

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



Community Action Sutton
Building Stronger Communities



Introduction

Hello

After another full and impactful year, I am pleased to share some of our highlights from the past year. As we continue to work towards our vision to promote equality and diversity and positive change for communities in the London Borough of Sutton, we've been busy working with our members and local communities, ensuring they have the support they need to deliver their services and grow to their full potential.

Whilst funding is understandably the biggest concern for many organisations we work with, we've seen an increase in groups wanting to strengthen their Boards, work in partnership and many looking to register as Charities and /or Community Interest Organisations. Even in a very challenging time for the Charity and Community Sector, new groups are being started and smaller groups are developing, which is great news!

Alongside our developmental and capacity building work we have many other exciting projects that have taken shape over the past year. Early 2023 saw the launch of our Health Inequalities Project. This project is important for residents in Sutton as it aims to help address long-standing health Inequalities in specific areas of the Borough by supporting communities to support themselves. I am delighted to see there have been many successful community-led initiatives including a community fun day, a community-led Eid celebration plus many more events bringing communities together to access much needed support. We've also been working with communities to help set up groups and more formal arrangements, giving them opportunities to start applying for funding to continue to develop the work they are doing locally.

I am pleased that our Together for Sutton partnership is going from strength to strength and it is clear that this service has made a real difference to residents in Sutton, as during this past year over 30,000 contacts were made to the service which clearly demonstrates there is a need and highlights the value of this collaborative work.

We continue to support and administer local funding streams and just over £126k was awarded to groups through the Sutton Community Fund and the Physical Activity Grants Programme (mainly funded by Sutton Council). It has been a real privilege to be part of these funding programmes and see the difference the projects have made.

The projects and events held at Hill House continues to bring together communities, strengthen partnerships and has created a strong community asset in the local area. The community garden at Hill House is a real testament to the dedication of the volunteers and to see the amazing changes take place over the year has been truly inspiring.

A big part of my work this year has been to support senior stakeholders to understand the precarious financial situation many Charities find themselves in. Whilst a lot of attention is rightly given to the financial and demand pressures that the public sector is under, far less attention is paid to how this has impacted charitable funding. Grants from Central Government departments decreased from £4.1bn in 2021-2022 to £3bn in 2022-2023 – down 26%, this coming on the back of 14 years of ‘austerity.’ The Sector in Sutton is a vital part of the system working alongside the NHS, Council and other statutory bodies to support some of the most vulnerable people. Community Action Sutton has been working hard to ensure this fact is not forgotten.

Finally, I want to thank my amazing and talented staff team who are so committed to our work and the support we get from our Board of Trustees!

Simon Breeze

Chief Executive Officer

Our Annual Impact Report highlights the positive differences we have made to local charities and community groups over this past. This report gives a flavour and highlights some of our key achievements but in no way represents everything we have achieved during 2023-2024. Our Vision is to promote equality and diversity and positive change for communities in the Borough of Sutton.

PROMOTE

Equality, diversity and positive change for all communities in Sutton

INSPIRE

Partnerships / collaborative work across the Voluntary and Community Sector

REPRESENT

The voice of the Voluntary and Community Sector

SUPPORT

Growing and established organisations to reach their full potential

DEVELOP

A diverse and vibrant Community and Voluntary and Community Sector



Information and communication

We continue to support our members and the wider sector by sending out regular communications containing useful information, resources, changes to legislation, examples of good practice and funding opportunities.

We also share information and news and promote local organisation's events and activities via our social media channels.

2999 Members



29,767

website hits
(Unique)

187
e-bulletins

398
subscribers

12
funding
e-bulletins

50
funding
opportunities
each month.
(average)

3.6k
Followers
(across social
media channels)

25,832
opened
e-bulletins

Raising awareness and supporting good causes

During 2023-2024 we continued to promote and take part in raising awareness around different themes each year. We did this by working with partners to share information and resources and working in partnership with local charities and community groups to create timetables of events and activities for local communities.



Key highlights and activities;



International Women's Day 2023, the theme was #EmbraceEquity, we collated photos of colleagues and residents striking the #EmbraceEquity pose.

Working with key partners we collated and produced a programme of information and public engagement events across the Borough for National Hate Crime Awareness Week.

Shared support information across our social media platforms and e-bulletins for Mental Health Awareness Week.



During Small Charity Week in 2023 we held a Funding for the Future event. The event brought together different funders who shared information about the funding opportunities that were available for groups in Sutton.

90%

attendees
rated excellent



Organisational support

One of the ways we aim to achieve our vision is by providing a range of support services to enable and empower both new and established charities and community groups to reach their full potential.

We provide both practical and developmental support covering every aspect of running a charity or community group. As with previous years, we found that funding and governance have been most sought after areas of support.

201 Organisations Supported

Community Accountancy

During 2023-2024 our community accountancy team has supported 42 groups with services that ranged from bookkeeping and accounts, budgets, unit costing their services, budgeting for funding applications and setting up accounting systems, preparation and independent examination of accounts.



CPS Payroll continues to provide a complete payroll service which is run by friendly, helpful and experienced staff and is both professional and sympathetic to the needs of the voluntary sector and beyond.

160

Organisations, businesses and individuals employing a PA use the payroll service

1340

Average payslips per month

70

Pension contributions submitted on behalf of clients.

Organisational support

Supporting groups to access funding

Sutton Community Fund

The Sutton Community Fund is a grant funding programme financed by Sutton Council and administered by Community Action Sutton. Applications are reviewed and funds are awarded by an independent panel. There were two rounds of the Sutton Community Fund during 2023-2024.

20

Successful applications

£76,106.68

Awarded

Physical Activities Grant

The Physical Activity Grant Programme was a one-off programme financed by Sutton Council and administered by Community Action Sutton. The aim of the fund was to support small and community focused projects that would benefit Sutton residents and encourage groups and communities to be more physically active.

13

Successful applications

£50,529.28

Awarded

MOPAC

MOPAC funding totalling £12,980 was distributed to 4 organisations whose projects supported the key priorities of MOPAC:

- Reducing and preventing violence
- Increasing trust and confidence
- Better supporting victims
- Protecting people from being harmed or exploited

4

Successful applications

£12,980

Awarded

47

Organisations supported with fundraising (inc. funding searches)

155K

Brought into the Borough through external funding



The voice of the Voluntary Sector

We have seats on a range of strategic boards including links to the South West London VCSE Alliance. The key role on these Boards is to remind stakeholders of the contributions the Charity sector makes and the challenges it faces. This has been more difficult, but more important than ever over the last few years.

We are careful to not to position ourselves as the lone voice of Charities, as the role of advocating on behalf of the sector is taken up by many leaders. A typical answer to the question, 'what does the VCS think about this?' would be, 'why don't we ask them.' A key role for us is also to be a point of communication and clarity when things become difficult and many times over the last year our role has been to work together to unblock problems and to ensure that public sector commissioners are aware of the impact of what might be small changes to them on small Charities.

Over the next year we will continue to highlight the perilous state of charitable funding and whilst it is recognised that many of the answers to the challenges Charities face sit outside of Sutton, we can work with public sector partners locally to support the needs of Charities who deliver vital services for local communities.

The Fairness Commission / Race Equality

We continued our Racial Equality work by having regular meetings with voluntary and community organisations, external partners and interested parties. These meetings give individuals the chance to talk about race equality, share experiences and information in a safe space. . This group was key in getting representation onto the Police Encounter Panels and the Stop Search Monitoring groups. The Race Equality work in Sutton has been shared across the region and we are also working with NAVCA on their equality and diversity agenda.

Voluntary Sector Forum

During 2023-2024 we held two Voluntary Sector Forums, these meetings provided an opportunity for organisations to meet the newly appointed Leader of Council and hear more about the proposals for local regeneration projects.

**Representation
at over
23**

**different boards, forums
and partnerships**

Working with communities

Hill House Community Centre has continued to serve as a vibrant hub for local communities, supporting various activities and ongoing initiatives. Key initiatives like the Active Me programme and the Community Garden have improved physical and mental well-being for older adults and residents. Our Sutton Men in Sheds group provides a supportive space for men and has seen a big increase in the number of participants. We are pleased that our Community Learning Project empowered many residents with over a third able to secure employment. Working in partnership we have supported residents to access food through the community food shop. We have also built strong connections with the Sutton Hong Kong community and have been able to assist new immigrants in adapting and building a cohesive community, ensuring our services are accessible and well-known.



Working with communities

In January 2023 we launched our Health Inequalities Project to employ community development officers to focus work in Shanklin, Roundshaw, St Helier and Benhill known to have long-standing health inequalities. The aim is to work with local groups and residents to identify community led responses and shape ideas into projects. See the key highlights and activities below:

Roundshaw

- In Roundshaw, we closely worked with the Wallington Integrated Neighbourhood Team to host monthly 'Healthy You' events.
- We supported a local organisation to secure funding for a delivery van which is used at the weekly Food Hub and also helped to set up a food cupboard.
- We started work with local churches to enable them to look at new and innovative ways to support residents.



Benhill

- The first Benhill Community Fun Day was held in September 2023, this successful event brought together over 200 residents. Residents expressed concerns that they were not always aware of support and local activities. To help address this a Benhill Community Calendar is currently being developed.
- Working in partnership with a local food bank, we supported a local residents association to install a community food cupboard.
- Weekly drop-ins were set up at a local Health Centre to enable patients to access a range of information and support. 12 sessions were held throughout 2023-2024 with over 100 patients attending.



Working with communities

Shanklin

- We worked closely with the Residents Association and partners to install a food cupboard to support residents with access to food.
- We played a key role in breaking down barriers with local communities as we supported local Muslim women to host the first Eid celebration in the community hall and continued to support and encourage ethnic residents to take a more active role with the Residents Association.
- We worked in partnership with a well-established local mental health charity as they were keen to engage with local Muslim women. A cake sale for Macmillan Cancer Charity was held at the charity and a number of Muslim women attended the event. Following the success of the event younger members of the community expressed an interest in volunteering with the mental health charity and a group of Muslim ladies now run regular exercise classes.



St Helier

- In November 2023 we supported Sutton Tamil School with their governance, this led to further engagement sessions around health where we found a high level of diabetes amongst this community. With our support the school were successful in applying for funding from the Physical Activity Fund and are now running regular exercise sessions.
- We supported a local group to work in partnership with the Integrated Neighbourhood Team to hold the first health and wellbeing event in St Helier.
- Working in partnership with a local health centre enabled local organisations to provide free blood pressure checks and NHS app support for local residents.
- When working with Muslim women in St Helier it was identified that there was a high level of concerning health conditions, for example obesity, diabetes and heart conditions. To help address support was given to a local organisation to deliver yoga classes specially for Muslim women.
- With our support a local church was successful in receiving funding from the Winter Engagement Fund, to enable them to provide a weekly lunch, where residents could have a bowl of soup and play games. This initiative also led to installing a food cupboard.



Inspiring collaborative working

As an infrastructure organisation one of the key functions of CAS is to promote, facilitate and support partnerships and collaborative working.

Together for Sutton

The Together for Sutton (Tfs) partners continue to work together as one branded 'Front Door' and provide independent, impartial, free and confidential information and advice services to support residents and professionals in Sutton.



1718

Professional Referrals

29,655

Sutton Residents, Self-Referrals



56%

Over the phone



32%

Face to face



12%

Online referral form



Inspiring collaborative working



Key highlights and activities:

Together for Sutton Information Networks

The TFS Information Networks have gone from strength to strength, with just under 100 Sutton professionals attending a network session themed around Housing in December 2023. A further three TFS Information Networks took place during 2023-2024 covering the following topics:

- Ripple Effects from the Cost of Living Crisis – Hidden pressures on families with children.
- Integrating with Sutton services and Health Care services
- Employment, Education & Training

Anti-Poverty Forum

We held three Anti-Poverty Forums during 2023-2024, topics and discussions included; the cost of living, affordability of private renting, local housing allowance, discounts on water bills, plus information about new schemes from Sutton Council's Cultural Services.

Sutton Safer Neighbourhood Board

During 2023-2024 we continued to chair and administer the Sutton Safer Neighbourhood Board (SSNB), which brings together key partners and Ward Panel Chairs to discuss local issues. As a result of the work we have carried out this year and the introduction of a new Police Data system the Police/Data Performance Packs are clearer and contain the information broken down on a ward level.

Meetings were held throughout the year providing updates on the White Ribbon Campaign, Street Pastors, detailed reports from the Police about operations that have taken place across the Borough, feedback from the new Met for London Launch Event which we helped to facilitate and regular updates on the work of the Independent Advisory Group and the Youth Independent Advisory Group.

Our Team

Simon Breeze - Chief Executive Officer
Jackie Parr - Executive Support Manager
Sara Thomas - Marketing & Events Officer
Lorraine Davies - Team Administrator
Razia Sattar - Head of Partnerships, Impact and Equality
Jubee Mathews – Community Development Officer
Alex Towers - Community Development Officer
Kate Lawman - Together for Sutton, Contract Manager
Karen Leung - Hill House Community Centre Manager
Helena Yaourtoglou - Project Assistant, Hill House
(until June 2023)
Richard Stone - Hill House Community Garden Lead
Dunstanette Kuti - Head of Finance
James Poon - Community Accountancy Officer

Creative Payroll Solutions (CPS)

Karen Adorjan - Payroll Officer
Tina Green - Payroll Assistant
Thayalini Sritharan - Payroll Assistant

Healthwatch Sutton

Pete Flavell - Chief Executive Officer
Colin Wilson - Communications, Engagement & Projects Officer
Andrew McDonald - Health Engagement & Projects Officer
Alyssa Chase-Vilchez - SWL Healthwatch Executive Officer
Iyinoluwa Oshinowo - SWL Healthwatch Engagement Coordinator

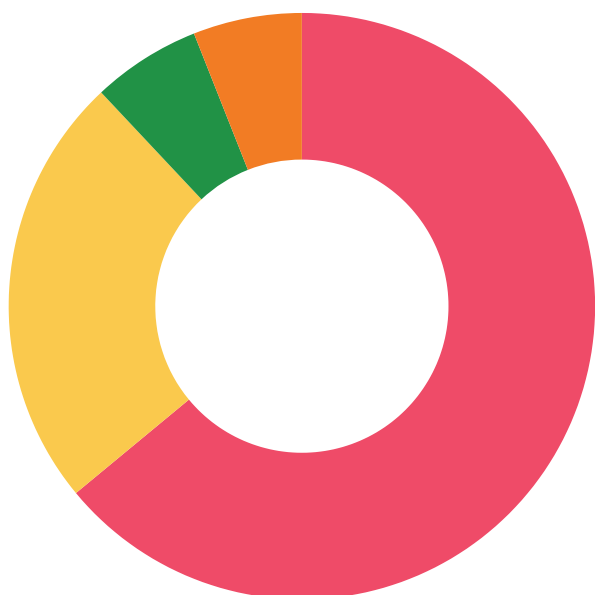
Trustees

Jenny Sims – Chair
Amie Stace – Treasurer

Vanessa McCain
Dave Hobday
Bob Harrison

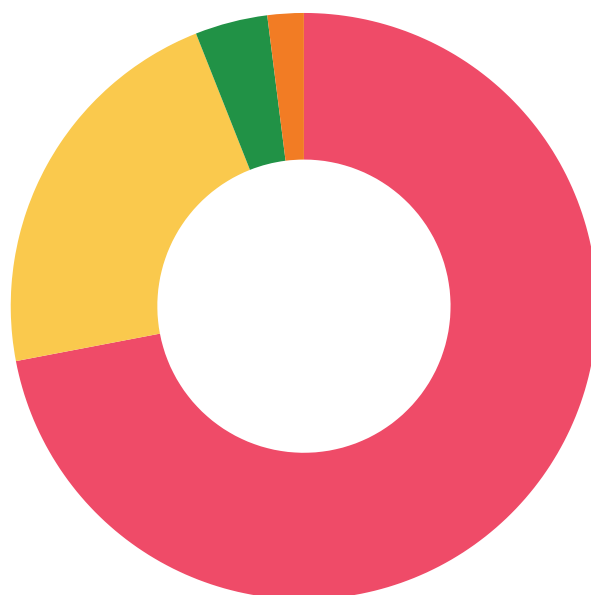
Laurence Imrie
Polly Persechino
Louise Kelly

Our Finances



Income

- Contracts- 64%
- Grants - 24%
- Trading Activities -6%
- Fees, Investments and Donations - 6%



Expenditure

- Grant Funding -72%
- Staffing and Volunteer Expenses - 22%
- Premises and Office Expenses - 4%
- Governance, Training and Consultancy - 2%

As at 31 March 2024, Community Action Sutton held £1,810,817 in unrestricted and restricted funds. £1,275,000 of which is the Sutton CCG Charitable Fund. An explanation of these funds is shown in a separate document, available upon request.

The total value of unrestricted funds held by Community Action Sutton as at 31 March 2024 stands at £440,532. The total value of restricted funds held by Community Action Sutton stands at £1,370,285. These are funds overseen by Community Action Sutton relating to specific projects and are accounted for separately, as required by the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). A full schedule of the restricted funds controlled during the year is shown in the Financial Statements.

**Granfers Community Centre, 73-79 Oakhill Road, Sutton,
SM1 3AA**

Tel: 020 8644 2867

enquiries@communityactionsutton.org.uk

www.communityactionsutton.org.uk

Company limited by guarantee no: 03336660

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