



Redbridge Equalities and Community Council

Annual Report 2019 – 2020



Registered Charity No: 1170313

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

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Our thanks to RECC's main funders in 2019-20:



Trust for London
Tackling poverty and inequality

London Borough of

Redbridge



MOPAC

MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

**The London
Community
Foundation**

Mayor's foreword

London Borough of
Redbridge



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Community Council
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Heraldic House
160-162 Cranbrook Road
Ilford
Essex IG1 4PE

The Worshipful the Mayor
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It has been an immense privilege to hold the position of president of Redbridge Equality and Community Council for 2019-20. This was one of the first organisations I came to learn of in the early seventies which was not only helping the underprivileged but standing up for them as well, led by very dedicated individuals. It has not diminished in its aims and values and in fact gets stronger and bolder each year.

RECC has worked very hard throughout the year to promote and establish good relationships between our different communities in Redbridge. RECC is a beacon of hope and strive for other organisations and groups to follow not only in our Borough of Redbridge but throughout our country by the promotion of respect, tolerance and understanding of each other to live in peace and harmony and equality for every citizen. RECC has always been in the forefront to assist new arrivals in UK who need the assistance and guidance the most. These are the great principles for all to follow for the promotion and wellbeing of all mankind and creation of an equal society to the benefit of every citizen.

The Coronavirus has imposed unprecedented challenges on all of us to operate but I am full of confidence that RECC will explore innovative ways to help our most diverse population in Redbridge and wish them the best of luck for their future.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Chair, Nigel Turner and other staff for doing incredible work for the residents of Redbridge. Well done and thank you to all of you.

Yours Faithfully

Cllr Zulfiqar Hussain
Mayor of Redbridge for 2019/20

Who we are

Redbridge Equalities and Community Council
Room 203, Heraldic House
160-162 Cranbrook Road
Ilford IG1 4PE
Tel: 020 8551 8178
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Chair

Nigel Turner OBE

Vice Chair

John Ward

Treasurer

[vacant]

STAFF TEAM 2018-2019

David Landau	Senior Caseworker
Cecelia Rufus	Admin Manager/Hate Crime Officer/Caseworker
Jennifer Kangwagye	Hate Crime Officer
Violet Hansford	Equalities Forum Officer
Khadra Mohammed	Administrative Officer

VOLUNTEERS

Mahbub Alam	Lirie Haxihui	Kingsley Olyen	Ghandhi
Alex Arulanandam	Christine Hibbert	Hyacinth Osborne	Sooriyakumar
Decine Cassama	Pauline Lozal	Aneela Rajput	David Tunbridge
Sharon Cypal	Brian McNelly	Dawn Renwick	Raz Wahid
Nellas David	Kathleen Monaghan	James Rufus	Marek Wesolowski
Monica Gomez	Aisha Nausheen	Dara Singh	
Harry Ellis-Grewal	Daveena Ogene	Surayah Sohail	

and 50+ young people from the National Citizen Service

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2019-2020

Trustees serving for three years 2017-2020

Diana Neslen Nigel Turner

Trustees serving for three years 2018-2021

Michelle Harewood Barbara White

Trustees serving for three years 2019-2022

Sue Mutter Jatinder Saini John Ward

Noorjahan Begum JoAnne McConnell

London Borough of Redbridge representatives 2019-20

CLlr Namreen Choudhry CLlr Michael Duffell CLlr Bob Littlewood

Chair's Report

As we had hoped, because of the security provided by the two-year grants from RECC's external funders and its Partnership Agreement with the London Borough of Redbridge, 2019-20 was a stable year for RECC, enabling staff to focus on delivering the funded programmes and achieving their promised outcomes. But by the end, as RECC celebrated its fiftieth anniversary (see page 6), it was clear that despite a well-defined strategy setting out the direction in which we wanted to see RECC develop, and our attempts with funders to try to establish new programmes to take it forward, that could not continue.

The Staff Report below describes the year's work in more detail and looks further at what has been achieved, both in Redbridge and, through Community Against Hate Crime, with our partner organisations in neighbouring boroughs. Once again, that work and those achievements have only been possible because of the dedication of RECC's staff to what they do and because they continue to work well beyond anything that could reasonably be asked 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.

The first cloud on the horizon, however, was David Landau's announcement that he intended to retire. David has worked for RECC for over 20 years, making him the second longest-serving member of staff in its history. And for most of that time he has been the lead officer. He will be remembered particularly for his exceptional work on hate crime, both for pioneering the community-based approach which now underlies Community Against Hate Crime and for the persistence and supportiveness of his casework. He will be sadly missed not only within RECC and by the people he has worked with and influenced both in the community and in other organisations around Redbridge, but also by the many clients he has helped and supported over the years. When events are possible, we intend to hold one to mark David's achievements. Meanwhile, he will return part-time for a period to bring aspects of his work to a conclusion, and he goes with our heartfelt thanks for all he has done and our best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

We heard in March that the changes in LB Redbridge's voluntary sector funding arrangements forced on it by the constraints of austerity meant that, for the first time in more than 30 years, RECC would receive no funding for its core costs in 2020-21, fundamentally changing a 50-year partnership. However, the Council is not alone amongst funders in failing to recognise that smaller voluntary sector organisations will not be there to bid for funding to deliver vital services unless their need for core funding can be met, and we continue to value the contribution to our Executive Committee made by the councillors nominated to it.

It has also proved to be the case that MOPAC, the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, has been unable to settle the future of hate crime work across London after current funding runs out in June this year, halting the Community Against Hate Crime initiative we have built up over the last three years. Though the detail of our response to this is a matter for next year's report, we are aiming to preserve what we can of this important work in the hope that further funding will become available in the autumn, and meanwhile seeking alternative sources of funds. We are hopeful of hearing shortly that a bid we have made to the Redbridge Safer Neighbourhoods Fund will be the start of this.

But there is also good news on funding. In February, we bid to the Trust for London for funding to extend and expand Cecelia Rufus's outreach work helping people from isolated, marginalised and vulnerable communities to understand and access their rights or entitlements, and we heard in June that RECC had been awarded £55k over two years, funding 26 hours a week of this work against the current 16. We continue to seek funding to expand this vital work still further.

Regardless of the changes on the horizon, I want to thank all our 2019-20 funders – both our major funders: the London Borough of Redbridge, MOPAC (via the London Community Foundation) and the Trust for London; and our generous donors, from the anonymous donor who has supported us substantially over the years, through those friends and members of RECC who contribute regularly via the Charities Aid Foundation or direct, to the many members of the public who contributed to collections organised on RECC's behalf by young people working with the National Citizen Service. We would not be here without you.

Though most of its impact has been felt in 2020-21, no report this year can be complete without a paragraph on Covid 19. By mid-March, we were already planning ways for staff to work from home and to deliver services remotely and to move our meetings on-line. This has proved a reasonable success, and I am grateful to everyone involved for the lengths that they have gone through to make that possible. Covid, has, however, also had a massive effect on voluntary sector funding, both on the availability of funding as donations have reduced and on the demand for it to meet Covid-related needs. We are still finding our way through this...

RECC's Constitution, in common with those of many other charities, allow an individual to be a Trustee for no more than two three-year terms in a row or an officer for no more than three years in a row. My time as a Trustee and as Chair of RECC is up on both counts, and I will be replaced at the forthcoming AGM. I am particularly proud of my contributions to RECC's move from unincorporated charity to Charitable Incorporated Organisation and to the stabilisation of its financial position in 2017 which led to the last two successful years – and of all the amazing work by its staff that that made possible. Though I've served my time as Chair, I am not intending to abandon RECC completely: I will remain a member, and I hope to be able to contribute to its work in a voluntary capacity. I look forward to seeing RECC's work develop in new and exciting directions as it seeks to expand its community cohesion work and works across communities to renew its efforts on the issues behind the Black Lives Matter campaign.

So, finally, I come to thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee – my fellow Trustees – for everything they have done collectively and individually to support RECC and me personally over my time as Chair. I am particularly grateful to John Ward for his support as Vice Chair, and to Jatinder Saini for all the support and expertise on financial issues he has given the Trustees and me this year despite the Rules precluding him from being Treasurer for the year. But beyond their direct responsibilities to come to lengthy meetings, consider complex issues and make difficult decisions, all the Trustees have, at different times and in different ways, made significant contributions to important areas of RECC's work. I'll miss working with both them and RECC's staff.

Nigel Turner
Chair

Fifty Years of Equalities in Redbridge

2019-20 marked RECC's fiftieth anniversary. The actual date of registration of RECC's predecessor, Redbridge Community Relations Council (RCRC) as a charity was 6 February 1970. Fifty years later, almost to the day, on Monday 8 February 2020, today's RECC Trustees and staff and their predecessors, friends and colleagues in other organisations met in the Conference Room at City Gates Church to celebrate the work of RECC and its predecessors over that time.

More than 70 people gathered to hear contributions from:

Nicholas Hurst, who, as a leading councillor at the time, played a key role in setting up RCRC in 1969-70, and then in getting funding for its first paid officer

Ian Martin, initially appointed in 1973 as RCRC's first paid officer, and later a very active member of its Executive Committee, before moving on to become a senior United Nations official

Chandra Bhatia, Assistant Community Relations Officer and then CRO in the late seventies and early eighties, and now Director of Enfield Race Equality Council

Diana Neslen, over the last 20 years, RECC Executive Committee member, Vice-Chair and Chair

Cllr Bob Littlewood, Redbridge Council Cabinet Member for Crime, Safety and Community Cohesion, and Council representative on RECC's Executive Committee

David Landau, RECC's current senior officer

We heard about RCRC's political and financial struggles in its early days, its pioneering work on the major issues affecting Redbridge's BAME communities in health and social care, education, policing and employment; how that work developed as the major communities in the Borough grew strong enough and resilient enough to stand on their own, and as the Council, the NHS, the police and other organisations started to take the equalities agenda into the mainstream for themselves; and about RECC's work today. We also heard a personal appreciation of RECC's work over the years from the Mayor, Cllr Zulfiqar Hussain, and from Sam Tarry, MP for Ilford South.

It was a privilege to hear first-hand from those involved at the time about the achievements of the past, and from those involved today about the vital work RECC is continuing to do. While much has been achieved, there is still hate crime and discrimination, there are still people and communities who find it hard to access the services to which they are entitled or to pay a full part in public life, and misunderstandings still arise between communities. All these are areas in which RECC will continue to make a difference.

We were very grateful to the speakers (and especially to David Landau for his impromptu saxophone solo at the end!); to John and Tom from Redbridge Music Lounge who provided background music; to Jane Grell, who opened the event with poetry and song; to the donor who paid for the buffet; to the staff of City Gates and their caterers for all their help; and to all the old friends who were there to help remind us just how far we have come in 50 years.

Staff Report

RECC's staff, as set out on page 3 of this Annual Report, did not change during 2019-20.

Significant changes, however, are in progress as this report is written, resulting from changes in RECC's funding and the retirement of David Landau at the end of June 2020, after more than 20 years with RECC. Though those changes are properly a subject for next year's report, the Chair's report (page 4) includes a tribute to David's exceptional work over his time here.

Communities Against Hate Crime

This project, funded by the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) through the London Community Foundation, has been running for two years. It has two principal limbs – providing an advice and advocacy service for victims of hate crime, and community engagement. There are a number of reasons why victims of hate crime, more than other victims of crime, may not report incidents. They may not know these incidents are criminal and they may not trust the authorities who should be helping them because of a history of institutionalised prejudice in these agencies themselves. It follows that advice, advocacy and support are key to helping people to make reports and ensuring that the agencies exercise their powers and duty of care. Community engagement is key so that victims of hate crime do not feel isolated in a sea of hostility. So the elements of Community Against Hate Crime (CAHC) are:

- Advice and advocacy
- Community Witness and Support Team
- Raising hate crime awareness in the community
- Identifying and addressing hate crime hotspots
- Developing Mutual Support Groups in hotspots or across boroughs

The project covers Barking and Dagenham, Enfield, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest. The vast majority of our cases have involved conflict between neighbours. We have had other cases – a person with mental health problems beaten up in a park, and recently some incidents linked to Covid 19, for example people being spat at in the face or shouted at inches away from the face. As well as seeing clients in the RECC office and in the offices of our sister organisations, our caseworkers – Cecelia and Jennifer – have been doing hate crime surgeries in libraries in Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham, Newham and Enfield. Though it is sometimes difficult to get tangible results, as a result of our work we have had a harassment warning made against a neighbour which has stopped the problem. In another case, paradoxically our success was in having a warning removed because it had been made on the basis of vexatious complaints. In another case the harassment has largely stopped because of the regular visits of our CWST volunteers. In Enfield there is a hate crime case panel and a multi-agency hate crime forum like there used to be in Redbridge 10 years ago. Cecelia sits on the case panel and I attend the forum.

We now have 24 trained Community Witness and Support Team volunteers who can visit victims of hate crime, aiming to address their isolation, witness incidents or collect evidence, take reports, and occasionally accompany people to the shops or other appointments. Victims who have been visited by members of the CWST have told us that they found them very supportive. Unfortunately, however, we have had to stand the CWST down because of the Covid 19 pandemic – social distancing would be impossible given the role of the volunteers. We hope to deploy them again when it is safe to do so.

During National Hate Crime Awareness Week the project was very busy speaking at events in all six boroughs and distributing materials. We spoke at events in two disability day centres in Redbridge, had stalls in the Library, and had a stall along with the police in Ilford Exchange and in the Central Library. We joined, attended and gave out leaflets at an event in Romford organised by Havering Council. As a result of this we forged a relationship with the Council and have attended three community councils there and met with officers about how the project can operate in Havering where we have no sister organisation.

In Barking and Dagenham, we had a stall at a hate crime awareness week hub in the town hall organised by our sister organisation there and at a similar event in Stratford. And we were the main speakers, along with the police and the Council, at CAHC's main event in Enfield, organised by our sister organisation there.

But our hate crime awareness activities were not restricted to the Hate Crime Awareness Week. We have spoken to Congolese and Tamil groups in Enfield and mental health groups. We were also scheduled to speak to two Age UK meetings in Enfield but these were postponed because of Covid. Barking and Dagenham REC had a 50th Anniversary event at the Ripple Centre at which we spoke about the work of the project. Further afield, we spoke to a meeting of Epping Forest District Labour Party about our work and the problems they are facing with the far right. We attended a Community Assembly in Waltham Forest – 5 days over 3 weekends, though, unfortunately we were not given the opportunity to give a presentation. We leafleted a potential hotspot and we have continued with our Redbridge Mutual Support Group. The current funding for the CAHC finished in June and MOPAC are not yet in a position to provide another round of funding for us to apply for to continue the project. We have therefore, sadly, had to wind the project up, at least temporarily. But the partnership has decided to continue and will be applying for funding for this and perhaps other projects in the future.

We are however applying for local and smaller amounts of funding to allow work against hate crime to continue in Redbridge. By the time of the AGM we hope to have some news on that front.

Discrimination Casework

Discrimination casework was once the bread and butter of organisations like ours, and remains much needed. But since the end of the Commission for Racial Equality almost 15 years ago there has been no central funding for it. Despite the lack of funding, though, we still do discrimination casework. We do not deal with employment issues, which we refer on

except in very straightforward cases where we can give basic advice. Very occasionally we have represented someone in a meeting with management simply because they were not able to find anyone else to do it in the time. Those cases are rare and we have none at the moment.

Over half of our recent cases are around disability discrimination in housing. Clients who have children – sometimes young adults – who need reasonable adjustments made or need to be re-housed in a suitable property, or need permanent rather than temporary accommodation because the mental health of the child make it very important to have stability in their lives. Sometimes these cases cross over with disability benefit issues and we work on some of them together.

General Advice Outreach Surgeries and Drop-ins

Our outreach advice surgeries (which were described in more detail in last year's Annual Report) have continued to run successfully, and demand for them continues to grow. In the second year of funding from the Trust for London the work has evolved considerably to include home visits for clients who are ill or disabled as well as outreach and drop-in services. This generates a huge and very demanding caseload for Cecelia.

The great benefit of the project is that it takes advice to our residents instead of them having to find us to access advice! Our outreach surgeries in various venues and especially the regular drop in surgeries at Central Library have enabled people from the most vulnerable and marginalised groups to access services and much needed support to address poverty, deprivation and destitution and for this reason are in much demand.

Night Shelter Surgeries and Street Outreach

We are in our second year of running surgeries in night shelters for the homeless. This service has been in great demand, with homeless people also making direct contact with Cecelia and referring others to her seeking help to address many other complex problems as well as their homelessness. This is not surprising given the extent of the needs of Redbridge's homeless population and despite the tremendous work of other often oversubscribed, agencies working in this field. The street outreach surgeries have continued to evolve from the night shelter work, giving direct advice to homeless people on the street and helping them to gain access to night shelter provision. This difficult work would not be possible without the assistance of our volunteers.

Case Studies and Statistics

Outreach Surgeries

We have assisted many people with advice, advocacy and/or signposting, impacting on over 300 - 350 people in 2019-20. We have achieved some great successes continue to transform many lives. 97% of respondents to User Satisfaction Questionnaires say that they are satisfied with the help we have given them. Comments from their feedback forms say that, in many cases, our interventions have enabled them to access services they had been unable to reach without our help and support.

Examples of the type of cases that we have assisted successfully include:

We have advised clients and dealt with cases helping people to access Universal Credit; requesting recalculation of overpayments of Council Tax and Housing Benefit, securing refunds; arrangements for underpayments of benefit; Tax Credit and income support mandatory reconsiderations/appeals; Council and private landlord rent arrears; evictions; homeless applications and housing allocation; securing help through rent assistance schemes; Housing Bonds for assistance in deposit to secure private tenancy; Discretionary Housing Payments; disability badge applications; Freedom Passes; access to secondary health treatment; debt recovery from creditors and courts and tribunals; requests for adult social services assessments and reconsiderations for vulnerable clients; tenancy disrepair issues and compensation; requests for environmental health inspections and local authority pest control intervention.

Night Shelter and Street Outreach

Our work with the street homeless is one of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of what we do – helping the most vulnerable in our community to access help and support for their housing and other many and complex needs.

Examples of the type of cases that we have assisted successfully include:

We have assisted street homeless clients to access Night Shelter provision or housing resettlement into temporary or private accommodation; access legal representation to regularise their stay in the UK and related documentation; access benefits; request parliamentary representations raising status enquiries; appeal and overturn overseas NHS treatment bills; notify agencies and authorities of medical conditions to access help and support; request change of frequency of signing at reporting centres. We are currently supporting 5 clients.

An example of casework: Rehousing – Unlawful eviction

In July 2019, we successfully obtained temporary housing for a Roma family after an unlawful eviction. The family consisted of two grandparents, their daughter and two grandchildren. Fortunately, prior to the eviction we had already put a case to Housing for the daughter and her children to be re-housed due to overcrowding. When this was refused, we referred the daughter to a Housing Lawyer for an appeal.

Some months later, we received an urgent call from the grandmother: the landlord had changed their locks, evicting them illegally! By then, the daughter had thankfully been re-housed, as Housing had accepted her appeal based on overcrowding, but the grandparents were very much homeless and had been sleeping in their car. They had found it very hard to communicate with the Housing Officer and explain their position, and needed help with this. We were able to explain that their homelessness was due to an illegal eviction by their Landlord who had not gone through the court process of obtaining a Section 21/Section 8 order. Eventually, Housing accepted that they were homeless, but they then needed medical evidence to confirm the vulnerability for the grandfather because of his health conditions. We therefore then helped the grandparents to request from their GP medical confirmation of the

grandfather's health condition, diabetes, asthma and sleep apnoea and the urgency of his need for accommodation where he could use his sleep apnoea machine. Once the medical information was received, Housing accepted responsibility and the grandparents were placed in temporary accommodation that same day.

Covid 19

Even before the pandemic, the demand for our services was growing fast as the demand grew for help and assistance and advice and advocacy from the most vulnerable, marginalised, and economically disadvantaged members of our community. Even so, the start of the pandemic was an unprecedented time for us all as we had to rise up quickly to the challenge to provide the additional help and support our clients needed.

We became part of the network of front line Covid response groups and organisations in Redbridge providing, a telephone advice and advocacy service giving help and support, and we are continuing to provide vital services to the most vulnerable and others in the community during these very challenging and uncertain time

We are very busy taking calls and doing conference calls:

- supporting the most vulnerable, in particular, those with disabilities, chronically ill with underlying health conditions who shielding, assisting them with a range of problems and connecting them to services to get food delivered.
- helping self-employed people with no money needing to claim Universal credit and providing them with information on the available Government support
- securing temporary housing and resettlement
- assisting with rent arrears and threats of eviction cases
- addressing debt recovery and benefit underpayments
- helping to facilitate rough sleepers to self-isolate into B&B provision and try to get Food Provision sorted for those self- isolating in B&Bs

This work is much needed now, and it is already clear that it will remain much needed once the pandemic is over.

The Redbridge Equalities Forum

RECC has continued to support and facilitate the Redbridge Equalities Forum, bringing together individuals and organisations across the borough committed to equalities. In 2019-20, this work – part of our strategic partnership with the Council – was made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor.

At the start of 2019-20, the Forum thought it important to follow-up on the information provided by Dr Penzer from the Independent Monitoring Board (Prison Visitors) who spoke to Forum in March 2019, on the lack of Visitors from the BAME Community.

Members from the Black Community applied to become visitors, but were mostly not appointed because of existing waiting lists and the location of prisons then recruiting.

Nevertheless, the Board says that it is trying to encourage younger individuals to become Visitors...

The Forum through Violet Hansford worked with the local organisation Sparks2Life which delivers a range of services addressing the challenges of contemporary urban youth culture. By working with disaffected young people in prison, transitioning out of prison and in wider community settings, such as on the streets and in schools, their aim is to encourage positive lifestyle choices, supporting the eradication of crime and gang culture.

Equalities Forum 10 June 2019

We looked again at the Forum's purpose and, after discussion, drew up new Terms of Reference addressing its agreed core purpose – to promote equalities and human rights, identify issues of concern, work to address those issues and to hold those responsible to account, including lobbying or campaigning where required, share information and co-ordinate activities, and provide a focus for community cohesion, engagement and consultation. Membership of the Forum is open to any organisation or individual living or working in Redbridge committed to help it fulfil that purpose. Agreed actions are monitored and progress is reported to each meeting and publicised by RECC.

Throughout the year, the Forum has discussed with many community organisations the increase in social and equality issues affecting young people in Redbridge and the surrounding area such as:

- Gang Related Crime
- School Exclusions (BAME)
- Stop and Search (Trauma)
- Unemployment
- Housing
- Homelessness
- Healthcare

In conjunction with other stakeholders we attended a 'Serious Violence Summit' which highlighted the increase in dangerous crime in Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham and Havering. Speakers were:

- Leroy Logan MBE, Chair of the London Independent Youth Safety Advisory Board –Retired Police Superintendent
- Stephen Addison MBE, Founder and CEO Box Up Crime
- Sakhile Mpopu, Founder and CEO of TIPE (Trauma Informed Practice Environment)
- Cllr Jas Athwal, Leader of Redbridge Council
- Simon Parker, Redbridge council crime lead
- Sam Walters, Head Teacher RAP (Redbridge Alternative Provision) – School Exclusions

The Forum was represented by David Landau, Chair and Violet Hansford, Project Officer. The summit focussed on the links between family and social trauma and the development of crime and antisocial behaviour amongst young people, the importance of spreading understanding of this within the community and the need for recognition within the police force, schools, local communities and government of the value of Trauma-Informed Practice Environments.

The Forum's meetings in September and March (the December meeting had to be abandoned because of the General Election) concentrated on sources of trauma and the damage it can do to young people. These meetings drew increased audience of parents, teachers and

members of other community organisations, whose contributions strongly supported the role of trauma in disaffecting young people.

Equalities Forum 9 September - Stop and Search

Speaker, Dez Brown, Founder, CEO, Sparks2Life, Trauma Therapist, Mentor, Pastoral Prison Officer

It has been evidenced that 'Stop and Search' is particularly harmful to young people and a major source of social trauma within BAME communities. Many young people between the ages of 10 and 17 are being stopped and searched, excluded from school, active in gang crime, or being imprisoned. Mr Brown set out the evidence for this and its effects, talked about his organisation's pioneering work, and outlined ways in which the community could help.

The meeting heard that the police were setting up a Community Monitoring Group and taking other measures to help address the issues raised. Subsequently, the government has started to recognise the effects of trauma on young people, and this is now been included in police training.

Equalities Forum, 10 March - School Exclusions

Speaker, Vincent John, Director of Procurement & Business Services, University of Greenwich
The Forum's aim was to highlight the number of children excluded from school, disproportionality between different communities and how the community can help to improve the position. Mr John reminded the audience of the effects of the Equality Act 2010: schools must not discriminate against, harass or victimise pupils because of their Sex; Race; Disability; Religion or Belief; Sexual Orientation; because of a pregnancy/maternity; or because of a gender reassignment. Other legislation meant that schools must not exclude or increase the severity of an exclusion for a non-disciplinary reason, such as academic attainment or ability, or because of the actions of the parents.

The latest statistics on children and young people with special education needs show a significant increase in the number of autistic pupils being excluded. Fixed period exclusion rates for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) increased slightly, mainly of those in mainstream secondary schools. Rates vary by ethnicity. BAME students are amongst the most excluded. The Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage ethnic groups had the highest rates of both permanent and fixed period exclusions, but exclusion rates for White British, Mixed and Black Caribbean children have also consistently increased. Given that exclusions must be "lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate", the Forum agreed the need for parents and organisations within Redbridge to work to help reduce exclusions of these students.

The Forum is continuing to engage with various groups and schools to determine what actions are being taken to help reduce exclusions, and to get accurate figures to see if the position is improving.

Council Consultations

Council Officers addressed the Forum at its meetings on consultation exercises covering:

- Gants Hill Community Hub
- Revising the consultation process
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Disability Charter
- Addressing loneliness of older people in Redbridge
- Air pollution
- Late night licences

Stalls, Events and Exhibitions

We have had stalls at a variety of events during the year, including the Town Hall Volunteers Fair, Mental Health Awareness Day, National Hate Crime Awareness Week (with stalls in various boroughs), Redbridge Institute Open and Welcome Fair Days, and exhibitions to celebrate Black History month.

We have also had tremendous fundraising and campaigning support from more than 50 young Redbridge volunteers from the National Citizens Service: they were truly inspirational with their ideas and Social Action Day events to raise funds for us and campaign on equality issues. Our young Redbridge volunteers continued their valuable work, helping to transform Jubilee Gardens open space to bring it back into community use by hand-painting murals to make the open space welcoming for families and deter drinking of alcohol. They also raised awareness on wide of equality issues, developed and acted out role plays about hate crime, discrimination and their impact on groups and communities. This helped the young people develop a deeper sense of equalities and human rights, learn decision making, develop civic pride and understand the meaning of community spirit.

We want to take this opportunity to thank NCS The Challenge staff in Redbridge and the management team that were responsible for galvanising our Redbridge young people into raising funds for RECC and other charities in Redbridge for many years. We were sorry to hear that The Challenge had gone into administration. We are working with the Administrator to recover the balance of the money collected for us.

We look forward to working with NCS Leyton Orient Trust in future programmes.

Violet Hansford

David Landau

Cecelia Rufus

June 2020

David's Retirement – a tribute from Cecelia

At the time of writing David is only a few days from retirement. He has been a tremendous source of support for me and for many of RECC's staff, volunteers and Trustees over the years. He has been an exceptional, outstanding and supportive colleague, mentor and friend! I thank David for all the support he has given me and all of us at the RECC – truly your 20 years of work at the RECC has been your vocation!

David, it has been an absolute pleasure and delight working with you! I and all the staff, volunteers and Trustees will miss you terribly! After working so well and so closely for 10 years in what we both called ourselves the 'Dream Team' your shoes will be hard to fill.

I wish you well David and every success, happiness and new beginnings in your retirement – well deserved!

Governance

In April 2018, RECC transferred its work and its assets, liabilities and membership from the previous unincorporated charity (Registration number 1002357) to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Registration number 1170313) which had been created to succeed it.

The existence of the old unincorporated charity was maintained temporarily whilst all its activities were wound up. As in 2018-19, the old charity was inactive throughout 2019-20, with all business being transacted through the CIO, and it therefore has no annual report or accounts for that year. It was formally removed from the Register of Charities on 23 June 2020.

RECC's trustees were trustees of both charities.

Reserves Policy

1. It is RECC's policy to maintain an appropriate level of financial reserves to ensure that it is able to meet its financial obligations and, as far as possible, to maintain continuity of service provision.
2. RECC will maintain a **Restricted Reserve**, made up as follows:
 - Three months' rent and other office expenses
 - Costs of expected redundancies
 - Costs of staff's entitlement to notice
 - A reasonable sum to cover other contingencies.
3. Reserves exceeding the restricted reserve will form an **Unrestricted Reserve**.
4. At the end of every financial year, and whenever else it is necessary to do so, the Treasurer will report to the Trustees on the level of the Restricted and Unrestricted Reserves and their compliance with this policy. The Trustees may decide to transfer funds to or from the Restricted Reserve to maintain consistency with paragraph 2 above.

Finance

2019-20 was a year of financial stability for RECC, with income above budget thanks to generous donations and successful fundraising, and effective financial control ensuring that expenditure was within budget. Because of this, the audited accounts for 2019-20 which follow show that, for the second year in a row, RECC finished the financial year with a surplus.

Nevertheless, because of the finite nature of all three of RECC's major sources of funds, we continued to look for suitable funding sources for the future, both to secure and develop RECC's work and to provide the core funding needed to support it adequately. The Chair's report (page 4) deals both with the factors which mean that, despite our efforts and close and positive relationships with them, we are currently no longer funded by LB Redbridge or MOPAC – and with our success in gaining £55k new funding for our outreach work from the Trust for London for the next two years. We have also bid successfully to the London Emergency Response Fund for funding to address short-term Covid-related demand for outreach work and we are hopeful of receiving some hate crime funding from the Redbridge Safer Neighbourhoods Fund.

In the light of the tight funding position, the Trustees have set a budget for 2020-21 which draws partly on RECC's reserves. They believe that, with continuing careful financial control and maintaining compliance with RECC's Reserves Policy, the available reserves will be sufficient for this purpose. Consequently, expenditure relating to unfunded activities is being drastically reduced, including non-renewal of fixed-term contracts of affected staff. Urgent work to find sources to replace the funding which has been lost continues in a difficult environment made more complex by the consequences of Covid.

For convenience, the Audited Accounts have been provided as a separate file

