I had not come to Sonali Gardens! (A Day Centre user at the end of a boat trip organised with DLR Transport for London)"*

*"I do not have any other place to meet and talk to people apart from Sonali Gardens."*



# Carers' Breaks Project 15

St Hilda's Carers' Project provides short and flexible respite breaks to carers in Tower Hamlets. Many carers spend a significant amount of their time providing unpaid care to a family member, partner or friend – all too often unrecognized and under supported. Funded by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, our Carers' Breaks service is designed to give carers a supportive break away from this caring role through stimulating domiciliary care or day care 'placements' for the cared for person. A popular monthly Carers Support Group also offers opportunities to access peer support, information and advice.



## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- The Carers' Project provided short and flexible breaks for 60 carers, comprising 1,800 hours of domiciliary care and 180 days of day care placement. 25 new carers accessed services, showing the impact of the Project in reaching unsupported members of the community. Individual carers were able to receive up to 36 hours 'short' and 36 hours 'flexible' respite breaks within the year, helping them to cope with a crisis or just take time out.
- Our "Fursoth" ('Take Rest' in Bengali) Carers Support Group enabled carers to meet others in similar situations, and to access information on available services and help. It also played a key role in helping Tower Hamlets Council to prepare its Carers Strategy by giving their views in four different meetings, two at Sonali Gardens Day Centre and two at Tower Hamlets Carers Centre.
- The Fursoth group worked in partnership with St Joseph Hospice in Hackney through its "Compassionate Neighbours" scheme, promoting volunteering opportunities within its End of Life services for carers after their caring role has come to an end.
- A programme of outings and trips was organised during the summer, including seaside excursions to Hastings, an outing to a fruit and vegetable farm in Esher, and to Woburn Safari Park. Those who went not only had enjoyable days out but received a much needed break and the chance to socialise with other carers.



## Plans for 2017/18

- After a number of extensions, Tower Hamlets Council funding for St Hilda's Carers' Project is due to finish during 2017/18, with respite care for carers then incorporated into domiciliary care commissioned by the local authority. However we plan to continue to provide much needed support to carers living in Tower Hamlets through our other projects and services.

*"St Hilda's carers' project helped me after I moved from Birmingham, caring for an elderly relative as well as looking after a 3 year old child on my own. The project worker visited me, and introduced me to St Hilda's advice service which helped me get benefits to live on so I could continue to care."*

*"I am the carer of my elderly mother-in-law who is disabled and in a wheelchair, needing caring support 24/7. By using St Hilda's breaks service I was able to complete my ESOL English course Level 1 with Tower Hamlets College and plan to do Level 2 from this September."*

# 16 Youth Project



St Hilda's Inspire! Youth Project works with young people with the aim of developing life skills, widening horizons and raising aspirations – encouraging a belief that the sky is the limit! While providing a welcoming environment to young people aged 11-19 from throughout Tower Hamlets, the Project acts a local Hub for the Weavers Ward and surrounding Bethnal Green area, providing activities and resources, and creating life changing opportunities for those who use it.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- Over 110 young people participated in the Youth Project's Inspire! activities during the year. Based around two weekly sessions, young people took part in a wide range of activities from sports, IT and creative arts to cooking and movie nights! With the help of our Rank Foundation funded Time to Shine internship, St Hilda's was able to develop its youth provision for girls, including an exciting new Guide Group initiative.
- Our Inspire! sports activities centred on a Youth Activate programme, supported by a grant from East End Community Foundation. Multisport sessions, kickboxing classes, football and basketball and much more kept Youth Project members active during the year! We also run volunteer led boxing sessions in the community centre.
- Healthy living activities also saw Youth Project boys 'break the gender mould', learning and using cooking skills, producing some mouthwatering dishes including shepherd's pie, lasagna, and Victoria sponge cake. Watch out MasterChef!
- Older members of the Youth Project received support for the transition to employment, including CV workshops, practice interviews, and assistance with applications and job searches.
- 10 young people achieved the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Skills Certificate, while others successfully completed Emergency First Aid courses, helping to develop confidence and life skills. St Hilda's East Community Centre is a registered ABC learning centre, able to offer accredited learning.

## Plans for 2017/18

- A residential trip to the top of the world.....in Wales! An expedition to the summit of Mount Snowden. A Youth Project group is looking forward to this experience which will help them develop character, resourcefulness, team work and leadership skills.
- A Diversity Sports programme, with Inspire! Youth Project members and Surjamuki disabled youth group members coming together through the Paralympic sport Boccia. Mixed teams will play together in a series of boccia sessions, leading to a grand final competition.
- Building on the work of our Time to Shine Youth Development internship, St Hilda's youth provision for girls and young women will further expand through the a Mercers' Company supported Unity Girls Project, ensuring equality of access and opportunities for all.

*"Here I don't get told off but get support to learn from life. It makes you feel like a grown up really." (16 years old)*

*"There is not much to do around here.... here I can do new things and be with my friends." (14 years old)*

*"It's a friendly place to be, I get help with things." (13 years old)*

# Time to Shine: Youth Development 17



St Hilda's was fortunate enough to have been involved in The Rank Foundation's 'Time to Shine' internship programme for a second year during 2016. The Foundation aims to support personal development and address organisational development needs through this innovative programme. St Hilda's successfully applied for a grant to employ a paid Youth Development Intern to develop new activities for girls and young women – with great results!

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- A 1st St Hilda's Guide Group was established in collaboration with Girlguiding UK. A key highlight of the internship programme, the Group has become a focal point for girls aged 10-14 wishing to learn skills, gain confidence and build friendships, and have fun. Weekly evening sessions are hugely popular, often in excess of 20 girls attending.
- Following a successful grant from East End Community Foundation, older girls took part in St Hilda's Youth Activate sport programme. A Sportivate London grant also enabled a summer girls' sports project. Incorporating multisport sessions and kickboxing classes delivered by world champion Ruqsana Begum, these initiatives enabled young people from diverse backgrounds to take part and keep fit. Football is particularly enjoyed!
- An exciting intergenerational project saw girls collaborating with St Hilda's Older People's Project members and V&A Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, bringing the past to life and showcasing childhood memories of living on the Boundary Estate - offering a glimpse into the lived experience of several generations of East Londoners. This project 'Searching for Ghosts' is currently being exhibited at the museum.
- In addition to regular community centre based sessions, St Hilda's girls enjoyed off site activities each week, from going bowling and visiting a chocolate factory to picnics in Victoria Park. Our 1st St Hilda's guides also held fundraising bake sales in the offices of city firms Berwin Leighton Paisner and Credit Agricole. They raised an impressive amount of over £500 through their fundraising activities, helping to pay towards their annual Girlguiding subscriptions.

## Plans for 2017/18

- In a fantastic development, St Hilda's has been chosen as the Mercers' Company Charity. A three year Company grant will enable us to continue the successful work of our Time to Shine internship, further developing new opportunities and engagement of girls in St Hilda's youth provision through a Unity Girls Project.
- We plan to establish a new study programme for girls aged 15-19, providing a safe and quiet study space in St Hilda's community centre to revise and do their homework. Many girls live in crowded accommodation and this will offer invaluable support for their academic performance at school.
- A residential trip away from London will be organised to help break barriers and provide girls with a lifetime opportunity as many of them have never been away from home.

*"I like coming to Guides because you get to do fun and different activities each week. I am really fitting into Guides and have made new friends."*

*"I enjoy Guides as it helps me with my confidence and I get to meet new people as well as spend time with my friends."*

*"Being here helps me to explore and enjoy myself as well as make new friends and take part in activities without being judged."*

# 18 Surjamuki Project



Surjamuki ('Sunflower' in Bengali) Project promotes independence, positive learning and involvement in the wider community among young people with disabilities. Delivered through weekly transport assisted group sessions at St Hilda's, on-site and outdoors its educational and recreational activities are based on the principles of Helping Children Achieve More. Activities aim to address issues such as independent living, performing everyday tasks and developing key employability skills – as well as being great fun! Project facilities include a Sensory Room, offering a fun, safe and stimulating environment for young people with sensory impairment to explore.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- Surjamuki's fundraising efforts received a wonderful boost in December, when a £25,500 cheque was presented by Cllr. Abdul Mukit MBE, the former Speaker of Tower Hamlets Council – recognition of the important impact of the Project on the lives of young people in the Borough.
- Surjamuki jointly delivered St Hilda's 'Youth Activate' in collaboration with St Hilda's Youth and Girls Projects, with an exciting multi-sports programme of activities including basketball and mixed sessions of boccia. This was a great experience, bringing together young people of different physical abilities together as a team.
- A highly engaging and interactive eight week digital programme took place, working together with Headliners, a digital media charity. Young people learned how to use digital cameras, take photos, and record videos and audio.
- Surjamuki's 'Established Wisdom' intergenerational programme (commenced in 2015/16) successfully concluded with a summer BBQ, bringing older and young people together. Other activities undertaken during the year included workshops strengthening members' independent living skills and promoting healthy living choices, outings to the seaside and a fun-filled day out to Woburn Safari Park!



## Plans for 2017/18

- For Surjamuki members to make and star in their own Hollywood blockbuster film, The Big Day, a wedding horror comedy, in partnership with staff from Create arts charity.
- To run a six month creative arts project, Surjamuki Creates Headlines!, showcasing to the wider community that disability is not a barrier to artistic expression. Supported by Canary Wharf Group, artwork will include printed T-shirts displaying positive messages about disability, delivered alongside a programme of fun multi-sports sessions.
- A new summer programme of trips with destinations and activities chosen by young people themselves.



*"I love Surjamuki. It allows me to have fun."*

*"Surjamuki is where I met my friends every week."*

*"I learn a lot when I go to the centre."*

# Under 5's Project 19



Our Ofsted registered Under 5's Project provides learning activities for young children from 6 months to 5 years. Pre-school children play, sing and listen to stories, while parents socialise in a friendly and welcoming environment, receiving support around parenting and child development. In addition to 'stay and play' sessions, crèche childcare enables parents to participate in other activities taking place elsewhere in the community centre, such as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes.



St Hilda's also works closely with our local Mowlem Children's Centre, which runs regular activities within the community centre. During 2016/17 these included active play for toddlers delivered by Toyhouse Tower Hamlets, music sessions, and stay and play. St Hilda's and Tower Hamlets Children's Centres complement each other, supporting children in getting the best start in life through a wide range of play and learning opportunities.

## Key Achievements in 2016/17

- More than 40 children used our regular fun early years activities during the year, enjoying stay and play and crèche sessions. Based on the Early Years Foundation Stage, our soft play and messy play activities provide great introduction for children going on to nursery school and beyond.
- Our 'Active Ants' programme continued as part of the Under 5's Project's Family Learning activities, encouraging children to be active and learn about nature while playing and getting messy! Our refurbished outside play area provided much needed outdoor space for pre-school children living in the local neighbourhood.
- In partnership with Spitalfields Music, the Under 5s Project hosted a wonderful 'Musical Rumpus' interactive opera for children under 2 1/2. 'Catch a Sea Star' proved a great success, bringing delight and introducing children to the world of musical instruments.
- One off events also included a Christmas Party in the crèche facility, greatly enjoyed by local children, with Xmas presents donated by the girls of Cheltenham Ladies' College.

## Plans for 2017/18

- An exciting new Nature Play 'Splatter Time' programme will take place as part of our Family Learning activities. This will encourage children to discover nature, the environment, and to be more physically active, supporting children with early learning before they go to school.
- Following replanting of our crèche garden in 2016/17 we will further improve the outside play area, providing outdoor opportunities for local children, many of whom do not have gardens or play space at home.
- St Hilda's partnership with Spitalfields Music will continue, including a brand new show about friendship, Fogonogo, taking place during May.



*"My child and I really enjoy our time here."*

*"This is one of the few settings I can still bring both of my girls at the same time."*

*"My child has fun here and my English has improved."*

# 20 Summarised Balance Sheet

## ST HILDA'S EAST SUMMARISED BALANCE SHEET - AS AT 31 MARCH 2017

	<u>2017</u>		<u>2016</u>	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Tangible fixed assets	1,595,726		1,655,211	
Investments	<u>64,004</u>		<u>63,604</u>	
		1,659,730		1,718,815
<b>Current assets</b>				
Stock	4,852		6,028	
Debtors	158,766		294,736	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>537,761</u>		<u>524,960</u>	
	701,379		825,724	
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Creditors falling due within one year	<u>84,955</u>		<u>119,538</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>616,424</u>		<u>706,186</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>2,276,154</u>		<u>2,425,001</u>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>				
Unrestricted funds				
- General		476,223		578,003
- Designated		225,310		230,279
Restricted funds		<u>1,574,621</u>		<u>1,616,719</u>
<b>Total charity funds</b>		<u>2,276,154</u>		<u>2,425,001</u>

The Designated Funds represents monies set aside by Trustees for specific purposes and include £134,507 for building maintenance and £90,803 for staff contingencies.

These summarised accounts have been extracted from the full audited accounts of St. Hilda's East for the year ended 31st March 2017 and they may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information, copies of the full audited accounts can be obtained from St. Hilda's East, 18 Club Row, London E2 7EY; Tel. 020 7739 8066.

The full audited accounts were approved by the Trustees on 31st October 2017 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies. The audit report thereon was unqualified.

### AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ST HILDA'S EAST

We have examined the summarised accounts, which have been extracted from the full audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2017. In our opinion the summarised accounts are consistent with the full audited accounts.

RAMON LEE & PARTNERS

REGISTERED AUDITORS

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

EAGLE HOUSE

167 CITY ROAD

LONDON EC1V 1AW

31 OCTOBER 2017

# Statement of Financial Activities 21

## ST HILDA'S EAST SUMMARISED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>			2017	2016
	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds		
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>					
Donations and legacies	34,404	-	30,000	64,404	135,696
Income from charitable activities	1,101,034	-	414,191	1,515,225	1,498,582
Income from other trading activities	119,400	-	-	119,400	126,878
Investment income	3,755	-	-	3,755	3,821
<b>Total income</b>	<b><u>1,258,593</u></b>	<b>-</b>	<b><u>444,191</u></b>	<b><u>1,702,784</u></b>	<b><u>1,764,977</u></b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Cost of raising funds	53,965	-	-	53,965	41,981
Expenditure on charitable activities	1,306,808	4,969	486,289	1,798,066	1,792,071
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b><u>1,360,773</u></b>	<b><u>4,969</u></b>	<b><u>486,289</u></b>	<b><u>1,852,031</u></b>	<b><u>1,834,052</u></b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>					
<b>&amp; net movements in funds before gains &amp; losses on investments</b>					
Net gains/losses on investments	400	-	-	400	4,292
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(101,780)</b>	<b>(4,969)</b>	<b>(42,098)</b>	<b>(148,847)</b>	<b>(64,783)</b>
<i>Reconciliation of funds:</i>					
Total funds, brought forward	578,003	230,279	1,616,719	2,425,001	2,489,784
<b>Total funds, carried forward</b>	<b><u>476,223</u></b>	<b><u>225,310</u></b>	<b><u>1,574,621</u></b>	<b><u>2,276,154</u></b>	<b><u>2,425,001</u></b>

### CONTINUING OPERATIONS

None of the organisation's activities were acquired or discontinued during the above two financial periods.

### TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES

No other gains and losses were recognised in the year other than those shown above.

The restricted funds totalling £1,574,621 includes capital funding of £1,507,387 relating to the community centre building and vehicles and revenue funds of £67,234.

**National Westminster Bank Plc.**  
280 Bishopsgate  
London  
EC2M 4RB

**CAF Bank Limited**  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent  
ME19 4TA

**The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc.**  
62-63 Threadneedle Street  
London  
EC2R 8LA

**Lloyds Bank Plc.**  
25 Gresham Street  
London  
EC2V 7HN

**Scottish Widows Bank**  
67 Morrison Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 8YJ

# 22 Thanks and Acknowledgements



## SUPPORTERS

St Hilda's East Community Centre's sincere gratitude goes to all the funders and donors who have supported the organisation in 2016/17 including:

Ally Capellino  
Balcombe Charitable Trust  
BBC Children in Need  
Bedford Memorial Trust  
Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP  
Big Lottery Awards for All  
The Cheltenham Ladies' College  
The Incorporated Guild of Cheltenham Ladies' College  
City Bridge Trust  
Crédit Agricole CIB  
Davis Rubens Charitable Trust  
Derwent London Community Foundation  
Duncan Norman Trust Fund  
East End Community Foundation  
The Worshipful Company of Fan Makers

The Grocers' Company  
The Haberdashers' Benevolent Foundation  
The Henry Smith Charity  
The Worshipful Company of Innholders  
London Legal Support Trust  
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust  
Mercers' Charitable Foundation  
Queen Adelaide's Charity  
The Rank Foundation  
The Joseph Rank Trust  
Samuel Butler's Educational Foundation  
The Sobell Foundation  
Sportivate London (Sport England)  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Special thanks also go to:

All the local businesses that supported our work through donations or in kind during the year. We are proud to announce that Sainsbury's store in Bethnal Green Road has chosen St Hilda's East Community Centre as its charity of the year in 2017/18 – for a second year in a row!

All our Friends of St Hilda's East members who continue to support our much needed work from year to year.

All the people who make regular and much appreciated contributions to the organisation by standing order.

We are also very grateful to all the individuals and others who made donations during the course of the year.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers make a key and much valued contribution to St Hilda's projects and services and last year was no exception. The volunteering community at St Hilda's is a rich and diverse one, and we would like to thank all the many individuals who generously committed time, energy and skills to help the organisation achieve so much during 2016/17.



# Thanks and Acknowledgements 23



## **PARTNERS**

Our acknowledgement and appreciation go to all the partners with whom we have worked during 2016/17, enabling us to together deliver services and activities for and with local people. We would especially like to thank Tower Hamlets Council, from whom St Hilda's receives a range of grant, service agreement and other funding, as well as our many other partners across the voluntary and community, statutory and corporate sectors.

We would also particularly like to thank:

The Mercers' Company, whose members have chosen St Hilda's East Community Centre as their Company Charity for a three year period from 2017. We are delighted to receive this honour, which will involve volunteering involvement by Mercers and Company staff as well as financial support for our youth work with girls.

Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP for the tremendous commitment of its staff in running pro bono Legal Advice sessions at Sonali Gardens Centre during the last year - as well as for the support given to St Hilda's with activities, fundraising and special events.

Thank you to Cr dit Agricole CIB for its greatly appreciated support, not only financial assistance and raising funds through the London Legal Support Trust's annual sponsored walk, but also through staff time and resources enabling our Older People's Project to deliver its programme of activities and outings during the year, making a real difference to the lives of a great many older people.

Many thanks to Maharaja Restaurant in Benfleet, Cheltenham Spice Lodge, and Toros Steakhouse in Coventry, for hosting fundraising events for St Hilda's East Community Centre during the past year.

Thank you to Barbican Centre & Guildhall School of Music & Drama HR Department for its support during the last year.

Last but not least, we are indebted to staff from Credit Suisse who have shared their time and skills to assist with the design and production of this Annual Report - for the 11th year running!









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Sonali Gardens Centre

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London  
E1 0AT

Telephone: 020 7265 9211

Founded by The Incorporated Guild of Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1889  
St Hilda's East is a Company Limited by Guarantee No: 52880 and Registered Charity No: 212208 with registered  
offices at 18 Club Row, London E2 7EY.

Grant funded by London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council.

