



Bonny Downs
community association



Changing Lives and Transforming our Community

Our Impact in 2020

bonnydowns.org

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Virtual community craft fun during lockdown >>



Values

Inclusion

Every person is a valued member of our community. We care for and support each other by celebrating diversity, challenging prejudice, breaking down barriers, building bridges and broadening horizons – for everyone!

Celebration

We adopt an attitude of thankfulness even in the midst of life's disappointments and challenges. We celebrate our community's many strengths, efforts and our all of our achievements, however small. We see Newham as a place of possibility.

Empowerment

We encourage everyone to be the best they can be. We support people to overcome the barriers which stop them fulfilling their true potential and strive to build a strong and resilient community.

Vision

Our vision for Newham is a thriving community where everyone feels connected, valued and fulfilled!

Mission

We work to break down barriers, bring people together and build people up

BDCA is a dynamic community-led charity that has been serving the residents of the London Borough of Newham since 1998.

We support a diverse cross-section of our local community, working with people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds.

We have a positive impact on local lives through a wide range of services and activities designed to bring people together and provide opportunities for people to connect with neighbours; improve their health and wellbeing; access the support they need; learn new skills; give back to their community; and celebrate life.

<< a bountiful harvest in our community garden this year!





Dave volunteering at The Well during lockdown. Photo by Charlie Bibby/ Financial Times

Message from the Chair

“I wish you could see the relief on people’s faces. We’ve seen children coming to take food because they’re so hungry, excitement as whole families run to the door, and grateful tears.”

– David Mann

Hungry children snatched food from a crate I left on their doorstep in week one of lockdown.

They’d been living in a hotel whose kitchen had shut and they hadn’t eaten for several days. They were referred to us by our MP Stephen Timms and we were able to deliver a food supply within hours.

The worst of times brought out the very best in our community and in BDCA. With an army of amazing volunteers and staff, The Well became a buzzing food distribution hub and we were able to support and feed thousands of our neighbours.

The crisis brought together furloughed workers with homeless friends, working together as an incredible team to serve others. We

were overwhelmed by the generosity of supporters in funding this work and grateful for the partnerships that developed with the authorities, businesses and other local charities.

Our actions also helped inform national debate about the causes of such food poverty, especially those made jobless and with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). True charity is not just about showing mercy, but also working for justice.

As the first lockdown eased, it was great to see Flanders Field bursting into life with activity. For the first time ever, Newham Cricket Club competed in the elite Essex League and ended up top of their division. Our cricket squares are considered among the best in the county, and the quality of our facilities and the level of competition give our young

cricketers great opportunities and aspirations.

Given the challenges of this year, I’m even more thankful than usual for our team of staff, volunteers and trustees.

The announcement of the first lockdown coincided for us with a change of Chief Executive. After 13 years, Peter Laing handed the baton on to Chelle Coulton.

Pete leaves an amazing legacy and Chelle has steered us through the choppiest of waters this year. Our Bonny Downs community owes them both a great deal.

David Mann
Chair of Trustees

2020 Highlights

After such an extraordinary year, it’s rather difficult to choose. But here are some of my personal highlights from 2020!

Growth

It was a year of growth in many ways. We increased our income to more than £1 million for the first time in our history, grew our number of service users by 12% and increased our number of volunteers to 178 people.

Coronavirus Response

We quickly transformed our community centre into an emergency hub and distributed food and essentials to 5,648 of our neighbours in need (including repeat service users). We provided 129 people with advice and advocacy and delivered over 400 hours of virtual activities for elders, families and young people during lockdown.

Reopening

As we write this report, we are currently in a second UK lockdown. However, we made strong progress reopening our services as restrictions eased during the summer. We began with our garden and sports venues, before welcoming our neighbours back for COVID-safe, face-to-face indoor activities in the autumn. By early November, we were offering over 120 hours of weekly services and activities again – and we’re ready to welcome the community back once again as soon as restrictions allow!

Investment

We continued to invest in our great community assets for the future. We opened refurbished toilets in our community centre, bought a minibus to further improve access to our services, and recruited a Facilities Manager to ensure our venues remain well looked after and meet future needs.

Partnership

In all our work, we maintained a strong partnership approach, both with our service users and other community organisations. We are hugely grateful for the collaboration, counsel and support of so many people and organisations during such a challenging year for our community!

Thank You

To all our team members – both staff and volunteers – I want to say thank you for your exceptional work, extraordinary commitment and endless creativity this year. Whether serving behind the scenes or in a public-facing role, in a project team or one of our support functions, you have each given to our community more than I could have expected or asked for. You have been an inspiration and I am greatly indebted to you.

Chelle Coulton
Chief Executive Officer



The Year in Numbers

HOURS OF ACTIVITIES **78,899**
 hours of BDCA-led activities and services for our community!

2,743 **UP 12% FROM LAST YEAR**
 unique service users benefitted from BDCA's efforts and activities

HOURS OF BOOKINGS **3,951**
 by 36 groups hiring BDCA facilities and venues for their activities

5,509 **VOLUNTEERING HOURS**
 given by 178 volunteers, equivalent to £59,772 at London Living Wage rate

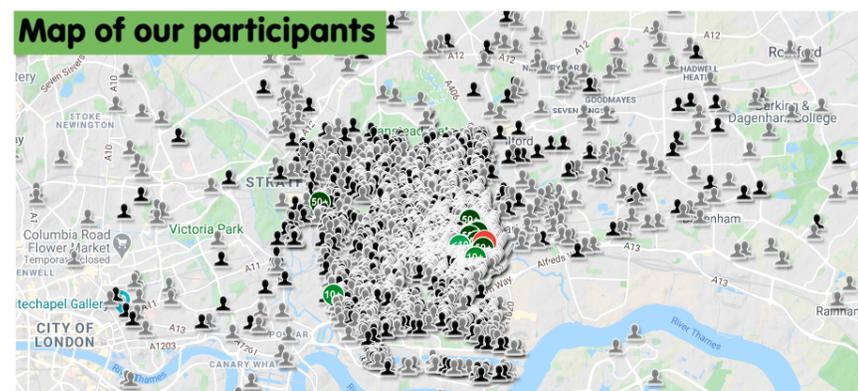
PAID WORKERS **59**
 from casual to full time staff members

37 **MEDIAN AGE**
 our youngest service user is 0 and our eldest is 101 years old!

GENDER SPLIT **EVEN**
 (well, almost!) We have 49% men and 48% female

60+ **LANGUAGES SPOKEN**
 by our service users, from Albanian to Yoruba!

FAITH BACKGROUNDS **6+**
 our service users come from a wide range of faith backgrounds including Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, other and none.



Statistics in this report are for the reporting year 1 October 2019 to 30 September, unless otherwise stated. They include people who have completed registers at sessions led by BDCA, but not those who accessed our facilities for other services or preferred not to share their diversity data.



Volunteers pack emergency relief parcels. Photo by Charlie Clift

Coronavirus Emergency Response

"The pandemic has shown us that everyone is just one step away from poverty. People who previously thought that they had secure lives have found themselves in situations they never imagined."

– Angie Allgood, Poverty Response Project Co-Ordinator

In May, Newham made headlines as the worst affected borough in the country, in terms of Coronavirus mortality rate.

It's difficult to overstate the impact that the pandemic has had on our community and sadly, as our Chief Executive Chelle says, "For many people, its effects will not be short-lived. The material need in our community has never been greater in BDCA's lifetime."

Many families we work with faced increased hardship, the loss of jobs, reduced income or no recourse to public funds. Young people found themselves frustrated and disconnected as their schools closed.

The elders in our community struggled with loneliness and adapting to life online. And all this took place while so many people were already dealing with serious and longstanding challenges from domestic abuse to long-term illness.

By early spring, Newham was beginning to feel the full force of the pandemic and, on 19 March, we were forced to suspend our usual face-to-face services. However, our team quickly stepped up to the plate, rolled up their sleeves and made temporary but radical changes to our service model to provide the support our community desperately needed.

5,648

people we served with emergency relief parcels of food and essentials, including repeat customers

174

people we provided with advice on debt, employment, benefits and housing

78

rough sleepers we helped to access emergency accommodation and sustain their tenancies



All hands on deck

It was the biggest operational challenge in our history. Every team member played their part and within a week, we had transformed The Well into an emergency response hub and joined forces with four other local charities to distribute food and essentials to people across Newham.

Angie, our Poverty Response Project Co-Ordinator recalls: "Overnight we became a logistics company – we were running a borough-wide warehouse and delivery service with maps on walls pinpointing routes. I had no idea it would be on that scale and if we'd known, we probably would have thought, 'We can't do this!'"

We began to support whole new cohorts of the community we hadn't worked with closely before. This included people suddenly struggling without jobs and navigating the benefits system for the first time, families with no recourse to public funds, and scores of stranded international students.

We recruited and trained new volunteers, delivered emergency relief packs to households across the borough, and increased our foodbank provision from one to two days per week as demand increased fifteen-fold. We also offered a Neighbourhood Shoppers service for people who could afford to pay for their shopping but were unable to get out.



Getting social, online!

To support elders who were feeling lonely or isolated, we launched a new phone-based befriending service along with a weekly virtual programme of social and fitness activities – the quizzes and chair-based exercise classes proved particularly popular!

We also found new ways to support local families virtually while schools were closed. Stacey, our Children and Families Project Co-Ordinator explains: "We knew families who had lost jobs, had no money or were unable to go out, so we drew on our creativity and tried to provide entertainment and support at home."



We delivered activity packs to families' homes and broadcast daily community craft sessions on our YouTube channel. These were much appreciated, not least thanks to the participation of a cheeky puppet called Feathers the Flamingo!

These were followed by regular virtual meet-ups for families with under-5s, which included messy play, fun science, mindfulness – and simply a safe space for parents to chat together. As Stacey says, "It was such a joy to have 55 of our after school club children online, delighted to see each other and do things like make slime together – and we quickly learnt how to use the mute button!"

Local young people were also kept busy during the summer, thanks to our young leaders who delivered a fantastic ten-week virtual programme #GoWildInLockdown! Over 31,000 social media users took part in over 150 online sessions, ranging from baking peanut cookies, to football and dance challenges, and creative and beauty tutorials.

As lockdown eased, we followed this up with face-to-face dance, fitness, football and arts & craft sessions outdoors, as well as music production workshops in partnership with Community Albums.



Virtual advice and advocacy

We moved our advice and advocacy services to a phone-based model so our team of qualified advisors and advocates could continue to provide debt, employment, housing, benefits and other advice to those in need.

As we entered lockdown, 78 rough sleepers or vulnerably-housed people were registered with us. Partnering with NEWway and the London Borough of Newham, we kept our day centre open remotely and worked to ensure that not one of them returned to the street during lockdown. Thankfully, we were also able to help some people move into more settled accommodation.

Learning the lessons

As Angie says, "The pandemic has reinforced how poverty has a ripple effect on every aspect of people's lives – it's not just about money: it also affects mental health, family relationships and personal opportunity."

As a result of what we learnt this year, we decided to boost the size of our poverty response team. This will help us to do more work on food poverty in particular, tackling issues such as nutrition and exploring how we can best support people with the underlying causes of poverty.

We'll also continue to work closely with Council, NEWway and Shelter around how we can prevent homeless people returning to the street, provide more housing advice and challenge evictions better when we advocate for homeless people.

As a community organisation, perhaps the biggest takeaways of all have been the importance of adapting quickly and partnering effectively with others.

"I also know I speak for the whole team when I say that we've been blown away by the goodwill and fantastic support of so many people and organisations across the borough and beyond," says Chelle. "We look forward to continuing our close partnership as we change lives and transform our community together!"

The Well was a hub of activity during lockdown. Photo by Charlie Bibby/ Financial Times





All are welcome at our community gardening sessions!

Skills

“I loved being in the garden. My mind switched off, and for the first time in months I went back to my room and had eight hours’ sleep.”

- Jamal is a homeless client who has PTSD and difficulty sleeping

Our Grow Together Be Together Community Garden isn't just an urban oasis where neighbours can relax, socialise and boost their wellbeing.

We also create opportunities for people to gain new gardening skills, learn about the environment, grow their confidence and improve employability.

During the year, we welcomed a diverse cross-section of the community. This included families at our Saturday gardening sessions with child-friendly activities such as scavenger hunts and wildlife surveys; children from our After School Club at our outdoor classroom; the homeless community; young people in partnership with the

Newham Youth Offending Team; and Newham College students with special educational needs. We also delivered environmental education sessions for local primary schools and hosted ceramics workshops for children. During Coronavirus restrictions the community appreciated this outdoor space more than ever, and we increased our gardening sessions to three days a week.

Before the pandemic, 12 homeless adults at our New Day centre completed basic online training with eight going on to take further employability skills training, and we matched three others with online skills training opportunities during lockdown too.

600+

people joined our gardening sessions, including repeat attendees

460+

students learned new skills in our garden

38

speakers of other languages built their confidence in conversational English

Our garden enjoyed its biggest ever harvest of grapes and figs, and an exceptional bounty of courgettes, cucumbers, apples, berries and currants!



Holly celebrates a record harvest in the community garden



Building confidence in speaking English

Volunteer Paddy completes his food training



Computer training for local residents



Our children and families team continued to offer IT classes for adults, and we ran a youth club and BMX sessions helping young people to develop new skills and confidence. This was complemented in the summer by our ten-week #GoWildinLockdown youth programme, thanks to our energetic young leaders!

— Meet Paris —



Paris is 19 and currently studying photography at university. He's been a young leader at Bonny Downs for several years, and this year he worked on our #GoWildinLockdown! virtual summer youth programme.

In this role, he had to think of online challenges that young people would enjoy during lockdown, and then film and record them, from making microwave mug cakes to creating banana face masks. Then, when lockdown ended, he ran two face-to-face workshops for the kids along with another leader.

He says the main challenges he's faced during the pandemic include socialising and making sure he's taking care of his mental health and personal self. Being a young leader has helped him to stay focused and occupied, while giving him opportunities to meet and connect with others.

Paris feels that being a young leader has really helped him to get better at working in a team, handle stressful situations and adapt to the working world.

“Every year I feel like it helps me grow as a person and every year I've done it I've always enjoyed the work and the people I've worked with!”



Autumn 2019 celebrations in our community garden

Social

“For those of us with few absorbing hobbies or interests, this is truly a lifeline.”

- Serena, participant in our weekly elders' group calls

Our children and families work continued to thrive with the support of The Henry Smith Charity and BBC Children in Need.

We held up to four weekly parent & toddler groups, including one for visitors to our foodbank and one outdoors which parents took turns to lead. Our social enterprise After School Club, rated Good by Ofsted, continued to provide high quality care for pupils from 7 primary schools while Saturday Space brought together local children for activities followed by lunch at weekends.

Regular activities for parents and carers included mindfulness and massage. We further evolved our intergenerational work, including a weekly all-age yoga and creche

session, and a very successful Community Nativity performance with Bonny Downs Baptist Church following six weeks of rehearsals along with art and craft sessions for parents.

It was another very sociable year for the elders in our community too! More than 50 people regularly attended our weekly coffee morning, funded by City Bridge Trust, while 86 elders enjoyed dinner and danced the night away at a special Christmas event.

During lockdown, we launched a new befriending service to support those feeling lonely or isolated. Our online programme of coffee mornings, quiz nights, bingo and other social activities provided lots of much-needed laughter, even if some of our more technophobic neighbours initially required a little persuasion!

230+

hours of befriending telephone chats by 23 volunteers to 75 elders

108

children attended 418 hours of after school activities

100

people attended our Christmas celebrations and 70 joined our Diwali event in the garden

Our weekly elders social programme included coffee mornings, lunch club, arts & crafts sessions and darts. We also provided 32 sessions of virtual social activities during the pandemic!



Our elders getting spooky online at Hallowe'en!



Children enjoy our Saturday Space activities



Tots Go Wild at Central Park (with parents in tow)

Hosted by Gem's Delights, our Community Café continued to provide a friendly social space for all ages. We partnered together to launch a new weekly intergenerational lunch at the start of the year. After lockdown, it provided a takeaway service as well as much-appreciated hot meals for our elders and for foodbank visitors, including during school holidays to help families combat holiday hunger.

— Meet Elizabeth —

Elizabeth is a single mum of two from overseas. Her ten-year-old son has been going to our after school club for six years and her daughter, who turns three in January, is a regular at our under-5s activities – which they both love attending.

Elizabeth says she is really grateful for the opportunities that BDCA provides to connect her family to the local community and help her manage a busy life. For example, when she was working in central London until 4pm and rushing home to pick up her son on time, BDCA arranged to collect him from school and take him to the after school club.

Elizabeth now tries to give something back. She says it feels good to support the other parents she has met, such as by helping to tidy up at the under 5's group and sorting the school uniform donations they receive.

“It's been a such a lovely journey for my family, and one that I know will continue – I'm already looking forward to my daughter joining the after school club!”





Young people learning BMX biking

Sports

“Not only do I feel I’m getting fitter, it’s also very therapeutic to see and talk to other people too. I’m very grateful to Bonny Downs for giving me this opportunity.”

– a regular at our fitness classes for elders

Newham remains one of the country’s least physically active boroughs, so we’re committed to providing a diverse range of sports and fitness activities to help people of all ages get moving.

We’re proud to serve as the home ground for Newham Cricket Club and eight other local cricket and football clubs, while local community groups continue to make full use of our facilities for everything from school sports to activity days as well.

During the year, we ran a full programme of activities for elders

including line dancing, Tai Chi and circuit training classes and we launched virtual chair-based exercise classes to help them keep moving during the pandemic which proved really popular!

We hosted several weekly football sessions for all ages, from Walking Football for the over 40s to Soccer School for pre-teens. The Active4Life programme, funded by Sport England and the Peter Harrison Foundation, continued to support those struggling with housing or money problems, with its own football team Active4Life FC, as well as gym and swimming sessions.

1,611

people attended a sports or physical activity session, including repeat attendees

325

hours of cricket were played during the year!

180

sports and physical activity sessions in total, despite the pandemic

Our most popular football activity was Walking Football, with 20 players attending each Saturday on average and our oldest regular was 84 years old!



Our elders went outdoors for Tai Chi and circuit training between lockdowns!

Football in Flanders Playing Field



Active4Life FC, our football team for people facing housing and financial challenges



As lockdown eased in late summer, we reopened the Bobby Moore Pavilion and Flanders Playing Field and restarted outdoors fitness activities for elders and four regular weekly football sessions. In October, we began welcoming the community back indoors for activities too, from yoga to Zumba!

– Meet Chandra –



Thinking back to 2016, Chandra recalls: “My health was good but my weight was averaging 92-93 kilos, and my GP had diagnosed me as pre-diabetic.”

His doctor recommended 150 minutes of exercise a week and Walking Football is at the heart of his new regime. He also loves the social life that come with it: “We are all trying to improve our lives in one way or another and walking football has positive effects on my social life too. The sense of camaraderie is just great and I love talking with the others about everything from sports to politics!”

There’s rarely a session when Chandra doesn’t score a goal or even a hat-trick. He also uses his great spreadsheet skills to run the Championship Table Prediction Competition for the group which is a great source of banter, and we hear the others are very keen on his wife’s samosas!

“I have managed to reduce my weight to 86kg and this has pleased everyone! Walking football has positive effects, not just on my health but my social life too!”



Getting advice and support. Photo by Charlie Clift



Our foodbank team spent a lot of time at supermarkets this year!



A socially-distanced doorstep delivery during lockdown

Support

“You have helped me enormously. Thank you for your support when I most needed it!”

- Paulo, former debt advice user

Even before the pandemic hit, 52% of children in our borough were living in poverty. One in 24 people were homeless – the highest rate of any local authority in England

Newham also had the highest rates of repossession in London, highlighting its longstanding challenges with debt.

Before, between and after lockdowns our team worked tirelessly to support a growing number of people affected by food poverty, unemployment, debt, homelessness, addiction and other issues.

Thanks to partnerships with Lloyds Bank and Nationwide Foundation, we offered a regular foodbank with free community lunch and provided debt, benefits and employment advice. We continued to serve as the lead partner

in the council-commissioned NEWday project, a daytime support centre for rough sleepers open five days a week year-round.

Alongside these services, our elders’ advocates, funded by Merchant Taylors Company, continued to support older people by helping them address their own challenges including housing and benefits, debt and budgeting, form filling, mobility and social care.

For the fourth year running, we provided support to children at risk of food poverty through our “Growing Strong” project funded by BBC Children in Need. We also provided Christmas gifts for more than 100 children living in poverty and delivered healthy relationship classes for Newham secondary school students in partnership with Alternatives Trust East London.

241

people served in one day at our foodbank at its peak during lockdown

101

elders received personal advocacy on a range of issues

100

the number of years we could have fed one person with the food we distributed during lockdown!



World’s longest receipt possibly? Weekly shopping for the emergency relief hub

Foodbank queue featuring service user Sumi. Photo by Charlie Clift



Our advocacy service helped Charles obtain his British passport and is currently helping him with his Windrush Compensation Claim

— Meet Jasmin —

Jasmin first came to our debt surgery for a free face-to-face assessment before lockdown because her family was struggling to make ends meet. When her husband was furloughed in April and their income reduced further, they became extremely stressed and couldn’t see a way out.

Our trained advisors went through their finances with them in detail and agreed a targeted plan of action for the short and long-term. We helped them claim Universal Credit, secure reduced rate Council Tax, negotiate an affordable debt repayment plan and set a new affordable household budget.

“Your support has stopped us from going under and drowning in debt. I’m much less fearful now, knowing there is a plan in place to give us freedom from money worries!”



Main Hall at Bobby Moore Sports Pavilion

Space

“We find it very easy to communicate with the BDCA team, and everyone is helpful. Facilities are clean, there is decent parking space available, and it’s easily reachable by public transport. We would rate the facilities 9/10!”

– local sports club

Over the past two decades, BDCA has transformed neglected local spaces into lively community hubs: The Well Community Centre, Flanders Playing Field, Bobby Moore Sports Pavilion and the Grow Together Be Together Community Garden.

As well as providing venues for BDCA’s community activities, they generate income through facilities hire which is reinvested back into our work.

During the year, they served as home for a diverse range of community groups and events – from company awaydays to sports and faith

groups and birthday and wedding celebrations!

We have continued to invest in these great community assets for the future. We opened refurbished toilets in The Well, funded by Veolia Environmental Trust.

We purchased a minibus, thanks to combined grants from Clothworkers’ Company, Morrisons Foundation, Percy Bilton Trust and Woodroffe Benton, to further improve accessibility.

We also recruited for a new role of Facilities Manager to ensure our venues meet the community’s future needs.

In March and again in November, lockdown forced us to temporarily close our facilities. However, after much planning and hard work, we reopened our playing fields in late summer and offered our garden for hire for the first time.

In October, we began welcoming the community back indoors in a COVID-secure environment with face-to-face social activities for elders, parents & toddlers and others. We stand ready to begin reopening our facilities for our neighbours, in line with government and council guidance, once the latest lockdown has eased!

36 groups hired BDCA facilities for 3,951 hours of activities this year.

Events we hosted included a birthday party for 100 people and a staff away day for 25 people.



Flanders Playing Field



The Well toilets refurbished!

Facilities available for hire!

Subject to the latest government restrictions, all our venues are open for hire and taking bookings

For bookings and enquiries:

- email info@bonnydowns.org
- call us on 0208 586 7070 or
- book a pitch at [playfinder.com](https://www.playfinder.com)

Facilities available:

- 3 football pitches
- 2 mini soccer pitches
- grass cricket square
- cricket nets
- floodlit multi-use games area
- community café
- multi-purpose hall
- training rooms
- garden
- counselling room
- children’s centre

– Meet Some of Our Hirers –

“The Well Community Centre has many great attributes – it is private enough but accessible by public transport at the same time, and the approachability and promptness of the team adds real value! It is also wallet-friendly as they have a choice of rooms with a flexible price structure.”

– Manager of a leading provider of Maths and English tuition

“We’ve been at this facility for over 10 years and it has the feel of a private pitch. It’s looked after very well, the groundsman does a great job and the admin team and match day staff are very nice and professional. The facility is local to us and feels like home!”

– Khalid coaches two football teams who play at BDCA

“Over the last three years, The Well’s employees have shown us nothing but an ethical and professional approach. This has really helped us support the local kids through education.”

– Muhammad Domun from Madrassah provides Arabic and Quran lessons for the community

“We really enjoy using Flanders Playing Field. The pitch and facilities are really good and it’s all very straightforward. The team are very accommodating and do a marvellous job, we would highly recommend!”

– local football club



Volunteers at our end of year celebration in December 2019

Our Volunteers

“We’ve had a laugh and a joke and it’s a really nice atmosphere... I enjoy meeting new people, they are all so friendly, make you feel welcome.”

– Sheila volunteered for the Emergency Relief Hub during the first lockdown

From the start, our amazing volunteers have been right at the heart of everything we’ve achieved at BDCA and they truly stepped up to the plate again this year.

When Coronavirus struck and we put out an appeal for help, we were overwhelmed by the generosity of local people – demonstrated both by the commitment of our existing volunteers (including our trustees) and the response from so many new ones.

We rolled out a thorough onboarding process, supported by full risk assessments and the oversight of a dedicated volunteer coordinator.

We truly couldn’t have been there for our community this year without their help, whether sorting, packing and delivering emergency relief packs at the hub; befriending and advocating for our elders; preparing, serving food and cleaning at the foodbank; or helping lead our toddler groups. It’s also been encouraging to see many volunteers take on new responsibilities and grow in confidence.

So to all our volunteers, new and old, thank you and please take a bow! So much of what we’ve achieved in 2020 is down to you. We’re so grateful for the time and energy you have committed to us and many other community organisations.



One of our youngest volunteers shopping for our relief hub!



Volunteers cook hot meals for our foodbank



Volunteers attend training to become Befrienders



Corporate volunteers from ExCeL London provide Christmas lunch to foodbank users

– Meet Maruf –



Maruf and his wife and two young children have a legal right to remain in the UK. Despite working, and the children being born here, their immigration status contains a ‘no recourse to public funds’ (NRPF) condition. This means they are not allowed to access healthcare or emergency welfare support. He therefore visited us for an emergency food parcel when his job ended abruptly during lockdown.

Maruf was so happy to get help that he decided to volunteer with us every week after his visit – even while fasting for Ramadan – and we committed to providing emergency food parcels for his family for as long as they need support.

“I’m so grateful for the way your team treated us with dignity and compassion and now I’m able to give something back to the community by volunteering!”



Our children and families team and service users show their appreciation

Partnership

At BDCA, taking a partnership approach is in our DNA.

This includes our service users, where we aim to help them address not only the immediate challenges for which they come to us, but also the wider underlying issues that cause them to seek help in the first place. For example, we refer people across to our other services at BDCA, invite specialist advisors to attend our groups and offer added support, and signpost them to specialist services offered by other trusted charities in our network.

This partnership approach also extends to our borough-wide relationships with other charities, community organisations and the London Borough of Newham, as we work to fight inequality and build a stronger Newham together.

The importance of effective collaboration has never been more real to us than this year. We're extremely grateful for your support and we look forward to working together even more closely to change lives and transform Newham!



Presentation cheque from Nationwide

Christmas lunch and gifts for foodbank users provided by our partners including ExCeL London



Rapper and actor Kano kindly included us in his Newham Talks fundraiser



— Meet Some of Our Partners —

Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP for East Ham

"As local MP, I have been a committed supporter of the work of BDCA for many years. Its committed, imaginative and creative work is absolutely vital to our community."

Jane Williams Founder and CEO, The Magpie Project

"For us, Bonny Downs is a trusted partner in Newham. We work closely with the organisation at many levels, from referring families to their wonderful services, to liaising over emergency Covid support, and influencing local service provision at local policy level. We are constantly learning from their wealth of experience in Newham, and their expertise gained through years of meeting community needs."

Lakmini Shah Councillor, LB Newham

"As the local Councillor, I have been involved with Bonny Downs Community Association and witnessed their work in the community since 2006. During the pandemic the work they did to support our community is of sterling standard. They served the most vulnerable residents in our community."

Muhammad Uddin Director, Newham Muslim Forum

"The work that Bonny Downs Community Association does for our community is heroic! We have greatly appreciated our partnership together this year and we need to keep working together for the people of Newham."

Phil Veasey Public Health Consultant, LB Newham

"Bonny Downs Community Association is one of our voluntary partners that is always there for Newham residents. Its model of providing a community food hub along with a range of holistic wider services, has provided inspiration to our borough-wide work as we navigate our way through the challenges of the pandemic and fight against ongoing inequalities."

Finance

The financial year ending 31 March 2020 was a year of further growth for BDCA. Our income rose by 56%.

As a result, our total income exceeded £1 million for the first time in our history, and we ended the year with a healthy surplus, which is reinvested back to our work, helping us to continue changing lives and transforming our community.

Since then, the pandemic brought a sharp change in the external operating environment. Like most charities, this has hit us through reduced income opportunities, in particular from hiring our facilities as lockdown forced us to temporarily close.

So far, we have weathered the storm remarkably well. This is thanks in large part our ability to adapt quickly to a changing world and the tremendous support we have received from our funding partners and the wider community. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our fundraising team and the generosity of our funders, we also won a significant number of new grants and secured additional support from several existing partners, while our supporters and other individuals have given very generously and beyond our expectations.

The operating outlook remains extremely turbulent. However, thanks to our strong financial position and the progress we have made on reopening our facilities, we are well placed for the future.

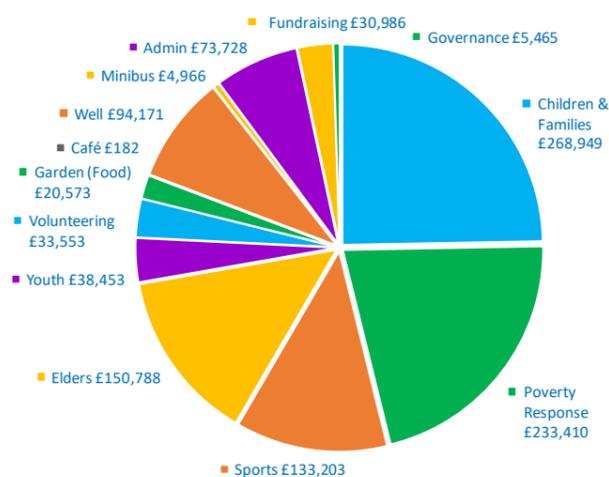
Income

In 2020, our funds totalled £1,358,727
Here's where they came from:



Expenditure

Our total expenditure was £1,088,427
Here's how we used it:

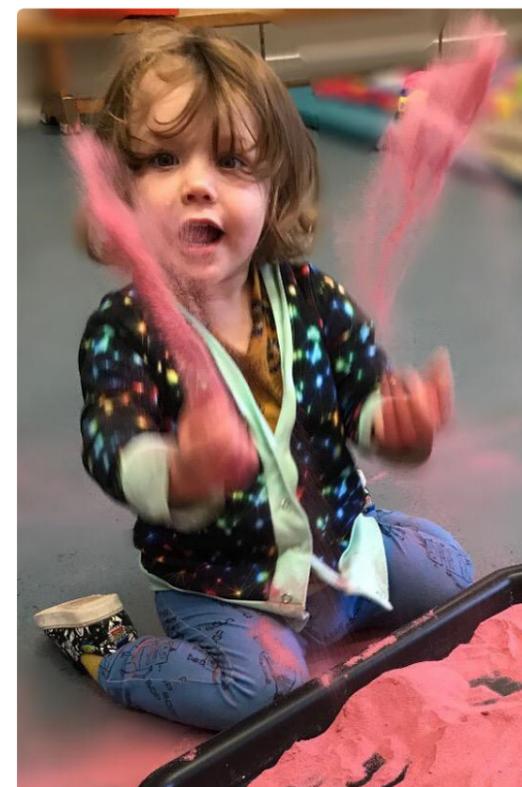


The summary accounts have been extracted from BDCA's annual accounts and trustees' report, a full copy of which can be obtained by contacting us at info@bonnydowns.org or downloading from the Charities Commission website.

The auditors' report on the accounts was unqualified and so was the auditors' statement under s.496 Companies Act 2006 in respect of the trustees' and directors' reports.

Looking Ahead

"The board and leadership team are united in their conviction that BDCA is strongly placed to face whatever 2021 brings."



Messy fun at one of our parent & toddler groups!



As I write this, a second UK lockdown is in progress and life is still very far from normal.

However, I'm encouraged by the great progress we made on reopening our services in early autumn and it's been great to reconnect with so many of our neighbours in person! The work we've already done to ensure our facilities are safe, comfortable and COVID-secure means we'll be ready to begin re-opening our activities and services again as soon as the latest restrictions start to ease.

The road ahead is highly uncertain. We don't yet know what the 'new normal' will look like, the journey there will not be linear, and we can expect further changes to restrictions along the way. Nevertheless, the board and leadership team are united in their conviction that BDCA is strongly placed to face whatever 2021 brings.

Our next priority is to reopen our services and activities once again in line with the latest guidelines, and we remain fully committed to supporting our community through the pandemic for as long as our resources allow. Our other specific plans for the year ahead include:

- **Delivering our Voices for Change project** to support Newham's recovery from the pandemic and ensure we remain a community-owned organisation. We are grateful for the The National Lottery Community Fund and government's support in making this happen.
- **Opening a new social enterprise day nursery** thanks to generous funding from Power to Change, Garfield Weston and Allchurches Trust. Young families tell us one of their biggest needs is pre-school care, yet there is currently only one place for every six under-5s in Newham. We expect to begin building work soon and open next year.
- **Securing longer-term leases** for the facilities we manage, to protect the future of our services for the community in Newham and to allow us to continue investing in them.

Chelle Coulton
Chief Executive Officer

Thank You!

“We love how BDCA’s work supports the whole community, from struggling young families to lonely elders. We give monthly so our money can be used wherever it’s needed most through the year.”

- BDCA Buddies Stuart & Vanessa give monthly

You may have noticed that we’ve said thank you a lot throughout our report, but we wanted to say it one more time!

2020 has been the most extraordinary of years and without the support of every one of our employees, volunteers, trustees, funders, partner organisations, individual donors and neighbours we would not have been able to achieve what we have for our community.

A special thank you to our individual donors

In February, we launched our BDCA Buddies programme. Our Buddies give monthly to our work, which means we can direct their gifts where they are needed most during the year. In return,

we offer Buddies a dedicated package of perks to show our appreciation!

We now have 32 Buddies and we have never valued their support more than during this challenging year! Thank you Andrew, Anthony, Bill, Ellen, Emily, Helen, Katharine, James, Jess, Kate, Matt & Sophie, Minh-Hung, Natasha, Neil, Nicola, Pamela, Paul, Sarah, Sian, Sharon, Simon, Stuart & Vanessa, Sue, Susan, Vicky and seven BDCA Buddies who wish to remain anonymous.

We’re also extremely grateful to everyone who has made one-off gifts to our work this year, whether directly or through one of our special appeals. It’s hugely encouraging to know that you care about Newham as much as we do – and trust us to put your money to the best possible use. Thank you!

You can make a monthly or one-off gift quickly and securely at [localgiving.org/BDCA](https://localgiving.org/)

Learn more about our BDCA Buddies programme at bonnydowns.org/giving

Local schools donated generously to our foodbank during harvest season



“Without your help I would have never got back on my feet!”

This year, we heard from a former service user whom we supported a few years ago. Josh had recently come out of prison. We provided food and a safe place to talk. We helped him to believe in himself, to look for work, and we even found him a suit for his job interview - which he got!

Roll on a few years, and Josh is now doing really well for himself and in a senior position at work. He got in touch with us this summer to tell us his inspiring story of progress, thank us for the helping hand we gave him and make a donation.

BDCA Trustees

- David Mann (Chair)
- Brian Dexter (Treasurer)
- Ife Okwudili
- Matthew Porter
- Michala Dobiasova
- Neil Jepson
- Nigel Brook
- Pauline Varughese
- Tricia Isaac

BDCA Senior Leadership Team

- Chelle Coulton (CEO)
- Angie Allgood (Partnership & Safeguarding Lead)
- Sarah Laing (Staffing)
- Sulthana Begum (Digital, Data, Tech & Comms)
- Tracey Pease (Finance)





“It is hard to describe how much inspiration I draw from all the hard work you do for the community. Organisations like yours are truly the unsung heroes, not only of this difficult time we are living through, but generally. Keep up the amazing work!”

– James Barnard is a BDCA Buddy who gives monthly to our work

bonnydowns.org
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Bonny Downs Community Association
Registered charity no 1071625 and registered company limited by guarantee no 3625785
Registered office: The Well Community Centre, 49 Vicarage Lane, London E6 6DQ