

# Clapton Park URC Round Chapel Old School Rooms

## Annual Review 2019

## How we do it, who we are and what we do

“A vibrant church and community centre.”

We are committed and driven by the values of social justice, inclusiveness, diversity, partnership, hospitality, creativity and hope.

### How we do it

Create an open, welcoming, inclusive and distinctive space, committed to community building and social change and the involvement of people from all backgrounds, faith traditions and none.

### What we do

We provide a space for local people to connect and build community, for families and vulnerable adults to receive care, support and practical help and to facilitate a positive environment for people to come together around common causes and issues the local community face.

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

 [@Old\\_SchoolRooms](https://twitter.com/Old_SchoolRooms)

 [@roundchapeloldschoolrooms](https://www.facebook.com/roundchapeloldschoolrooms)

2 Powerscroft Road, London E5 0PU  
Registered charity England and Wales (1132114)



## Foreword by Joe Walker, centre manager

“What is this place?” is a question people often ask when they first walk through our door. It’s a good question. Even someone who has been connected to the building as long as I have still struggles to find one answer. Maybe that is the beauty of it? Here is a place for worship and a place for children and families to come and play, learn and be supported. Here is a place for the homeless and those living in vulnerable situations to receive practical help and

**“I am grateful to the small congregation of Clapton Park URC, who enable and support all of the work we do, continuing to value the relationship between the church and wider society, and the relevance of living as a faith community in our local neighbourhood.”**

**Joe Walker**

intervention and a space to have a community celebration. Here is a place to come and have a coffee and a chat. There is something here for everyone.

Our origins lie in the strong nonconformist and dissenting traditions of Hackney in the late nineteenth century when the Round Chapel, Old School Rooms was built. Back then, in an increasingly urbanised Hackney, society’s tolerance of poor housing, child



Photo © Manal Massalha

poverty and social isolation demanded a radical response. At that time, churches including the Round Chapel opened their doors to those whom the rest of society had forgotten.

It is a legacy I often feel that we are the custodians of and values that we must preserve. I am grateful to the small congregation of Clapton Park URC, who enable and support all of the work we do, continuing to value the relationship between the church and wider society, and the relevance of living as a faith community in our local neighbourhood.

We live in an unprecedented time of political, social and economic change that impacts the very fabric of our communities. As resources continue to shrink but the need increases, we are forced to re-evaluate the nature and intent of what we do and why we do it. Our team, trustees and members of the congregation have been thinking about the next chapter of our work and the importance of how everything we do is value-driven. The values that we are inspired by – social justice, inclusiveness, diversity, partnership, hospitality, creativity and hope – inform how we engage in our local community. These in turn shape our vision and mission and are also values that the whole community can unite around.

This report outlines the fantastic and

**“The Old School Rooms is an important community hub in Clapton. Their engagement with families and adults is helping to tackle some of the challenging issues we face as a borough, giving vital support and bringing about meaningful and lasting change to people’s lives.”**

**Philip Glanville,  
Mayor of Hackney**

transformative community programmes that take place in our building. People are at the very heart of what we do. To achieve our vision, we are privileged to have a highly professional, creative and active team of staff, volunteers and trustees. They not only help to shape and drive our vision, but their commitment to ensuring we remain relevant, distinctive and open to new challenges inspires the work we do and helps to create our future direction.



## Thank you

None of what you read in this review would be possible without the commitment and dedication of our amazing staff, volunteers, trustees and funders.

### **Our staff**

Saada Adus, Edem Alorvor-Nunekpeku, Michelle Baker, Modina Begum, Sibebe Bulgarello, Alison Davy, Jane Elliott, Sheena Gleeson, Paula Hughes, Dalwinder Jagdish, Tomas Malinovsky, Fiona McAllister, Emma Spinelli, Ayesha Sultana, Rob Truscott, Joe Walker

### **Our volunteers and sessional workers**

Mary Fagan, Kristin Sharpe, Mike Sharpe, Kari Stewart, Sue, Olga, Karen, RCCG, Farook Bhabha, Susie Cunningham, Laura Thomas-Hockey, Angella Smith, Cintia Gloker, Madlyn Ray-Jones, Caroline Abbott, Dee Gaitskill, Lana Kaziro, Joelle, Andrew Wilkes, Linda, Rachel Turner, Patrick, Abi Kingston, Jasmine O'Connor, Neil MacInnes, Milo MacInnes, Clare Croft-White, Abimbola Oyebade-Balogun, David Turley, Eden Turley, Sue Barby, Karen Zvorc, Olga Filatova, Madlyn Ray-Jones, Joelle Ekoume, Farzana Patel,

Bamidele Kolawole, Abiola Kolawole, Yemi Bamidele, Fehintola Bamidele, Celestine Ikwukeme, Monica Apeh, Tinuke Ogundere, Kunle Ogundare, Emanuel Igbinosa, Lanre Olagbaju, Sandra Idubor, Shola Olaosebikan, Hanna Osazuwa, Grace Oyenike Akpejoye, Mrs Osadugba, Nora Ziegler, Mirjam Johansson, Roland Dale, Richard Barnard, Clare Bellefeuille-Rice, Joel Pullin, Len Welson, Gary Winder, Joshua Symons, Chris Diaz, Oniqa Siddiqa, Jasmine Fynaut, Sarah Ryan, Azadeh Ciel, Nic Jottkandt, Briony Black, Kate Murray-Browne, Jennie Gilhespy, Ethan Pearson

### **Our trustees**

Rev Elizabeth Welch – Chair (to January 2019), Rev Dr John Campbell – Chair (from February 2019), Aniema Aaron, Lesley Trenkel, Yetunde (Bim) Oniwinde (to December 2018), Abigail Kingston, Mercy Mashem, David Turley (to February 2019)

### **Our funders**

Hackney Council, Hackney Parochial Charities, East London Foundation, Thames North Synod, National Lottery Awards for All, HCVS, John Laing Trust

## The Mix that Makes Me

I'm people walking, talking, dancing  
Heels kicking, skirts a-flying,  
I'm children playing, toddlers' trikes,  
I'm friendships forming, sacrifice

I'm ballet, steel pans, Jesus talk  
I'm laughter, heartache, noticeboards  
I'm being cheeky, I'm organised chaos,  
I'm hiding in corners, I'm making a big mess

I'm a minister's robes, I'm a busy cook  
I'm a wedding party, a loving look  
I'm painting on paper, I'm chasing a robber,  
I'm singing, I'm running, I'm pissing in flowers

I'm arts and crafts, bringing bicycles in,  
I'm floodlit giraffes, I'm a boy getting hit  
I grow and I change, every day, every year,  
Unconditional welcome from far and from near

I'm the Round Chapel, The Old School Rooms  
The church, the office, the studio  
I'm Clapton Park, the URC  
These names and more are given to me.

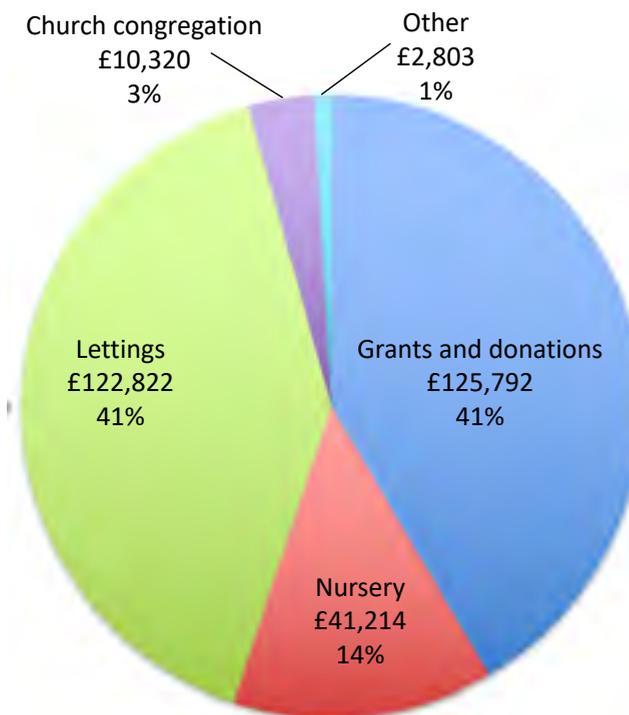
This building's people, moments shape me,  
All of these things are the mix that make me.

*A poem written by attendees of the Burns Night community meal and curated by Annabelle Burns, 25 January 2018*

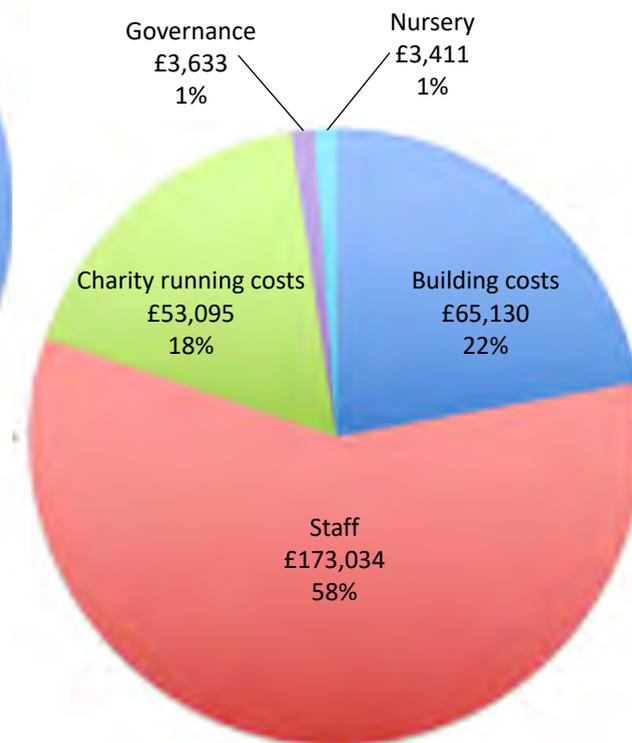
## Where our income comes from and what we spend it on

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2018	2017
<b>Total income</b>	185,512	117,439	<b>302,951</b>	320,352
<b>Total expenditure</b>	181,740	116,563	<b>298,303</b>	284,076

### Income



### Expenditure



# Families

In the past year we have increased our weekly term-time offer to local families. We now run four weekly drop-in sessions for parents/carers and their under-5s.

## **Monday and Friday Kitchen Club (Cook & Play drop-in)**

Our Kitchen Club sessions are a partnership between the Round Chapel Families Project and a local charity, Parent Club. The ethos is about providing positive experiences for parents of 0-5-year-olds, reaching out to families who might be experiencing social isolation and offering additional support and signposting to family services and activities in the area.

Participants cook lunch together and enjoy soft play and messy play with a designated playworker. We're very grateful to our dedicated and committed team: Laura, Angella and Susie! Thanks to continued outreach work we are also engaging harder-to-reach families.

On Fridays we offer extra support to parents and families facing housing struggles or living in temporary accommodation. As well as links with three local hostels, we have received referrals from Birth Companions and Bump Buddies.

Feedback from families attending these sessions is positive. We support parents with school admissions and job applications and point them towards affordable school holiday activities. Our new peer-to-peer advice table, run by



volunteer Cintia, offers support about housing, jobs and food bank vouchers.

## **Wednesday Playgroup (Stay & Play)**

Our busiest drop-in averages about 50 families a week. Sessions include a craft corner, free kids' shop, healthy snacks and singing. We have hosted recent guest spots from Hackney Real Nappy Network, Wrap a Hug Sling Library, the Hackney Family Cycling Library and Hackney Families Extinction Rebellion. The playgroup continues to provide good recruitment for our Nursery.

## **Thursday Messy Play (Stay & Make)**

Since September we have been running a weekly creative/messy play drop-in led by local artist Olga with volunteer Karen. Olga's ideas and imagination have been captivating toddlers around Clapton!

## **Community lunch**

Our **Wednesday lunch** keeps growing. We have offered the slot to guest cooks including Dabba Drop. Now Maya and Laura rotate weeks and continue to cook delicious, vegan curry and rice dishes. Families pay £1/£2 towards the lunch. We average 40 families eating a week.

In September 2018 we piloted our **All-Ages Community Café**, which is open to young, old and young at heart! The donation-based café serves tea, coffee, healthy cake and veggie lunch made with the Growing Communities veggie bag every Thursday from 11am till 12.30pm.

## **Singing Together**

Inspired by Walthamstow's Together Project, the Families Project trialled some toddler and parent singing sessions

alongside residents with dementia in a local care home. The feedback from residents, staff and families was so positive that we kept the sessions going every week. Kari of Ms Kari's Singstation leads the singing group on Thursdays.

## **Family Open Day**

Over 200 people attended our open day in June 2018. This was a great opportunity to bring together different groups and families that use the building and to welcome others in!

The day included a community café (with Slow Craft tables) and tasters showcasing all the wonderful activities that take place during the week (including Karen of First Touch Massage, Natalie of Showkids, Hannah of Ballet North, Kari of Ms Kari's Singstation, AJ of Adrenalin Dance and Chloe of Shakti Mama).

**“The Families Project is hugely fun and supportive, always lots of kind staff and volunteers around to help and welcome - and other parents to meet.”**

**Emma Kapur,  
local parent**

# Round Chapel Community Nursery



We had another well-attended and positive year at the nursery. Our lovely children make it a lively and fun place to be. Our families, staff and visiting tutors come from many communities around the neighbourhood. This enriches our nursery, and brings together people from many backgrounds, cultures and beliefs.

Our team, including regular bank staff, have given our children many fun experiences, such as cooking food from around the world, art and craft, jewellery making, physical literacy, celebrating festivals, safeguarding our planet, and lots more sensory and heuristic fun.

The children enjoy outdoor visits to our local parks and library and have lots of fun in our small garden making mud pies, trying to climb our cherry tree, hanging mobiles from it, sowing, planting, and other physical activities. The children help prepare and serve healthy snacks. We have many amazing little chefs, and they are supported to be independent and confident. The nursery team focuses on the wellbeing of our children, ensuring that a nurturing and caring environment is provided. We support children with their feelings, by running activities focused on emotions, and regularly practise mindfulness.

Ultimately, our focus is to ensure our children have lots of fun experiences and feel secure and happy.

Visiting tutors have given our children the opportunity to experience regular classes in capoeira, Italian singing, yoga,

storytelling, movement, singing and dancing. Our parents are very supportive and contribute immensely to the nursery with ideas and by running activities such as making a quilt inspired by the shibori Japanese technique, dyeing with natural food dyes and printing.

The nursery continues to grow thanks to the hard work and contribution of everyone involved.

**“Wonderful nursery and staff. Couldn’t have chosen a better place to send my child.”**

**Nursery parent**





Photo © Neil MacInnes

## Clapton Community Drop In

Clapton Community Drop In supports around 200 people a year. We open twice a week to provide a warm welcome to anyone who wishes to “drop in”.

Many people find the complex bureaucracy that they need to interact with, overwhelming. They may be experiencing financial crises, homelessness, poor mental health or have learning difficulties. They may want help to use a computer, have problems with literacy or English language, and no one at home who can help.

Our amazing team of over 30 volunteers offer mostly non-expert support, working alongside guests to resolve

problems they face, helping to build their confidence and skills. The generous gift of their time and energy has helped people in our community to both survive and make lasting changes. They help people to apply for benefits, write and read letters, use computers, fill forms,

**“I have been coming here for two years and they have helped me with a lot of things.”**

**Clapton Drop In guest**

**“We enjoy being part of this vibrant and diverse community and look forward to working in partnership for many years to come.”**

**Christina Ball,  
director,  
Hackney Doorways**

set up email accounts, keep in touch with friends and family, negotiate with landlords, and access services they need. We help guests to make appointments, introducing them to services and sometimes accompanying them too.

We hope to empower and enrich lives and build community. We hold information and creative workshops, and monthly foot health clinics in partnership with other organisations. Many of our guests visit regularly, often just to say hello, and some are now helping their peers, sharing the skills and confidence they have gained. They have had great ideas of other services that they could help provide.

## Urban Table

The Urban Table has been going for 14 years and in that time has barely missed a Sunday in providing food, support and friendship to many adults who are either street homeless or living in vulnerable housing situations. Many also are struggling with addictions or mental illness.

The number of guests has risen to over 70 including several women and two children supervised by their mother. The atmosphere is usually calm and friendly with a cafe feel and has become a safe space for many regulars who also see the weekly meal as a support network that they can connect to.

The project is a partnership with the London Catholic Worker and the RCCG church who are based in our building. We have an active and committed team of volunteers, usually between 11-14 each week, who help with the cooking, clearing and hosting.

We are grateful to Mary Fagan, who supports our partners and volunteers and ensures the smooth running of the service week in week out.

We held a very successful ceildh in April 2018 and raised an incredible £1400! We also received food donations at Christmas from Millfields School.

# Community organising

## Women's Strike, 8 March 2019

The Families Project marked the Women's Strike (International Women's Day) by hosting a number of activities, including a 'My Mum is on Strike' Stay & Play. The Friday Kitchen Club group invited local women to come together and 'strike' in whatever way they could to show solidarity with the struggles so many women face.

Over 200 people came together from the nursery, Families Project groups and the Drop-In plus others we met on the street, in shops and at the local family hostel that morning! Our kitchen was full of men supporting the strike by cooking up our evening meal. We had an inspiring and fun day that included talks, a fabulous community cafe, henna painting, making herbal bundles, playing with our kids (If you can't strike from your unwaged labour isn't it better to collectivise your efforts?).

Later that evening we welcomed over 150 local women to collect a take-away meal enabling all those women to strike from cooking for their families that evening.



## Mother's Rise-up March, 12 May

Parents from our playgroup suggested we organise a meeting point for local families so we travelled into town on the bus together.

## The People's Vote March, 23 March

We made signs and placards in the craft corner at our weekly playgroup.

## Extinction Rebellion

We're delighted to be hosting XR weekly meet-ups on Mondays. We also hosted a Hackney Families XR meet-up and hope to offer more space and resources in future.



Photo © Neil MacInnes

## Community meal

We love hospitality, food and feasting. Our Community Meal has now been going for 21 years. Established by a few members of the congregation, the core vision behind the meal was to encourage neighbours living on a few streets close by to get into a habit of eating together. This was about 're-neighbouring'.

The important thing about the Community Meal is that there is no

agenda beyond the simple act of sitting down and eating, with the meal itself being the main event.

This year we made a few changes, hosting fewer over the year and focusing more on creating the meal around events, which have included a Burns Night celebration, and also encouraging more families to get involved.

# What's next?

## **Peer support grant**

With continued support from Michelle around fundraising, we were awarded £3470 from the London Borough of Hackney at the end of 2018. We delivered a 12-week peer-support programme facilitated by Fiona and Susie for local mothers of under-5s (priority went to women living in insecure accommodation). We wanted women on the programme to experience a sense of community and resilience and to be inspired by practical ideas (such as relaxation techniques) to maintain positive mental health and to manage the daily stresses related to insecure housing. It's been an amazing journey for everyone involved – participants, facilitators and practitioners alike!

We're delighted that some of our mums who participated in the programme have continued to get together on Wednesday afternoons to share skills – once a month they get together to do sewing and on the second Wednesday for African dancing.

## **Active Londoners**

We've been awarded a small GLA grant to run a wellbeing programme of dance and movement classes for mums (with a creche). Starting in September, we hope to work with Karen of First Touch Massage, Andrew of Adrenalin Dance and Joelle.

