





A Message from our Chair

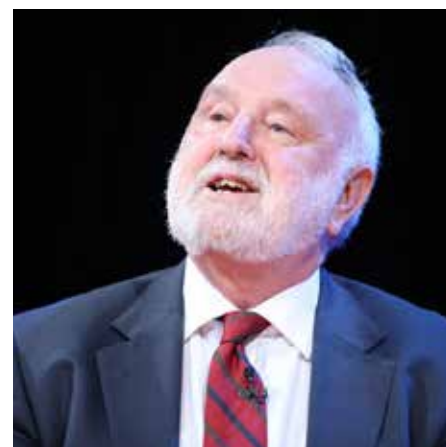
There aren't many places in Central London where children can play in safety. That's one reason why Coram's Fields is so popular with local children and their parents. It is a safe haven for children.

From the very first day it opened, Coram's Fields has been a safe haven for children. That's why it's so popular with both them and their parents. It's the place where children can get away from parents and other adults. They can join in organised activities and sports or just lark about with their friends. Sometimes as a result, equipment and the grassed areas get scuffed and knocked about. That's inevitable when boisterous girls and boys are letting off steam.

This year, we have managed to find the money to upgrade the toilets and to re-lay the basketball court, the nursery outdoor play space and the under-fives area. How and when to re-lay the grassed areas poses dilemmas, not just because of the cost, but also because it would require recovery periods when they could not be used. A major improvement programme

is being developed involving the expensive restoration of the historic buildings and to continue the decades-long updating of facilities. A draft outline of what might be done has been the subject of consultation with parents, children and the Coram's Fields User Group and is now to be worked up in more detail and costed. A balance will have to be struck. Whatever happens, neither I nor anyone else is likely to get exactly what they want.

For the Trustees and our hard-working staff, the biggest problem remains finding the funds to pay for the running of the playground and for specific services like the increasingly popular youth programme. Happily, fund-raising efforts spear-headed by our new Fundraising Manager have been increasingly successful. This includes the Oak Foundation's



commitment to a 3-year sports programme, with special effort directed at participation by young girls.

Such targeted funds are very welcome but to meet the general costs of running Coram's Fields and maintaining its buildings and equipment, we remain very dependent on the income from pitch lettings to adults, from the Christmas Marquee and from the long lease of the Wolfson Centre which was purpose-built for the Institute of Child Health.

We welcome the views of children and parents on what our service provision should be. We also welcome any help with our task of raising the funds necessary to keep providing a safe place for children and the services they use.

Frank Dobson
Chair

Park and Playground



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- 01 Entrance to the Tim Seward Wildlife Garden, reopened in April 2018
- 02 NBC Universal volunteers replenish play bark in the adventure playground and Under 5s play area
- 03 Children from our OSC get up close and personal with our new resident chickens
- 04 Children from local primary schools take part in our Annual Country Barn Dance
- 05 Children play on our newly refurbished basketball courts
- 06 Child from our OSC hunting for minibeasts in the wildlife garden



Coram's Fields outdoor space remains its greatest asset and as we moved towards the end of the year, we were delighted to be able to reopen a corner of the park that had stood dormant for many years. The 'Tim Seward Wildlife Garden' reopened to the public in April 2018 after a long awaited redevelopment by the London Wildlife Trust.

The space offers children and families a slice of the countryside in the heart of city and has already seen hundreds of children get involved in a range of activities from; bug hunting to pond dipping, gardening to beekeeping.

No sooner had we put down our gardening tools, we began work on a programme of major site improvements. The redevelopment of our basketball courts, ensured that we continued to provide some of the best sports facilities for young people in London. A much needed face lift for our adventure play areas, was followed closely by the resurfacing and redesign of our nursery outdoor area, bringing a new lease of life to a previously dilapidated space. Arguably though it was the upgrading of our park toilets in June 2018 that proved the most transformational, as we exchanged the old 1950s décor for an altogether more modern look and feel!

During the year, we continued to play host to a packed calendar of events. Our young women's sports day once again inspired girls from across Camden, Islington and Westminster to get active and try their hand at a host of different sports. Meanwhile, others put their dance moves to the test, as hundreds of primary school children descended on the fields under the early summer sun, for our annual country barn dance. The return of the Camden Mela provided the perfect excuse for local families to come together and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the local area, whilst our annual fireworks display saw thousands of families enjoy what is now the only remaining free public firework display in Central London.

Our continued efforts to make improvements to the park and playground were greatly assisted by a host of volunteer support and we were grateful to teams from Hogan Lovells, NBC Universal International, SKANSKA and LexisNexis who between them donated over 900 hours of support through the year.



Youth Programme

It's been a transformational year for our youth programme, with attendance more than double that of the previous year. An increasingly targeted approach has ensured that support through the programme continues to reach those most in need whilst the completion of our Theory of Change model, registration as an AQA accreditation centre and our Jack Petchey Silver award status have been testament to the quality of work being delivered. Recognition for young people came in the form of our first ever London Youth Award, as six of our young people received the prestigious 'Social Action Award' for their delivery of a youth homelessness project, followed by confirmation in March 2018 of a Camden Youth Award for staff, in recognition of our work with local gang members as part of Project 10/10.



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Case Study

Since joining our youth programme in June 2017, Saba, age 16 has seized every opportunity available to her, including taking part in our law mentorship programme in partnership with Edwin Coe LLP and completing a British Film Institute (BFI) documentary residential. Arguably, her greatest achievement though came on the back of her visit to the TEDxTeen programme of talks, a visit that left her feeling so inspired that she successfully applied to speak at an upcoming TEDxCamden event where she was able to share the beginning of her life story as an unapologetic: young, British, Muslim, female activist. Saba remains an integral part of our youth programme and is one of a number of young people training as a young leader and aspiring to go to Zambia in 2019 as part of our volunteer leaders programme.



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01 Young people from our youth programme on a trip to the London Dungeon

02 Young people from our youth programme rock climbing

03 Young people taking part in a London Youth football tournament

Sports Programme

What a year it's been for the sports programme! With funding from the Oak Foundation confirmed for the next three years, we were able to get moving with our ambitious plans to increase the reach and impact of the service through an increasingly targeted programme of support for young females and those at risk. The appointment of a new Sports Development

Officer - Edel Maher, in January 2018, has seen us deliver more sport for young women than ever before. The culmination of another successful youth football league and delivery of a new programme of tournaments in conjunction with London Youth gave over 500 young people the opportunity to play competitive football.



Case Study

Sherin, age 12, has attended our sports programme for over 5 years and has always had a keen interest in football, often citing that her time at Coram's Fields provided some much need respite from other things that were going on in her life. After joining our Arsenal Kickz programme, Sherin soon found herself being scouted for her talents and in no time at all, had been asked to join the Arsenal Ladies Football Development Academy. Over the last year, the sports team have provided vital support to Sherin during this exciting period and are incredibly proud of her achievements.



Out of School Club

It's been a terrific year for our out of school club (OSC). Since the launch of our wildlife garden, the OSC's weekly nature club has seen young people take full advantage of the space, getting involved in a range of activities from bug hunting to pond dipping. New partnerships with Goodenough College and the Postal Museum have opened up a wealth of new opportunities, the former providing a chance for young people to put their song writing and performance skills to the test through regular sessions with volunteers. Following their performance at last years' AGM, the Kids Council continued to play a vital role in informing the work of the service and formed part of a recent consultation regarding the proposed development plans for the park.



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Case Study

Amaan, aged 9 has attended the OSC since he was 5 years old. When he first joined, he heavily relied on one to one support from a playworker. The OSC worked closely with his family to help Amaan overcome certain barriers and enhance his ability to build relationships with others. The past year has seen Amaan flourish into a confident young individual, he is constantly surrounded by a circle of friends and now has a positive relationship with all members of the OSC team.

- 01 Children from our OSC bubble painting
- 02 Children from our nursery get creative as part of an arts activity session
- 03 Children enjoying the soft play provision in the under 5s drop in



Children were inspired through a weekly art project in partnership with the Foundling Museum



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Nursery

Our nursery received a major face lift this year as support from the London Taxi Driver's Fund for Underprivileged Children led to the transformation of the outdoor play space, with a new surface and a range of new play equipment supporting children's physical and cognitive development. Whilst all that was going on, our talented team of practitioners continued to work tirelessly to make sure that the 36 children that attend the nursery received the very best start in life – children were inspired through a weekly art project in partnership with the Foundling Museum and had an early lesson in democracy as the UK went to the polls for the local elections.



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Under 5s Drop In

Our under 5s drop in continued to deliver support to hundreds of families, offering a diverse range of activities from; tummy time to music and messy play! We've been delighted to see an increasing number of dads coming to the service who are traditionally under represented. In addition, increasing collaborative work between the nursery and the drop in has led to the creation of a number of new and exciting opportunities for those that attend, including a new gardening project led by our in house gardening expert Suzanne.

Future Plans

Inevitably, continuing our work in diversifying our unrestricted income streams will be the greatest focus over the coming months and years, as we look to build the future resilience of the Charity. Alongside this, with funding for the majority of services secured for the next year at least, we will continue to build new funding relationships and retain existing support, as we work towards our aim of having all services fully funded for a minimum of two years into the future.

The successful expansion of our corporate partnerships, the introduction of a new major gifts programme and the development of our community fundraising programme will we hope, provide a stable platform, from which we will be able to safeguard against future funding challenges, whilst also enabling us to invest at the right level in the upkeep of the park.

From a service perspective, there is much excitement about what can be achieved over the next twelve months. Following on from what proved to be a hugely successful year, the expansion of both our sports and youth programmes will see us deliver greater impact for more young people through a growing and varied programme of support.

Our two early years' services and out of school club will continue their work in providing young people with access to some of the highest quality childcare in London. Collaborative work, both internally and externally, across all of our services, will ensure that we are able to take advantage of partnership opportunities, bringing increased benefit to the young people that we support.

As we head into the summer, the recent upgrade works across the site will see our users to benefit from some greatly improved facilities. We will continue to work on our maintenance systems and processes over the coming year, to ensure that these investments are well looked after long into the future.

Having secured financial support from the Oak Foundation for the creation of new architectural plans for the site and following initial consultations with users, we are looking forward to sitting down with architects to begin the process of bringing these plans to life.

Despite the obvious challenges, 2018/19 promises to be an exciting year for the Charity as we seek to build on the success and impact of our work to date.

Thanks to all those that have continued to commit great time and effort over the last year and for your continued support over the year ahead.

The expansion of both our sports and youth programmes will see us deliver greater impact for more young people through a growing and varied programme of support

Stuart Woods
Chief Executive Officer

With Thanks to:





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