



ANNUAL REVIEW

2023 - 2024



**BRINGING
LEWISHAM
TOGETHER**







"The 1-2-1 sessions (with Karen, the Fundraising Development Manager) are valuable.... really bespoke. The response to all of my questions has been really swift and effective. I feel like I have added value to my funding applications. There has been good signposting to support my fundraising applications. It kept me on track. When I have a session coming up, I know I need to focus. It was all about RMUK. I was determined to get something out of it, so I felt like it was flexible enough to cope with me! ...it was good to have someone who understands me. I like the fact that it wasn't rigid. It was accommodating."

— Stella from RMUK

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends and Partners,

Welcome to the Lewisham Local Trustees' Annual Report for the year 2023-2024. This is a year which has been marked with numerous exciting achievements and new challenges as we continue to grow and evolve as a charity.

We started the year with increased funding pressure following the previous year's statutory funding cuts. We continued developing a project-focused delivery model revolving around our core values and mission, requiring us to locate alternative sources of support. In responding to this challenge, we have successfully secured diverse new funding for our established projects, showcasing the value and impact of our work. Additionally, we were able to embark on new pilot projects to address emerging local needs, such as digital exclusion, supporting individuals in work placements and partnering with community organisations that specifically serve Lewisham's black and ethnic minority community. Even under challenging conditions, our charity continues to grow at impressive pace – a testament to the important role we play in Lewisham's vast and storied social tapestry.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated and hardworking staff team, whose collaborative efforts with the Trustees have been integral to our progress over the past year. They have risen admirably to the challenges presented by the cost-of-living crisis, which has placed increased demands on our projects and our local communities, as well as our staff team. I would also like to express our gratitude to our funders for their ongoing support and flexibility, as well as our tireless volunteers and project members, whose positivity and unwavering efforts continue to uplift us. Finally, I commend my fellow Trustees for their exemplary commitment and hard work, driving our charity forward.

We were also deeply saddened to share the news of the passing of three symbolic members of the Lewisham Local community; our trustee Susan Ryder, our former trustee and treasurer Patrick McKee, and most recently our trustee Pete Webb. Each played a significant role in the development of our charity, and their loss has been immeasurable. In remembering them, let us recognise their unwavering dedication, commitment and the impact they had on our organisation and the lives of many in our community.

We also said goodbye to our CEO, Sam Hawksley, as he and his family relocated to Yorkshire. Early in the new year we started our search for a new CEO to take the charity to its next chapter. After a long and meticulous selection process, we appointed Dr Gülen Petty as Lewisham Local's new CEO. While waiting for her to join the charity in June, I stepped in as an Interim CEO to hold the fort.

I would like to thank my fellow Trustee colleagues and our staff for their support and dedication to supporting our communities and residents of Lewisham without interruption through these times of change. Moving forward, we remain resolute in our commitment to rise to the increasingly confronting circumstances faced by local residents with determination and flexibility. We are excited for the upcoming year, under the vision and direction of our new CEO, we will continue to prioritise investing in improving our internal systems, including our digital communications and website.

We will continue to support our staff in delivering their incredible work and move towards enhancing Lewisham Local's sustainability by diversifying our funding base.

Sincerely,

Roy Witter, | Chair of Trustees



FROM THE OUTGOING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

What a pleasure it has been to lead Lewisham Local over the last couple of years. We have been on an exciting journey, continued to grow our impact in Lewisham and our staff team. We have developed new projects responding to the community's needs, increased our funding streams and taken steps to include more representation of the communities we serve on our Board. There have been challenges along the way as the charity has grown quickly. However, we have continued to provide a robust service to our local community, and acted as an agent for meaningful change for Lewisham.

I'd like to thank the staff and volunteer team for being flexible and dedicated to making a difference in Lewisham's communities.

As my family and I relocate to the North-West of England, I look forward to watching from afar the positive difference this fabulous local charity continues to make. Keep being positive in the face of the challenges, respond to the needs, be creative and have fun!



Sam Hawksley

A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark green background. The signature reads 'S. J. Hawksley' in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

FROM THE NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE



As a long-time Lewisham resident and a charity leader in the borough for the past decade, I was thrilled to step into the role of CEO of Lewisham Local in June 2024. It's a privilege to lead such an incredible charity that, even in challenging times for Lewisham and its residents, remains a vital partner for residents, funders, and community stakeholders.

Together with the talented staff members and highly skilled and supportive Board of Trustees, I am looking forward to leading Lewisham Local to its next phase.

Our focus remains on listening closely to our communities, hearing and understanding their needs, and working collaboratively to find the resources needed to address the challenges and hardships many residents face – whether that is through time, skills, expertise, or funding.

Our progress would not be possible without the dedication of our partners, funders, community leaders, and volunteers. Your contributions make Lewisham Local a beacon of hope in this vibrant borough - a place where we are proud to live, learn, work, and have fun together.

Thank you for being part of our journey!

Dr Gülen Petty, CEO

OUR VISION

A connected Lewisham community that gives, shares and works together to build happier, healthier communities.

OUR MISSION

- **Connect** and **collaborate** with individuals, community groups, businesses and statutory organisations
- **Encourage all** to **give and share** what they can; time, skills, expertise, knowledge, resources and money
- **Respond** to **needs and opportunities** through events, projects and communications
- **Raise awareness** of existing and emerging **community needs**
- **Promote and strengthen** Lewisham's voluntary and community groups
- **Promote asset-based community development**, making the most of what we already have in Lewisham
- Increase the **impact and sustainability** of Lewisham Local

OUR VALUES

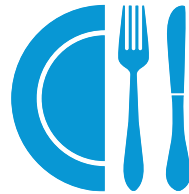
- Everyone in the community is an asset and able to contribute, give and share
- We are inclusive, welcoming and open to all
- We are collaborative and committed to working together with a positive attitude
- We are dynamic and responsive to Lewisham's communities' needs and willing to innovate
- We value the diversity of Lewisham's communities and are committed to proactively representing Lewisham's diversity in our Staff, Trustees and projects

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR



600+

Businesses Engaged
with Lewisham Local
Discount Card
Scheme



4,466

Community Meals
Served



2,584

Volunteer Hours
Provided at
FoodCycle



£232,471

Distributed in Grants
to 118 Projects



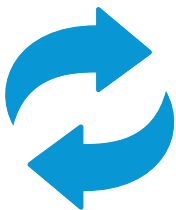
600+

Organisations in the
Lewisham Community
Directory



2,000

Residents Supported
through Digital
Access for All



Launch

Of the Community
Exchange Platform



31,000

Visits Recorded for
Timebank



385

Young People Received
Essentials from Bank of
Things Project



101

People Placed into
Volunteering

PROMOTING ACCESS TO GOOD HEALTHY FOOD

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

399

People

Engaged in the Good Food Lewisham Network

4466

Community Meals

Served at FoodCycle Lewisham

6473

Kilograms

Of Surplus Food Rescued

2584

Volunteer Hours

Provided at FoodCycle Lewisham

70%

Of Guests

At FoodCycle Lewisham eat more fruits and vegetables as a result of coming to the meal

£90k+

Invested in 19 projects

Lewisham Local partnered with Lewisham Public Health to deliver a Community Food Justice grants programme. This funding enabled groups to buy fresh, ambient and culturally appropriate foods, provide cash-first approaches, and respond to dietary requirements. Cookery course provision was also funded after this need was identified by partnership.

Lewisham's work on food justice was commended in the Good Food Local report 2024



GOOD FOOD

This is the second year hosting Good Food Lewisham, Lewisham's Food Partnership, a network of passionate people working together to change the world of food in the London Borough of Lewisham. The project is currently funded by Lewisham Council until April 2025.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN:

FOOD GIVING NETWORK

Good Food Lewisham hosts a Lewisham Food Giving Network which engages over 40 food giving groups in Lewisham. Supporting this network, they hosted 10 monthly Zoom meetings to problem solve, connect with other partners and share emerging needs alongside training, manage a WhatsApp group to share surplus food and cross refer between partners, and ran two in-person Round Table events. This work has improved referral pathways between projects, saved tonnes of food from going to waste and facilitated more joined up working across community food projects.

"Ongoing development support from GFL has meant we were able to share our learning and knowledge directly offering advice, guidance and practical help to: Evelyn Community Store, Rehoboth Set up, St Peters Set up, Sydenham Social supermarket Set up, Lewisham Donation Hub food set up. The Mayoresses Lewisham Pack Lunch Appeal Coordination and The Mayoresses Christmas Hamper Appeal" Good Food Lewisham Steering Group member Stella Headley who founded and runs RMUK Wellbeing CIC, a food project providing cultural foods to meet the needs of Black African and Black Caribbean housebound individuals in Lewisham.

As part of this work, Good Food Lewisham helped establish a temporary food hub at Evelyn Community Store in the summer of 2023 to distribute additional fruit and veg during the summer holidays to address holiday hunger.

Lewisham Local successfully gained funding from GLA Food Roots 2 to develop and embed more sustainable and resilient ways of working to better support food insecure Londoners, especially those who are forced to rely on emergency food aid. A Community Development Worker was employed in October 2023 and is engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders to promote the Healthy Start scheme. Activities include: attending engagement events to promote to local residents in areas identified with low uptake, working with Lewisham Council's cost-of-living programme to run a Healthy Start billboard campaign near Lewisham's markets; visiting food banks to engage members who could be eligible; engaging local market holders and social supermarkets to accept the card, and regular briefing sessions for frontline staff on the Healthy Start initiative. Uptake has increased as a result.

CASE STUDY

More than £400,000 worth of Healthy Start funds are still going unclaimed in Lewisham alone, meaning thousands of families simply don't realise that they are entitled to this benefit.

We are working hard to spread the word about Healthy Start, because we know what a difference it can make for families on a tight budget.

We spoke to Eyambe and her son, Noah, about how the scheme impacts their lives, and the importance of outreach to young families.

"I've been using Healthy Start since it was introduced, when it used to be vouchers. The card is the best, much better. I use it in supermarkets or anywhere that I can. But I didn't know I could use it in the market along Lewisham High Street!"

"The Healthy Start has helped me very much, very very helpful – because I can buy fruit and vegetables every time; sometimes spinach, sometimes other things. I am not worried about money."

One of the reasons we think not everyone uses Healthy Start is because they either don't know about it, or think it will be hard to apply for. We asked Eyambe if she had any challenges getting the card or using it; and what others could gain from checking their eligibility.

"It's very easy to apply for, very easy. I am surprised there are still people who have not heard about it. My older one is 8 and so I've been using Healthy Start for 8 years now. I know people I could spread the word to."

"Because of Healthy Start, my kids love eating fruit and veg, so it's really helpful for me. I get a lot of frozen peas. "We always buy milk with it. I get lentils through the card too."

"The preparation is all that is different, we all eat the same really. It's just how we prepare it. So even if it is harder sometimes to get food from around the world cheaply, it is never difficult to have a healthy meal – because I can always prepare something."

"Healthy Start has helped my children grow a love of fruit and veg. Broccoli, bananas, carrots – anything. I am French-Cameroonian. What my family eats depends on the seasons, and who is making it. Healthy Start has really helped me to eat well, with ingredients I know."



FOOD GROWING - Achievements have included:

- Developing activities through a Food Growing Network, thanks to funding by Sustainable Food Places Growing the Good Food Movement Grant. As part of this project there have been community growing visits to show case gardens through blog posts e.g. St Mary's Therapeutic Garden, Downham Men's Group.
- Supported six groups working with communities who face inequity and barriers to food growing with small grants including 360 Lifestyle Support, AFRIL, Two Mindful Bees.
- A GFL network meeting in June 2023 meeting was co-organised with a school, focusing on young people. The host school went on to set up a gardening club. Feedback at the meeting influenced the Council Task & Finish Group on Community Food Growing - a Council Community Food Growing Officer is in development as a result. Our work was commended. In September 2023 a meeting and community gardens walk was held as part of Capital Growth's Urban Harvest week. This attracted a large diverse group, 55 people signed up, co-organised with community activists, seed saving demonstration by Grow Lewisham, tours of two community gardens.
- The January and March meetings included tours of Coco Collective Bellingham garden, Forster Memorial Park sensory garden and Goldsmiths Community Centre gardens.
- Lewisham Local and partners organised Seeds and Cultural Foods event in February at Besson Street Community Garden was successful with a tour, speakers, seed swap, food from Rastafari Movement UK, attracting many new people.



GOOD FOOD BUSINESS NETWORK

The Good food Business network has continued to grow, supported via a GFL WhatsApp group, which has linked around 40 businesses and has given a new platform for training support, opportunities, funding, business support and development. The businesses use the network for promotion, and benefit from potential business opportunities such as events and catering requests. In person Breakfast Network Meetings are hosted at different businesses around the borough.

By April 2024, 15 businesses and organisations have signed up to the Good Food Business Charter. We recognise businesses providing healthy food through an online GFL Business Directory. Lewisham Local has signed up to the Charter.

LEWISHAM FOOD JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Lewisham Council funded Lewisham Local to host a Food Justice Programme Manager to oversee the delivery of Lewisham's Food Justice Action Plan launched in April 2023 by Public Health Lewisham.

A Food Justice Alliance made up of a range of community stakeholders, statutory partners and services was launched in October 2023 to support the delivery of the plan. The Food Justice Action Plan actions include redirecting surplus food to community partners and gardens; increasing food growing and community cookery provision and improving referral pathways for people in crisis. Lewisham Local helped to set up a strategic steering group with representation from community partners, local authority, NHS and voluntary sector and four task and finish groups that oversee the delivery of different priorities.



FOODCYCLE LEWISHAM

FoodCycle Lewisham is one of Lewisham Local's frontline projects which is now seven years old. The project is ran in partnership with the national charity FoodCycle.



Every week FoodCycle Lewisham serves a three-course vegetarian community meal at the Lewisham Irish Community Centre in Catford that is made from surplus food that may go to waste, saving food from landfill and providing a community dining experience to those who may not have access to cooked food, suitable cooking facilities or who struggle to access nutritious food.

6,473kg

Of Surplus
Food Rescued

15,411

WRAP-Equivalent
Meals

2,584

Volunteer Hours
Provided

4,057

CO2e
Saved

HIGHLIGHTS

In November 2023, the project opened a second midweek meal on a Wednesday in partnership with the Lewisham Irish Community Centre (LICC) thanks to funding from the Haberdashers' Benevolent Foundation and free hire of the hall and kitchen thanks to LICC. The project is proud to have developed a second project which has been a long-term goal to serve more members of the local community.

FoodCycle Lewisham now offers 26 volunteers sessions on a weekly basis



The project is funded by Lewisham Council's NCIL Rushey Green Ward funding, The Beatrice Laing Trust, The Co-op, The Haberdashers' Benevolent Foundation, Verisk, Neighbourly

PROMOTING LOCAL GIVING

KEY GIVING ACHIEVEMENTS

600+

Businesses
Giving Through
our Projects

£232,471

Grants
Distributed

118

Projects
Funded

£2,200

Raised Through
Funding
Appeals

A key theme across our projects is encouraging all in Lewisham to give what they can in order to make Lewisham a happier and healthier place. We inspire people to give whatever they can, whether that is time, skills, money, or things in kind. Our work aims to build connections between local residents, businesses and the statutory sector and increase their awareness of local community organisations meeting diverse needs in our community. We worked with the Lewisham Local Collaborative to launch and facilitate the Lewisham Funders Network, bringing together local and regional funders with a particular interest in the borough. We would like to thank City Bridge Foundation for their ongoing funding and the support we receive through the London Funders network, London's Giving, to share ideas with other charities promoting local giving in their London boroughs.

We are continually building our capacity to work with more local people and businesses who are able to give to improve our local community and meet its complex and varied needs.

"We have achieved so much thanks to the amazing grant from Lewisham Local/Lendlease and we are immensely grateful."

- Grant Recipient



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE YEAR

PUBLIC FUNDRAISING APPEALS

The people of Lewisham continued to amaze us with their willingness to donate to our Bank of Things Christmas Appeal, in particular St. Andrews Church Catford, which raised £1,000 holding a Christmas fair.

“We were also able to use £1,500 of the grant to subsidise beautiful kits for our team. This meant that people on low incomes were not left out in getting the kit, and we were also able to ensure team cohesion and camaraderie through the kit.”
- Grants Recipient

GROWING OUR GRANTS DISTRIBUTION

We continued raising money through fundraising appeals and partnering with organisations to distribute small grants to community groups meeting Lewisham’s needs. Lewisham Local’s knowledge of community needs and our unique connections with community groups have enabled us to develop this work and channel resources towards community needs in a responsive way. We distributed £326,140 in grants to 88 projects. Key themes included food insecurity, supporting local people with energy advice and Lewisham Warm Welcomes, a programme of over 50 local drop-ins with activities and a place to stay warm and receive support. Other funds in development include our Essentials Fund in partnership with Lewisham Council, supporting individuals through one-off purchasing of essential items and Food Justice Grants, supporting local food projects to meet the need for equitable access to food in Lewisham.

FUNDS DECIDED THROUGH PARTICIPATORY GRANTS

The charity recognises that we are in a position of power, trusted with public funding resources, and that local people with lived experience know what is best for their communities. We distributed six grants through Participatory Grant Making, which was delivered in partnership with Lendlease, a housing developer. Local people who live close to the Deptford Landings housing development in Deptford were recruited and trained by Lewisham Local and facilitated to make the decisions on the grants that were awarded to local projects.

LEWISHAM LOCAL CARD

We continue to invest in our local discount card as it is an effective tool that connects local residents, local businesses and community groups. 60 businesses joined the network over the last year and we had an 24% increase on cards sold this year, raising over £1,587 with targeted promotional campaigns. With our increased capacity we look forward to promoting the card even more and increasing the number of locals who receive a card.



"It's a win, win for everybody. One of the main things for me is about accessibility and also sustainability, 'cause what I found is that a lot of times over the past 10 years that I've been doing this there seems to be a situation where everybody's doing pop-ups, they're you know doing markets and things like that. But then that's it. It's like that's the ceiling. It's like, OK, where does anybody else want to go past that? So, for me, I feel like initiatives like (the Lewisham Local Card) are a way to get you over that level. It's something that people be a part of"

— Lewisham Local Card
Business Owner





LEWISHAM COMMUNITY LOTTERY'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY

After two years, 90 community organisations are now actively fundraising using the platform. 519 local people bought tickets to fundraise for the groups and this has raised over £16,912 for Lewisham's good causes in one year. We look forward to building on this progress over the next year.



LEWISHAM COMMUNITY EXCHANGE LAUNCH

We launched the Lewisham Community Exchange platform, enabling community organisations to put forward their 'requests' for support, and for businesses with social value commitments to put forward their 'offers' of support.

Our other giving projects continue to make an impact meeting needs in the community:

LEWISHAM COMMUNITY TOILETS

Increased our network to 95 establishments allowing free access to their toilet facilities for members of the public. We were pleased to be able to promote our achievements at an Age UK London event focusing on toilet provision.



LEWISHAM REFILL

Added 21 new sites to our network of over 100 local businesses offering free water refills to the public to help reduce single-use plastic waste.



TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

Businesses offering free skills-sharing workshops to upskill local charities and other businesses as a way of giving to the community.

STRENGTHENING LEWISHAM'S VOLUNTARY SECTOR

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Fundraising Development support for more than 300 individuals



Infrastructure mentoring and training for 80 individuals and 35 groups representing Black Community-Based Organisations



Supported 2,000 Lewisham residents through Digital Access For All



Developed the Lewisham Community Directory to more than 600 organisations



Distributed £125,000 in Warm Welcomes grants to 43 organisations

BLACK INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

FUNDRAISING DEVELOPMENT

DIGITAL ACCESS FOR ALL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK

BLACK INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT PROJECT (BISP)



The Black Infrastructure Support Project (BISP) has strengthened Black Community-Based Organisations (BCBOs) in Lewisham this year by providing essential support and resources.



A COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEM:

BISP fosters a connected and thriving Black community sector in Lewisham by working collaboratively with other organisations and stakeholders. BISP's impact extends well beyond individual organisations. By working closely with the FDM Equalities project and other infrastructure support Sector stakeholders and volunteers, we are fostering a vibrant and interconnected Black Community Development Ecosystem in Lewisham. This collaborative approach ensures that developmental support is readily available and accessible to those most in need.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Building a Stronger Network: We initiated and supported the development of Lewisham's Black Voluntary Sector Network which advocates for the priorities of Lewisham's BCBO's.
- Increased capacity: 35 groups received mentoring and 80 individuals accessed training, improving their organisational skills.
- Immediate support: Our 24/7 WhatsApp help desk provided rapid assistance to over 200 people.
- Funding success: 75% of participating BCBOs reported securing more funding than ever before.
- Expert advice: 25 black community champions accessed professional support from solicitors and accountants.
- **It has recently come to our attention that an error has been made in our 23/24 and 24/25 annual reviews, suggesting that the Black VCS Expo 2023 was organised by Lewisham Local. This is not the case, Mabadaliko CIC created and delivered the Expo. At Lewisham Local, we take great care to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our partners. On this occasion, it is clear that a mistake was made. On behalf of Lewisham Local, I would like to offer my sincere apologies to the directors and staff of Mabadiliko for this error. - Gülen Petty, CEO, Lewisham Local**
- Access to Mentoring: 15 mentors offered individual support to 25 BCBO leaders.
- Easier access to help: We collaborated with the FDM Equalities project and local infrastructure partners to streamline access to support services.
- Digital skills boost: BCBOs improved their digital skills and learned about new fundraising tools.

FUNDRAISING DEVELOPMENT



- Fundraising for Equality: Empowering Lewisham's Communities
- The Fundraising Development Manager (Equalities) project has strengthened community groups led by and serving those with protected characteristics in Lewisham. We've focused on building fundraising skills and knowledge, connecting them with funders, and promoting equitable access to resources.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Increased Capacity

291 Individuals received training and support
15% Average increase in funding applications
10% rise in successful grants

Stronger Networks

Facilitated connections with funders, resulting in:
5 New partnerships
3 Joint funding applications

Improved Access to Information

Our online funders list and resources were accessed by over
500 Individuals and groups

Greater Awareness

We actively promoted our services and advocated for equitable funding practices, influencing funding guidelines to be more inclusive

IMPACT:

- Essential skills: Participants reported significant improvement in fundraising knowledge and confidence.
- Funding secured: Groups secured a total of £150,000 in funding, enabling them to expand services and launch new programmes.
- Sustainable organisations: Groups strengthened their infrastructure and long-term sustainability.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Friday Fundraising Club: Delivered 12 sessions on a wide range of fundraising topics.
- Fundraising Plus Program: Provided in-depth support to 15 groups, with 70% securing funding and 90% reporting increased confidence.
- Fundraising Conference: Hosted a successful conference with 50 groups, funders and stakeholders.

DIGITAL ACCESS FOR ALL

The Digital Access for All (DAFA) project has made significant strides in ensuring Lewisham residents can effectively access and use digital services. We've focused on providing digital skills training, support and resources to individuals and community organisations, tackling digital exclusion and promoting digital inclusion.

IMPACT

DAFA has empowered individuals and community organisations to improve their digital skills, access online services and participate more fully in the digital world. This has resulted in increased confidence, independence and opportunities for beneficiaries.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Launched new digital drop-in centres in Orchard Gardens, Newstead Community, and Downham

Expanded Support Network

Delivered tailored programmes, such as Microsoft Office skills and Excel training for Lewisham Parent Carers

Targeted Training

Provided laptops and home visits for individuals with specific needs, including voice banking support

Improved Access

Promoted DAFA and Lewisham Digital Access Listings through various channels

Increased Awareness

Worked closely with Catbytes, Lewisham Council, Good Things Foundation and local community organisations

Stronger Collaborations

LEWISHAM COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

The Lewisham Community Directory Project has successfully created a central online hub connecting residents, community groups and public sector services. This year, we focused on improving access to information, fostering collaboration and strengthening the local community network.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Expanded listings: The directory grew significantly, with 613 community groups and 99 public sector services listed by December 2023.
- Increased engagement: Website views and engagement time steadily increased, demonstrating growing interest and usage.
- Positive feedback: Users praised the directory's user-friendliness, diverse listings, and ease of navigation.
- Successful outreach: We actively promoted the directory through community events and initiatives, expanding our reach.
- Valuable partnerships: Collaborations with Lewisham Local, Catbytes, and Lewisham Libraries strengthened the project's impact.

REACHING OUR COMMUNITY

The directory benefits a wide range of Lewisham residents, including individuals seeking local services, community groups aiming to expand their reach and public sector organisations improving their visibility. Hundreds of people use the directory each month to connect and access information.



DATA HIGHLIGHTS



- Listings: Increased from 576 community groups and 91 public sector profiles in Q1 to 613 and 99 respectively by Q3.
- Website views: Showed a steady increase from January to March 2024, with March recording the highest number at 72 views.
- Engagement time: Averaged 3.2 minutes in October, 3 minutes 11 seconds in November, and 3 minutes 32 seconds in December 2023.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK IN RUSHEY GREEN WARD

The Lewisham Community Directory Project has successfully created a central online hub connecting residents, community groups and public sector services. This year, we focused on improving access to information, fostering collaboration and strengthening the local community network.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Community engagement: We held two community assemblies, including a "Taste of Rushey Green Marketplace" event.
- Youth engagement: A dedicated pop-up event engaged approximately 50 young people, gathering valuable feedback on local resources and community perceptions.
- Food and shopping focus: A pop-up event on Catford Broadway engaged 30 residents, highlighting the importance of local businesses and gathering insights on the area's appearance and cleanliness.
- Community asset mapping: Developed an interactive map of local groups and resources, which was shared with 100+ local organisations.
- Increased communication: Reached over 250 residents through in-person consultations, events and festivals.
- Supporting local events: Sponsored Catford Pride, amplifying the voices of 30+ LGBTQ+ artists and small businesses. Supported the "Food, Folk 'N' Fun in the Fields" event, with 9 community groups and 25 businesses participating.
- Collaboration with local services: Partnered with the Rushey Green Safer Neighbourhood team on a "Diversion Day" to provide community information and resources.



CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- Staffing changes: The departure of the Rushey Green Development Worker in November 2023 required adjustments to project delivery.
- Outreach effectiveness: Low attendance at some events highlighted the need for tailored outreach strategies for different audiences.

LEWISHAM WARM WELCOMES

The Lewisham Warm Welcomes programme provided vital support to residents during the cost-of-living crisis, offering warm spaces, activities and a sense of community. Working with 50 community organisations – including libraries, churches, community centres and even Millwall Football Stadium – we created a network of welcoming spaces across the borough.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

31,000

Visits Recorded
Across the
Network

£125,000

Distributed in
Grants

43

Organisations
Supported

- Funding support: Distributed £125,000 in grants to 43 organisations, enabling them to provide food, activities and a warm welcome.
- Diverse offering: Warm Welcomes spaces offered a wide range of activities, from sewing and singing to exercise classes and dementia-friendly sessions.
- Community impact: Over 31,000 visits were recorded across the network, highlighting the significant need for these spaces.
- Social connection: The most common reason for visiting a Warm Welcome was "to talk to other people," emphasising the importance of social interaction and combating loneliness.
- Supporting vulnerable residents: The programme successfully reached vulnerable residents, particularly those aged 55-74, who are facing increasing financial pressures.

KEY FINDINGS

- Footfall: Over 31,000 visits were recorded during the four-month period, a significant increase from the previous year's 18,000.
- Activities: A diverse range of activities catered to different interests and needs.
- Demographics: A wide range of demographics was served, with the 55-74 age group being the most prevalent.
- Motivation: Social connection was the primary motivation for visiting, highlighting the importance of community and combating loneliness.

The most common reason for visiting a Warm Welcome was "to talk to other people," emphasising the importance of social interaction and combating loneliness.



VOLUNTEERING HEALTH & WELLBEING

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

95

Volunteer Roles Posted

101

Placed Into Volunteering
Roles

1,404

New Sign Up to
Volunteering Newsletter

VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS

SUPPORT INTO VOLUNTEERING

Our volunteering project supports people with low confidence, learning disabilities and those managing poor mental health into voluntary roles in Lewisham. This year we have worked with people on a 1:1 basis supporting them to identify their knowledge, skills and qualities they can bring to a volunteering role. We offered tailored support to match people with a volunteering role that were right for them.

Another aspect of this work is supporting community organisations to develop their volunteering program. This year we continued to grow our network of community groups hosting training and networking opportunities.

In the upcoming year, we plan to continue our work supporting a wider range of people to start volunteering. We will work with community organisations helping them to strengthen their volunteering program, encouraging people to volunteer using volunteer days and Work with Business and organisations to volunteer through skill and knowledge sharing. We were very pleased to hear that project funding would be extended from the Lewisham local Main Grants fund for one extra year until March 2026.

MAYOR'S AWARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

We continued work with Lewisham Council to recognise the contribution of volunteers through the Lewisham Mayors award for Volunteering.

TIMEBANK



We organise a number of stand-alone workshops events, such as our Bring & Fix day where members can bring broken items to be fixed and saved from landfill. Our yearly seaside outings are very popular as well as events and presentations during Black History Month and Christmas time. The Timebank is what its members brings to it and we are very lucky to count many talented members who share skills ranging from poetry to gardening to the table. But most importantly, they generously give their time in our groups.

With three year funding from the National Lottery, the Time Bank project was able to continue to support individuals to increase their health and wellbeing through actively giving and sharing their time and skills. The Timebank currently has an active membership of around 100 people.

TEA AND CHAT

Our most popular group with 20 or more people coming together on a Wednesday afternoon to do needlework, arts and crafts. Goods produced are then sold locally at events such as Brockley Christmas Fayre.

COFFEE CLUB

This group sees Time Bank members do a Quiz, board games and meet up for a chat on Thursday mornings.

CHOIR

The Choir has between 8-12 members attending as well as colleagues from the Lewisham Local team. Over the last half year, more members have taken an active part in leading the choir even though we are supported by a professional musician. Some of the places the choir has performed this year are Lewisham Foodcycle, The Kings coronation event, Hayes Galleria London Bridge, Salifest and Wild Cat Wilderness

FRIDAY ART

This is a group that brings together Time Bank members who work on their own art projects on a Friday morning or we offer workshops such as felting.

CASE STUDY

H is a young woman who came to the UK seeking sanctuary. She arrived in November 2022 and was placed in a hostel in Deptford. She has since had a baby and we first met her at the Waldron Health Centre during a brokerage/ Timebank session. Her and baby are regular participants of the Tea and Chat sessions and she is enjoying learning different craft things from sewing to making paper flowers. Her accommodations is very small and her immigration status is still up in the air. Coming to the Timebank is providing her with a positive break from her very stressful life circumstances. Her and her baby also came to Brighton and had an enjoyable day. This was the first time they had been to the English seaside. We were also able to link her with AFRIL for support in terms of her status and she is now also attending sewing classes at the Crofton Park Library. In this way, she is getting to know Lewisham and the offer is there for her and her young child.

"I love the Time Bank it gets me out of my flat and helps my mental health. Its good to meet new people"



"We would surely like the Time Bank to continue , as we are all happy there"



"Very rewarding interacting with other people"

WILD CAT WILDERNESS

The Wild Cat Wilderness community green space in Riverview Park, Catford, has gone from strength to strength this year.

Regular volunteering on a Thursday and Friday plus with additional community days and corporate volunteering have been enormously influential in successfully maintaining the green space, as well as expanding through the thickets to create new space for our service users.

This included creating a new pond in the orchard. After our City Bridge Trust funding ended in December 2022, we focused on applying for new funding and were successful with our joint bid with the Timebank -Well Together in Lewisham with the National Lottery Community Fund which started in October 2023. This enabled us to restart work in the new woodland area ready for the new fence and gate to be installed at the Bellingham end of the site. We also organised a community feedback session in February 2023 to ensure local people had a say in planning for the future.





We had a full programme of events during the school holidays including a Be Wild at Easter fundraiser, summer programme called the Wild Nature Club including open afternoons, minibeast hunt, building a bug hotel, fruit picking and campfire pizzas. Our pumpkin fun day hosted more than 100 people. Other popular events, which were fully booked, included the Wassail, wild pancakes and nest building sessions. Adult workshops included tree pruning and a spring forage and wild lunch.

Across the year, over 550 people engaged in nature in our space through community events alone.

Due to fundraising challenges at the start of the period, we were creative in finding solutions. We requested donations for our events, held a summer Plant Sale, sold jams and chutneys and hosted a wreath-making workshop, altogether raising more than £1500.

550
People Engaged in
Nature

£1,500+
Raised Through Donations
and Sales

Hiring out the site to the Mud Club for their independent Forest School sessions 3-4 times a week was a big part of our income generation and their three-day festival in September was a great success with the community and raised substantial funds. This revenue allowed us to continue to operate and pay for repairs from historic vandalism including a new kitchen roof.

The Wild Cat Wilderness has become a vital community asset, offering a place for people of all ages to connect with nature, learn new skills and foster a sense of belonging. Beyond maintaining the space, our activities have helped create a thriving, inclusive environment where residents can explore, relax, and engage with each other. By involving the community in everything from planning sessions to hands-on activities, we have ensured that Wild Cat Wilderness remains a space shaped by and for the local people. As we continue to grow, we remain committed to offering enriching experiences that promote health and well-being, accessible volunteering opportunities, environmental awareness, access to a welcoming and safe green space for young people in Lewisham and an enhanced sense of community connection.

BANK OF THINGS



Bank of Things Lewisham (BoT) supports young people aged 11 to 25 living, working and/or studying in Lewisham with everyday essentials to support education, employment and/or training. We have a shop in a central location in Lewisham Shopping Centre that is open Wednesday and Friday for young people to drop in and receive support.

OUTREACH AND POP UPS

This year, the Bank of Things project began to focus on reaching out in the community to get much needed essential items to young people in various parts of the borough. Through the Elizabeth fund, we were able to employ an outreach worker to reach more young people in need. Bank of Things delivered pop up sessions with several community groups including Lewisham Community Space, Young Lewisham Project, Young women's hub, Sports fun for all, Lewisham Family Hubs, XLP, Youth First and Orchard Gardens community centre.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

385

Young People
Served at
Outreach
Sessions

990

Items Given
Away Including
Toiletries and
School Supplies

**Collection
Boxes**

In Four Better Leisure Centres
(Glassmill, Wavelengths, Forest Hill
Pools and Bellingham, and on all
floors of Laurence House

As well as all the donations given to the project this year, we were grateful for funding from Elizabeth fund and Clarion housing, allowing us to continue the project for another year. In the upcoming year, we hope to develop the project to include activities that will contribute to improved wellbeing for young people. We will continue to build partnerships with local businesses and sponsorship and continue to fundraise to grow the project to reach more people.



CASE STUDY:

HARLEY P. AGED 14

Harley is a Young Advisor to the Young Mayor of Lewisham, and has been involved with Bank of Things for three years as a volunteer. They help out on a Wednesday afternoon from 2:30 to 5pm. They have grown so much in the time we have known them and Harley is now a seasoned and confident communicator, happy to talk to people of all ages and backgrounds. They are kind and polite, but also assertive and it has been a great privilege to watch them mature and start to think about their future. Harley has plans to become an engineer and is part of their local Army Cadets and is about to start the Duke of Edinburgh award.

They enjoy interacting with other young people at the Bank of Things, and with our colleagues in Baseline and Lewisham Works, they are held in high regard by all who know them. They have shown commitment and dedication attending weekly but also helping with ad hoc events such as our family fun days at Orchard Garden's and our Back to School Give Aways and helping with our Black History Month campaign.

In addition to their voluntary work with Bank of Things, Harley is one of six siblings and lives in a single parent household and is on free school meals. They have used the service on a number of occasions for both themselves and for their older sister. Their Mother has told us that this has helped her prioritise other family essentials, primarily food, for her large family and helped relieve the pressure.



FINANCIAL REVIEW

Our results for the year show an income of £1,218,803 and an expenditure of £1,049,190. Net assets at 31/03/24 were £728,954 made up of £397,017 restricted funds and £37,093 designated funds and £294,844 general unrestricted funds. Full accounts are included in our Annual Report, submitted to Companies House and the Charity Commission. They are also posted on our website and copies are available on request.

OUR FUNDERS

The charity is grateful for the financial support funders have kindly provided, without whom the charity would not be as successful. The principal funders were The London Borough of Lewisham, The City Bridge Foundation and National Lottery. Lewisham Local is grateful to all of its funders, as well as members of the community that also gave generously to the organisation and its causes through community fundraising appeals and projects.



The Haberdashers' Company











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