



Lee Green Lives

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

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We have made a difference

LGL Chair, Councillor Jim Mallory, on how we have coped during a very difficult year.

Covid changed everything. One way or another, we have all experienced just how difficult it has been. Whether it's having lost someone dear to us, seen others suffer from infection or caught it ourselves, its effect has been truly devastating. Yet, it would have been even worse had vital services and the community not responded.

We hope we can say that Lee Green Lives has played its part, together with many other groups in Lee Green. And we will continue to do so, for it doesn't look as if the pandemic is going away any time soon.

The year 2020-21 began with lockdown. We had closed the centre, furloughed our coordinator, Shirley Kirkland, and negotiated with funders a delay in implementing our programme.

Lockdown also forced a rethink, with a return leading to mixing some direct and remote provision within strict guidelines with remote sessions. So, we did a thorough Risk Assessment, then installed temperature checks, sanitation measures, social distancing. After that, we worked with session leaders to organise the return.

Maybe we shouldn't have been surprised when virtually all our users wanted back. Many were lonely and isolated, or lacked digital support. We had to add sessions to enable them to maintain safe distancing. All in all, it was a real achievement.

Then, just as we looked like restoring and



enhancing our programme, came the second lockdown, and that lasted into April of this year.

Again, this report would be incomplete if we didn't record what's been achieved since. Building on our earlier experience, Shirley and the session leaders, supported by Val Miller and some new volunteers, jump-started the programme with virtually no lead-in time.

In addition, we have been able to restore our much-missed Advocacy & Support service – in abeyance for a year after the excellent Stephanie Bennett-Fraser left for a full-time job.

Lee Fair Share, the local time bank, who have been with us since we first set up in 2011, had all their Coffee & Chat members taking part

during the good weather by holding their sessions in nearby Edith Nesbit Gardens. They have since, of course, come indoors.

Further uncertainty lies with redevelopment plans by Leegate's new owners, Galliard Homes, gaining pace. While they have committed to a community centre, assuming they get planning permission, we will be without a home during construction leading to our looking for alternative venues for that period.

Our financial situation, too, is difficult with cuts to our core funding making the running of the centre dependent on our attracting more resources. We have put in some bids, but will need to apply still more to national funding agencies.

Many challenges lie ahead, but we wouldn't have made it this far if it weren't for the efforts of Caroline Mayow, James Rathbone, Pat Coyne

and the rest of the trustees, Shirley Kirkland and all of the session leaders and other volunteers, and of course, all our participants and service users.

We're proud of what we had achieved in the knowledge that people need us, and that we can continue to make a difference to their lives in these uncertain times.

Meanwhile, we continue to work with other local groups through Lee Green Consortium, founded in 2015 to make sure we work together for the benefit of the community, more than ever needed to support people through the pandemic, whether things get better or not because, for many, it has been the months of isolation that has been the worst feature with an aftermath that may not get much better.

Jim Mallory,
Chair, Lee Green Lives

A great big thanks to our funders

Without funding, of course, Lee Green Lives would not survive. That's why we're so grateful to our funders who enable us to keep going in such a difficult financial climate. **Lewisham Council** through its Main Grants programme have provided us with core funding that enable us to pay for our worker and running costs, without which the community centre simply wouldn't remain open. **Trust for London** has enabled us to revive our Advocacy & Support service and Literacy classes for three years, and Lewisham's **Neighbourhood Community Development Partnership (NCDP)** has supported our Healthy Exercises and Sewing classes. In addition, **Clarion Housing** has contributed towards the centre staying open. All have also allowed us to defer use of the funds to overcome the centre closure during two lockdowns.

Hitting the ground running

LGL Coordinator Shirley Kirkland tells how LGL came back after Covid

The centre closed on 17 March 2020, and I didn't know how the centre would get back to any kind of normal or what that would be. I kept in contact with service users who wanted to, and Valerie Miller and I prepared to work from home using Zoom, face-time and phone.

I made referrals to organisations and services such as food distribution, legal advice, Bench Outreach, DWP, accessing Universal Credit accounts. Some of these contacts would be by a conference call for support. One such call was a DWP Assessment.

As with most things in the community centre, it would take a lot of volunteer effort to get things going. So I asked a small group of volunteers for ways to enable the centre to open up safely,

‘As with most things in the community centre, it would take a lot of volunteer effort to get things going.’

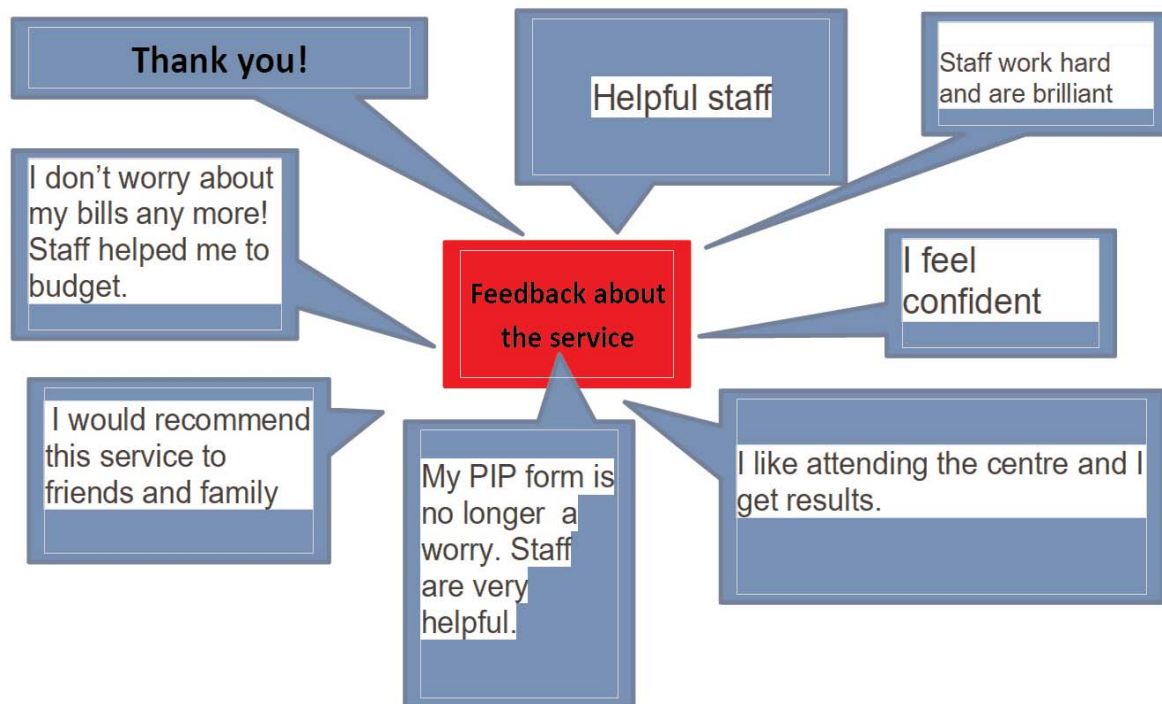
and the Ideas flowed from not opening at all to wearing hazmat suits.

Listening to government regulations and researching official online information allowed us to put in safety measures to open the centre. I met with Anwar Ghazala, who is responsible for cleaning the centre and Valerie. We measured out the ground floor for social distancing, then moved and cleaned furniture and got rid of clutter. We organised cleaning schedules for when sessions would be resumed—doing all



this while adhering to government safety measures. We even managed to get a group of volunteers to change the front windows thanks again to Anwar, Valerie, Helen Nicholas and Megan Jamieson.

We also met to put together a list of Covid-19 equipment and PPE, to which the management committee agreed. By the time we met with tutors and activity leaders, we were confident and ready to reopen safely in September, and hit the ground running.



LGL— Top of the Form

With the reopening of the Centre in April 2021, support and advice has proven invaluable, says Joanne Harvey.

A form filling service currently operates between 10:30-3:30 on Thursdays and has proved to be a useful addition to the service offered. We have now developed a productive system for supporting community members and can guide with signposting.

There are many success stories covering the last few months. These are just two of the most urgent.

Client A came to our attention due to being quite ill for a very long time, with various ongoing ailments including depression, exacerbated by the lack of access to services during lock down.

Over a period of time covering a number of visits, we were able to contact his doctor and

assist him in booking a much needed-consultation.

The weeks following his consultation, we saw an improvement in his outlook and we were also informed by him personally that, “a weight has been lifted”.

Client A had not only let his Blue badge renewal lapse, but he had also, due to depression, ignored letters and reminders for household bills and unpaid parking fines; sometimes not opening them for months. As a team, we were able to apply for his blue badge renewal, and also contact the council with a letter of support to explain our client’s predicament during Covid-19 and ask for a resolution to the unpaid fines.

We were able to offer support by assisting with contacting his creditors, like British Gas, to allow payment plans to be put into place.

Client A has visited the centre since, just to thank us for our help and keep us updated on the support he is currently receiving through his doctor.

Client B was already known to us through weekly attendance at the sewing club. However, after being notified that her sibling could possibly be released from a Secure Unit, where he was serving time for murder, she was keen to utilise our support. She was very concerned for her safety and the following steps were taken:

- Contact was made with her local MP via email so that our client could attend a surgery to express her concerns.
- The client's main concern was that upon release, her brother could be moved back into her borough, which was his original borough, or very close into a neighbouring borough and as such, wanted to speak to her local MP.

Client B brought in a 12 page document explaining the care package that will be given to her sibling upon his release under section 37/41 of the Mental Health Act.



Joanne Harvey has joined LGL as our new Advocacy and Support worker

The 12 page document was explained in detail by myself to Client B.

- She was given details of the Restriction Order (temporary leave; transfers; examination of mental health)
- She was informed that her brother would be reassessed before any release took place.

We also emailed Janet Daby MP and Vicky Foxcroft MP regarding the situation.

To date the client is happy with the advice and support given and we will continue to monitor the situation.

From refugee to volunteer

How LGL helped Anwar and her family with housing
and how she now helps us

Anwar and her husband, Saad, arrived in the UK in 2003 as refugees from the Iraq war, and moved into Leybridge Court in 2011. We met Anwar in 2017 when she came to the centre to use our advocacy and support service on behalf of her husband, who had PTSD, and they were having to replace Incapacity Benefit (IB) with Employment Support Allowance (ESA). She had a concern about being reassessed for ESA as their benefits, including Housing Benefit (HB), had been cut.

“ I really enjoy working in support of the community. Lee Green Lives and Clarion have supported me and my family with things that have made my family’s life better and helped me to get more confidence. I now feel that I can bring my skills as a cook to the life that goes on in Leybridge estate. Also, the work I do at the community centre makes me feel that I am helping make it a more friendly place.”

She quickly got involved in Lee Green Lives’ activities, preparing and cooking a vast range of Iraqi and Greek food for an event at Lochaber Hall in November 2017, celebrating the contributions made by volunteers working for local community groups that belong to Lee Green Consortium.



In March 2018, she contacted LGL about a dangerous situation in her block on Leybridge, in which water had leaked into the electrical system, with residents calling on the local fire service. LGL contacted a local councillor, who emailed the head of Clarion Housing locally

and an emergency operation brought support to the residents.

LGL helped Anwar to make a claim for Job Seekers Allowance and provided support while they were on a lower income with food vouchers. Later, we helped her when she had difficulties in paying her rent by contacting Clarion to arrange payments, especially once Universal Credit came into force. Anwar made many visits to the centre regarding her benefits, and then became a general volunteer for LGL because she wanted to help and give to the community.

Clarion supported Anwar through Greenwich Community Development Association (GCDA) and she learned new skills on a food hygiene and gained a food hygiene certificate and that gave her the confidence to cook BBQ food for residents at two Fun Day events in August 2019

for residents on Leybridge and Newstead estates.

Anwar has a busy life, with three school-aged children one of whom is autistic, and a husband with PTSD, so it can be hard to find time to volunteer. However, Anwar found the advantages of volunteering, helping people in need through befriending people and sign-posting people to LGL's Advocacy and Support service, and in her community Anwar has become a well-respected person on the Leybridge estate.

Clarion's support for the community centre has enabled LGL to support Anwar. She works as cleaner at the centre, as well as cooking at events at community events. In the recent coronavirus lockdown, Anwar is a contact to keep LGL aware of any difficulties she and her neighbours are experiencing.



The road back to mental health

How LGL's Advocacy and Support service helped a young woman to get the help she needed and to care for her child

SF came to Lee Green Lives Advocacy and Support mid 2018. When she became ill at work her GP sent her to Lewisham A&E, where she was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. She was referred to Certitude Solidarity in a Crisis, a peer-delivered emotional listening support service for people going through very difficult life events and experiencing feelings of emotional or mental health crisis.

SF was referred to Lee Green Lives Advocacy & Support from Certitude and we advocated on her behalf, as her employer at the time was making it difficult for her to take time off work to go to her doctor or to hospital appointments. Lee Green Lives Advocacy & Support helped her deal with her employer, for whom

she had worked for 11 years, to leave because she was too unwell to continue to work in a Nursery.

SF needed support with her mental health, which she received from Stephanie Bennett Fraser, LGL's first Advocacy and Support worker, who also worked for Certitude. She also needed help to obtain temporary accommodation, as she found it increasingly difficult to live at her parents' house, and to claim benefits, as she had dyslexia and had never claimed benefits before.

Lee Green Lives Advocacy and Support gave SF support with applying for temporary housing and she was given a place at Family Action Supported Housing and we also helped her successfully claim Employment Support

Allowance. Whilst at Family Action SF discovered she was 4 months pregnant and on 18th April 2019 gave birth to little KF.

SF mental health deteriorated at the beginning of the pandemic and by the second lockdown she was admitted to hospital for three months when she was discharged. Professionals who

“ Amazing support. My mental health would have deteriorated if I had not had the help from Lee Green Lives Advocacy & Support. They helped me with reading important documents. Without this help I wouldn't have not known what was going on or what was said in the reports, letters and assessments. They showed kindness. ”

were working with SF decided to make a support bubble of organisations that would be in contact with her during the lockdown so that the isolation would not adversely affect her mental health. The professionals included Perinatal Psychiatry Outpatients, Health visitor, Social Worker, GP and Certitude out of hour crisis help line. SF also needed support to apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and because it was during lockdown and there were no other services to support SF to fill out the form Lee Green Lives Advocacy & Support collaborated with all the professionals involved with SF to complete the form as they had the expertise on SF's condition and could give the correct terminology, I had a lot of help in particular from Rebeca Ogunsua the Specialist Perinatal CPN.

She has now moved into better temporary housing, a Lewisham Homes flat, and has been awarded PIP which helped to alleviate some of the anxiety around finance enabling her to eat better and travel to do activities with little KF.



Literacy – the key skill

Alex Peach, LGL Reading and Writing class teacher, on how the classes have boosted the self confidence and improved the employment prospects of two attendees

KL has been coming to our reading and writing class for 2 years and has been a consistent attender despite closures due to Covid 19 restrictions. She values the class for its inclusive ethos and for helping to improve her concentration and focus when carrying out more challenging reading and writing activities. She particularly enjoys vocabulary tasks, where she is able to use a dictionary to look up meanings of words, and use them in the context of longer sentences. KL said, “I like the activities where I need to find the meanings of words I don’t know, and then write sentences with them. It means I get to know new words, so I understand them if I read them in a book.” During the class, she has been helped to access learning online, for example through the BBC

Skillswise website. She enjoyed the word games on Skillswise, and I have been able to bring similar resources to class. Her confidence has greatly improved and she feels much better about her ability in reading and writing. Pat, our class volunteer, accompanied KL to the local library and she was able to find books which she was particularly interested in. KL now has the confidence to use the library on her own and this has increased her participation in her community, particularly since lockdown when local amenities were closed. KL has recently attended a work placement organised by the Job Centre; I feel her improved self-confidence will have supported her to make this a positive experience which may lead to permanent employment.

NNN has been attending the class for three years. She works in a care setting and needs to improve her literacy skills in order to read longer texts, write reports and progress through professional qualifications. She has recently gained her Level 2 professional qualification, and had been using the class to practise answering the questions for her assessment. She said, “The class helped me to achieve my certificate. I was able to ask Alex for advice with any language problems and I could answer the questions more easily.” NN has a busy life and values the class time as a

space where she can improve her literacy skills, meet people and engage in social interaction. More recently, I have been focusing on her reading skills as a route to widening her vocabulary and improving her written language. I have found materials specific to her job and she has been making strong progress. She really needs to improve her language skills for her job, to help her children with their school work and to enjoy reading and writing in everyday life, and the resources she is able to access in the class are helping her to achieve this.



Healthy Exercise for mind and body

Participants in the Healthy Exercise class run by Jean Lee tell how it has helped them keep healthy and sane over the last year

I'm writing on behalf of my mother Margaret who currently attends the Lee Green Community Centre where she participates in Tuesday morning exercises classes.

My mother joined Lee Green Centre a few years ago after a recommendation from Mind Care who advised us about the different facilities and classes.

She has attended both Sewing and Knitting classes and really enjoys her time there learning new skills which really helps in maintaining her mind and keeping her active and fit.

She thoroughly enjoys the Exercise Classes which is very beneficial to her health and well-being and being able to socialise with others in her age group as well as developing friendship.

Lee Green Centre is a wonderful community

centre bringing different people together and is very much like a family.

The centre is very important and beneficial to all who live in this area and greatly appreciated.

Margaret Vidor

Lee Green Community Centre is within easy reach which is a help when mobility in old age is weakening.

I have been coming to the Healthy Exercise for Seniors Class for five years and it has been the most enduring class for me.

It is an important part of my week, for the opportunity to exercise, to socialise and to share companionship.

Living alone and with the stresses of lockdown motivation to exercise was lacking. It was a joy and a relief to be able to return after lockdown knowing that the needs of us older people were understood, and exercises planned to help us all.

At 81 years of age, I have a fear of falling so I value the chance to practise balancing and strengthening exercises. It makes it more fun to be doing it alongside other people. I trust the co-ordination and strengthening exercises will help me to continue to look after myself for as long as possible.

Mental and physical health cannot be overestimated.

I do hope the class will continue.

To meet friends in a similar position and to know that the class helps us in mind and body is invaluable.

Mary Fisher

I have been attending classes for over four years since retiring. I enjoy meeting a nice mixture of males and females of different ages and abilities. During classes we work with resistance bands, dumbbells, chair yoga, memory exercises, etc. These exercises help me with stabilising my weight and maintaining strength for when I really get old. All the exercises are challenging and taught by our excellent trainer with great expertise and care. Classes are fun with lots of laughter and I always leave feeling energised and happy.

Hulma Miller



Sewing the seeds of success

How Patricia Corvett learned new skills and made new friends at the LGL sewing classes run by Nikki Bailey

Patricia told us that she found out about the centre by walking along the street at Lee Green. She has been attending for seven years and her main reasons for joining the group was to have a hobby.

“Since losing my job, I have felt so isolated, especially during the week, I have made some friends. I have been able to improve my skills in sewing and learning to use different parts of the sewing machine. From attending the course I have been able to meet new people, learn how to cut on a pattern and how to create clothes.”

Nikki Bailey says that, “ Since I have been teaching at Leegate Centre Patricia has been a regular attender and contributor to the group. She will often stay after the group has finished to continue working on her projects. She has a good range of

sewing skills but enjoys the support of the group and the use of the sewing and overlocking machines as she does not have access to any of these at home. She enjoys supporting other group members, often commenting on their work and giving words of encouragement and praise.

“The sewing group provision also allows Patricia to not only make her own clothing but to make adjustments to clothing that she has bought so that they will provide a better fit for her. She has also been able to make curtains and soft furnishings for her home.

“Patricia clearly enjoys attending the Centre and has found the provision to be an important part of her weekly routine, a place where she can socialise and meet like-minded people while pursuing a hobby she enjoys.”

Publishing your own book

LGL runs classes for budding authors at the Centre

Lee Green Lives runs classes to help budding authors publish their own books. This year two members of the class, **Maureen Annette Russell** and **Beverly Clarke**, have both published books under our own imprint, Lee Green Press. They are now available to buy on Amazon.

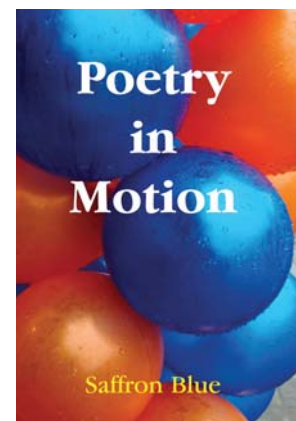
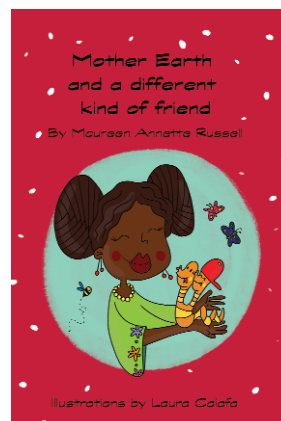
Mother Earth and a Different Kind of Friend is the third of Maureen's books for young children. The other two are *Mr and Mrs Universe and their Four Best Friends* and *The Four Elements and their Friends*, all of them beautifully illustrated by Laura Caiafa, another local resident. They all feature Mr and Mrs Universe and the Elements – Fire, Wind, Earth and Water – in interesting stories that also have a moral for young readers.

Maureen has just completed an honours degree in Health and Social Sciences and is currently volunteering for three charities. She is a grandmother to five grandchildren, which goes to show that it's never too late to be an author.

Poetry in Motion, written by Beverly under the name Saffron Blue, is an anthology of her poems. She writes about everything that interests her, from food to dating, butterflies to beauty contests, climate change to friendship, in a simple, direct and appealing way. She is already working on her next book of poems and a crime novel, but admits that "I'm no Agatha Christie." She is also hoping to start a PhD in Caribbean Literature at Goldsmiths University, to add to the BA and MA that she already has. She obviously likes to keep busy.



Maureen Annette Russell (left) and Beverly Clarke with their books in the Lee Green Community Centre. Below: their books. available on Amazon.



Lee Green Consortium – working together

Seventeen local organisations work together under Lee Green Assembly’s banner of “Our community, our say” to create a safer, healthier and better environment while providing activities and services for local people.

Founded in 2016 by Friends of Manor House Gardens, Lee Manor Society and Lee Green Lives, the Consortium has looked for ways of supporting the dozens of volunteers who give their time freely to support local activities that enable people to enjoy healthier lives while having fun, and others to overcome loneliness and isolation, or provide advice and information for people in need.

Before the COVID pandemic, the groups organised the annual Showcase event at Manor House Gardens Festival, with funding from Lee Green Assembly. The Gardens Festival, held annually, regularly attracted more than a thousand visitors, many of whom passed through the marquee.

Since then, the Consortium’s members have stayed in touch through email exchanges and the occasional remote meeting. Its work is facilitated by Lee Green Lives. It has recently expanded with the addition of Arts Network and GRACE joining in 2021.

Members of the Consortium

Friends of Manor House Gardens	Lochaber Hall Association
Lee Green Lives (LGL)	Manor House Library
Lee Manor Society	Manor Park Friends
Users and Friends of Manor House Library	Newstead Tenants and Residents Association
Friends and Users of Staplehurst Shops (FUSS)	Soul Refresh Café, Leegate
Lee Fair Share Time Bank	Leegate Traders Forum
Lee Forum	Arts Network
Lee Green Open Studios	GRACE (Greenwich Refugee Aid & Community)
Lee Green Women’s Institute	Enterprise) Charity Shop, Leegate

Our vision

Our vision is for a safer, stronger and more cohesive community with opportunities for self-development and growth accessible to all.

Our mission

We aim to offer opportunities, advice and support for local people to work, play, think and learn together, and to address economic and social disadvantage for mutual benefit, health and wellbeing.

Our goals

- To provide activities for the benefit of local people, especially the elderly, young people and people experiencing social or economic disadvantage with a focus on wellbeing, health, mental health, learning and opportunities to socialise
- To help local people to overcome difficulties with housing, health or lack of income
- To sustain a community centre at Leegate with the active participation of local volunteers
- To support the work of other local groups and organisations and to work in partnership through the Lee Green Consortium
- To contribute to the cohesion of the local community
- To advocate for the needs of local people and assist them to influence decisions that affect their lives or community

Our values

Our values are at the heart of everything we do. We aim to work in ways that are:

- Welcoming – we want everyone who comes to the centre to feel welcome and valued
- Inclusive – our activities are for everyone from the local community
- User-led – we encourage our volunteers and people using our services to help us design, develop and improve what we do
- Collaborative – wherever possible we work in partnership to improve outcomes for local people

Lee Green Lives Trustees 2020-21

Laura Cheek

Pat Coyne

Glyn Holmes (from December 2020)

Simon Hooks

Jim Mallory (Chair)

Naomi Marley (Secretary, to December 2020)

Caroline Mayow (Vice Chair)

Frances Mignuolo

Wendy Moss

Sheila Peck

James Rathbone (Treasurer)

Maureen Russell

Ralph White



Lee Green Lives: Community Centre, Unit 3 Leegate Centre, Lee Green SE12 8SS

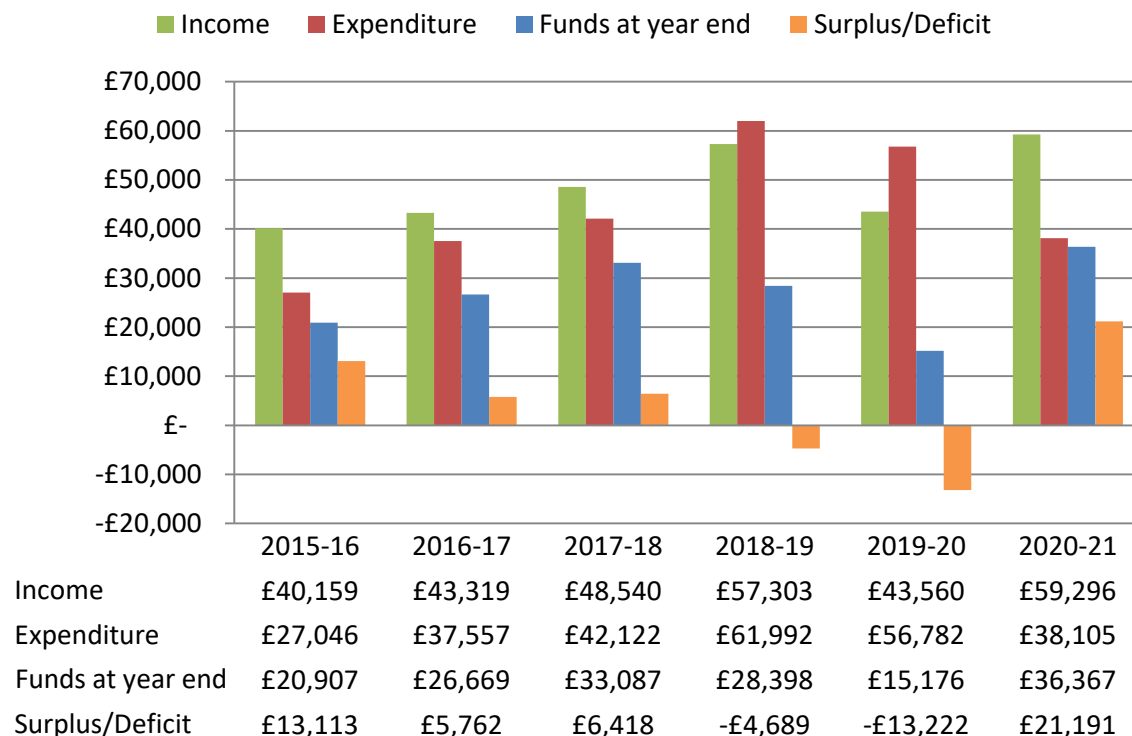
Registered Charity Number: 1141238

Landline: 020 7998 1004 *Centre Coordinator:* Shirley Kirkland info@lgl.org.uk

Email: lgrnlives01@gmail.com *website:* www.lgl.org.uk

(UNAUDITED) Lee Green Lives Financial Accounts - April 2020 to March 2021

INCOME	Unrestricted Grants	32,210
	Restricted Grants	26,399
	Donations	423
	Group Contributions	248
	Photo Copying	17
	TOTAL INCOME	£59,296
EXPENDITURE	Salary Cost	15,998
	Freelance Staff	5,211
	HMRC	3,644
	Blue Ribbon Men's Group	2,422
	Accountancy Fees and Charges	2,004
	Insurance	1,845
	Service Charge	1,281
	Lee Fair Share	986
	Telephone & Internet	972
	Pension	870
	Office & General Expenses	724
	Manor Park Friends	700
	Maintenance and Cleaning	503
	Electricity	486
	Water	212
	Hardship Fund	131
	Training	80
	Governance Costs	35
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£38,105
	NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	£21,191
	OPENING ACCOUNT BALANCE	£15,176
	ENDING ACCOUNT BALANCE	£36,367



Expenditure during the 2020-21 financial year was reduced due to two factors; staffing reductions and the Coronavirus pandemic requiring us to run a reduced activity programme. Income increased from the prior year, but a significant portion of this was not assigned to in-year expenditure. £8,460 was received from Clarion Futures for expenditure made in the prior financial year, whilst £5,000 of funding from Trust For London was held in our account for a project which we deferred to the financial year 2021-22. Adjusting for this LGL had a surplus of £7,731, including £10,835 received via the HMRC Job Retention Scheme (JRS). We received £10,264 from NCDP as the lead member of a partnership bid, with £4,861 being carried forward into the 2021-22 financial year.

Lee Green Lives has sufficient secure income and existing unrestricted & general funds to remain a going concern until at least April 2022. Beyond this point the continued viability of the charity will depend on attracting new grant funding due to a minimum reduction in Lewisham Council Main Grant funding of £15,000.