

# **Redbridge Equalities and Community Council**

Registered Charity No: 1002357



## **Annual Report 2017 - 2018**

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

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## MAYOR'S FOREWORD



Redbridge Equalities and  
Community Council  
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Essex IG1 4PE

The Worshipful the Mayor  
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Town Hall  
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2 July 2018

I am delighted to accept your invitation to be President of Redbridge Equalities and Community Council (RECC) for the year 2018-2019.

RECC is amongst one the oldest charities in our borough and I am very pleased it is in its fiftieth year continuing to provide vital support, advice and advocacy to some of the most vulnerable in our Redbridge community.

I am passionate about working with young people in their early years and supporting them in their development. There is strong evidence from research and Government statistics that that promotes better outcomes in later life. Working with young people is ultimately the cornerstone that underpins a thriving, happy and harmonious society – for young people are our future.

RECC's work with young people to prevent discrimination, prejudice, hate crime, develop civic pride and help them participate in developing their community is vital in promoting peace, harmony and cohesion within the borough and in getting their voice heard.

I would like to wish everyone at RECC the greatest success with all their projects and activities, some of which spread across our neighbouring boroughs and I look forward to joining with you in your work to help and support the community in Redbridge.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Debbie Kaur-Thiara  
Mayor of Redbridge 2018- 2019

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF REDBRIDGE EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

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### **Chair**

Nigel Turner

### **Vice Chair**

Diana Neslen

### **Treasurer**

Jatinder Saini

### **STAFF TEAM 2017-2018**

David Landau  
Senior Caseworker

Cecelia Rufus  
Administration Manager/Good Relations Officer/Caseworker

Khadra Mohammed (to 31 August 2017)  
Administration Officer

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Sharon Cypal  
Lirie Haxihui  
Christine Hibbert  
James Rufus  
JoAnne Mc Connell  
and 50+ young people from the National Citizen Service

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2017-2018**

### **TRUSTEES SERVING FOR THREE YEARS 2015-2018**

Kathleen Monaghan  
Michelle Harewood  
Barbara White

### **TRUSTEES SERVING FOR THREE YEARS 2016-2019**

Sue Mutter  
Jatinder Saini  
John Ward

### **TRUSTEES SERVING FOR THREE YEARS 2017-2020**

Rashmit Khalra  
Diana Neslen  
Nigel Turner OBE

### **CO-OPTED TRUSTEE**

Khadra Mohammed (from 10 January 2018)

### **LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE REPRESENTATIVES 2017-18**

Councillor Mahboob Chaudhary  
Councillor Shakil Warraich Ahmad

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

### **Introduction**

2017-18, my first year as the substantive Chair of RECC, proved to be a busy and challenging year for everyone involved, but a year which has – eventually – left the organisation in its strongest and most stable position for some time.

### **Governance**

Last year's Annual Report explained the work which had been done to replace RECC's previous structure as an unincorporated charity with a more modern and business-like "charitable incorporated organisation".

The 2016 Annual General Meeting agreed to replace RECC's previous structure and become a CIO. In November 2016, this received the approval of the Charity Commission, and the CIO was registered as Registered Charity number 1170313.

At the 2017 AGM, on the unanimous recommendation of the Trustees (who are all Trustees of both the old charity and the CIO), the following Resolution was agreed, also unanimously, by the members present:

This Annual General Meeting of Redbridge Equalities and Community Council ("RECC"), mindful of the recommendation of the Charity Commission that charities like RECC should be Charitable Incorporated Organisations, of the practical and administrative advantages to a charity such as RECC of CIO status, and of the unanimous recommendation of the Trustees that it should do so, resolves:

1. That the unincorporated charity, Redbridge Equalities and Community Council (Registration number 1002357) ("the Old Charity") and the Charitable Incorporated Organisation of the same name (Registration number 1170313) ("the CIO") should merge as the CIO
2. That the members of the Old Charity should be transferred to the CIO
3. That the assets and contractual obligations of the Old Charity should be transferred to the CIO, and that the CIO should be empowered to settle any outstanding debts of the Old Charity thereafter,

with effect from, in each case, the earliest practical date after receipt of approval from the Charity Commission (or confirmation that that approval is not required) of both the merger and the transfer of assets.

Various issues had to be sorted out before RECC could start to operate as a CIO, including:

- discussions with Council officers and other funders to ensure that they saw no impediment to continued partnership funding

- development of a set of Rules for the CIO covering administrative and other important matters not dealt with in its Constitution. These were agreed by the Trustees of the CIO in June 2017 and accepted by the membership at the 2017 AGM of both charities.
- consideration of the legal, practical and accounting issues involved in transferring the old charity's assets and financial and contractual obligations to the CIO and, where necessary, seeking the Charity Commission's approval.

These issues were finally concluded early in 2018, and the Trustees then agreed that the start of the new financial year on 1 April 2018 was "the earliest practical date" referred to in the Resolution. RECC has operated as the CIO since that date.

Consequently, this Annual Report and Accounts is the last for the old unincorporated charity and that for 2018-19 will be the first substantive report for the CIO. A brief 2017-18 Annual Report for the CIO is included below to meet the Charity Commission's reporting requirements. The CIO was inactive throughout 2017-18, with all business being transacted through the old charity, and therefore has no accounts for that year.

### **Finance**

Through the early months of the financial year covered by this report, we struggled to obtain enough income to remain viable in the face of changes in the London Borough of Redbridge's funding criteria; the end, in July, of the Sport Relief funding we had had through the Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund; and a number of unsuccessful bids to other funders. Eventually, at the end of July, the Trustees concluded that – while we would continue to pursue funding wherever it might be available – we had, in order to fulfil our legal responsibilities, to proceed towards an orderly closure.

A small group of Trustees and staff worked closely to implement this. We gave staff notice of redundancy, gave our landlord notice of termination of the lease, and took similar actions to limit RECC's other obligations. But we also looked at what could be done to keep RECC going despite the shortfall in income – through stringent restriction of expenditure and vigorous fundraising. However, by October, thanks in particular to a once-off supplementary grant of

£5,000 from the London Borough of Redbridge, two very generous anonymous donors, and the remarkable fundraising efforts of Cecelia Rufus (and vicious cost-savings, including a significant reduction in administrative hours), the Trustees were able to agree that RECC was financially viable at least for the remainder of the financial year. I would particularly like to thank Barbara White and Cllr Bob Littlewood for what they did to help in that, and the many generous donors who made contributions.

This stay of execution gave us time to pursue more funding applications. In December, we heard that an application we had made to the Redbridge Community Projects Fund via the London Community Foundation had been successful, giving us £23,507 restricted funding over 12 months to enable us to develop our work on racial harassment. We had also made a bid partially overlapping that to the MOPAC Victims Fund (again via the London Community Foundation) to develop work on hate crime, this time as lead organisation on a joint basis with similar organisations in Barking and Dagenham, Enfield, Newham and Waltham Forest. In March, we heard that this bid, too, had been successful, providing restricted funding totalling £150,842 over two years from June 2018. Finally, we submitted a bid to the Trust for London in February to establish outreach and drop-in surgeries to help people from isolated or vulnerable groups to access their rights and entitlements. We heard in June that that bid had been successful, providing £34,000 restricted funding over two years from July 2018. More details of all these projects are given in the Staff Report below. I want to thank David Landau and Cecelia Rufus for all the work they put into these bids, and Shaweb Ahmed at RCVS for his sound advice.

We also took the opportunity to look at where else we could make cost savings without unduly impeding RECC's work. The most significant opportunity to reduce core costs proved to be in our accommodation. This has resulted in a move in June 2018 from the offices at the back of the Gants Hill United Reformed Church where we had been located for more than a decade to a new, smaller, more economical office in Cranbrook Road, Ilford – which is in progress as I write. Hopefully, settling in will be complete by the date of the AGM. David and Cecelia have taken on the extra workload brought by the

move with fortitude, and I thank them, and Diana Neslen and Michelle Harewood who found the new premises, for making the move possible.

We were very sorry to have to move: we are very grateful for the support and assistance we have received from the Gants Hill URC and its members over the years, and very much regret the effects on the URC of the loss of income which will no doubt result. We are very grateful, too, that, despite our move away, the URC continues to be willing to let the New Hall to RECC from time to time for larger meetings.

The audited accounts for 2017-18 later in this Report show that, as a result of all the above, RECC finished to financial year with a small surplus. The Trustees have set a balanced budget for 2018-19, which they believe should, with continuing careful financial control, be achievable. The position for 2019-20, at this distance, looks similar. We will, however, continue to look for suitable funding sources for the future both to secure and develop RECC's work and, where possible, to access the core funding need to support it adequately.

Finally here, I want to thank Jatinder Saini for all the support and expertise he has given the Trustees and me over the year in his role as Treasurer.

### **Staffing**

We began the year with David Landau as Senior Caseworker, Cecelia Rufus as Good Relations Officer and Office Manager, and Khadra Mohammed as Administration Officer. Because of the financial challenges RECC faced in the first half of the year, these dedicated staff members had to work under particular uncertainty and insecurity through the early part of the year this report covers. However, the additional funding we then obtained secured their position for the next couple of years, and has led to the establishment of an additional part-time post.

The funding from the Redbridge Community Projects Fund mentioned above covers a significant part of David's post for the 12 months of 2018. The MOPAC funding secures that position through June 2020 and provides funding for two years for a second post. This covers part of the posts of both Cecelia and Jennifer Kangwagye, formerly a member of staff of Barking and Dagenham Race Equality Council, whose previous work was absorbed into the MOPAC-

funded project. We welcome Jennifer to RECC's staff. Finally, the funding from the Trust for London has secured, for two years from July, the remainder of Cecelia's role.

We have been very fortunate this year, not just to have made the successful funding applications that have secured staff's positions for the next two years, but also that, earlier in the year when things were more difficult, David's, Cecelia's and Khadra's dedication to what they did kept them here and working well beyond anything we could reasonably ask of them under their contracts. Once again, my deepest thanks, and those of all the other Trustees, go to them for everything they have done during the year.

### **General Meetings**

Our two General Meetings during the year were well attended, interesting and valuable. On 20 November, Farah Elahi from the Runnymede Trust made a detailed presentation on their work on the Redbridge Race Equality Scorecard. This covered key indicators on education, employment, housing, health, criminal justice, civic participation and support for the BAME voluntary sector – and how different ethnic groups are benefitting (or otherwise) in these areas. What Farah told us stimulated a lively discussion amongst a significantly larger audience than recently. In addition, we provided the Council for the first time with a slot on the agenda to use as part of its community engagement processes. At the General Meeting on 5 March, Dr Omar Khan, Director of the Runnymede Trust, spoke on the review of the treatment of, and outcomes for, BAME individuals in the Criminal Justice System, which had been chaired by David Lammy MP. This again led to a lively and sometimes passionate discussion. We are very grateful to both speakers.

### **Thanks**

I'd like to begin this section by remembering Chaim Neslen, husband of RECC's Vice Chair (and former Chair) Diana. Chaim, who died at the beginning of April, was a good friend and supporter of RECC, and a thoughtful and sometimes challenging contributor to our general meetings. As we remember – and miss – him, our thoughts and sympathy are with Diana and her family.

As well as our generous donors and our exceptional staff whom I have thanked above, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee – my

fellow Trustees – for everything they have done both collectively and individually to support RECC and me personally during the year. Beyond their direct responsibilities as Trustees to come to lengthy meetings, consider complex issues and make difficult decisions, all of them have, at different times and in different ways made significant contributions to important areas of RECC’s work. In particular, I want to thank Khadra Mohammed for the exceptional administrative support she has provided. I’d also like to thank Kathleen Monaghan for her continuing work in sorting out the office and administrative arrangements and Rashmit Kalra for her expertise on data protection: sadly, neither of them will continue as Trustees next year. I am also grateful to John Ward for his work on RECC’s strategy for the future, Michelle Harewood for helping with the arrangements for the AGM, and Diana Neslen for the many ways in which, as Vice Chair she has supported staff – and me – during the year.

I should also like to thank our volunteers:

- Sharon Cypal: outreach helper, for providing outstanding help to the homeless and disadvantaged groups
- James Rufus: back office support volunteer, for providing tremendous back office help and support especially during the recent office move
- JoAnne Mc Connell: business consultant, for providing organisational mentoring and support
- Lirie Haxihui: researcher and events and meeting support volunteer, for providing support at meetings, minute-taking and bid research
- Christine Hibbert: outreach engagement volunteer, for engagement with the homeless

and the 50-plus enthusiastic young people who worked with us through the National Citizens Service on the Pocket Parks Project and made an outstanding contribution to RECC’s fundraising.

### **And finally...**

As I said at the start of this report, RECC is in the strongest and most stable position it has been for some years. But though we have the funding to take forward key parts of our work over the next two years we cannot be complacent. There is still much to do. Discrimination, both individual and

institutional, still exists. There is still hate crime – harassment, abuse, violence – based, for example, on race, colour, religion, nationality, disability, sex, mental health or homelessness, and exacerbated by the rise of populism across the world, anti-refugee sentiment in the Press, the rhetoric of Brexit, and terrorist incidents and other events. For many reasons there are still people in the community who find it hard to access the services to which they are entitled, or to pay a full part in public life. Misunderstandings still arise between communities. All these are areas in which RECC can make a difference – and in which it could make a greater contribution if it had the resources to do so. As Trustees we will continue to work both to make that possible and to secure the future of RECC and its vital work for the longer term.

As Chair, I am well aware that none of what RECC achieves would be possible without the support, hard work and dedication of everyone involved – staff, Trustees and volunteers. It has been a privilege to work with them all.

Nigel Turner

**Chair**

2 July 2018

## **STAFF REPORT**

This has been a rollercoaster of a year with staff having to spend a disproportionate amount of time on funding applications and fund-raising and then, suddenly, a triple success of funding, which of course, comes with a considerable amount of extra work and projects which we are breathlessly trying to come to grips with at the same time as undergoing the disruption and tasks of moving offices.

### **GENERAL ADVICE OUTREACH SURGERIES**

In 2016/17 these stood out as are biggest achievement whilst revealing huge problems of destitution and homelessness in the borough. Unfortunately, the funding for this work from the London Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund ran out at the end of July 2017 and we were not successful in renewing it. However, despite this, Cecelia continued with her existing cases and the reputation she had established from the surgeries over the years has meant that people from vulnerable communities have beaten a path to her door and she has continued to provide advice and advocacy or managed to refer them to other organisations.

During the last financial year, she supported 93 people, including acting as a McKenzie friend.



Rough sleepers in Gants Hill

This work has been with migrants, refugees and the homeless. We access interpreters where appropriate. We have spoken at a number of meetings of community and BAME groups letting people know their rights and entitlements and helping them access these or signposting to specialist advice agencies.

We have now just secured funding from the Trust for London to do this work and drop-in sessions, also extending this service to Night Shelters. This vital work with the most vulnerable in our community will resume on a more secure footing.

### **HATE CRIME**

We continued to do hate crime casework, giving advice and advocacy to victims of hate crime. In the last financial year, we carried 24 cases of hate crime. One of these has been about homophobic attacks, threats and abuse. Another first is a case that has required the use of a British Sign Language Interpreter. We have attended every Victims Panel meeting over the last financial year, providing about 50% of the cases to discuss.

But the endeavour of eradicating hate crime goes beyond casework. The RECC has always believed that it is essential to engage the community in combating hate crime and has run a number of innovative projects to do this over the years. We have had to cease this activity because of lack of capacity and funding. However, we have, at the end of last (calendar) year secured funding from the Redbridge Community Fund to re-establish the Community Witness & Support Team, intervening in hate crime hotspots, mutual support groups in hotspots, speaking to community organisations, congregations and schools. Together with five other sister organisations – Barking & Dagenham REC, Enfield REC, Newham REC and Waltham Forest REC - we bid to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to roll this out across 6 boroughs (including Havering where we have no sister organisation) as well as funding for Advice and Advocacy across the region. The project is called Community Against Hate Crime. RECC is the lead organisation in this partnership.

We have made progress with the Redbridge project although there have been some obstacles. We have recruited and trained volunteers, we have leafleted a suspected hotspot which led at least one family to come forward and anticipate that more will follow in that area in which we will operate. Part of the very important preventative work we do on raising awareness in schools of hate crime and discrimination. We have done a presentation on hate crime and hate bullying at an assembly in Oakdale Junior School as part of the Redbridge hate crime project.

Now the Redbridge project is merging with the MOPAC Community Against Hate Crime project across the region.

During National Hate Crime Awareness Week in October we held an event together with Victim Support in the Vine Church in Ilford.

RECC has played an important role in pushing for and contributing to a Safer Communities Partnership hate crime strategy and we intend to take a significant role in the Hate Crime Monitoring Group that is being established. We continue to sit on and inform the Strategic Partnership Board on hate crime and other equality issues. For example, we raised queries about the injunction and sanctions taken out by the Council to stop Travellers stopping on unauthorised land – aimed at a particular group of fly-tippers but with a potentially wider impact.

### **DISCRIMINATION CASE WORK**

We have dealt with 12 cases of discrimination in the last financial year.

### **SOCIAL ACTION/POCKET PARKS**

Over the last few years we have brought people together to develop Jubilee Gardens and the space on the corner of Ilford Lane and Norman Road. This arose out of our work on community cohesion in the area to bring these open spaces, hot spots for anti - social behaviour back into community use. This became a focus of activity for social action events and practical activities like planting, painting etc, involving young people from the National Citizens Service (NCS) project in Redbridge. However, the council has now decided to build housing on both of these sites. But we have tried to apply these methods elsewhere.

Over last summer we ran events in underused and underdeveloped spaces in Jubilee Gardens, Ken Ashton Square and Valentines Park in conjunction with the NCS young volunteers – 8 events with over 60 volunteers.



Painting of benches in Jubilee Gardens

## **EQUALITIES FORUM**

We have continued to run the Equalities Forum (without funding for this). We had three Forums in the last financial year. We had Duduzile Sher-Arami talking about the Consultation on Public Health & Well Being. We had Sarah Tranter talking about the LBR Equalities Strategy and Ian Buckmaster of Health Watch Havering about the NELFT Triage system. We also had slots about council consultations at the Forum meetings. In June of this year we had a presentation by Councillor Bob Littlewood on the legacy of the Fairness Commission.



RECC staff and voluntary sector groups and organisations at the Equalities Forum

## **MORE ON CONSULTATIONS**

We offered slots about consultations at each of the Equalities Forums, our General Meetings and AGM

- Public Health and Obesity
- Adult Care and Well Being
- Developing the Council's public engagement
- Housing Allocation Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Gypsy and Traveller Site Consultation

We also submitted a response on Housing Allocation questioning the 5 years of continuation in the borough rule, which would rule out the most vulnerable who are most likely to have to

move from borough to borough. We also assisted the consultation process at North View Caravan Site on Gypsy and Traveller Sites and submitted our own response to that.

### **THE ASSOCIATION OF REDBRIDGE AFRICAN CARIBBEAN COMMUNITIIES (TARACC)**

We assisted TARACC to link with the Mayor and appropriate councillors and officers to get recognition as a voice in the borough. We worked together with them on a very successful event “Taste of the Caribbean” during Black History Month attended by 200 people. We addressed a meeting on participation – see below



Nostalgia Steel Band with Mayor of Redbridge and Chair of TARACC

### **HAVING A VOICE - FACILITATING BAME PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

The Ministry of Justice had an event at Ilford Central Library to recruit magistrates and we promoted this event in BAME communities.

We spoke to a meeting of TARACC about how to become a school governor, join a Patients Participation Group and to become a Magistrate. This was attended by about 30 people.

We have produced a short leaflet about how to become involved in these roles which we display at our meetings, stalls at events and so forth.

## **IMMIGRATION AND NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS**

Following our involvement in the Immigration Corporate Group at the end of 2016/17 we attend the forum on No Recourse to Public Funds run by RAMFEL and feed in issues thrown up by our outreach casework.

## **COMMUNITY NETWORK**

Redbridge Council has set up a Community Network to bring together representatives of various communities and organisations across the borough. This was in part inspired by the more localised community networks and forums that the RECC pioneered in areas of community tension. It is now one of our tasks as a Strategic Partner to attend and get involved with these forums. This has replaced our previous obligation to attend the Community Tension Monitoring Group, which has been dissolved into the work of this network.

## **STALLS**

Throughout the year we have stalls promoting our work and raising awareness on equalities and human rights issues and recruiting volunteers needed to continue RECC's vital work.



RECC staff and volunteer with voluntary sector colleagues from CAB and RCVS

## **EXHIBITIONS**

Once again we have had our exhibition for Black History Month displayed in libraries with much enjoyed drumming sessions and our Women and Work Exhibition was displayed at an event marking the centenary of votes for women in Woodford Library.

David Landau and Cecelia Rufus

June 2018.



