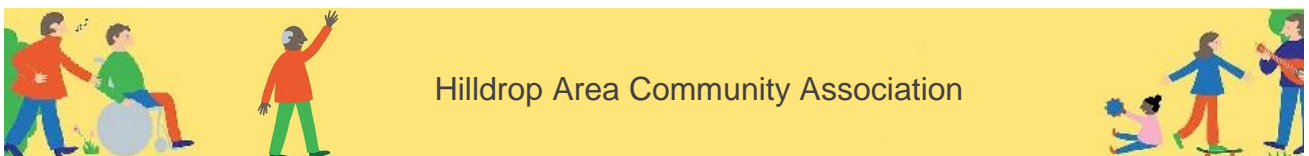




# Hilldrop Area Community Association



## Annual Report 2022-23



# About us

Hilldrop Area Community Association (HACA) is a registered charity that aims to promote opportunities, services and activities that increase the social and economic wellbeing of our diverse community, supporting social cohesion and benefitting all.

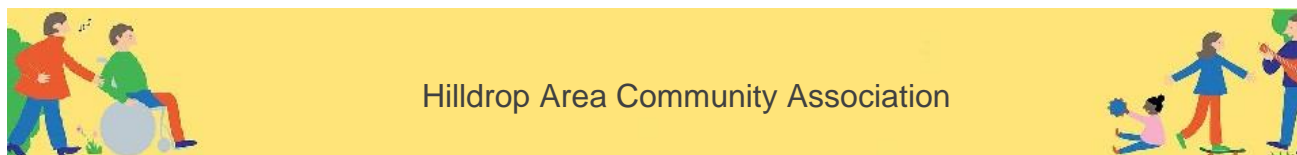
Located in the Tufnell Park (formerly St George's) Ward of Islington and based at Hilldrop Community Centre, we are an established multi-purpose community venue, offering a wide programme of activities and services that respond to local interests and needs. We are committed to involving the community in the shaping of our programmes, and work in partnership with a vibrant network of local groups, providers, and statutory services.

Our Association was first formed in 1986 in the wake of rising community turmoil. Local tenants of the surrounding Hilldrop Housing Estate brought together different groups and individuals who took over the management of an estate building that became Hilldrop Community Centre. The first Head of Centre was Bob Drinkwater, whose dedication and commitment saw him hold the post until March 2016 - an amazing 30 years.

Our current Head of Centre, Elaine Maffrett, joined us in September 2018, and since then HACA has continued to deliver on its aims and consolidate its practice, bringing in new activities and developing the Play Project after school and holiday childcare services. The strong community base on which we were founded has continued to this day, with staff and trustees all local to the area.

We are committed to:

1. Providing strategic leadership within the local community.
2. Coordinating a coherent and engaging neighbourhood-based offer of services and activities for local residents.
3. Ensuring that local community facilities and assets are utilised to their full potential.
4. Attracting external funding to facilitate the delivery of activities and services specific the local community's needs.



## A message from our Head of Centre

**Welcome to our Annual Report for 2022 – 23** - a year full of new projects, increased membership, and the beginnings of a number of fantastic improvements to the centre.

A special feature of Hilddrop Community Centre is that it is off-Road and located in a 'green corridor' right in the middle of the Hilddrop Estate, and in a densely populated urban landscape.

Our gardens and communal spaces provide a valuable natural environment for residents and centre visitors to enjoy - as well as a haven for local wildlife, and over the year we worked hard to maximise the benefits of these spaces.



The old carpark at the end of Community Lane was transformed with a large area 'de-paved' to enable a porous surface and reduce water run-off. New planting areas were created, and several fruit trees were installed. The old circular stone wall was reshaped into a raised bed with herbs and edible fruits. These improvements were made possible through **Community Infrastructure Levy Funds** and a successful bid to the **Mayor of London's Grow Back Greener Fund**, which enabled us to deliver a series of workshops to support volunteers in developing this new space as a wildlife garden.

Our Tuesday **Lunch Club & Socials** have continued to be a practical and social form of support to our members, providing a healthy cooked meal and a space to meet friends, share experiences and seek advice. We expanded this service in the autumn of 2022 to include a **Warm Room**, which became very successful, with members staying all day and using the space for activities such as sewing and knitting, puzzle clubs and watching films. The process of creating a social space in which friendships and connections can develop has been just as positively nourishing as the free food we have on offer.

As always none of our successes and achievements would be possible without the hard work and continued support of our staff, Trustees, volunteers, donors, residents, and members. All have played an essential part in the successes and achievements of the centre over the past year. We were especially delighted that two **Thriving Communities** applications, submitted with members ideas and requests, were accepted and we look forward to improvement works in resurfacing our access road and pavements, and completing the refurbishment of our Main Hall.

*Elaine Maffrett – Head of Centre*





## A message from our Chair of Trustees

**2022-23 was the year in which we were truly able to bounce back from the pandemic and welcome our centre users back to a full range of activities.**

We enjoyed the fruits of the Mayor of London's Grow Back Greener funding, which not only enabled the transformation of our forecourt and landscaping of the **Hilldrop Wildlife Garden**, but also allowed us to deliver a series of useful workshops in partnership with the Octopus Community Network and other guest facilitators, including Urban Bees. Topics included soil improvement, cultivating animal & insect wildlife habitats, and exploring permaculture principles. We now have an even greener oasis in the concrete jungle, thanks to the hard work of our gardening volunteers.

In June we held our **Jubilations** summer fair and parade to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It was a huge success and one of our most well-attended events. which included a fabulous costumed parade attended by local children and families. Our thanks go to **Cut Moose** who masterminded and dressed the parade, **Saada** and her team of kitchen volunteers who fed everyone, and our evening entertainers, magician **Siegfried Loew-Walker**, the **Camden Harmony Singers**, and of course the **Hilldrop Ukulele Band**.

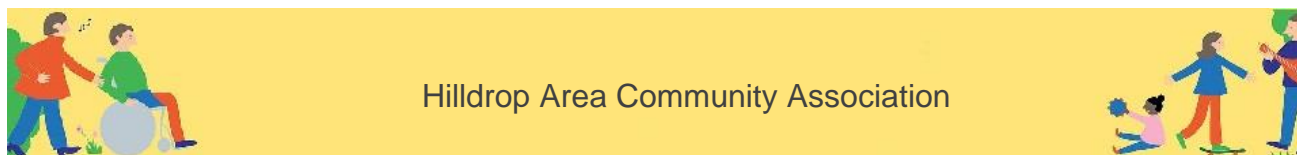
We also held a **Health and Well-Being Fair** in July, a day dedicated to relaxing and inspiring activities to foster good mental & physical health, with advice stands, craft stalls and a free healthy cooked lunch.

Our first ever theatre performance was held in September to raise funds for our services: A 90-minute version **Romeo and Juliet** performed by the pioneering company, **Shake-Scene Shakespeare**, who specialise in 'cue script' method, improvising throughout in a compelling performance. We welcomed a packed house of 70 and are grateful not only to all who bought tickets, but also to the incredible players who offered their time and talent for free.

With help from the **Local Initiatives Fund**, our **Food Hub** volunteers, led by **Robin Campbell**, provided a **Christmas Dinner** for more than 90 of our centre users and residents in December. We were joined by a team of wonderful guest volunteers from Howden Group Holdings, who hosted festive activities, present giving, bingo, and quizzes. Our thanks to both them and organisers The Big Alliance, who helped make the event go with a swing.

The Food Hub service received £8,000 from the **Together for London** fund just before Christmas and more than £2, 500 from the **Cripplegate Foundation** which meant we could invite more people to our growing **Tuesday Lunch Club** and expand our provision of social activities, which included subsidised trips to Kew Gardens, Regent's Canal, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the William Morris Gallery, and the Wellcome Collection.

We were also able to offer the training room as a **Community Warm Space** last winter, thanks in part to a **Local Initiatives Fund** grant from Islington Council to the Octopus Community Network, while an **Islington Giving** grant paid for an after-school series of creative family cooking workshops led by Cut Moose in the spring of 2023.



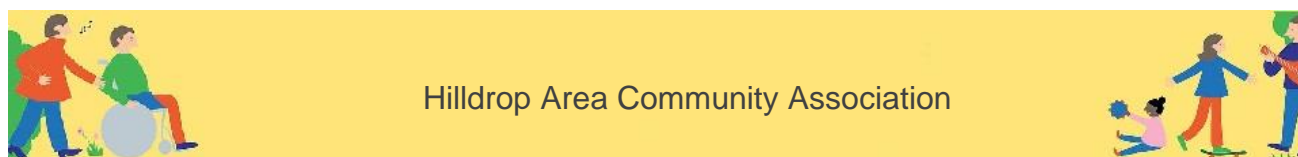
In March we hosted **Common Ground**, an event celebrating the legacy of the Greenham Common women's peace camp, organised by **Greenham Women Everywhere** and **Scary Little Girls**. The event included an exhibition, a willow-bender making workshop, shared stories from those connected with the protests, and contributions from local organisations including **St George's Mutual Aid**, **Disability Action in Islington**, and **Community Plan 4 Holloway**. It was wonderful to feel, alongside the celebration of past achievements, the buzz of new connections being made in the centre.

All this been in addition to our regular activities of course, and none of it would be possible without the hard work of our staff and volunteers and I would like to thank core team: Head of Centre Elaine Maffrett, Administrator Natasha Harper, Play Project Manager Iola Isaac, and Deputy Play Project Manager Jahanara Rahman, alongside our wider team of staff and volunteers who keep the centre running.

Thanks again to the **Board of Trustees** for their time, expertise, and professionalism as always, especially our outgoing Secretary Sarah Martin (who will continue as a trustee) and our Treasurer Glyn Clark, who has completed a first year in post. We're also grateful to our three local Islington Council members **Tricia Clarke**, **Satnam Gill** and **Gulcin Ozdemir** for their supportive presence on our board, and to **Islington Council** and the **Octopus Community Network** for the continued funding and expertise without which we would not exist.

And all of you regular centre users and supporters are so important to us. Please consider becoming a **Friend of Hilldrop** or come along and check out our activities.

*Geraldine Breenan – Chair of Trustees*



## Our Community Space

Our building provides free space for residents' meetings, ward panels, public consultations, and events. At the same we offer affordable space to rent for activities, training, private meetings, and small parties. We offer discounted rates to small charities and local interest groups, and we welcome those that seek to provide affordable activities that promote health and wellbeing, social activity, and local participation.

Our relatively small building punches above its weight with a large main hall, a small hall with patio, a small training room and kitchen facilities. Accessibly situated on ground level, the centre is surrounded by ample pleasant garden space. Improvements to the training room have been made to create an additional warm space for our Tuesday drop-in where people can browse our book collection, play games, do crafts, or just relax and chat.

Alongside our long-term regular bookings, the centre is very popular with families organising children's parties at the weekend. Our out-of-hours bookings are managed by our Centre Warden **Celine Nodinot** who is on hand to introduce hirers to the centre and provide any assistance during each booking.

Thanks to Celine and our Centre Cleaner **Sandra Florez**, who keeps our building in tip-top condition, we can maximise this vital income stream that helps us to fund events, improve facilities, and provide materials and equipment for our own services.





## A Year in Transition

At the start of the 2022-23 financial year, we were thankful over the disruption caused by the COVID pandemic. The bonds built with our community, partners and supporters were stronger than ever and it was time to plan the year ahead with a renewed sense of energy and purpose.

We were off to a great start with work already underway on the transformation of Community Lane to create the new wildlife garden. At the same time our internal systems were receiving a much-needed overhaul thanks to our new partnership with IT professionals **People's Place Community Partnerships (PPCP)**. PPCP provide IT support for several grassroots voluntary organisations and manage the **21st Century Skills (21CS) project**, a training and work experience programme supporting young people into IT careers. Since they came on board, we've not only had our operations transformed, but we've also had the great pleasure to get to know some of PPCP's young trainees and follow their journeys into new careers.



April began with a fully subscribed Easter Holiday Play Scheme followed by an equally well-attended summer term After School Club. The new term saw the return of the **Food Hub's Tuesday Lunch Club and Social**, and we welcomed new volunteer **Saada Sulieman** to the kitchen to support Food Hub Co-ordinator **Robin Campbell**. Saada has since been adding her own special flourishes of flavour to the weekly menu, as well as being key in providing the catering for many of our community events.



We hosted our first '**Coffee with a Copper**' drop-in with officers from Tufnell Park Ward Police's Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

The team hold their quarterly Ward Panel meetings at the centre to discuss local concerns and policing strategy. In future we hope to host more public events that provide the opportunity for the community to meet and chat with local officers in a relaxed setting.

## Springing Into Action

The first of our free summer **gardening workshops** ran between April and June and covered a range of subjects including soil maintenance, herb cultivation, urban growing, and wildlife habitats. In May the **St George's Mutual Aid Group**, whose volunteers continue to play a crucial role in supporting vulnerable people in our neighbourhood, hosted '**New Shoots**', a



celebratory event inviting the community to meet neighbours and volunteers over light refreshments. Themed around the development of the new wildlife garden, the event included a special workshop on wildlife permaculture hosted by Fran from the Octopus Community Network.

In late May we welcomed staff from business technology and marketing company **Incubeta**, who volunteered their time to transform the entrance to our main hall with a much-needed re-paint of the exterior walls.

Thanks to **The Big Alliance**, who specialise in linking corporate volunteers with community projects, we were delighted to have them with us for the day, and even more so with the splendid job they did!



### ***Summer Celebrations***

As June approached preparations were well underway for our '**Jubilations**' event in honour of HM Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The day was to feature a costume parade by local children and families who attended a series of creative workshops hosted by Helen Ainsworth of **Cut Moose**, making decorative crowns, cloaks, and hobby horses.

Our tea-party in Community Lane featured music, games, and home-baked treats, and we were bowled over by the wonderfully high turn-out of neighbours and friends who joined us for our largest community event since the lockdown. As evening approached the festivities continued in the Hilddrop garden with a delicious cooked supper prepared by our Food Hub volunteers, music from the Camden Harmony Singers and the Hilddrop Ukulele Band, and magic tricks performed by Siegfried Loew-Walker.



The Jubilee coincided with the announcement that the **Octopus Community Network** were to receive the prestigious **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**, given in recognition of the hard work of volunteers across the network's community food hubs.

Later in the year our own volunteers **Edith & Saada** would attend the awards ceremony on behalf of all Hilddrop volunteers to accept this thoroughly deserved recognition.





In late June women attending our lunch club and sewing activities were invited to attend a free day-long course in **DIY Skills** using power tools, provided by **Islington Adult Community Learning**.

The course was a great way to introduce learners to the basics and give them the confidence to get creative using the right tools. Some of the Hilldrop staff also attended and the skills acquired would be put to good use – after all our building often requires light maintenance!



In July we held our second **Health & Wellbeing Fair**, a day dedicated to relaxing and therapeutic activities, arts & crafts, advice & signposting, and healthy food to sample. Meanwhile Cut Moose were busy processing entries to their '**Everyday Fantastic**' film-making competition to be judged later in the month, but Helen still made the time to bring her weaving stall to the event and enjoy a day chatting and catching up with visitors.

With so many spectacular creations made by those who had attended the Jubilations workshops in May, Cut Moose also organised a series of short exhibitions to show off their amazing work for all to see at both the Highgate and Belsize Libraries, and at the Somerstown festival.

As the summer term ended, we said goodbye to Play Workers **Emilio Reyes** and **Emma Clarke** who were moving onto greater things, while our Centre Cleaner **Sandra Florez** became a permanent staff member, cementing her long-term association with the centre.

### ***Arts In the Autumn***

After another successful Summer Holiday Playscheme there was drama in the air as the new term approached and we welcomed actors from **Shake-Scene Shakespeare**, a unique company specialising in improvised 'cue script' performance, to the centre for a very special fundraising performance of Romeo & Juliet.



The performers, including our very own **Geraldine Brennan**, gave their time and considerable talent for free to help raise funds for our services, and we were delighted to welcome a near full house of guests to the centre on the day. We are extremely grateful to the players of Shake-scene Shakespeare for bringing such a special event to the centre, and to all those who came to enjoy the show and raised nearly **£600** for our charitable activities - an amazing achievement!





*Actors from Shake-scene Shakespeare performing Romeo & Juliet in September 2022.*

The autumn term brought another round of gardening workshops, a new season of the **Artistic Takeover**, a series of multimedia workshops for young creatives hosted by Cut Moose, and the return of **Easy Exercise** classes for people with limited mobility, another short course offered by Islington Adult Community Learning. **Stacy Dugdale** joined the Play Project team as a permanent member of staff, having previously supported the team as a volunteer, and in October we hosted our first in-person **Annual General Meeting** since the pandemic.

The AGM saw us officially welcome **Glyn Clark** to the executive board, having been a co-opted member since January 2022. It was sadly the last AGM as Treasurer for long time board member **Anjit Chaudhuri**, who after 6 years was stepping down as a Trustee. We are grateful to Anjit for helping to steer us through some of our most challenging years financially and helping to put us firmly on the road to recovery post-pandemic. As new Treasurer, Glyn has ably stepped into his shoes to ensure we remain in a strong position going forward.

### ***Winter Warmth & Kindness***

By November we were once again making plans for Christmas, with the launch of our children's **Christmas Card Competition** and the ever-important **Christmas Appeal**.

Again, thanks to the tremendous kindness of people in our community who donated money and goods, we were able to give parcels of food, essential household items, winter clothes and other gifts to a many local families and individuals needing help over the winter.

In December we said farewell to the **Humpty Dumpty Singalong** as facilitator **Deborah Brodie** and her family moved from London to pastures new. Deborah had been running her gentle parent and child music sessions regularly at Hilddrop since 2019 and she was a much-loved member of the Ukelele Band. The Singalong continues in a new location, and we wish Debs and her family all the best for the future.





*Christmas Family Craft Day and the winning entry from our children's Christmas card competition.*

We also held a **Family Craft Day** in December which included a Christmas wreath-making workshop, a bric-a-brac sale, baby soft play and a lunch of delicious hearty winter soup cooked up by Robin.

We ended 2022 with our **Christmas Dinner & Celebration Day**, where we welcomed more than 90 guests to the centre for fun & games and a huge Christmas dinner prepared by Robin and the Food Hub volunteers. It was a pleasure to have so many of our centre regulars plus a few new faces with us on the day, and thanks to the support of our donors during the Christmas Appeal, we were able to cater for all and keep our guests topped up with refreshments.

Special thanks were due to our fantastic guest volunteers from **Howden Group Holdings**, again recruited through The Big Alliance, who not only helped with the mammoth task of preparing the food, but also did an amazing job of providing the games, entertainment, and good cheer for our guests throughout the day.

### ***New Activities for a New Year***

2023 began promisingly with us having procured funding from **Together for London** and Islington's **Local Initiatives Fund** to provide an additional **Warm Room** for residents on Tuesdays. Our Training Room received a new coat of paint, a sofa, and some bookcases to hold our expanding book collection, craft materials, games, and puzzles.

With many residents worried about heating their homes, for a least one day a week (and sometimes two) the space was available to anyone who wanted to sit and chat, browse books, watch TV, or use the PC.





We welcomed the **Tarbiya Club** who began running a weekly learning and play group for Muslim mothers and children. The centre also became the location of rehearsals for '**Women Making Waves**', a series of short plays by Lipstick Rebel Productions exploring the stories of real women from history who challenged the conventions of their day. The shows would later run to much critical acclaim at Actors East in Hackney.



In February our Sew & Craft group returned and later we'd welcome **Coraleen Charles**, our facilitator for a new free course in **Sewing Skills** funded by Islington Adult Education. Our Sew & Craft drop-ins have always been popular, so we felt it was important to provide a dedicated course covering all the basics so that more people could join in.

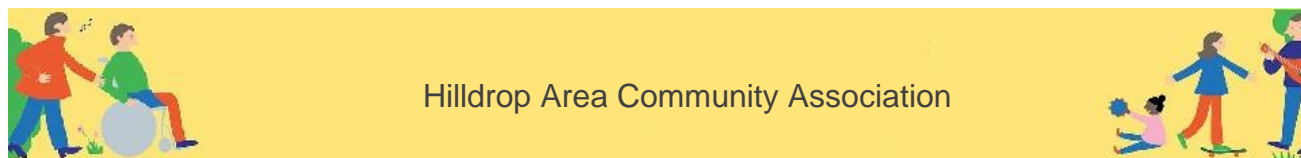
Participants were invited to the **Stitch Festival** at the Business Design Centre, a regular outing in the Hilldrop calendar.

As a community space serving the Hilldrop Estate and surrounding area, we regularly host Tenants and Residents Association meetings, including both the **Brecknock and Penderyn Way TRA's**. We hosted the first meeting of the newly formed **Ivinghoe House TRA** in February which is now a quarterly fixture, and in March we hosted a resident's meeting held by our neighbours **Community Play 4 Holloway**, an independent coalition working to ensure the needs of the local community are at the heart of the redevelopment of Holloway Prison.

**Creative Dinners**, a brand-new activity for families, began in March and ran for 5 weeks until the year end. Facilitated by Helen Ainsworth of Cut Moose, parents with children were invited to join in preparing a multi-course family meal each week and sit down and eat together as a group. As always with Cut Moose activities, there was an additional creative element with the children being encouraged to have conversations, explore ideas, and create artworks at the table before helping to prepare dinner. Our families all got to know each other and picked up some handy recipes & techniques along the way.

A series of **days out** were planned for the spring & summer term, and in March our regular Lunch Club and Sew & Craft members were invited on visits to the V&A Museum and a narrowboat trip along the Regents Canal.

Planned days out have become a regular feature of our service delivery and are part of our wider remit to foster new friendships and connections in the community through common interests.



We hosted the **National Childbirth Trust's** first **Bumps & Babies** meet-up for the Islington area. NCT regularly organise these small friendly meet-ups for parents-to-be and those with young children, giving them an opportunity to get advice and support, make new friends and share experiences over coffee and cake.

The term ended with a very special event held in collaboration with **Greenham Women Everywhere** and **Scary Little Girls**. **'Common Ground'** celebrated the women of the Greenham Common Peace Camp who famously protested the presence of US missiles on UK soil in the 1980's. The event included an exhibition of photographs and stories, songs and poems were shared by those who were there. A workshop on building willow dens was held, and we heard talks from Community Plan 4 Holloway, the Museum of Youth Culture and Jeremy Corbyn.



In all it was an eventful year where we were able to take a number of positive steps forward and set in motion not only a programme of improvements to the centre, but a gradual expansion of our services to include more people than ever before. We're grateful to everyone who has supported us, and it's been a joy to welcome so many more new faces to the centre over the course of the year.

*Natasha Harper – Centre Administrator*



## The Kingsley Organisation

We have had the pleasure of hosting The Kingsley Organisation's thrice-weekly disability support group at the centre since 2019.

The 'Chain Reaction in Town' programme offers disabled adults practical and emotional support with life management, health and wellbeing, personal development, and pathways to greater independence.



Group members Brian, Michael, Gunaj, Pallwasha, Tony, James and Lai-Kwan were in regular attendance over 2022-23, while staff Antonio, Rose, Angela and Norma provided the daily support, practical care, activities, and cooked dinners enjoyed together as a group.

Together they create a family-like atmosphere, and they have become a much-loved ingredient of life at the centre.

## The Hilldrop Ukulele Band

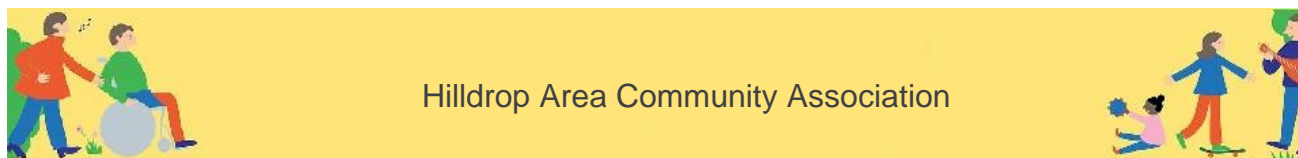


Another of our long-running activities is of course the Ukulele jam on Fridays, where anyone with a Uke, voice, or other instrument is welcome to join in a relaxed singalong covering a wide range of popular and traditional songs.

During the height of the COVID pandemic the activity had to be suspended and it was quite some time before the musicians were able to meet again.

By the end of the COVID restrictions some of the core members of the group returned for the weekly session, but it would not be until 2022 when we really saw the group start to flourish again.

Over the year membership of the group trebled and in their various incarnations they returned to being key providers of the soundtrack to our community events, including our Jubilee celebrations. Special props are due to long-term group member Jude Bailey for keeping the interest alive and encouraging new members joining in for the first time. The group were delighted to welcome back founder member Bob Drinkwater as they continued to grow and expand their repertoire.





## The Food Hub

Our Food Hub services include our weekly **Tuesday Lunch Club & Social**. We're also able to distribute donated food to people in need, thanks in a large part to local volunteers **Jane & Claire** who bring a weekly delivery of surplus food from M&S during term-time.

We're not a 'food bank' but we do our best to assist local people on request by providing groceries and household essentials when we have them or can buy them using cash donations. Food Hub Co-ordinator **Robin Campbell** also ensures that children attending our Holiday Play Scheme are treated to at least two full cooked hearty meals each week.

We're a hub for **St George's Mutual Aid** group, whose volunteers arrange deliveries of hot take-away lunches (provided by **Food 4 All**) to vulnerable people unable to reach the centre.

### The Lunch Club

The Lunch Club saw a rise in attendance during 2022 -23, with plenty of new faces joining us for a free hot lunch on a Tuesday afternoon.

Our Food Hub Volunteer **Saada Suleiman** joined us in May of 2022 to support the Lunch Club and help with our event catering. Saada often makes traditional Eritrean coffee for our Lunch Club guests and has made some incredible dishes such as Doro Wat with Injera (a spiced chicken stew with boiled eggs, with a fermented pancake-like flatbread).

Every year we invite the community to join us for a full **Christmas Dinner** and in 2022 we managed to put on a huge spread consisting of two big turkey crowns, vegan mushroom wellington and *all* the trimmings! With help from the Local Initiatives Fund and donations to our Christmas Appeal, we fed over 90 people including many of our Lunch Club regulars.

Our kitchen volunteers Saada, Geraldine and Alison were ably assisted by guest volunteers from **Howden Group Holdings** who got stuck into peeling the mountains of carrots and parsnips! They provided the day's entertainment, including a big Christmas quiz, and made sure everyone was looked after and having a lovely time.





*Christmas cooks Saada, Geraldine & Alison, and guest volunteers from Howden Group Holdings.*

We continue to strive towards zero food wastage, and we've introduced a scraps caddy (collected by Islington council) which guests are asked to empty leftovers into. Our raw veg peelings go directly into a 'hot bin' for our gardeners to put straight back into the soil. Now we rarely have any food left over from the Lunch Club. Instead, we encourage guests to bring plastic containers in so that we can pack them with any remaining hot food to take home.

I'd like to thank everyone who's worked so hard to make the Food Hub such a success - our volunteers Saada, Edith and Alison; Jane & Claire for providing the weekly surplus from M&S, Elaine for hosting and looking after our guests on Tuesdays, and Geraldine for her support (not to mention fabulous baking!) at our events.

*Robin Campbell - Food Hub Co-ordinator*



## Services for Children & Young People

### *The Hilldrop Play Project*

Our Play Project service delivers a thriving **After School Club** for 39 weeks of the year and a school **Holiday Playscheme** which runs on weekdays during each Half Term, Easter Holiday break and 4 weeks of the school Summer Holiday. Open to children aged between 4 and 11 years, we provide affordable childcare options with a full range of fun and stimulating activities run by our qualified, friendly, and experienced staff.

Our After School Club and Holiday Play Schemes were back to full capacity by the start of the 2022-23 year, with a many new children joining us as the year progressed.

Our Play Project is diverse and inclusive. Catering to all abilities and welcoming children from all walks of life, we encourage every individual child to reach their full potential. Activities are child led, allowing for individual independence and expression whilst building numerous skills.

Our **After School Club** mainly caters to local children attending the Tufnell Park and Bridge (formerly Hungerford) primary schools, from which our staff make daily walking collections.

From January 2023 a new pricing structure was introduced, following Islington's after school childcare funding consultation, allowing a subsidised lower rate for families on low incomes.



Our **Holiday Play Scheme** is accessible to children from further afield but as its very popular families have to book early to avoid disappointment. Alongside daily indoor activities we often organise field trips to parks, museums, and live events. Bowling trips to Rowan's are always very popular.



We occasionally arrange in-house entertainment and in the past the children have enjoyed puppet shows, pantomimes and educational sessions where they can interact with domestic animals & wildlife. During the hot summer of 2022 we delighted the children with the purchase of a brand new large paddling pool, and we are able provide a wide range of outdoor physical activities in our large garden and adjacent multi-use games court.





At the end of each Holiday Play Scheme, we hold a small party for the children. As we don't run the Play Scheme over the Christmas holidays, we make sure that every child that regularly comes to the centre receives a Christmas present at the end of the term.

We're able to do this largely thanks to donations of new toys distributed by the **East London Business Alliance (ELBA)**.



ELBA's annual **Toy Appeal** encourages companies and their employees to buy and donate toys to children's centres across East London and Islington so that every child can feel included in the joy of opening a Christmas gift.



We're extremely grateful to have ongoing support from the staff of our local **Nisa - Brecknock Road**, who provide a weekly donation of fruit and everyday groceries to the Play Project so that we can prepare healthy snacks for the children.

In February 2023 they kindly nominated us for a **Making a Difference Locally** award of £1000 to purchase play equipment and fund activities for the Holiday Play Scheme.

I'd like to thank Deputy Play Manager Jahanara Rahman and the core Play Project staff for their hard work and professionalism, including Stacey Dugdale who has become an invaluable member of the team since joining us in September 2022. Thanks are also due to our temporary staff and specialist one-to-one workers who support the Holiday Play Scheme. Finally, I'd like to thank departing Play Workers Emilio Reyes and Chloe Watson for their service, as well as Charlie Hewitt, who would move onto pastures new in February, and I wish each of them every success in their progressing careers.

*Iola Isaac – Play Project Manager*

### **Bright Futures Early Help Service**

Islington's **Bright Futures** service gives one-to-one support and advice to families with children aged 5-19 years. Advice sessions can be booked at Hilddrop on Wednesday afternoons during term-time, and help can be sought for a wide a range of issues ranging from educational, health or behavioural concerns, to managing family conflict. Bright Futures team of Play and Youth practitioners for North Islington, led by Glen Billey, will work with families for up to six weeks to help address emerging issues and develop a plan of action. This



Hilddrop Area Community Association



may include linking them with other support services and/or activities designed to improve outcomes for children and young family members.

### ***Under 5's Activities***

Our **Stay & Play** service provides a space for families with young children to play, learn and try out new toys and games in a relaxed and sociable environment. The service includes a **Toy Library** through which parents can borrow a variety of toys and books for up to two weeks. The service runs on Monday and Wednesday mornings during term time and is free, though we do encourage a small donation from parents to help with providing materials.

Other under 5's activities that ran during 2022-23 included football skills training provided by the **Little Kickers** franchise, and the **Humpty Dumpty Singalong**, a gentle singing session for parents with babies and toddlers using musical instruments, puppets, and toys.

### ***Cut Moose***

Cut Moose, founded by Helen Ainsworth and Irene Ros, deliver a variety of creative arts projects for children and young people including the long-running **Artistic Takeover**. Now in its fourth year at Hilldrop Community Centre, these free collaborative workshops for 10–14-year-olds explore a variety of different mediums including visual arts, model making, storytelling and performing.

In 2022-23 we continued our Wednesday **Artistic Takeover** workshops throughout the summer, autumn, and spring terms with a core group of children in regular attendance. As the Queen's Diamond Jubilee approached we successfully applied for National Lottery funding to provide a series of creative workshops in preparation for the celebrations.



Open to families with children of all ages, the **Jubilations Workshops** at Hilldrop were joyous events where dazzling crowns and costumes were made to be worn at the celebrations, which included a spectacular children's street parade organised as part of Hilldrop's **Jubilations Summer Fair & Parade**.

Similar workshops for children and young people were repeated across Islington and Camden at Maiden Lane Community Centre, the NW5 Project, the Somerstown Youth Centre and at both the Brecknock and Eleanor Palmer Primary Schools. Many came along to show off their creations at the Jubilations event and it was a wonderful opportunity to contribute to such a stupendous day!





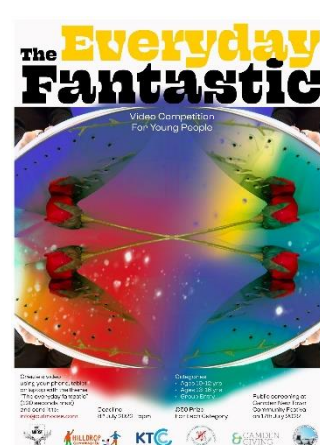
We had a tent full of costumes and crowns, and participants were invited to have their faces painted with eye-catching designs, adding a final touch of magic to each look.



*The Jubilations Summer Fair & Parade, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022*

Towards the end of June, we launched the **Everyday Fantastic** film competition, which kicked off a series day-long workshops in film making for young people at the Regents Park Time Bank, Maiden Lane Community Centre, and at Hilldrop as part of the Artistic Takeover. The poster was created with images from students at nearby Beacon High School. The competition would later culminate with a prize giving at the Camden New Town Festival in the presence of local film makers.

In July, our Jubilations crowns and accessories were put on display in a series of **exhibitions** at Highgate Library, Belsize Community Library, and outside the British Library as part of the Somerstown Festival to much admiration.





The term ended with a well-received **performance** devised by our Artistic Takeover participants to which parents and family members were invited. They also delivered a short workshop with the audience in which they demonstrated some of the creative processes used in their weekly sessions.

In September the Artistic Takeover returned, but as many of our participants had moved on to secondary school, we ran parallel sessions at the Zone Youth Club for a slightly older age-range. As the term went on these were better attended than the Hilldrop sessions and so we began to think about developing a new activity on Wednesdays for the new year.



In March 2023 we launched **Creative Dinners** in partnership with the **Islington Food Fund** and **Islington Giving**, inviting families to cook and share a meal together, with some art activities included for the children. The sessions were very well attended with four families regularly participating in the preparation of a variety of dishes and getting to know each other through the activity. The sessions were as much about providing a social occasion for neighbours to meet and chat, as they were about introducing families to healthy recipes and cooking techniques. The sessions were very much enjoyed by everyone who took part.

Cut Moose had a wonderful year at Hilldrop. We're very grateful for all the time and support that Elaine, Natasha, Celine, and the rest of the staff gave us through the course of each project. We're grateful also to our funders who included Camden and Islington councils, the Cripplegate Foundation, and the National Lottery. We hope to continue contributing to the creative community life of Hilldrop in the years to come.

*Helen Ainsworth – Cut Moose*



*'Everyday Fantastic' competition finalists at the Camden New Town Festival.*



## The Hilldrop Gardening Project

Our gardens & raised beds are the combined work of volunteers who work through the seasons to keep a peaceful oasis in a densely urban area. In 2022 the **Mayor of London's Grow Back Greener** fund was launched, part of a London-wide initiative to 'Green the Grey' of our urban spaces. An opportunity arose to transform a disused area of Community Lane into a wildlife garden for all to enjoy. Hilldrop Gardening Project co-ordinator Sarah Martin tells the story:

### A Year In The Garden

2022 - 2023 was an ambitious year for the Hilldrop Gardening Project. We had already planted our raised beds outside the centre and in Community Lane with vegetables and herbs, broad beans and onions, mint, and coriander, nasturtium and chamomile, lavender, and blackcurrant sage. But there was much more to come as the money and support began filtering through from our successful bid with the Mayor of London's Grow Back Greener fund.

The fund provided the materials and manpower to re-landscape the end of Community Lane. This included the removal of the old damaged pavements and the dismantling of the former stone circle, the re-alignment of the raised beds, the creation of a new bed from recycled stones, road re-surfacing and the laying of new turf. Once the restructuring was complete the stage was set for our gardeners to bring the space to life!

The Grow Back Greener funding enabled us to purchase a variety of trees, shrubs, hedging and the materials to plant them. We invited the community to get involved by running several free workshops. Topics covered tree identification, cultivating herbs, making habitats for wildlife (such as bug hotels), and two sessions delivered by **Urban Bees** exploring the seasonal activities of our most important pollinators. We followed the workshops with a mass bulb planting session in September.

We now have fruit trees and edible hedges for birds and insects. In November we planted young trees and shoots and built some compost bins, and by spring we were planting double hedges and a sea of new bulbs.





We sowed nasturtium seed saved from the beginning of the year, as well as and crimson clover in the grassy patch for diversity.

By March 2023 there was only one thing missing, and that was a sign to name the new area the **Hilldrop Wildlife Garden**. Local artist **Winston Scotland** took up the challenge, creating a beautiful hand-painted triptych adding a splash of vibrant colour to complement the blooming beds.

Our wonderful gardening volunteers have given so much to the project, and I'd like to thank **Tom, Yasmin, Karen** and **Alfred** for their hard work throughout the year. I'd also like to thank **Elaine** for managing the project with such energy and vision, **Will** and **Fran** from the **Octopus Community Network** for their practical support, all our workshop facilitators, and everyone who came along to help us with planting. It's been an incredible achievement we can all be truly proud of.

*Sarah Martin – Trustee & Garden Project Co-ordinator*



Hilldrop Area Community Association





## FINANCE

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### **An overview from our Treasurer**

With great appreciation of the detailed work undertaken by our Finance Officer, Anita Nightingale, working closely alongside our Centre Manager, Elaine Maffrett, and our previous Treasurer, Anjit Chaudhuri, we were able to set budgets and accruals for the financial year 2022/23 with a high degree of accuracy. The centre sets an annual budget with a modest net loss, with the expectation that over the course of the year, the small loss will be transformed into a net profit through successful grant applications and strong take-up of the centres services, specifically hall hire and after school clubs.

I would like to thank the London Borough of Islington for their financial support through Voluntary & Community Sector funding, the dedicated staff at the Council for their assistance, as well as our local Councillors for their ongoing support. Finally, I'd like to thank our Finance Officer Anita Nightingale for managing our bookkeeping, and Andrews Tete-Donkor from Glandys for preparing our final accounts again with such great efficiency.

The centre has managed to maintain its target level of cash reserves. This helps to mitigate the risk of any changes of circumstance that may affect the centre's finances, such as a withdrawal of funding or the ending of a service agreement.

*Glyn Clark - Treasurer*

### **Finance Report Summary**

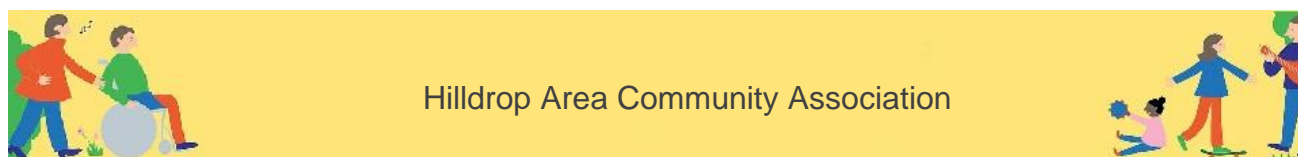
The total income generated for the period ending March 2023 was £207,509, this reflects an increase of 11.75%, compared with March 2022's, income of £185,678.

The total expenditure for the period ending March 2023 was £202,621, as compared with the total expenditure for prior year (2022), which was £189,413, this reflects an increase in cost of 6.97%.

The net profit for the year was £4,888.

General reserves at 31st March 2023: £57,633.

*Anita Nightingale – Finance Officer*



## FINANCE

### Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

I carried out an examination in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. The examination also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Managers and Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken provided as much evidence as would be required in an audit and, consequently an opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view", and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, despite the continuing negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war on the general UK economy (high inflation), and with the charity's activities having returned to some normalcy, no matters have come to my attention that are materially significant.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- (1) give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and its profit [loss] for the year then ended have been properly prepared in accordance with SORP FRS 102 as adopted by the Charity Commission and Section 130 of the Charities Act 2011 and
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Andrews Tete-Donkor, MBA, ACIE  
Glandy & Co (Accountants)  
24<sup>th</sup> May 2023

	Unrestricted General Fund £	Cyclical Maintenance Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>INCOME</b>					
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds</i>					
Grants and other donations	50000		111971	161971	148996
Other income	45538			45538	36682
<i>Incoming resources from charitable activities</i>					
Income from services provided				0	0
	95538		111971	207509	185678
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
<i>Cost of generating funds</i>					
Fundraising and project development					
<i>Charitable activities</i>	91610		111012	202621	189622
	91610		111012	202621	189622
<b>Net Income/ (Expenditure)</b>	3929		960	4888	-3944
Transfer between funds					
<b>Other Recognised Gains/ (Losses)</b>					
Realised gain on investment					
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>	3929		960	4888	-3944
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
Balance Brought Forward 31Mar 2022	52745		0	52745	56689
Balance Carried Forward 1st April 2023	56674		960	<b>57633</b>	52745



We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Hilldrop Staff, Volunteers and Trustees who have all contributed to developing the centre and organisation, enabling it to flourish.

### **Staff**

Elaine Maffrett – Head of Centre

Robin Campbell – Food Hub

Coordinator

Natasha Harper – Centre Administrator

Anita Nightingale – Finance Officer

Arifa Choudhury – Under Fives Worker

Nasrina Ahad – Under Fives Worker

Celine Nodinot – Centre Warden

Sandra Florez – Centre Cleaner

Iola Isaac – Play Project Manager

Jahanara Rahman – Deputy Play Manager

Mick Carroll – Play Worker

Amy Marciano – Play Worker

Sharon Davies – Play Worker

Stacy Dugdale – Play Worker

Charley Hewitt – Play Worker

Emilio Reyes – Play Worker

Emma Clarke – Play Worker

Chloe Watson – Play Worker

### **Volunteers**

A big thank you to all our volunteers at the centre but a special mention to the following:

Edith Neves

Thomas Coyle

Karen Dube

Saada Suleiman

Yasmin O’Grady

Alfred Maher

### **Trustees**

Geraldine Brennan (Chair)

Sarah Martin (Secretary)

Glyn Clark (Treasurer)

Marissa Campbell

Brian Bench

Victor Olayebo

Charlene Braithwaite

Petronella Carter

Stephen Moorby

Cllr Satnam Gill (Co-opted)

Cllr Tricia Clarke (Co-opted)

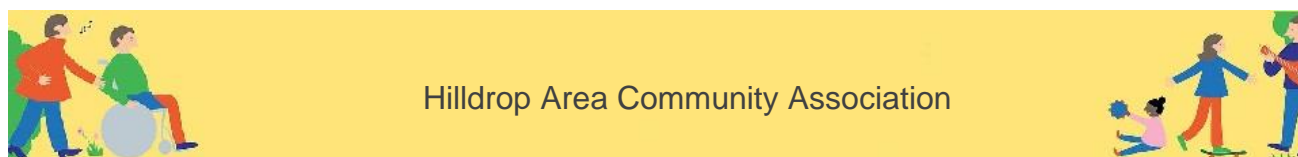
Cllr Gulcin Ozdemir (Co-opted)





And finally, we'd like to thank the many individuals and organisations that supported us over the year. It is thanks to the generosity and dedication of our donors, partners, funders, local businesses, and other supporters that we have been able to help so many people.

Thank you for making Tufnell Park Ward a community to be proud of!



Hilldrop Area Community Association

Hilldrop Community Centre

Community Lane

Hilldrop Road

London

N7 0JE

Tel: 0207 607 9453

[office@hilldrop.org.uk](mailto:office@hilldrop.org.uk)

[www.hilldrop.org.uk](http://www.hilldrop.org.uk)

Registered Charity number 1164597

Ofsted setting number 2503947



Hilldrop Area Community Association

