



*“Working together to change lives  
and transform our community!”*

# Volunteer Handbook

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

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[Facebook.com/bonnydowns](https://www.facebook.com/bonnydowns)

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# Welcome

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Welcome to Bonny Downs Community Association! Thank you so much for giving your time to join with us in transforming our local community.

I hope that you find your volunteering experience with us rewarding and positive. This handbook is designed to give you a clear picture of what BDCA does, as well as share general guidelines about volunteering here. If you have any questions please feel free to contact our Volunteer Coordinator ([volunteer@bonnydowns.org](mailto:volunteer@bonnydowns.org)).

Volunteers are the lifeblood of BDCA. We have over 100 volunteers each year supporting our local community through the variety of services we offer. We believe it is important to invest in our volunteers so we have a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator to help look after our volunteers and ensure they have the best possible experience.

All of our volunteers are amazing people who generously give their time to serve others. Whether you want to contribute to the life of your community, further your skills and experiences, meet new people, or you have a particular skill or passion to share, I am so pleased that you have chosen BDCA. I hope you will discover your unique role within the Bonny Downs story as we create the next chapter together.

Chelle Coulton  
Chief Executive Officer

# About BDCA

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## The Journey So Far...

In 1998, volunteers from Bonny Downs Baptist Church launched a community development charity to better support their neighbours in need. The first project was to renovate a nearby derelict community centre, which had stood empty for several years.

The vision was to create a building that would benefit local people from all walks of life and become a hub for local community projects. The team began fundraising, liaising with the council, recruiting other residents and getting their hands dirty demolishing the old building. After many years of hard work, we re-opened the centre, now called The Well, in 2001.

In 2002, BDCA began working in partnership with Newham Council to transform a disused and neglected 9-acre space, Flanders Playing Field, into a high quality sports venue complete with a purpose-built indoor facility. We named this The Bobby Moore Sports Pavilion and opened in 2009.

BDCA secured further funding to create a new eco-friendly community food growing garden in 2013. We are proud of what our community has achieved together.

## Our Strategic Plans

In order to work towards our vision and mission, the following strategic objectives will underpin our work over the next 3 – 5 years:

1. To help people to connect so that we reduce isolation and have a more integrated community.
2. To support people to be physically active, so that we have a healthier community.

3. To help people to take time to reflect in our busy society, so that we can improve our mental health and wellbeing.
4. To provide opportunities to keep on learning so that we have a knowledgeable and skilled community.
5. To provide people with opportunities to give of their time and or money so that we can inspire local action and increase capacity to effect positive change.
6. To help more people to celebrate so that we encourage an attitude of thankfulness and celebration – even in the midst of life's disappointments and challenges.
7. To provide support for people in times of difficulty so that we are able to develop a more resilient community.

## Our Ethos

### MOTTO

**Working together to change lives and transform our community**

### VISION

**A thriving community where everyone feels connected, valued and fulfilled**

### MISSION

**Working to break down barriers, bring people together and build people up**

### VALUES

**Inclusion, Celebration, Empowerment**

## Faith Statement

Bonny Downs Community Association (BDCA) exists to serve our whole community. Inclusion is the first of our organisation's three core values and is very important to us. One of our key strengths is that we are embedded in the diverse community we serve and our teams and services support local people regardless of their background, and of all faiths and none.

BDCA was founded by members of Bonny Downs Baptist Church in 1998 who, inspired by their faith, sought to tackle the poverty, loneliness and injustices in their neighbourhood. Our Christian heritage is something we are proud of and we equally celebrate the fact that BDCA has flourished into a much larger organisation of over 200 change makers who represent our multicultural community and who share with our founders their universal desire to serve. Our staff and volunteers represent a wide range of beliefs and we empower everyone to play their part in transforming our community for the common good.

Today, we continue to work in close partnership with the congregation of Bonny Downs Baptist Church, who meet in our community centre for their worship services and partner with us on projects that address shared aims. BDCA also hosts Friday prayers and Arabic tuition classes for the Muslim community, while we organise four interfaith garden parties each year, so that neighbours can celebrate together, share food and learn about the festivals of Easter, Eid, Diwali and Christmas.

These relationships benefit BDCA and the local community in many ways. For instance, with the church's support we are combating hunger at our foodbank and we offer pastoral care and prayer support for any interested team member, while our popular interfaith events

have been successful in helping neighbours to break down barriers and build new friendships.

## Family Relations Statement

BDCA has grown from a small, family-run company into a larger, more diverse organisation of over 200 community change makers.

More than 20 years ago, BDCA was born out of a small church congregation consisting of several committed local families. Many of their members were so dedicated to the cause that they gave up their secure jobs in order to give more of their time and skills throughout the working week. Without their sacrifice and service, we would not have built the charity that now supports so many Newham neighbours in need. Our roots remain our inspiration and we are proud that several members of these original founding families are still working and volunteering at BDCA today.

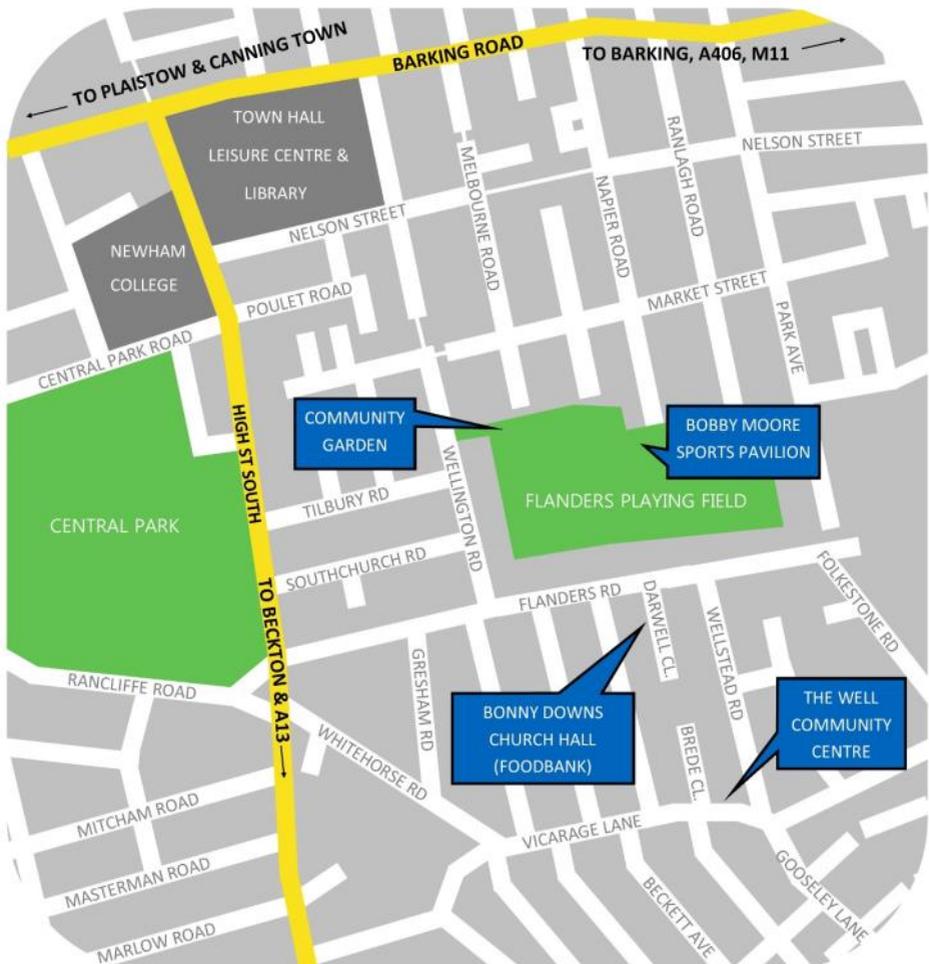
Over time, more and more people have joined the organisation, brought their talents to serve the local community and helped to further develop our mission and vision. As our local area has changed, so has BDCA, developing into a charity that represents the full diversity of our multicultural community.

Today, we see our organisation as an extended family with deep local roots and wide-open arms. We pride ourselves on our professionalism, our commitment to transparency and the strength of our governance and our external 'Trusted Charity' quality assurance mark highlights the robust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies we have in place. We ensure everyone is treated fairly, all roles and opportunities for progression are offered on merit, and no-one is ever supervised or interviewed by a relative.

# Our Venues

BDCA manages the following local venues in East Ham:

- ◆ Flanders Playing Field (entrance on Napier Road), London E6 2SG
- ◆ Bobby Moore Sports Pavilion, 118 Napier Road, London E6 2SG
- ◆ Grow Together Be Together Garden, Wellington Road, London E6 6EB
- ◆ The Well Community Centre, 49 Vicarage Lane, London E6 6DQ
- ◆ Foodbank, Bonny Downs Church Hall, 18 Darwell Close, London E6 6BT



## Access to BDCA

Our venues are all wheelchair accessible. BDCA aims to enable everyone to volunteer and has equipment to facilitate their involvement.

If you have any queries please talk to the Volunteer Coordinator about your individual needs.

## Travel Arrangements

**Bus:** Bus 300 stops outside our office. Buses 474, 101, 104, 115 serve stops on High Street North which is 5 minutes' walk from our office.

**Train:** We are 20 minutes' walk from East Ham underground station. From there you can catch one of the above buses

**Car:** There are limited pay and display meters and disabled parking spaces at the Well Community Centre. We encourage walking or public transport if possible.



# BDCA Projects

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## Children & Families Project

BDCA provides free or low cost activities that help local children and families to have fun, stay safe, be healthy, learn and thrive!

We also help parents/carers in Newham to form positive social networks and access support in order to build their resilience, tackle isolation, improve mental health and strengthen community connection.

Regular activities include playgroups for under 5s, courses for parents, low cost childcare services and holiday play schemes.

For children in Newham who are at risk of hunger our Growing Strong project provides support that includes kids' uniform bank, access to laptops, homework support, emergency food parcels, Christmas toy appeals and parent peer support.

- ◆ After School Club: [07542 125 476](tel:07542125476)  
[afterschoolclub@bonnydowns.org](mailto:afterschoolclub@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Children & Families: [07423 143 451](tel:07423143451)  
[families@bonnydowns.org](mailto:families@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Growing Strong:  
[growingstrong@bonnydowns.org](mailto:growingstrong@bonnydowns.org)

## Food Project

BDCA believe that everyone should have access to healthy, affordable, locally produced food so we make opportunities for local people to enjoy eating, sharing, cooking, growing and learning about food together.

Our Grow Together Be Together Community Garden has local residents of all ages working together to help grow fruits, vegetables and herbs. The garden has innovative 'green'

features including: a compost toilet, raised food growing beds, pond, polytunnel, outdoor cob oven and bonfire area

We run free Community Celebration Events to bring together locals to enjoy food, crafts and family-friendly activities to celebrate the festivals of Christmas, Easter, Eid and Diwali.

Our Outdoor Classroom uses our garden for day time lessons and after school clubs for primary school children

Gem's Delights Café at The Well Community Centre serves delicious African, Caribbean and English dishes on weekdays for local residents

- ◆ Food: [07851 006 472](tel:07851006472)  
[food@bonnydowns.org](mailto:food@bonnydowns.org)

## Sports Project

BDCA provides a variety of affordable and inclusive sports activities and manages high quality sports venues in order to help more local people get active and become healthier. Our Active for Life delivers free sports for adults affected by homelessness including Walking Football, Football, Table Tennis Swimming, Yoga and access to gym facilities.

We run activities such as

- Women only fitness
- Yoga and Pilates
- Chair based exercise
- Community Football
- Walking Football

We hire out our MUGA, pitches and cricket nets and halls at competitive rates.

- ◆ Sports: [07450 805 962](tel:07450805962)  
[sports@bonnydowns.org](mailto:sports@bonnydowns.org)

## Youth Project

BDCA provides Summer activities for local young people aged 11-19 years in the Bobby Moore Pavilion, including: pool, dance, football, basketball, netball, cricket, table tennis, DJing and music production, arts and crafts, trips, life skills workshops and homework support.

We also runs a leadership course for 30 local youth each year to boost their employability.

- ◆ Youth: [07447 268 789](tel:07447268789)  
[youth@bonnydowns.org](mailto:youth@bonnydowns.org)

## Elders Project

BDCA aims to improve the health and wellbeing of local older people by delivering a wide range of social groups, exercise classes, educational activities and support services. We also offer a range of health promotions and social events.

Our Advocacy Manager provides free 1-2-1 appointments for local elders who are experiencing problems and need support in getting their voices heard.

Our volunteer befrienders visit isolated elders for social chats and where possible support them to access local activities and services

- ◆ Elders: [07449 105 436](tel:07449105436)  
[elders@bonnydowns.org](mailto:elders@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Advocacy: [020 8586 7070 ext 209](tel:02085867070)  
[clem.richards@bonnydowns.org](mailto:clem.richards@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Befriending:  
[volunteer@bonnydowns.org](mailto:volunteer@bonnydowns.org)

## Poverty Response Project

BDCA supports people struggling with unemployment, homelessness, in-work poverty, food poverty and debt.

We partner with local organisations including: Bonny Downs Baptist Church, Newham Foodbank, Skills Enterprise and NEWway to deliver free services to help people move forward out of poverty.

We run the Bonny Downs Foodbank and offer 1-2-1 benefits and debt advice appointments.

Our NEWday centre is a consortium of local charities, ran for homeless and vulnerably housed adults with a motivation and commitment to make changes. We offer job search support, advocacy, life skills courses, showers and laundry facilities. We also offer housing options advice and support with referrals where possible.

- ◆ Poverty Response: [07951 688 883](tel:07951688883)  
[support@bonnydowns.org](mailto:support@bonnydowns.org)

## Volunteering

We post our volunteering roles on our website and sometimes on our social media and Do-It.org, where you can check for the latest opportunities.

We regularly have the following opportunities to support our main operational needs: Data Entry, Receptionist, Photography and Minibus driver.

- ◆ Volunteering:  
[volunteer@bonnydowns.org](mailto:volunteer@bonnydowns.org)

# BDCA Policies

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To function effectively, BDCA have a number of policies and procedures, which all staff and volunteers are expected to follow.

We have policies on: Confidentiality, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Health & Safety, Data Protection, Safeguarding, Media and External Communications, Complaints, Volunteering and more. All our policies are available on request, and online ([www.bonnydowns.org/resources](http://www.bonnydowns.org/resources)) but your Supervisor will decide which ones are important to share with you straight away.

Below is an outline of some of the key policies.

## Safeguarding

If your role requires that you work with children and/or adults at risk, we have to undertake a DBS check on you. We will explain the procedure to you and we will cover the costs. It is important that you read and understand our Safeguarding Policies.

## Health & Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy applies to our volunteers as well as our paid staff. It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to act in a safe and responsible manner and not to put themselves or others at risk.

Volunteers will be provided with appropriate Health and Safety training where needed.

If you are visiting a home as part of your volunteering, you must comply with all safeguarding measures as stated in our Home Visits Policy and in our Safeguarding Policies.

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

BDCA is an equal opportunities organisation and include volunteers in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us,

## Data Protection

Please ensure that we have up-to-date information for you, including emergency contact details and any medical conditions.

We may use this information for monitoring and evaluating purposes. If you do not wish us to use your photographs, or other personal information, please let us know.

All your details are kept securely – either in a locked filing cabinet or in secure electronic format. If you want to look at any of your data please ask your Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator

## Photos, Social Media & External Communication

To protect the privacy of our service users, please do not use personal phones or cameras to take photographs of our activities or other users. Please do not post anything on social media without permission. See our Media & External Communications policy for further information.

# Key Information

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## Breaks & Refreshments

You can help yourself to tea, coffee and water during your volunteering time.

Volunteers are entitled to a lunch break when working for more than 4 hours over the lunch period. You are welcome to eat at the Well Café. There are also many shops and cafes within 5 minutes' walk of all of our venues.

The offices are a 'no smoking' zone. You can smoke outside the buildings. See our Smoking and Vaping policy for further information.

## Expenses

We will cover reasonable travel expenses that you require to volunteer. This is on the production of a receipt together with a payment request form.

Some of our projects have free meals, which will be offered to you. If you are volunteering for more than 4 hours over our lunch period, we can provide you with a voucher for lunch in the Well Café.

We do not want you to be out of pocket as a result of your volunteering so please keep all your receipts and remember to claim what is due to you.

## First Aid

There are posters with the names of our First Aiders at all premises. Please contact them if you need assistance or before taking anything from the First Aid box. Your Supervisor will inform you where the First Aid box and Accident Report forms are kept.

## Noticeboard & Information

There is a notice board in the hallway of The Well Community Centre with information for volunteers. Our website is also updated regularly and you can check our Facebook and Twitter.

## Meetings & Events

BDCA loves gathering people together, and you are an important part of our team. You are welcome to attend our team meetings and events, the details of which you can find out from your Supervisor. If you cannot attend but would like to bring something to the attention of the meeting, please inform your Supervisor.

Some projects also have Steering Group meetings which you can join.

## Dress Code

BDCA staff dress relatively informally in the office, but look smarter when they have important meetings. You can wear what you feel comfortable in as long as it is suitable for community context. If you are volunteering in the garden, you will need suitable footwear.

## Personal Belongings

We are unable to accept responsibility for any personal belongings brought onto our premises. We strongly recommend that you do not bring any items of value with you whilst undertaking your role. Please ask your Supervisor where personal items can be stored whilst you are volunteering.

## Trial Period

We hope you enjoy volunteering with us. However in case there are any initial worries, we treat the first 3 weeks you spend with us as a trial period. After this period we will have a chat and if you want to stop volunteering with us, or change roles, that's ok!

If you want to clear up some concerns or maybe change some of the tasks you're doing, we can also discuss this.

## Ongoing Support and Training

We will help you to complete the tasks you have agreed to perform. This may involve initial training, which we would identify during selection or induction.

You will be given the name of the staff member who will be your Supervisor and will offer day-to-day support for your tasks.

You will not be asked to do the work of any staff member whose post has been made redundant. If you are not happy with anything you are doing or being asked to do, please speak to the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.

The Volunteer Coordinator will also check in with you on a regular basis, at least every three months. At this time we will look at what you have been doing recently, any training or support you may need and to see if there are any other areas of BDCA's work you might want to become involved in.

## Time Commitment

On your first day at BDCA we will discuss your arrangements with us, and agree on your times and tasks. We are happy to make an arrangement that allows you more freedom about the hours you come to BDCA. Please talk to the Volunteer Coordinator about this.

## Reporting Absence or Sickness

We value your time and rely on you to turn up when you say you will. If you are unable to attend on any of times agreed, please let your Supervisor know as soon as possible, so that suitable cover can be arranged.

## Telephone & Photocopier

You can use our telephone and photocopier in the course of your volunteering role. Ask a member of staff about how to do this.

## Insurance

Volunteers, like paid staff, are covered by BDCA's insurance while on our premises and supporting our activities offsite. Volunteers must carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of BDCA.

## Dealing with Problems

We want you to be happy while you are volunteering with us. Volunteers are not expected to carry out tasks which are unrelated to their roles within BDCA or beyond their skill level. BDCA will endeavor to respect the boundaries you place in your volunteering. We also expect you to follow our Code of Conduct, available to read at [www.bonnydowns.org/resources](http://www.bonnydowns.org/resources)

If you have any problems or concerns, please talk to your Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible, and we will try to sort them out promptly. A Complaints Procedure is available on the web link above.

If we think there is a problem with your work for BDCA then we will also try to talk to you as soon as possible. For further details, please look at our Complaints Policy.

## Criminal Convictions

Volunteer candidates will only be asked to disclose convictions, which are unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We consider applications for employment and promotion opportunities from volunteer candidates who have a criminal conviction. Opportunities can be offered as long as they are in line with our safeguarding policies. Please see our Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.

## Receiving Benefits?

As long as you only receive out-of-pocket expenses there should not be a problem with volunteering while on benefits.

We are sometimes able to offer job centre volunteer placements for jobseekers on JSA.

## Gifts & Donations

You must not accept personal gifts or bequests from service users or their relatives or friends.

If they insist on making a gift, tell them it can only be accepted as a direct donation to BDCA and not to any individual.

If you are unsure about anything, speak to your Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

# Moving On

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## Leaving BDCA

When you decide to stop volunteering, whatever the reason, we hope you complete an Exit Form so we get feedback about your experience, and any suggestions you may have for improving our volunteering programme.

We also hope you give us 2 weeks' notice to prepare for your exit.

## References

Once you have volunteered with BDCA for three months, we will provide a reference if you need one for paid work, study or another voluntary position.

## Support with Job Search

You can use the public computers in the Café Lobby to carry out job search or work on your CV etc. The Volunteer Coordinator is here to support you as well.

## Paid Positions within BDCA

You are welcome to apply for paid positions within BDCA while you are volunteering with us. You will be expected to go through the same selection procedure as other applicants.

# Volunteer Agreement

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Volunteers are an important and appreciated part of Bonny Downs Community Association. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and contribute fully to our organisation. This agreement is not a contract but highlights what we hope to expect from each other.

BDCA will ensure volunteers:

- ◆ Understand how BDCA works and your role within it
- ◆ Receive the necessary information, training and help to fulfil your role
- ◆ Know who to turn to with questions or problems
- ◆ Can refuse requests that you consider to be unreasonable
- ◆ Are included at relevant meetings and social functions
- ◆ Feel valued and recognised by BDCA
- ◆ Receive regular support, constructive feedback and opportunities for development
- ◆ Are consulted on matters directly or indirectly affecting your voluntary work
- ◆ Know BDCA's arrangements for insurance, taking references and reimbursing expenses
- ◆ Are trusted with confidential information if necessary for your voluntary work
- ◆ Have a safe place for you to volunteer in line with our Health and Safety policy
- ◆ Can share comments and suggestions regarding how BDCA might improve

BDCA asks volunteers to:

- ◆ Perform your volunteer role to the best of your ability
- ◆ Be honest, reliable and punctual
- ◆ Notify BDCA if you are unable to volunteer or will be delayed
- ◆ Uphold BDCA's values and comply with organisational policies and procedures
- ◆ Respect the rights of staff and other volunteers
- ◆ Attend relevant training sessions
- ◆ Give two weeks' notice if you intend to stop volunteering with BDCA, where possible
- ◆ Contact your Supervisor or the Volunteer Co-ordinator to discuss any issues

# First Day Checklist

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You can use this checklist on your first day to make sure you have everything covered:

✓ <i>Things To Check</i>
Introduction to relevant team members
Tour of the facilities
Safety / Fire instructions
Where to find things e.g. First Aid box, equipment, registers etc
Incident reporting procedure
Explanation of role, break times, boundaries etc
Who to contact about absence or delay
Shadow experienced volunteer or staff
Agree days and hours of volunteering

## Contact

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If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Coordinator:

[volunteer@bonnydowns.org](mailto:volunteer@bonnydowns.org)

Some other staff members you may want to contact include:

- ◆ Chelle Coulton (Chief Executive Officer) [chelle.coulton@bonnydowns.org](mailto:chelle.coulton@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Tracey Pease (Finance Manager): [tracey.pease@bonnydowns.org](mailto:tracey.pease@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Jessica Craig (Fundraising Coordinator): [jessica.craig@bonnydowns.org](mailto:jessica.craig@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Angie Allgood (Senior Manager): [angie.allgood@bonnydowns.org](mailto:angie.allgood@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Deepa Selvaraj (Finance & Admin Assistant) [deepa.selvaraj@bonnydowns.org](mailto:deepa.selvaraj@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Sarah Laing (Safeguarding for Children): [sarah.laing@bonnydowns.org](mailto:sarah.laing@bonnydowns.org)
- ◆ Clem Richards (Safeguarding for Adults): [clem.richards@bonnydowns.org](mailto:clem.richards@bonnydowns.org)

*“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”*

*- Anne Frank*



### **Spread the Word!**

If you know anyone – friends, family, colleagues – who may be interested in volunteering with us, we’d love to hear from them! Please ask them to call 0208 586 7070 or email [volunteer@bonnydowns.org](mailto:volunteer@bonnydowns.org)

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