



103a Wornington Road • London W10 5YB • Tel: 020 8960 3234 • Fax: 020 8960 5118  
Email: [info@venturecentre.org.uk](mailto:info@venturecentre.org.uk) • Website: [www.venturecentre.org.uk](http://www.venturecentre.org.uk)

## Chair's report 2020

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Annual Report and Accounts. For 60 years the Venture Community Association has provided a welcoming and valued service to our community and it has been our pleasure to continue to do this.

This year we have continued to fill the building, inside and outside, with the sounds of people chatting, singing, dancing, exercising and playing. We have also filled it with the smell of great food being cooked and the sight of people of all ages and backgrounds meeting each other as friends and neighbours. We have been a community centre and a playground full of community and play.

The year got off to a great start, with our first ever Iftar gathering and Eid celebrations. Both events were hosted in partnership with the Friends of Morocco Association and over 200 people came to each event. Coming together around food is such an important part of being a community and I am very pleased that we have continued to provide a weekly lunch as part of our Community Champions programme, working in partnership with WAND. This healthy cooked lunch, which always fills the building with heavenly aromas, is provided for just £1.50, making it accessible and affordable for everyone.

As well as the weekly community lunch, we have continued to provide a food bank every Wednesday and every other Saturday. Through the London Food Alliance, we are able to distribute excess food from the retail and catering industry – providing much needed help to individuals and families and avoiding food waste at the same time.

During the long hot summer, we put on a number of events, including our ever popular coach trip, this year going to Margate. We also took some of our younger community to Kent, this time to Ashford and the Grosvenor Hall activity centre for a week long residential. You can't help but be impressed by the courage of these young people, away from home for the first time and made to clamber blindfolded over assault courses and disco dance in a swimming pool. All that after staying awake and chatting into the small hours. Parents received some very tired children at the end of that week!

Back at the Venture Centre the six weeks of summer programme were packed with activities and trips. With two meals provided and an optional breakfast club, we were determined that no child should go hungry during the school holidays. We also arranged special food banks, where the young people were able to choose what food they would like to take home. The summer holidays can sometimes show very starkly the different lives of families who live in this part of London. However, it is our mission to make sure that a child who comes to us in the holidays will have as many stories to tell when they go back to school as any child in Kensington and Chelsea.

The Director, William Roberts, continues to provide day to day leadership as well as strategic direction and change. Since his arrival in February 2019, the organisation has undergone a significant transformation. There has been a review of costs and income and a new fundraising strategy has been put in place, initially focussing on trusts and foundations. He has brought in a new staffing structure that has both reduced our overheads and shifted the focus onto community development and making sure we do more to support our local residents.

This new structure has given us the opportunity, to build a new community team. It had become clear from what local people were telling us, that there is a lot more we could do to help, support, inform and welcome the widest possible cross section of our community. Over the coming months and years, we will do more to join up the various activities that take place here, and actively put on more, find more people to participate and do all we can to show very clearly that all are welcome.

We also want to find as many ways as possible to include people in activities they have not felt able to take part in. We hosted, in partnership with Age UK, a 'pre-Carnival' Carnival on Portobello Green. All the fun, all the music, all the food, some of the costumes but none of the crowds. We also brought neighbours together to share a couscous and turkey Christmas lunch, in partnership with Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre and we welcomed Manifest who ran a series of movement workshops for gay and lesbian, non-binary and trans young people.

We continue to be incredibly grateful to all our funders, particularly the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, our core funder. Our grateful thanks also goes to Catalyst Housing, The Grove Trust, Kusuma Trust UK, The Brown Foundation, John Lyon's Trust, St Thomas School Foundation, Madame Pigg, Westway Development Trust and the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation for their generous support.

We are also grateful to our partners who help to fill the building with activity seven days a week – whether that's singing, dancing, sewing or learning, there is always something happening.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for providing stable and capable governance and the staff team for working hard and showing tremendous commitment to our community and above all else, our volunteers who have so freely given of their precious time.

Although this report is looking at the year that ended in March 2020, history will remind us of the significance of that date, as that was the moment that everything changed and we entered the Covid-19 pandemic. Next year's report will highlight all that we did during that period but I want to pay tribute to all in our community who stepped up and helped out during a very difficult time. Although our building was closed, we turned it into a huge food warehouse and distributed food across the borough, we held our food banks outside and we transferred our playground to a local school and put our activities on-line. It is at times like this, and we have had far too many in recent times, that we really know the value of coming together as a community.

I also want to pay tribute to our friend, long time Board member, former treasurer and tremendous supporter of the Venture Centre, John 'Ziggy' Parkes, who sadly died in October 2020. We are so very grateful for all he did and we will miss him enormously.

This has been our 60th year at the heart of the community and I want to thank all of you who have visited us, played with us, supported us and funded us over the last 6 decades. As a community association we are nothing without our community and to you we owe the greatest thanks.

Best wishes

Gillian Kleinert  
Chair of the Board of Trustees