

Forward by Jan de Villiers,
Chair of Bierley Community
Association Ltd.



It was a privilege to be involved in The Life Centre over the past year. We had a great year in terms of our sustainability, but also a sad one as we had to say our 'goodbyes' to our friend and former Chair, Gillian Clarkson, after she passed away unexpectedly in March. It is with thanks that we reflect on her vision for the centre and the foresight to have established a small team of people with passion and energy to drive forward the outworking of that vision. Thank you Gillian!

We had a number of challenges to deal with during this year including finishing off a contract with Work Where You Live and seeing Free Paws and Best Friends (the dog training groups) leaving the space that they have rented for many years. Their contribution to the longevity of the centre did not go amiss. We have further acquired a number of new sessions, including Yummy Mummies, Zumba, youth sessions, church on a Sunday morning and a more regular Friday lunch for people of all ages. As a result we have seen around 200 people making use of the centre each week.

I want to say a special thanks to all the staff, volunteers and trustees who have been involved over the past year – your contribution is much appreciated and valued. Also to the funders and individuals who believed in our work enough to make financial contributions. Without workers and funds we cannot achieve our dream of providing relevant and on-going services to our community. We ended our year on a positive financial note and we are planning ahead for the increased employment of our Centre Manager and Administration support. We are working closely with partners to explore further service development and are excited about what the next year might hold. In this report you will see what we have achieved and our Centre Manager will reflect on what other services he will develop over the next year. I hope it indicates to you that 'things are happening' at Bierley Life Centre and that we are making strong strides forward. Thank you for taking time to read this report.

Yours sincerely

Jan de Villiers

Events

Jubilee

This year we celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee in style! We had a wonderful day at the centre with activities for all ages including football, Zumba, indoor bowls, arts and crafts and the community enjoyed a picnic in the grounds with an ice cream van on hand. We enjoyed a baton twirling demonstration and many of our partners joined with us, all of which contributed to a very successful day which was enjoyed by all. Many thanks to all who were involved.



Marie Curie Tea Party

The centre played host to a tea party to raise funds for Marie Curie Cancer Care. Delicious cakes and tea were served and all the volunteers had their legs waxed for the worthy cause. The event raised £300 - thanks go to Janet who organised the event.



Curie
willing
event



Halloween & Christmas Parties

Due to popular demand the centre hosted a Halloween party. Party goers of all ages turned up in some very impressive costumes and enjoyed a time with party food and games. Once again at Christmas time Santa arrived with his grotto and he had plenty of young visitors. This year we had a DJ and everyone joined in the dancing. The Friday lunch group enjoyed a fantastic buffet put on by Margaret and relaxed afterwards with some entertainment from Ken Romano.



Community

Friday Lunches and Friday Friends

In the past year we have made steps forward with our Friday groups for over fifties. Having received some funding we have been able to pay for meals to be cooked for us and so we have welcomed Nicola and Dawn into our midst who have served us well by giving us inexpensive nourishing meals, initially on a twice a month basis. To ensure continuity and because of further funding we are able to now provide meals weekly and already we have had a positive response to this. Paul and Margaret are to be thanked for their involvement as volunteers prior to being able to employ our cooks and for their continued work.

Following lunch we have a multi-activity group which includes craft but can extend to other pursuits should there be interest in them. Thanks are recorded to June who joins us to stimulate us in craft activities. The members of the group have become firm friends as they have worked on differing activities and were able to join in the Easter Art Project and enjoy seeing the fruition of their work.



We would love to include more participants for both the lunches and Friday Friends and are looking for ways to encourage people to join us.

Coffee Morning and Bingo

This group ran during last year providing a fantastic social activity for local residents in Bierley to meet up for a chat, enjoy a light lunch and play bingo. Many thanks to all from the community who contributed to the running of the group and particularly to Anna for hosting the bingo, which she is now taking a break from in preparation for the birth of her baby; we wish them both well. We hope to see the return of this session sometime very soon.

Volunteering

At The Life Centre we want to bring together the community of Bierley and we hope to do this by providing and creating opportunities for people to work together, learn new skills and give something back to the community through various volunteering opportunities. We would like to say a **HUGE thank you to everyone** who has contributed towards the work of the Life Centre and if you are interested in volunteering please do get in touch.

Art Project

Members of the community were invited to participate in an art project which ran over three days. A local artist came to run the sessions providing inspiration and different materials for people to work with. The theme was 'self-portrait' and around 58 participants ageing from 1 - 82 produced a portrait of themselves which were then put together to produce the finished piece of art. Participants and other members of the community came to see an unveiling of the work where they enjoyed cakes and refreshments and had the opportunity to see the finished result. Thank you to all who contributed.



Yummy Mummies

The Life Centre was awarded an Awards for All grant to run this group which was initiated by the mums themselves. The group is called Yummy Mummies and meets every Thursday morning during term time with special trips and events throughout the rest of the year. The group is for mums from Bierley and helps build up skills and strengthen relationships in a relaxed atmosphere. Each week the group are encouraged to take part in various activities that they have expressed an interest in. As a result the mums have been baking, card making, sewing, book reading and also designing and making their own jewellery.



Messy Church

Once a month BD4 Family runs a Messy Church at The Life Centre for the families of children of primary school age. The session aims to support links with the church and children played and learnt alongside their parents. So far the families that come have explored through craft and story telling the plans God had for both Noah and Joseph from the Bible. All are welcome.

Church Service

During the year we have welcomed Liberty City Church to the centre who meet here every Sunday at 10:00am - 11:30am. The church is led by Wale and Emma, they currently have around 22 people attending each week and anyone is welcome to come and join them. Wale and Emma have also offered counselling sessions, English lessons for non - native speakers and opportunities to learn a musical instrument.

Sport, Fitness, Youth and Children

Kidz Club & Football



The sessions were run by One in a Million every Monday and Wednesday. Kidz Club continued to attract 45 primary school children each week and 25 people at the all age football session. Activities have included arts and crafts, table tennis, pool and playstation. During the holidays and nicer weather we have had trips out and enjoyed local walks in the surrounding woodland areas.

Chill Zone

Youth Service and Step 2 worked in partnership to deliver Chill Zone on a Friday night providing activities for secondary school age young people at The Life Centre. Young people came from a wide area to participate in activities ranging from sports activities to arts and crafts and cooking.

Fun & Play/Sport & Detached/Bus Project

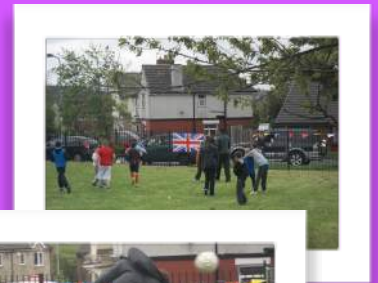
Youth provision has also been provided by e:merge who have delivered activities through the Bus Project and sports and detached work. Young people have enjoyed participating in activities and the e:merge youth workers have been on hand to provide support and advice whilst the e:merge sports workers ensured that everyone was able to join in. During the spring and summer months e:merge have arrived on a Thursday to run activities for primary school age children outside in the grounds. The children have enjoyed the activities including sport, wide games and arts and crafts whilst significant relationships have been built with the e:merge staff. On average 75 children and young people each week have benefitted from these sessions.

Zumba

Zumba, still very popular, takes place at the centre every Wednesday and classes are run by fitness instructor Adele Bostock. The session had 15 people attending on average each week and provided a fun, high energy activity and also opportunities to make new friends.

Exercise class

This exercise class runs on a Tuesday and is led by Leela Peel a qualified physiotherapist. The exercises are gentle and particularly suitable for those who are less mobile and want to improve flexibility and mobility whilst being able to socialise with others. The session had 10 people on average attending each week.



Support

Advice

On Monday mornings HOPES have provided drop-in advice sessions at the centre. Sessions offer opportunities for people to gain advice on welfare and benefits amongst other things. The service has been very well attended and has provided a vital service for many.

Counselling

Counselling has been provided by two counsellors from United Churches Healing Ministries who every Monday have provided 1 hour counselling sessions to people. The counselling sessions are confidential and cover issues such as bereavement, relationship difficulties and stress etc.

Work Where You Live

The work club ran on Mondays and Thursdays and provided people with the help and support that they needed to look for work and as a result of the programme a number of people have found work. People that have attended have been assisted with setting up email addresses, writing CV's and job searching. The work club has now finished, however we are still here to provide access to the computers for those who do not have access elsewhere. We hope to have a new job club starting in September 2013.

And finally...

A word from the new Centre Manager

Having been in post only a short amount of time I would like to say how welcoming the staff, volunteers and users of the centre have been, this has all helped me to feel part of the community right from the start. I am looking forward to the next year and I will continue to strengthen the centre's relationship with ASDA who have recently started supporting our Friday lunch club and Sure Start BHT, who will soon be delivering a variety of sessions at the centre. We are also welcoming Brave, Soul food and a local karate club, all of whom will be providing additional services from the centre. I am also currently in negotiations with Forster Community College who are planning to provide some educational support to local residents starting in September 2013. In the mean time we have lots going on over the summer with a Go Cycle programme that will hopefully lead in to a cycle club operating from The Life Centre, as well a programme of sports that will be delivered by e:merge. I think you will agree that things really are happening - watch this space!

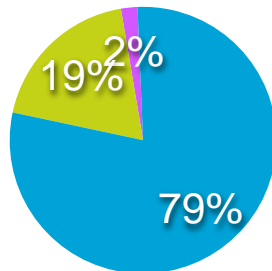


Rob Normington

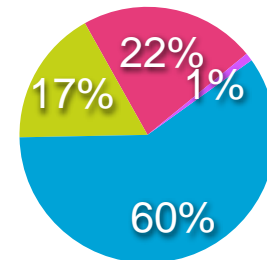
Finance

Bierley Community Association Ltd Income & Expenditure 2012/13

Income		£107,445
Grants received	79%	£85,185
Lettings/Fees	19%	£20,795
Other sources	2%	£1,465



Expenditure		£83,540
Staff costs	60%	£49,382
Premises costs	17%	£14,160
Centre activities	22%	£18,765
Other costs	1%	£1,233



A BIG thank you to our many supporters and partners

