

COVENT GARDEN COMMUNITY CENTRE
(COVENT GARDEN SOCIAL & CRAFT CENTRE ASSOCIATION)

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 276616

CGCC
ANNUAL
REPORT

April 2023 to March 2024



CGCC

Room hire is available in the building - the space is hired out at commercial rates & also free or at discounted rates for residents and other local organisations.

All income generated from room hire is used for the upkeep and overheads of the building and any surplus goes into the delivery of activities and services for the community.

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CONSTITUTION

The charity is governed by its original constitution dated 4 December 1977. Its premises were located on the ground floor of a large building in Earlham Street. The whole building was gutted by fire in 1999 and the charity ceased to function pending the refurbishment of the building.

The charity was re-activated in 2008 and established a subsidiary company, The Seven Dials Club Limited, to be incorporated on 11 May 2009 as the trading arm solely to enhance the capacity of the charity to benefit the amenity of local residents. CGSCCA is the sole shareholder of the limited company.

Registration number: 276616

42 Earlham Street
London
WC2H 9LA

ABOUT US

COVENT GARDEN COMMUNITY CENTRE

CGCC WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COVENT GARDEN DRAGON HALL TRUST, THE PHOENIX GARDEN AND OTHER LOCAL ORGANISATIONS TO DELIVER SERVICES & ACTIVITIES FOR THOSE OVER 55, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHER COMMUNITIES.

TRUSTEES



SUE VINCENT

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



LAURANCE LYNCH

TRUSTEE



KATHY PIMLOTT

TRUSTEE

OBJECTIVES

To promote the benefit of the inhabitants of central London, including Covent Garden, St Giles, Bloomsbury, the area bounded by the Strand, Kingsway, Aldwych, Great Russell Street and Charing Cross Road without distinction of sex, political, religious or other opinions, by associating with the local authorities, voluntary organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupations with the object of improving the condition of life for the said inhabitants.

To maintain and manage, or to cooperate with any local authority and the Covent Garden Community Association in the maintenance and management of the Community Centre for activities promoted by the Association and its constituent bodies in furtherance of the above objects.



FRIDAY LUNCH CLUB

ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

2023 TO 2024

TRUSTEE REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 2023 - 2024

With a refreshed and refurbished community centre starting this financial year, the investment in our spaces paid dividends with an increase in commercial room hire, amply covering the grants we had received for Covid related support and expenditures. Our income this year also saw a rise in food and beverage sales, which we hope to continue this coming year with increased hire.

The CGCC refurbishment costs increased our expenditure, along with our direct costs including insurance cover both significantly rose as a result of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. With energy rates finally stabilising and careful management of both commercial and community activities, we have a positive outcome with our general funds and reserves at £196,500. This is a healthy balance for future investment and to cover worst case scenario reserves.

Whilst we have not seen corporate day time bookings return to pre-pandemic levels, we have witnessed an increase in confidence as more organisations and people are wanting to meet, support, socialise and learn together. We are grateful for the strengthened relationships with regular organisations including The Institute of Narrative Therapy, the London Film School, DCMS, Just Add Water and the Chinese Church. We have also welcomed new clients McDonald's Global and UK Youth.

Since November 2022 we have reserved the exclusive use of a Community Room with WiFi and audio-visual facilities to provide a permanent home for community activities, 5 days per week including Tai Chi, digital creative classes, 1:1 digital support, jewellery classes, quiz, bridge and whist afternoons, aromatherapy courses and other events inspired by our local community.

The Friday Lunch Club has 200 attendees per month with a waiting list, which we hope to increase capacity in the coming year. This popular



event is funded by Shaftesbury plc and we are grateful for their steadfast support providing this much needed space for people to engage and enjoy, thanks also to Chef Karol for providing a fantastic range of great lunches each week.

Two Christmas lunches were provided this year serving 158 guests per lunch, with the Mayor of Camden in attendance with our over 55s. Again, our thanks go to Shaftesbury PLC for providing enthusiastic volunteers to serve the lunches and to Richard Wilson who is a fantastic volunteer for our community.

The Food Pantry reopened in January as a result of the Cost-of-Living Crisis looking after a number of households in the area. We expect to see greater demand in the new financial year and we are planning ahead to provide fresh ready meals prepared by our creative Chef Karol. This support goes alongside our new Advice Service in partnership with Mary Ward Legal with funding from LB Camden, offering 1:1 support on managing financially, as part of the Camden Advice Network. These services are administered by the very able Natalie Moor, and we also welcomed a new centre assistant, Louis Monahan to the team. Our grateful thanks to Phil Walls for his exceptional and outstanding work looking after the community and corporate users of our Centre.

SUE VINCENT

**FOOD SERVICE
CONTINUED PLUS
A NEW ADVICE
SERVICE WITH
PARTNERS MARY
WARD LEGAL**

FOOD PANTRY & ADVICE SERVICE

Covent Garden Community Centre continued to deliver food and hygiene support to residents who were finding things difficult - either because of the cost of living crisis, delays in benefit claims or ill health. In addition we have continued our Advice Service - this is in partnership with Mary Ward Legal.

Between April 2023 and March 2024 we accepted and engaged with 94 referrals for advice from Camden Council via the advice referral network. Of those 94, we saw 57 in person. 25% of the in-person appointments were for Covent Garden Pantry users who we signposted to the advice service.

It's common for users to either forget, cancel or not attend an appointment and this can lead to gaps in the appointment schedule. However, we understand that the people we are supporting often find even reaching out for help to be a stressful situation and we endeavour to support them, whatever stage of their advice journey they might be at. Our tone is always, as with the Covent Garden Pantry, one of understanding and kindness.

Generally we're noticing that the advice sessions are for debt related issues caused by the cost of living crisis and housing advice.

The Covent Garden Pantry remains busy and whilst our primary role is food provision we find that we have also become a support mechanism in other ways. Clients come to ask us advice about all sorts of things aside from what they might eat that week. Recent examples are how to charge a new ipad (client bought in ipad and leads and was very relieved when we could help to show where the lead connected!); discussing health problems is very common and also feelings of social isolation.

Between April 2023 and March 2024 we saw 905 individual users at the Pantry and this equates to approx 3620kg of food distributed. To make these figures more accurate, if we take an average week of 16 regular Pantry users and their family units (of which we are very familiar) that 16 becomes 40 actual family members being helped. When we multiply this number by the 905 attendances we realise that in reality over 3,600 meals, cups of tea or breakfasts are being provided.



A food bank ran from the CGCC during lockdown and the decision was taken to reinstate this community support in response to the current cost of living crisis. In addition to food provision we have also included hygiene and cleaning products which are often the first items that are cut back on in the family shopping.

In partnership with Dragon Hall Trust and based in CGCC the Covent Garden Pantry has been building relationships and meeting the needs of the local community since it re-opened on **Friday 10th February 2023**.

"I really appreciate the help from the pantry, it really makes a difference financially in these hard times as well as the warm welcome with a big smile from Natalie, it's nothing like the typical food bank. Personally I am looking forward to come here every week." **Pantry User**

The Pantry at present supports families and individuals with parcels being distributed each Friday. Clients are asked to fill in a referral form each week in order to receive a parcel of essential food and hygiene/cleaning products. Appointment slots are made and preferences for food stuffs can be requested, with no solid guarantees given as we rely on donations for our food parcels. In addition we also offer free one-to-one advice sessions on finances, debt, housing and benefits.

In terms of donations we are already seeing new emails from organisations in the local area who supported us with their 2023 Christmas Food Drives, asking if they can help us again this year. In November and December 2023 we accepted winter donations from around 40 different companies in Covent Garden and the local area. Where possible we invite those organisations to visit the Pantry and we talk about our work with the local community. We often have offers of volunteer time; funding and regular food donations and we look after these relationships carefully to ensure the sustainability of the Pantry.

Just recently a pantry and advice service user let us know that her circumstances had taken a turn for the better and she is now hoping to become a regular at lunch club instead of Pantry.

This user, we will call her Pantry 1, has been coming to us for a food parcel every week for the past year. She has an unusual circumstance for us, in that she had no cooking facilities or a kettle. There was no way for her to heat up food or cook, and no way to even add hot water to a packet of noodles or a cup a soup.

Pantry 1 is not an internet or phone user and prefers to stay under the radar of conventional communication. Therefore we had to agree a specific time that she would come each week as there was no way to contact her in between. In addition it was a challenge to find useful food items for her that needed no cooking or hot water. We gave things such as cooked tinned potatoes; tuna; mayonnaise; cooked veggies; cleaning items; toiletries; packets of cooked lentils or grains; cereal and milk.

Pantry 1 also told us that she was diabetic meaning we had to carefully monitor sugar content in food items. Pantry 1 often talked about her past and how she had felt threatened at times in her own home. We signposted her to the Mary Ward Advice sessions and also chatted to her each week to check in and make sure all was well.



Pantry 1 told me in October that she had been very happy to find us. She felt that she was slipping through a sort of post code abyss. The Euston food bank is too far for her to walk, but Islington would not accept her even though she felt they were her nearest place for provision. She said that if she hadn't found the Covent Garden Pantry she wasn't sure how she would have coped.

"You've helped me through a very difficult patch in the past few months and have been kind and non-judgemental, for which I'm very grateful. Please pass on thanks to your generous donors and the trustees of the charity".

Pantry User 1

OVER 55s PROJECT



Our extremely popular Friday Lunch Club at CGCC continued for another year providing a 2 course lunch for 60 older people per session. Other activities took place in the dedicated Community Room and included Tai Chi, Chair Exercise, Digital Sessions, Jewellery Classes & Bridge, Whist and Dominos among many others.

Loneliness remains a significant issue for many older people. Our community programs, designed to bring together individuals with shared interests and hobbies, offer a valuable solution. By fostering connections over a cup of tea or coffee, we help members reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness while also providing opportunities to meet old friends and make new ones.

Through our collaborative efforts with various partners, we have successfully organised a diverse range of community programs that have facilitated meaningful connections and strengthened our sense of community.

Collaboration is a cornerstone of our work, and partnerships are essential for building stronger and more vibrant communities. By working together with other organisations, CGCC can leverage our collective resources, expertise, and networks to achieve a more substantial impact toward our shared goals.

These partnerships shape the work that we do, offering new opportunities for joint efforts, and expanding our reach. By working closely with other organisations, we can access new resources, gain valuable insights, and learn from best practices. This enables us to enhance our own programmes and services, ultimately improving the lives of the people we serve.

OVER 55s PROJECT

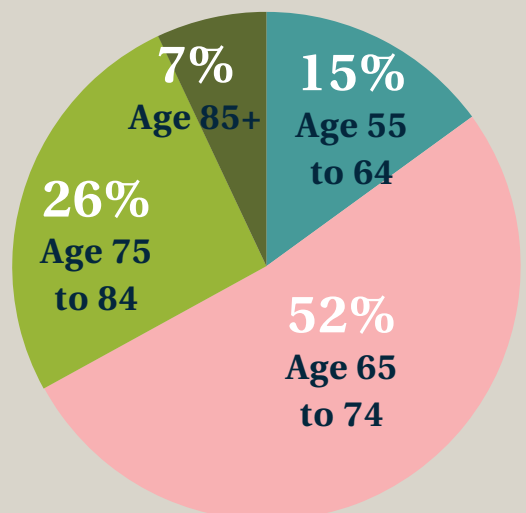
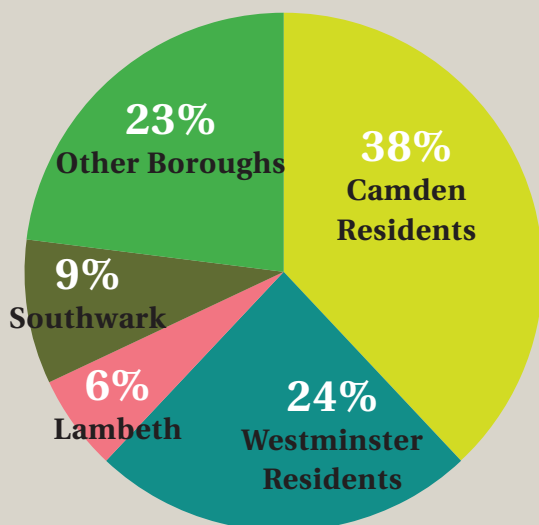
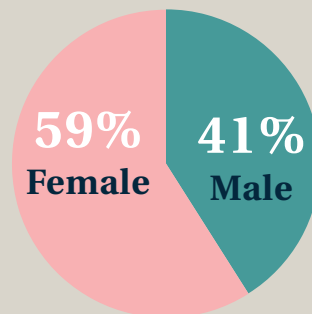
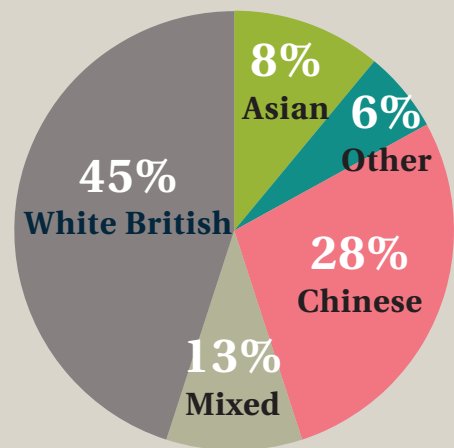
Over 55s Project Statistics

delivered in partnership with Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust.

385 Members

584 Activities

5671 Attendances





Room Hire

The space is hired out to generate much needed income to deliver our activities and events for the community

Shelton Room

A south-facing room with lots of light

Capacity: 60 cabaret style
80 theatre style

Dimensions: 8m x 9m

Available to hire: 50" TV screens, stage, full PA

Shelton & Bar

Larger space for parties, conferences, live shows & celebrations

A moving wall separates the two spaces creating a much larger space.

Capacity: 80 cabaret style
170 theatre style
180 parties (non-seated)

Community Room



The Community Room is reserved for activities, events and projects set up for and by local residents including other local organisations. Activities include talks, Whist & Bridge, yoga, quiz afternoons, jewellery making, digital support, advice service one-to-ones and many others!

Our Over 55s Project, a partnership between CGCC and Dragon Hall Trust, is based here. The Community Room is also offered to local residents groups and other charity organisations at a low cost to support their regular meetings and other activities.



If you are Over 55 and would like to become a member of our Over 55s Project please email manager@cgcc.org.uk

Local organisations can book the space for meetings, training sessions, gatherings or discussions. Booking is essential.

If you would like to use the space for your community activity please email

bookings@cgcc.org.uk

**COVENT GARDEN SOCIAL AND
CRAFTS CENTRE ASSOCIATION**

known as

**COVENT GARDEN
COMMUNITY CENTRE**

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