

St Hilda's East Community Centre

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019



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2 About Us



Who we are and what we do

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

St Hilda's has been serving the community for 130 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. 2019 marks our 130th Anniversary and we have been celebrating through a range of community and larger-scale fundraising events.

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 people using our services 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 2018/2019 were:

Ms Suzette Barry
Ms Nandini Basuthakur (Treasurer)
Ms Harriet Edwards
Ms Alison Klarfeld
Mrs Jean Locker
Mrs Malini McCauley
Ms Bethan Mobey
Ms Fawziyah Rahman
Mr Dennis Twomey (Chair)



4 Message from the Chair



St Hilda's is 130 years old this year and continues to provide a wide range of much needed services for the local community. Many of the problems faced by the poor in the late nineteenth century have, fortunately, disappeared. Even so, I suspect that those remarkable ladies from Cheltenham Ladies' College Guild, who established our charity, would still recognise some of the issues in the area today. St Hilda's is no less needed now than it was 130 years ago. St Hilda's performs an enormous amount of work each year, as you will see when you read this report. The community which we serve faces deep challenges against a background of changes to the benefits system and reductions in public expenditure.



St Hilda's has transformed itself greatly over the years but it is exactly this – the ability to change to meet new needs and circumstances – that has enabled us to continue as a valued resource for the local and wider community. We will, of course also need to continue to change in the future. The world changes and we, if we are to go on providing appropriate services, must change with it.



St Hilda's has been fortunate in recent years in the support it has received from The Mercers' Company. This has included not just a substantial financial contribution for which we are immensely grateful but also funding for a consultancy to help us plan for the future. As a result of this we have recruited an additional deputy director to help drive forward our plans for the future.

In this Annual Report you will find details of the work done and the success achieved, often against considerable odds, by the multitude of projects that St Hilda's now runs. When you read about these individual projects, remember that the work done and the success achieved comes only as a result of the hard work and enthusiasm of the people staffing those projects and the support they receive from the administrative and management team. St Hilda's, like all other community organisations, can only ever be as good as the staff (both paid and voluntary) who work for it.

St Hilda's, like all charities, is governed by a board of trustees. St Hilda's is fortunate in that its board is particularly strong and brings not just commitment but also a wide range of skills and experience to its task. I am enormously grateful to my fellow board members for their continued dedication to, and work on behalf of, St Hilda's.

Dennis Twomey - Chair of Trustees

Message from the Director 5



I am delighted to introduce our 2018/19 Annual Report in what is a very special year for St Hilda's East, our 130th anniversary. Founded as a settlement by ex-pupils of Cheltenham Ladies' College way back in 1889, our organisation has evolved into a vibrant and modern day, local charity. Our fundamental mission to serve the community remains the same all these years later, as you will see from the pages of this report. With over 500 people using our services each week, St Hilda's continues to not only provide life-changing services and opportunities for people of all ages, but also act as wonderful example of what can be achieved when people from diverse backgrounds come together to change society for the better.

St Hilda's truly has a lot to celebrate, with some 12 different projects and services operating under our roof. From Under 5s pre-school play, our new Boys' Space and wonderful Girl Guide groups, our highly popular Food Co-op, Boundary Women's Project running ESOL classes and craft training, to care for older people on both our community centre and Sonali Gardens sites, there is something for virtually everybody! We extend a warm invitation to anyone who has not seen our work at first hand to visit us and do so.

We are proud that St Hilda's achievements receive both local and national recognition. Most recently the prestigious LawWorks Best New Pro Bono Activity Award was awarded in December 2018 at the Law Society, for our community centre Legal Advice Clinic run in partnership with City law firm Macfarlanes LLP and BPP School of Law. At the same time, we are conscious of the need to plan for the future, co-designing our services with those who use them and moving forward. To

this end we engaged a Mercers' Company funded Charities Aid Foundation consultancy during the last year, helping us to develop our business model to be more resilient in the years ahead. We are confident that this will help our work to continue to thrive, meeting needs and helping create new opportunities.

St Hilda's 130th anniversary programme will continue throughout 2019/20, having commenced with a series of exciting local community events including a joyous Street Party in July 2019. We are indebted to The Mercers' Company: as its Company Charity it has made the stunning Mercers' Hall available for a grand celebration event in October 2019. A few months later in March 2020 we will welcome members of Cheltenham Ladies' College Guild to mark not only St Hilda's birthday, but also a unique shared heritage and recognise the work of our fantastic projects and numerous volunteers.

The assistance and commitment of all our funders, individual donors and pro bono partners makes a real difference to what we are able to achieve. It is also much needed. To ensure that our vital work continues into the next 130 years we have launched a 130th Anniversary Appeal with the ambitious target of £130,000, a thousand pounds for every year! We are truly incredibly grateful to all who are able to lend their support to St Hilda's East Community Centre.

Thank you.

Rupert Williams

Rupert Williams - Director

6 Advice Service



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

Key Achievements in 2018/19

- St Hilda's Advice Service helps an enormous number of individuals with the limited resources of a part-time and sessional Advice Worker. Over the last year 213 clients used the service, 138 of these being new. 732 advice appointments took place, during which over 656 hours of face-to-face advice was provided on a range of issues. Of these appointments 528 involved welfare rights matters, 108 debt and 55 housing.
- 166 forms were filled in, resulting in £70,378 in new benefits being awarded to clients, and £38,144 in backdated benefits. This work has had a massive impact on the quality of life for individuals and families trying to make ends meet, in some cases enabling them to move out of poverty.
- We run additional and well-used drop-in sessions alongside a City Bridge Trust funded anti-poverty Food Co-op initiative and our community centre Legal Advice Clinic. This combined approach has increased take up of advice support for people living in the Weavers Ward and surrounding area.

"I'm very grateful as I got discretionary housing payments when my benefit was cut due to the benefit cap. I was then helped with a Personal Independence Payment claim, which was successful. I not only got a disability benefit but my benefits were no longer capped. I can now cope with the costs of being disabled."

Plans for 2019/20

- Renewal of the Advice Service's AQS (Advice Quality Standard) accreditation at Generalist Level, with a biennial audit due in August. This will demonstrate the ongoing high standard of our advice provision.
- A St Hilda's East 130th Anniversary Team will take part in the London Legal Support Trust's annual Legal Walk to raise funds for our work, alongside teams from our law firm partners, to whom we are indebted for their continued support. St Hilda's Advice Service relies greatly on sponsored funds raised through the Legal Walk to continue its much-needed provision.
- St Hilda's has come into contact with many people who are struggling to manage changes made in the welfare benefits system, especially Universal Credit. This has now been introduced across the borough of Tower Hamlets and we expect an increased demand for advice as the full effects of its implementation begin to be felt during the coming year.

"The advice worker not only explained our water bill to us but also helped us claim a grant that reduced our annual bills by 50%."

"The advisor helped me get repairs done to my flat that I had been chasing up without success."



Legal Advice Service 7



St Hilda's Advice Service is complemented by weekly evening Legal Advice Clinics on both our community centre and Sonali Gardens sites. Advice is provided by volunteer City law firm staff to members of the public on a pro bono basis. In an era of Legal Aid restrictions, this service enables many who would otherwise not be able to obtain legal advice to do so in easy to access drop in sessions.

Key Achievements in 2018/19

- 351 drop-in and pre-booked appointments took place at our two weekly Legal Advice Clinics held in the Bethnal Green and Shadwell areas of Tower Hamlets. These included advice enquiries on 158 housing matters, 59 employment issues, 40 on welfare benefits, and 24 consumer concerns, as well as a wide range of other subjects.
- St Hilda's community centre Legal Advice Clinic won the Best New Pro Bono Activity award at the prestigious LawWorks Annual Pro Bono Awards held at the Law Society in December 2018, receiving the award with our partners Macfarlanes LLP and BPP Law School.
- The value of pro bono advice given during the year amounted to £431,721, indicating the enormous contribution made by our law firm partners in making advice accessible to those who need it.
- St Hilda's East's Legal Advice Service also provided valuable practical experience to Queen Mary University and BPP Law School students who help to operate a triage system for clients at our clinics. Following on from our December pro bono award at the Law Society, St Hilda's community centre clinic was a runner up for the LawWorks Student Awards in May 2019.
- Volunteer staff from Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner and Crédit Agricole raised funds for St Hilda's advice work through the London Legal Support Trust's annual sponsored walk in May 2018, along with St Hilda's own team. The teams' combined efforts raised £10,545!



Plans for 2019/20

- Our Legal Advice Clinics in Bethnal Green and Shadwell will work together to provide a truly cross borough service, making free legal advice available to people on low incomes living throughout Tower Hamlets.
- We hope to launch a new programme of public education legal workshops through our community centre projects. Delivered by law firms these will enable members of the community to be aware of their rights.

*"The advisors have helped me to rehouse on two occasions.
Thank you very much."*

*"Thank you for writing on behalf of my elderly mother. She
was distraught before using your service but feels a lot
better now the matter has been resolved. Great service!"*

*"Thanks to you and the team I was able to resolve the
dispute."*

*"I very much appreciate the efforts of the legal advisors on
my case. Thank you so much for your help!"*

8 Boundary Women's Project



Boundary Women's Project works with women in the area surrounding St Hilda's to develop skills and realise their own potential, especially individuals experiencing social exclusion or those facing language barriers. During last year over 250 women received support from the Project, with up to 70 taking part in its activities in any one week, from ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes and IT learning to Keep Fit and Yoga. An outreach service also helps individual women overcome isolation and provides one-to-one support.

Key Achievements in 2018/19

- 60 women developed communication skills and confidence through our ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses. Class-based learning was extended into support to become 'Job Ready', including advice on interview techniques. Our drop in IT classes also assisted this process and enabled women to create email addresses, develop CV's and access job opportunities.
- Our women's positive health promotion development included three weekly sessions, featuring Zumba, Yoga and Keep Fit. In new developments we were able to provide an amazing four-week Self Defence course in partnership with Faith Regen. A very well attended four-week Nutritional Cooking Course also took place, engaging with women through taste and practical cooking to change attitudes to food.
- Our International Women's Day event in March saw well over 100 women come to enjoy and multitude of activities and join in with our 'Orange' day. This theme continued the UN campaign to end violence against women and girls, and encouraged all to think about what equality means today. Women enjoyed dressing up in orange, entering an orange food competition, and an inspiring reading by a local woman of 'Phenomenal Woman' by Maya Angelou.
- Boundary Women's Project worked together with St Hilda's Older People's Project to share their skills as part of a Heritage Lottery Fund supported 'Cut from the Same Cloth' textiles themed workshop programme. Women from different backgrounds came together from the local community to swap memories and experiences over a period of 15 weeks, creating a beautiful banner displaying their common heritage for all to see.

Plans for 2019/20

- Develop and increase ESOL provision to offer classes at multiple levels. Based on the successful experience of the last year, these will incorporate 'job ready' skills including interview techniques, IT classes and CV development.
- Develop our alternative skills development opportunities offered to local women. We will work in partnerships with local social enterprises such as GLOW, Oitij-Jo to offer training for women in catering and crafts. We will also work with the Mary Ward Centre to run an exciting new Looking East cultural art course in conjunction with The British Museum.
- A new programme of health and wellbeing activities for local women, including nutritional cooking sessions, health promotion workshops, and women's 'get active' classes.

"ESOL classes have made a huge difference in my life. The teacher has given me so much confidence. I never used to even leave my flat, but now I'm in the community centre every week and have just started volunteering!"

"I was new to the area and heard about St Hilda's through a neighbour. I came to Cut from the Same Cloth and met so many amazing women. I now often come to activities and really feel like I belong here."

"I come to the women's Yoga and Zumba classes. When the nutritional cooking classes started I just had to join these too. I learned so much! As a result, I have become healthier, and so has the rest of my family."

Community Food and Advice Project 9



Supported by a five year City Bridge Trust grant, our Community Food and Advice Project runs a weekly Food Co-op providing fresh affordable fruit and vegetables to the local community. At the heart of the project is its aim to combat food poverty, with drop in advice on welfare benefits and money issues also available. The project is an inspiring example of social cohesion, bringing together people from the area surrounding St Hilda's. The Co-op is run by a team of volunteers and provides valuable opportunities for local people to gain experience, skills and confidence.

Key Achievements in 2018/19

- St Hilda's weekly Food Co-op is open during both the daytime and evenings, increasing accessibility for working people on low incomes. Last year, our average number of customers increased to 80 people per week, while 165 people have used much needed drop-in advice sessions – in many cases helping clients to move out of poverty. A Legal Advice Clinic also operates alongside the Co-op and welfare benefits advice sessions, offering local people a truly holistic service.
- 45 volunteers helped run the Food Co-op, with a high level of retention, some having volunteered for many years! From managing the till, ordering produce and assisting elderly customers with shopping, we could not do without them. The Co-op has also played an important role in offering work skills and language development placements to individuals, including students from St Hilda's ESOL courses and Tower Hamlets College, and young adults with learning disabilities. Training for volunteers has also included achieving certificates in Bookkeeping for Small Businesses, Customer Service Skills and Food Safety.
- With the help of a small additional grant from Derwent London Community Fund, monthly Food Co-op outreach sessions extended the reach and impact of St Hilda's community food project, with pop-up Co-ops at local Children's Centre sessions in south Hackney and Tower Hamlets. We are registered with the charitable Rose Voucher Scheme which supports families on low incomes to access fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Food Co-op sales increased for the third year in a row, this year by over 25%! From healthy apples to freshly grown spinach, it sold £28,357 worth of vegetables and fruit last year, making a small surplus of £151! While operating on a 'not for profit' basis the Co-op aims to be sustainable by breaking even, and this is the ideal 'break even' result.

Plans for 2019/20

- The Food Co-op will invest its £151 surplus from last year in a weigh-your-own table at the Food Co-op for dried goods and wholefoods. This will help to cut down on use of plastic by customers who bring their own bags or containers.
- We will continue to run outreach pop-up Food Co-ops at Hackney Comet Children's Centre and Tower Hamlets Mowlem Children's Centre sessions.
- A new programme of training for Food Co-op volunteers will include emergency First Aid, a new Food Safety course and nutrition.

"I love the quality of the food and it's nice to buy from people you know...the food is very affordable."

"I like chatting and meeting people so the Food Co-op is the perfect project for me."

"I enjoy working with the customers and other volunteers. I like doing the weighing and setting the tables out ready for customers."

"I buy more fruit and veg now than I used to. I like the summer fruits, especially strawberries."

10 LinkAge Plus



Based at Sonali Gardens in Shadwell, our LinkAge Plus service works with residents aged over 50 to maximise their wellbeing in later life, as part of a Tower Hamlets borough-wide service led by our voluntary sector partner, Toynbee Hall. LinkAge Plus has now been running for 13 years and has become an integral part of the local community. Sonali Gardens is one of five Hubs across the borough offering a range of social and health related activities. We work as a 'One Stop Shop' service where older people can drop in to our centre to access information or support. In addition, we also have Outreach Workers visiting people in their homes and linking them up to other agencies when needed.



Key Achievements in 2018/19

- LinkAge Plus works regularly with over 200 regular service users, with a wide range of activities taking place throughout the week in Sonali Gardens and in other community venues, from darts sessions to seated exercises, coffee mornings and health talks.
- Sonali Day Trippers (a group of LinkAge service users) organised a series of events including a meal at the Moretown Belle restaurant, an outing to the Canterbury Christmas Market and a trip to see the wonderful Motown based musical 'Rip It Up', where everyone had a great time singing and dancing to the music! Partnerships with East End Homes and East End Community Foundation have also enabled us to offer trips to the seaside and highly popular tea dances.
- A new regular arts and crafts session was launched, proving very popular and where service users can have a go at crochet, knitting and making their own jewellery items. Some beautiful items have been created, those taking part showing off and learning lots of new skills.
- Our LinkAge Plus Men's Group is going from success to success and this weekly session is a great time to play pool, have a cup of tea and have a good gossip!

Plans for 2019/20

- Our IT sessions will include support in using SMART phones and tablet training. Many older adult users have told us that they feel that the IT revolution is passing them by. We plan to hold regular sessions where people can bring in their phones or other IT equipment, so we can show them how to get the most out of it.
- Whilst we cater for an enormous number of service users every week, we are aware that there are still many more we need to reach. We are therefore planning to hold regular market stalls and make links with local sheltered schemes.
- We plan to build on an existing partnership with the NHS Falls Awareness Team, based at Mile End Hospital, with the aim of developing Falls Prevention work with older people in Sonali Gardens.

"LinkAge Plus makes our day and keeps us getting out and about. What would we do without it, stay home and get bored!"

"Good company...I love playing darts!"

"I enjoy coming here, it's a very good service and everyone joins in the fun!"

Community Volunteer Project 11



St Hilda's Volunteer Project provides an enriching experience for all who wish to contribute their time to support the community. We are really proud of the support and contribution from those who volunteer in making a difference for others. Our volunteers come from a diverse cross-section of Tower Hamlets and further afield, united by a shared belief in being part of St Hilda's positive impact on the lives of people. A wide range of people volunteer, from unemployed individuals, students and school work experience placements, to teams from corporate companies.

Key Achievements in 2018/19

- 98 volunteers were involved in helping run our services across St Hilda's, from our ever-popular Food Co-op to our youth projects. More than 100 corporate volunteers also took part in team challenges to support the work of St Hilda's, including outings for older people and much appreciated assistance in decorating the community centre. Companies taking part included Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner, Credit Agricole, Velocity Global, Huntress, and Columbia Threadneedle - to name a few!
- Young people are at the heart of volunteering at St Hilda's. We are delighted to continue to receive a high volume of volunteering and work experience requests from school students, sixth formers, college leavers and university graduates. Last year young people came from ten academic institutions to volunteer, from Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, New City College, City University, and Queen Mary University, as well as students from Cheltenham Ladies' College.
- We enjoyed a wonderful second year of partnership volunteering with The Mercers' Company as its Company Charity. This was immensely helpful, with Mercers members and staff volunteering in our Girl Guide Group, gardening sessions in Sonali Gardens, repainting our training rooms, joining St Hilda's Team at the annual London Legal Walk in 2018 – as well as developing our website. The Mercers have truly become part of the St Hilda's volunteering family!
- We are now in our fifth year of welcoming student volunteer placements from the USA. Our international volunteers bring with them unique energy and skills. Last year, the focus was on nutrition and wellbeing expertise, running plant-based cooking workshops with our Women's Project, supporting the Food Co-op and helping run Herbs for Health sessions for our Older People's Project users.



Plans for 2019/20

- An exciting new partnership with Account3 in delivering a 'Welcome to Tower Hamlets' programme, funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This aims to support recent migrants to become involved in the community through volunteer placements.
- Development of a 'St Hilda's Volunteering Framework' to enrich the volunteer journey. The framework will be informed by the guiding principles of Investors in Volunteers. This will ensure that we continue to have a robust and dynamic volunteer programme, supporting the needs of our volunteers and service users.
- As part of our corporate volunteering strategy engagement with companies will enable us to improve our centre facilities for the community, through a new programme of team challenges.



"From day one of my internship, I felt so welcomed by everyone at the centre and could tell that they all treated each other like family. I'm so fortunate to have worked with them and with the wonderfully diverse community of people who come to St Hilda's."

"St Hilda's is an amazing place for volunteering. Staff supported me and made me feel very comfortable as soon as I stepped in. My experience has increased my confidence."

"I have become a good Bingo and Dominoes player as these are some of the most popular activities at St Hilda's!" (Volunteer in Older People's Project)"

12 Older People's Project



The Older People's Project plays a key role in reducing isolation and promoting wellbeing throughout the week. Over 190 older people benefited from its Lunch Club Plus and day care services during the last year. A wide range of regular activities are on offer from a Computer Club, art classes, outings, Zumba and seated exercise sessions, 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 2018/19

- Our new Older People's Singing Group was launched, with support from Spitalfields Music. AKA St Hilda's Choir, singing as a group has brought immense pleasure and joy to those taking part – and to other people! Public performances have included an appearance at a community Winter Gathering event and an inspiring intergenerational rendition with Virginia Primary School children at St Hilda's AGM.
- Aided by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, older people shared their memories and skills as part of a 15-week textiles themed workshop programme in partnership with St Hilda's Women's Project. Older Caribbean women and other pensioners came together with Bangladeshi women from the local community to swap experiences and created a beautiful banner displaying their common heritage.
- We expanded our Healthy Living activities, with new additional sessions including 'Music and Keep Fit' and 'Strength and balancing'. Alongside our already existing activities such as Zumba, Tai Chi and Boccia (a Paralympic sport accessible to all) St Hilda's has become the place to go for older adults to keep fit! Older People's Project members took part in the London-wide Better Over 50's games, representing Tower Hamlets in the dominoes section as Borough champions!
- Students from Mulberry Academy Shoreditch and Older People's Project members took part together in a term time intergenerational project, weekly visits to the community centre resulting in inspiring social contact between young and old. Skill sharing was also a feature of the sessions, notably students being put through their paces in learning the art of dominoes!
- A new programme of outings took place, enabling older people to enjoy venues and amenities that they would otherwise not access. With volunteer assistance from corporate companies, a truly diverse range of destinations included the British Museum, Natural History Museum, Valentine's Park, Brick Lane Music Hall, Brighton seaside, as well as tea dances and shopping trips – and a much-loved annual summer party at the offices of City firm Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner.

Plans for 2019/20

- Following a successful pilot project supported by a Tower Hamlets Can Do grant during 2018/19, we have secured Big Lottery Awards for All funding to run an exciting new Well Art! year-long programme. Led by an experienced community artist, participants will develop their art skills and create a group piece of work, using the theme of St Hilda's 130th anniversary.
- We expect our Singing Group to go from strength to strength. The members are currently practising in advance of a planned performance in the illustrious setting of The Mercers' Hall in the City of London!
- Work with local health services to bring primary health care sessions to older people using St Hilda's, such as audiology, opticians and dental care. This will make it easier for users to access these services.

"St Hilda's is my family. Without it I would just be stuck indoors with just my TV for company."

"I feel on top of the world; my mood goes up when I'm singing."

"The lunch club chef is wonderful. I'm able to make sure I eat properly, have a lovely meal and not be on my own, and I don't have to wash up either!"

Sonali Gardens Day Centre 13



Sonali [Bengali for 'Golden'] Gardens Day Centre provides person centred care and support throughout the week for Bangladeshi and other communities. A Tower Hamlets borough wide resource, it is run at St Hilda's second site in Shadwell. A team of bi-lingual Bengali speaking staff provide culturally appropriate care and facilities, with activities designed with our users to help promote their independence and wellbeing. Accessible transport is used to enable housebound and other users with reduced mobility to come to the Day Centre.

Key Achievements in 2018/19

- Last year, 117 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.
- Partnership with external health agencies to promote health and wellbeing is a key and ongoing feature of our service. NHS staff from Mile End Hospital met with users to raise awareness around cardiovascular health and strokes, how to manage diabetes, in addition to bowel and breast cancer awareness sessions. London Hospital dental students also visited the centre to highlight risks associated with 'betel nut' consumption, widespread in the community.
- Alongside regular keep fit sessions within the Day Centre, table cricket sessions were launched during the year, organised by the Lord's Taverners. Table cricket is an adapted version of cricket, played on a table tennis table, specially designed to give disabled people the chance to play and compete in the sport. It has proved highly popular with day care service users!
- A new craft group was established within the Day Centre, using traditional Bengali embroidery skills to create a lovely tapestry depicting memories and 'scenes from 'back home'.
- Day Centre service users teamed up with our LinkAge Plus Happy Gardeners group to grow vegetables in a magnificent oak planter donated last year through the Mercers' Company. The day centre users enjoyed growing a new crop of South Asian vegetables including 'sheem' (beans) and (kodu) pumpkin, as well as onions and broad beans.



Plans for 2019/20

- A new annual programme of outings chosen by service users, including regular shopping trips, visits to Kew Gardens, the seaside, local parks, and a river boat journey on the Thames.
- Music is a highly popular fixture in the Day Centre's menu of regular activities, with visiting musicians performing traditional Bengali songs. Our users love to participate in these. We plan to expand our repertoire with 'antakshari' singing games: each contestant sings the first verse of a song that begins with the consonant on which the previous contestant's song selection ends!
- Meanwhile, our healthy living activities will be augmented by gentle yoga classes, and a new summer walking programme will encourage older people to stay active, using the large outside garden area at Sonali Gardens.

"I was not able to move much after I had a stroke 6 years ago.... but I have got my movement [mobility] back by taking part in activities at the day centre."

"Gardening [in Sonali Gardens] reminds me the life of Bangladesh where I used to grow my own fruits and vegetable when I was young."

"Coming to the day centre stops me being depressed. I am not on my own."

14 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 based at St Hilda's, on-site and outdoors its educational and recreational activities are founded on the principles of Helping Children Achieve More. Activities aim to address issues such as independent living, confidence in taking on 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 2018/19

- Supported by Derwent London Community Fund and Create arts charity, Surjamuki Makes Headlines! programme included a public showing of their latest blockbuster film. Members also produced hand painted T-shirts displaying positive disability messages inspired by making the film. Other arts activities included Bollywood dance and music sessions, role plays and acting, postcard and Xmas card making.
- A popular outings programme took place during the summer, with destinations and activities chosen by young people themselves – an annual fruit picking trip to Hewitts Farm in Kent, seaside excursions, picnics in the park, a theatre outing to see the Lion King, not to mention canoeing at Shadwell Basin! December saw a much enjoyed visit to see the Xmas lights in the West End of London.
- A programme of personal development workshops incorporating a healthy life project, designed to encourage positive lifestyles and strengthen independent living skills around diet, exercise and self-confidence. Sessions such as shopping and how to put together a budget also helped our members overcome communication barriers and build team work and co-operation skills.

Plans for 2019/20

- An exciting summer activities holiday scheme held in the community centre and off site – from cooking and BBQs, art workshops, to picnics and an outing to the seaside.
- A new programme with our long term partner Create arts charity. Young people led, Surjamuki members will devise art forms such as sculpture and drama to produce their own theatre-style play.
- Surjamuki members have said that they want to go on a residential trip outside London. We hope to fundraise to make this wish a reality.



"We are happy, we're family in Surjamuki."

"I really like it here, I have friends here."

"I love coming. I enjoy it and find it exciting."

Youth Project 15



St Hilda's Youth Project works with young people aged 13-19 with the aim of developing life skills, widening horizons and raising aspirations. While providing a welcoming environment to young people from throughout Tower Hamlets, the Project acts a local Hub for the Weavers Ward and surrounding Bethnal Green area. We aim to create life changing opportunities for young people - so that they can develop confidence and new skills to reach their full potential in life.

Key Achievements in 2018/19

- Over 100 young people participated in the Youth Project's activities during the year. Based around regular weekly sessions, young people took part in a wide range of activities from IT to creative arts, and cooking! The work focused on detached youth work in the local community as well as being centre based.
- Awards won by Youth Project members included Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Skills certificates and 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.
- A weekly volunteer led Muay Thai kickboxing class remains highly popular, with those taking part benefiting from increased strength and self-discipline. Other sports activities included table tennis, badminton and football sessions, helping young people gain confidence and learn team skills as well as keeping fit.
- The Youth Project provided support for older teenagers in their transition from college or school to employment, including CV and job application form workshops, practice interviews, and job searches.
- St Hilda's puts young people's voices at the forefront of our service delivery. A series of engagement events and activities were held to make sure that the type of support we offer meets the changing needs in our community. This included co-designing a new Boys' Space club for boys aged 9-13, enabling us to successfully seek grant funding to kick start this new initiative.

Plans for 2019/20

- With the help of grant funding from Derwent London Community Fund, we will be running our new Boys' Space club for boys aged 9-13. This follows requests from pupils and teachers at our local Virginia Primary School, and will provide a safe space for young people to be involved in fun activities and become active citizens.
- Building on our existing training courses and ABC accreditation, we hope to deliver money management learning units to enable young people to be in control of their finances as they approach adulthood.
- Looking to the future, we aim to develop a new strategy for our work with young people, engaging and actively involving young people directly in designing this to ensure their aspirations and needs are at the centre of our services.

"I come to St Hilda's to meet my friends and make new ones."

"I can talk about my problems here and look at things differently."

*"I got help with my homework and careers advice at the centre
[former Youth Project member]."*

16 Unity Girls' Project



St Hilda's Unity Girls Project works with girls and young women aged 10-19, providing those who use it with a chance to take part in new and empowering activities. The project has become a focal point for girls wishing to learn and develop skills, gain confidence, build friendships and, very importantly, enjoy a space of their own. Activities range from sports and fitness, arts and crafts, trips, to emotional wellbeing workshops.

Key Achievements in 2018/19

- A St Hilda's 1st Guide Group is run weekly in collaboration with Girlguiding UK. Its Thursday evening sessions have become a highly popular destination for girls aged 10-14 living locally! Regular activities include games and challenges, movie nights and achieving Guide badges, along with outings and visiting speakers.
- Based around Girlguiding UK's 'Be Well' programme, girls explored the theme of healthy minds, learning how to look after their personal wellbeing. Alongside meditation, hula hooping, yoga and fitness workshops took place during the year. A US nutrition student on placement in the UK delivered health and nutrition workshops, providing useful insights for girls learning about the consumption of different nutrients.
- Our Girls Project is very much about good citizenship as well as empowerment. To this end girls have helped in the community centre's Food Co-op, helping customers while learning retail skills. From weighing and bagging up porridge oats to serving customers on the till, girls have truly become community volunteers! In October, the Girls also voluntarily helped out at a Boundary Fun Palace held in St Hilda's, giving up their weekend to assist people around the centre and supervise stalls and activities.
- Monthly cooking workshops continued during the year, run with a volunteer chef from the Mercers' Company. With recipes to rival MasterChef, girls learnt the skills of preparing healthy meals while becoming more aware of nutrition and food contents.
- St Hilda's Girls Project members are nothing if not active, raising funds for their activities. In February, girls held a Bake Sale at the local Shoreditch Tea Building office block to raise money for Girlguiding annual subscriptions. A great team effort yielded a total of £212! Also, a Jack Petchey Achievement award for outstanding young people leadership skills was won, the prize money from the award financing an annual trip to Trampoline Park.

Plans for 2019/20

- A residential weekend will take place in September at Kingswood activity centre in Kent, promising to be an experience packed with adventure activities and fun. This will be a fantastic opportunity for some of the girls who have not been away from home in this way before.
- The girls plan to take part in St Hilda's 130th Anniversary celebrations. They will start by taking on boys in a special St Hilda's Anniversary football tournament held at local Mulberry Academy Shoreditch. Women's World Cup, here we come!
- A new programme of workshops will take place around mental health, body image, self-esteem and confidence – essential and highly beneficial for girls facing personal, social and exam pressures as they grow into young women.

"Coming to St Hilda's means I have somewhere to go and de-stress after school. No matter what mood I'm in I always look forward to it."

"I came here 3 years ago and it was the best decision. I started out not knowing other people, doing nothing for the community, but now I am the best person I can be. I am lucky to be part of a community of strong girls."

"Girl guides has helped my confidence and social skills. I have learnt how to look after my physical and mental wellbeing."

Under 5's Project 17



St Hilda's Under 5's service provides pre-school activities for young children from 6 months to 5 years, offering them the opportunity to explore and learn, both indoors and outdoors. Our sessions play a key role for parents as well, providing them with a safe place to talk, have fun with their child, and make friends. Our Ofsted registered crèche childcare provision enables parents to take part in other activities within the community centre such as training events or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes.

St Hilda's is also a key partner of the local Mowlem Children's Centre. As part of this, our partner Toyhouse Tower Hamlets delivers Children's Centre commissioned active play for toddlers in our community centre hall. St Hilda's and Tower Hamlets Children's Centre provision complement each other, aiming to help children to get the best start in life through availability of a wide range of play and learning opportunities.



Key Achievements in 2018/19

- A popular programme of our Nature Play 'Splatter Time' activities was delivered, funded by The Balcombe Charitable Trust. Activities included a much enjoyed visit by Spitalfields Farm's 'mobile farm'. Children learnt about and met animals many for the first time – including exciting encounters with guinea pigs and chickens!
- Meanwhile, weekly 'messy play' sessions for our Under 5's continued, providing valuable early learning fun activities for pre-school children and equipping parents with knowledge and tips for using everyday items to help their children to develop through play.
- A wonderful Christmas Party in December for local children and parents took place. All had a great time, with games and seasonal activities. Our resident Santa gave out an enormous number of lovely presents, kindly donated by Cheltenham Ladies' College and nearby Tea Building offices in Shoreditch.

Plans for 2019/20

- Following continued funding from The Balcombe Trust and a grant from Samuel Butler's Educational Foundation, we will launch a new programme of Splatter Time sessions, introducing children to nature and fun play activities.
- A makeover of our crèche facility is planned thanks to 'team challenge' volunteering by The Mercers' Company and corporate firms, redecorating the indoors play room and improving our garden area.
- A programme of summer play activities is planned, make use of our crèche outdoor space, an important provision in a district where many families have no gardens or safe external play spaces.



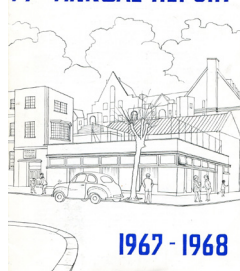
"My child can't wait to get here in the morning."

"I could not have done my course if there had been no crèche to look after my daughter."

"I was worried about my child playing in the soil but he loves it!"

18 130th Anniversary

SAINT HILDA'S EAST
79TH ANNUAL REPORT



The Story of a Community 1889 – 2019

St Hilda's East Community Centre was set up in 1889 by the alumni association of Cheltenham Ladies' College, known as Guild. Their founding mission was to support those facing disadvantage in the East End of London. Today, 130 years on, our mission remains fundamentally the same while informed by new and modern day perspectives. We have grown significantly over the last century, especially during the last several decades, responding to changing needs. We now provide a wide range of opportunities and activities to over five hundred people each week, delivered through twelve projects and services across two sites in Tower Hamlets – our longstanding community centre in Bethnal Green / Shoreditch and a second site, Sonali Gardens in Shadwell.

Celebrating our history – and the present!

We are celebrating the 130th Anniversary of St Hilda's East during 2019/20. Engaging with all our stakeholders we are holding an exciting year long programme of events and celebrations – involving the local community, our service users, volunteers, funders and other supporters. As our Annual Report goes to print these are some of the highlights so far from our Anniversary year:

A 130th Anniversary Football Tournament during Easter, held at our local Mulberry Academy Shoreditch School. Bringing together young people from the local area, this was a great success. Everyone was a winner, receiving specially minted anniversary medals and cups on the day! We are grateful to the Rank Foundation who provided a grant for our Time to Shine Anniversary Intern, Shah Rahman, a local young person himself, who organised this and other events. Under his leadership, a 130th Anniversary Intergenerational Tournament also proved a great way to celebrate, while bringing together older and younger members of our community.



130th Anniversary 19



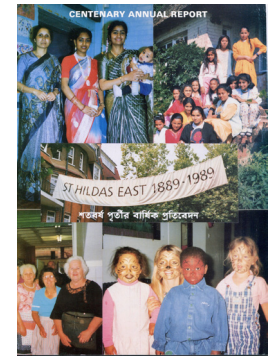
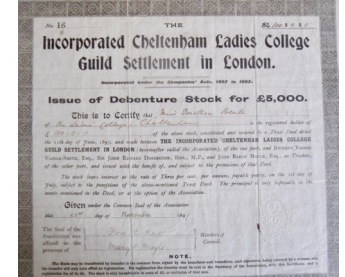
A summer Anniversary Street Party, held in July on the historic Boundary Estate where St Hilda's community centre is sited – the first municipal estate to be built in the country. With music, traditional Bangladeshi dance, singing, painting, an archival exhibition, food and cake, the party was a true celebration of all things community! We were joined for the occasion by the Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets, John Biggs, who helped cut our anniversary cake (donated by Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner) with our oldest and youngest user. The party was a reminder of the amazing work that St Hilda's does and the importance of community cohesion.



A fantastic anniversary celebration and fundraising dinner at The Mercers' Hall in the City of London during October. St Hilda's East is deeply indebted to The Mercers' Company as its company charity from 2017 to 2020. The Company made its magnificent hall available for the evening, along with food and drink, so that all proceeds went to our charity. The occasion featured an inspiring performance by our community centre Over 50's Feeling Good! Choir, and a premiere for St Hilda's new anniversary film. The Mercers have supported us throughout our anniversary year, from volunteering, grant support, to revamping our website – a greatly appreciated contribution to our work!

Looking forward, St Hilda's East is committing itself to continuing its much needed work into the next 130 years. To that end we have launched a 130th Anniversary Appeal Fund, to secure funds to sustain its vital services in the months and years ahead. Our ambitious target is to raise £130,000, a thousand pounds for every year! Through activities from bake sales, quiz nights, and sponsored walks, our Mercers' Hall fundraising event, to donations, we are reaching far and wide in our efforts to reach this target. **We welcome and would be grateful for any contribution, small or large. These can be made to our 130th Anniversary Fund:**

Bank: Natwest
Sort code: 60-80-01
Account no: 37331760



20 Summarised Balance Sheet

ST HILDA'S EAST SUMMARISED BALANCE SHEET - AS AT 31 MARCH 2019

	2019		2018	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible fixed assets	1,468,690		1,532,963	
Investments	<u>69,155</u>		<u>68,221</u>	
		1,537,845		1,601,184
Current assets				
Stock	4,690		5,637	
Debtors	178,420		156,713	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>371,554</u>		<u>514,211</u>	
		554,664		676,561
Liabilities				
Creditors falling due within one year	<u>75,694</u>		<u>119,082</u>	
Net current assets		478,970		557,479
Net assets		<u>2,016,815</u>		<u>2,158,663</u>
The funds of the charity				
Unrestricted funds	General	306,615	418,450	
	Designated	225,310	225,310	
Restricted funds		<u>1,484,890</u>	<u>1,514,903</u>	
Total charity funds		<u>2,016,815</u>		<u>2,158,663</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 2019 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 3rd September 2019 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 2019. In our opinion the summarised accounts are consistent with the full audited accounts.

RAMON LEE AUDITORS LLP
REGISTERED AUDITORS
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

93 TABERNACLE STREET
LONDON EC2A 4BA

3RD SEPTEMBER 2019

Statement of Financial Activities 21

ST HILDA'S EAST SUMMARISED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

	UNRESTRICTED FUNDS				
	General	Designated	Restricted	2019	2018
	Funds	Funds	Funds		
	£	£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations and legacies	47,286	-	10,000	57,286	57,334
Income from charitable activities	657,229	-	709,822	1,367,051	1,174,637
Income from other trading activities	169,426	-	-	169,426	155,500
Investment income	3,346	-	-	3,346	3,065
Total income	<u>877,287</u>	-	<u>719,822</u>	<u>1,597,109</u>	<u>1,390,536</u>
Expenditure					
Cost of raising funds	76,764	-	-	76,764	73,483
Expenditure on charitable activities	913,292	-	749,835	1,663,127	1,438,761
Total expenditure	<u>990,056</u>	-	<u>749,835</u>	<u>1,739,891</u>	<u>1,512,244</u>
Net income/ (expenditure) & net movements in funds before gains & losses on investments	(112,769)	-	(30013)	(142,782)	(121,708)
Net gains/ losses on investments	934	-	-	934	4,217
Net movements in funds	(111,835)	-	(30,013)	(141,848)	(117,491)
<i>Reconciliation of funds:</i>					
Total funds, brought forward	<u>418,450</u>	<u>225,310</u>	<u>1,514,903</u>	<u>2,158,663</u>	<u>2,276,154</u>
Total funds, carried forward	<u>306,615</u>	<u>225,310</u>	<u>1,484,890</u>	<u>2,016,815</u>	<u>2,158,663</u>

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 £1,484,890 includes capital funding of £1,405,919 relating to the community centre building and vehicles and revenue funds of £78,971.

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 2019/19 including:

Ally Capellino
The Balcombe Charitable Trust
BBC Children in Need
Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP
Big Lottery Awards for All
The Broderers' Charity Trust
Charles S French Charitable Trust
The Cheltenham Ladies' College
The Incorporated Guild of Cheltenham Ladies' College
City Bridge Trust
Co-op Local Community Fund
Crédit Agricole CIB
Dentons Charitable Trust
Davis Rubens Charitable Trust
Derwent London Community Fund
The Drapers' Charitable Fund
The Duncan Norman Trust
London Legal Support Trust
Macfarlanes LLP
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

The Mercers' Charitable Foundation
Morrisons Foundation
Murphy-Neumann Charity Company Limited
The Peter Fraenkel Charitable Trust
The Rank Foundation
Samuel Butler's Educational Foundation
Sport England
The Tea Building
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Tower Hamlets Homes
The Weinstock Fund



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 chose St Hilda's East Community Centre as its charity of the year in 2018/19 – for the third year in a row! We were also very grateful to be chosen as TSB Bethnal Green Branch Charity of the Year.

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.

Thanks and Acknowledgements 23



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers make a key and much-valued contribution to our work at St Hilda's and Sonali Gardens. Some of our services depend upon volunteers to function and all benefit in some way or other. The volunteering community at St Hilda's is an incredibly 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 in 2018/19.

PARTNERS

Our acknowledgement and appreciation also goes to all the partners with whom we have worked during 2018/19, enabling us to deliver services and activities together for and with local people. We would especially like to thank Tower Hamlets Council, from whom St Hilda's receives a range of grant, contract and other funding, as well as our many other partners across the voluntary and community, statutory and corporate sectors.

We would 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 until April 2020. We are delighted to receive this honour, which involves much appreciated volunteering involvement by Mercers and Company staff as well as financial support for our youth work with girls. We are indebted to the Mercers for their support in helping us organise a major fundraising celebration to mark St Hilda's 130th anniversary at the Mercers' Hall in October 2019.

Special thanks are due to our law firm partners, Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP and Macfarlanes LLP for their support, not only in running our award winning free Legal Advice Clinics for the community, but also in providing pro bono advice and policy support for the organisation. Many thanks also to BPP Law School and Queen Mary University for the involvement of their law students in our Legal Advice Clinics.

Thank you to Crédit 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 its support for our Older People's Project.

A heartfelt thanks to our neighbours, Rochelle School, who have kindly covered the costs of our special St Hilda's East Anniversary film, which will be released during 2019/20!

Last but not least, we are truly grateful for help from Credit Suisse staff who have shared their time and skills to assist with the design and production of this Annual Report – for the 13th year running!





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18 Club Row
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E2 7EY

Telephone: 020 7739 8066

Email: mail@sthildas.org.uk

www.sthildas.org.uk

[@sthildaseast](https://twitter.com/sthildaseast)

Sonali Gardens Centre
79 Tarling Street
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.

