

Company Number: 04657449
Registered Charity number 1099403



TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee.

Annual Report
Year ended 31 March 2021

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(a company limited by guarantee)

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Trustees:

Gemma Roye (Chair, from 1 February 2020)
Elizabeth Marshall (resigned 30 September 2020)
Anne Worlledge (Treasurer to 30 September 2020)
Anthony Hardie
Amanda Goh
Kirsty Sanders
Carl Steventon (appointed 11 June 2020)
Christopher Bingham (appointed 11 June 2020)
Stephen Robarts (appointed 11 June 2020, Treasurer from 30 September 2020)
Pam Kaur Gibbons (appointed 23 March 2021)

Registered and principal office

St Margaret's House, 21 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PL
Telephone 020 8983 7979 Email admin@thfn.org.uk Website www.thfn.org.uk

Staff

Chief Executive and Company Secretary:	Rajesh Kalhan
Operations Manager:	Bridget Akinbolaji
Client Services Administrator	Clara Djondo
Befriending Advocates:	Rose Curran, Shirajul Islam, Brenda Lawrence, and Habiba Kamaly (from February 2021)

Bankers

HSBC Bank plc, 75 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DU

Independent Examiner

Gavin Purvis (FCCA), Purvis Stevens LLP, Chartered Certified Accountants, Hayles Bridge Offices, 228
Mulgrave Road, Cheam, Surrey SM2 6JT

Solicitors

Russell-Cooke, Solicitors, 2 Putney Hill, Putney, London SW15 6A

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DIRECTORS' AND TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Report of the Chair

On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our colleagues and volunteers throughout the organisation. They have responded to the constant challenges the pandemic has produced and kept true to the mission and values that underpin everything that is Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours. Despite the obvious challenges we have been incredibly fortunate in being able to deliver a service to the elderly community in Tower Hamlets throughout the pandemic.

Our clients are among the most vulnerable, many with multiple health issues. To allow us to continue to maintain the valuable contact and support we provide, we adapted our service and moved to regular telephone contact with our clients. Thankfully we already had a tele-befriending service with the necessary training and operational protocols in place. Very quickly we were able to roll this out to all the clients and were able to recruit extra volunteers to support the service. This proved to be successful – in addition to providing our normal befriending service we kept our clients informed about the virus and the need to protect themselves and were able to provide practical support in arranging for food deliveries and the delivery of medications. As soon as it is safe to do so we will return to face-to-face contact, supplemented with a telephone-based service for those clients who find this support more helpful.

Despite what was and continues to be a challenging operating environment we have managed to maintain momentum on many of our key projects and aspects of our service delivery. In many respects it has been a positive year for Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours. In February 2021 we welcomed a new member of staff to our team who has led on the Bangladeshi adults' programme allowing us to reach and engage with even more isolated adults in Tower Hamlets. With the support of our funders, and some new funders, we were able to continue to be fully staffed throughout the year. Without their generous support we would not have been able to provide the level of service we did.

It is always very sad when we lose clients but this year in particular our thoughts are with all the people we support, our colleagues and volunteers who have lost loved ones or have suffered from the virus themselves. It is important that we take the time to remember them and reflect on the difficulties faced by our community in what has been a very difficult and stressful time.

In conclusion, I would personally like to thank the THFN staff who have continued to do all that they can to support our clients during what has also been a trying period for themselves and their families. Thank you to the volunteers who continue to be committed to THFN clients during this crisis and thank you to the trustees who have worked to ensure that THFN continues to provide such a valuable service to those who need it the most. The following pages in the annual report will provide a more detailed account of our activities and plans.

Gemma Roye


Chair

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The trustees present the annual report together with the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2021. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) - (effective 1 January 2015) as amended by Update Bulletin 1 (effective 1 January 2015).

Since the company qualifies as small under section 383 of the Companies Act 2006, the strategic report required of medium and large companies (Strategic Report and Director's Report Regulations 2013) is not required.

Why we are here and what we do

The objects of Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours (THFN) are the relief of poverty, hardship and distress, among those residents within the boundaries of the former Borough of Stepney and more generally within Greater London, by the provision of such support (in particular to the elderly, isolated and vulnerable) as the trustees shall from time to time consider appropriate. Our charitable aims are:

- to enhance the quality of life of older people and decrease social isolation.
- to promote wellbeing and increase independence through emotional support and through access to services, benefits, etc.
- to provide relevant and stimulating activities and increase social rehabilitation.

THFN provides a lifeline for vulnerable, isolated, older people, the majority of whom are housebound, and have at least one chronic, medical, and mental health issue. Each client receives free befriending, advocacy and support designed to meet their individual needs, to enable them to overcome the barriers of loneliness, disadvantage, medical, cultural or issues around their own 'confidence'.

Being lonely is very bad for both physical and mental health and wellbeing. Loneliness increases blood pressure and diminishes the ability to refrain from risky behaviour. It can lead to cognitive decline in adults and is associated with depression. Such is the effect of social relationships on the risk of death it can be compared to that of smoking and exceeds the effects of obesity. In Tower Hamlets, a higher proportion of older people live alone, are on a low income, report poor health, and are of non-white ethnicity than in England; Based on national estimates, approximately 10% of the over 65 population are likely to be lonely 'all or most of the time' referred to as 'chronic' loneliness. Yet, rates of chronic loneliness were found to be higher at 16% in deprived inner-city boroughs. Given the characteristics of the Tower Hamlets population, the proportion of older residents who are chronically lonely is likely to reflect the higher rate of 16% but excludes those who are lonely some of the time so in essence is likely to be an underestimate.

We also know that the proactive interventions at a person-centred level that we undertake will help alleviate this.

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Through our service, we ensure that our older people in LB Tower Hamlets are not alone, can go out if they can and meet other people but also have access to, and benefit from, health care and support as and when they need it.

Case study – V was admitted to hospital with Covid-19 in March 2020 and following her hospital discharge she was referred to THFN in July 2020. She has since developed long covid and has breathing difficulties and low energy. It has also affected her mobility and ability to be active in her day-to-day life, limiting her social interaction and she became housebound. V used to work with special needs children using sign language and had only recently retired and missed work very much. Having contracted Covid 19, she was unable to enjoy her retirement. Although she lives with her son, she was still isolated and living in a high-rise block which brought about its own problems during this time as her mobility and breathing problems continued.

THFN allocated her a Befriender to call her several times a week. You could hear on the other side of the telephone, that she was having problems with her breathing, so initially, calls were kept short. She used to enjoy painting, and this triggered conversations with her about art which distracted her from her health issues.

After a few months, she felt comfortable enough to discuss some of her family problems that were causing her anxiety. Since having the virus, she had lost her taste and was not really enjoying her food, which was a concern to her family, as was her fear of going out which they could not understand. With encouragement from her Befriender, she slowly rebuilt her confidence and began visiting her local convenience store. Although this was not easy for her, she developed the confidence and determination to do this with support from her Befriender. Her Befriender developed a plan for her to go for a walk to her local park, ensuring she rested when she needed to.

V has been grateful to talk to somebody outside of the family and is now making steady progress to improve her mobility; she enjoys the conversation and looks forward to the call from her THFN Befriender.

'I feel comfortable talking to you-we have a bond.'

Last Year

This past year has been one of the most difficult and challenging THFN has encountered due to Covid-19. Fortunately, we were as prepared as we could be having already started a new tele befriending service in 2019, so had tele befriending protocols already in place. We retrained all our befrienders and volunteers which meant we were able to hit the ground running and start a new distance befriending service immediately after the lockdown was announced. Our offices were shut, and all staff asked to work from home.

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As everyone else found at that time, it was unclear what lay ahead. We quickly undertook reassuring clients and identified what they needed most from us. Initially we found the need to reassure clients as there was a lot of concern around the virus, and much confusion over what people could and could not do. Our calls helped reduce anxiety as many people had no other social contact with anybody other than their carer. Our calls sought to provide a friendly and reassuring voice at the end of the telephone which helped to reduce their stress and anxiety.

There was also much concern around groceries and prescriptions, so our befrienders found the need to undertake more advocacy than usual ensuring Carer's were visiting as expected, clients had enough food, and their utilities were in order. THFN work with some of the most vulnerable older people in the borough, and most of our clients identified as either "extremely clinically vulnerable" or "clinically vulnerable". We needed to ensure that people understood the need to follow public health guidelines around shielding, washing hands, going out, and what to do if unwell etc.



At a time when we had the option of furloughing our staff, we decided this was the time our clients needed us most so decided against following that path. We spent much of our time identifying new funding partners to enable us to deliver the essential services our clients required, and are very grateful to MIND, Independent Age and all the charitable funders who have provided financial support during last year.

It was clear from the outset that to meet the needs of our clients, working with other organisations was essential. We were not able to distribute food and groceries, so we worked with local foodbanks, who could have the resources to do this. We did not have the resources to collect and deliver prescriptions, so worked with the pharmacies and community and volunteer groups to partner with us to do this. We advertised widely on social media for any elderly resident needing a call or support and began taking on new clients. We developed a partnership with a global

law firm, Shearman & Sterling whose many staff offered themselves to volunteer for us as tele befrienders.

Our clients are elderly and most of them are not digitally enabled, so most of our clients received regular calls. We were, however, able to arrange coffee mornings, and a regular music club where clients sang and listened to Bangladeshi folk songs from years gone by.

Thank you also to the volunteers who came forward for tele- befriending training with us and have helped us to support our clients. Thank you also to the staff who have worked throughout this crisis, doing everything that they could to support our clients.

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Case study – Mrs B was referred to THFN by her GP Surgery at the beginning of the lockdown. She had lost her husband in April 2020 due to dementia and Covid 19, and the lockdown had made her very anxious, emotional, lonely and isolated. Mrs B lived alone, had stepchildren, with most of her family members living abroad.

Along with the isolation and loneliness, Mrs B was struggling to deal with the loss of her husband and felt guilty she could not visit him when he was in hospital. She was very emotional, lost motivation to do anything and had started to accumulate a lot of papers, magazines, letters in her home which were causing her stress. Mrs B used to participate in a weekly exercise class, at her local community centre, however, after losing her husband, and not being able to go to her classes she began experiencing low moods, and anxiety.

THFN allocated Mrs B a Befriender, and when she was first called, she was very emotional, unable to talk and just cried, as she was missing her husband and did not have anyone she could talk to. Her THFN befriender called her a few times a week and as time went by, she began to chat with her Befriender more and more, as the relationship between the two developed and common areas of interest were identified which they could speak about. Mrs B also joined a regular group with other THFN clients and was able to share her experiences which helped her. She now feels more reassured and looks forward to speaking to her Befriender.

'Speaking to my befriender calms me down, she knows how to calm me down when I get too emotional'.

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Who did we support last year?

Designing services that meet the complex needs of older patients, and that reflect and support the many communities we serve is challenging. But, trying to navigate through the services as an older person, with no one to turn to, is very difficult. For the clients we see who lack family and friends, the loss of community cohesion, and a 'disconnect' between health and social care, leaves them more at risk of physical and emotional ill-health, as they age. The best solution to this is one-to-one support from befrienders and advocates who champion their needs, who do not give up until they get treatment, housing, a medical appointment, or whatever these vulnerable, unwell people, so desperately need.

Our client base comprises lonely and socially isolated older people with complex physical and mental health problems and severely limited mobility. The pandemic led to an increase in their anxiety, and the uncertainty of what was happening and how safe things were for them remains today.

The average age of our clients is 79, with 78% aged 70 and over. Over 70% describe themselves as being housebound and the numbers referred to us with a multitude of problems remain high (over 90%). Unsurprisingly this last year the number of clients referred to us with depression is at its highest (96%), as is the number of people with an existing diagnosis of dementia (34%). The increase year on year of people with dementia was one reason all THFN staff were trained as Dementia Friends, and all befrienders as Dementia Champions.

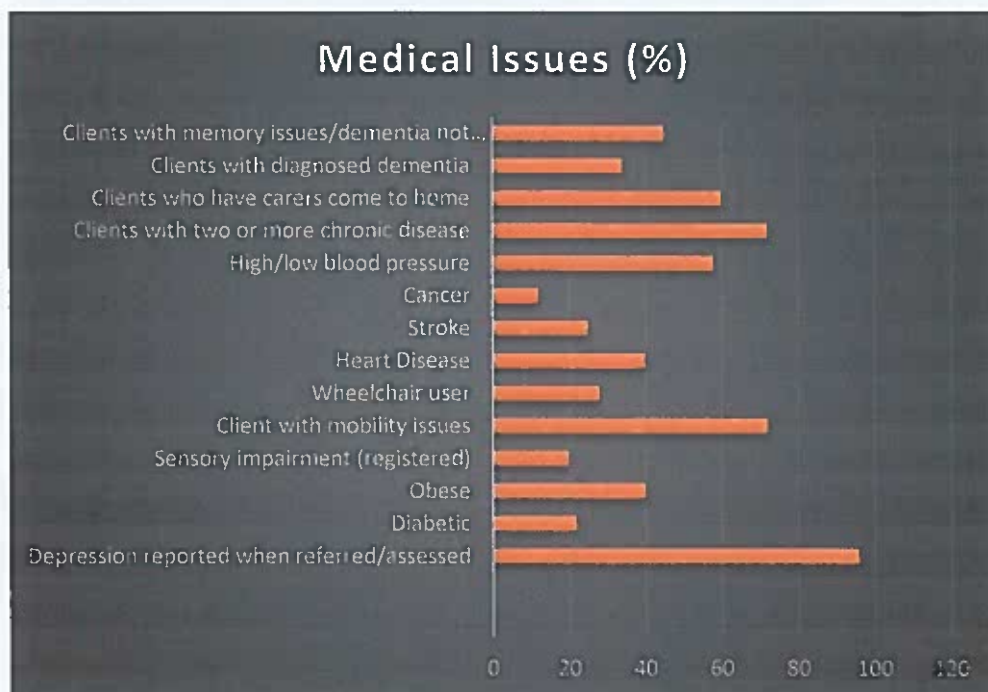
The increasing number of clients with dementia does not paint a clear picture, as a further 45% have memory issues. This would support information from local statutory bodies which indicates that there is major under-diagnosis of dementia in the borough.

- Largest group supported between 80-90-year-olds
- Mean age being 79 years
- Oldest client 100
- 34% are male, 66% are female

Medical Issues

THFN provides services throughout the entire borough. This year our services were all undertaken remotely, and in total we supported 218 clients in the period from April 1st, 2020, to 31st March 2021. The drop in the number of clients from previous years, was due to not being able to directly support clients in care homes, although contact was made regularly with care home managers where THFN clients resided. The number of referrals received last year have remained high and it is only with the support of our new telephone befrienders that we have managed to operate without a waiting list.

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The data above is consistent with previous years and the increase in referrals with depression is not surprising, given the anxiety experienced by client's year, due to the virus. The number of people referred to us with dementia, and those experiencing memory loss/undiagnosed dementia is also high. It is estimated that there are now 1,200 diagnosed people living with dementia in the borough. Dementia prevalence, as a proportion of 65-year-olds in Tower Hamlets, is the second highest in London at 5.25% and is significantly higher than the London prevalence of 4.49% so it isn't too surprising that we have seen increases year on year. The Council has made a commitment to make Tower Hamlets a Dementia Friendly Community and we have underlined our commitment by ensuring we are able to support people as best we can. All events organised by our dementia partners, the Alzheimer's Society have been moved online, and it is unclear when these will return to offline events.

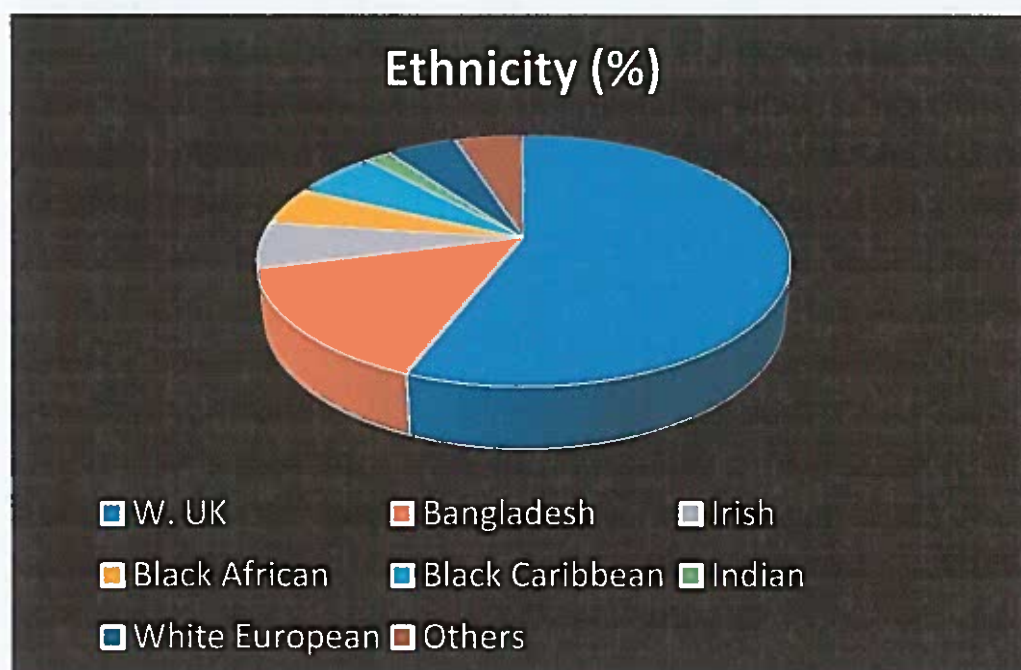


Earlier this year we undertook a partnership with St Margaret's House developing a project for clients with dementia. This took the form of sensory packs, using maps that were sensitive to the touch and to be "explored". It has been particularly difficult to work with clients with dementia, this last year, although THFN have continued to call clients using family members as a go between. Whilst our Befrienders Advocates have not been able to maintain their Dementia Champions status, all staff are Dementia friends.

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Increasingly, our clients are at the sharp end with a myriad of emotional and health issues, facing language and cultural barriers, and with no one else to turn to. 72% of people are referred to us with one or more complex health issues and 60% have carers supporting them at home, and 72% have permanent mobility issues. 40% of clients were referred to us with obesity; heart disease 40%, clients with a stroke 25%, and those with high blood pressure was 58%.

There was a drop in the number of male clients we supported last year, down from 42% in the previous year to 34%, one of the lowest in many years. In terms of ethnicity, our largest group is again clients who describe themselves as White UK (56%). The second largest group is Bangladeshi (15%), the same as last year.



The third largest group is Irish at 6% and there was a small drop in White European clients, from 7% to 5% of our clients, and includes older people from countries including Spain, Poland, Italy, Lithuania, and Malta.

The take up of our advocacy services has continued to increase and is now an integral part of our work. All our befrienders are advocacy trained, and the increase in the take up of this service demonstrates the value our services users place on this aspect of our service. This was particularly valuable this year as clients found themselves without access to food, required support in the collection of prescriptions, and required help to register as either extremely clinically vulnerable, or clinically vulnerable.

The number of new referrals we received increased significantly straight after lockdown. We were fortunate to have developed a partnership with Shearman & Sterling whose staff volunteered as tele befrienders. This ensured we had a never-ending supply of people we could train up as tele befrienders, ensuring we did not have a waiting list. This year we have had over 50 volunteers supporting us representing over 3000 hours of their time; we are as thankful as ever.

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The number of clients referred to us from the Alzheimer's Society is consistent with last year and now represents our second largest referrer. As ever, our largest referrer continues to be the local authority with 63% of people referred through this source. Other referrers include health professionals (21% and the Alzheimer's Society (14%).



Case study – Impact of Covid 19 on a THFN client

I feel my nerves are getting worse, I have always been a worrier, but this virus has made me more nervous. I seem to get frustrated and angry more now than I ever did, and I even feel nervous to put the T.V on as all you hear nowadays is the Virus and so many deaths. I was looking forward to being taken out as I have got my wheelchair a while ago but unfortunately it has not happened yet due to this Virus. In the last 4 years I have been out 3 times and that has been to hospital appointments. I couldn't even go out to get the vaccine as no transport, so the nurse had to come to my home.

I get very nervous when my son comes, and I end up shouting when he touches my things around the flat as all I think is someone is going to bring it into my flat and I also get anxious with letters and other things that are put through my letter box and when my grand- daughter brings my shopping. I am constantly washing my hands.

I just want to get back to normal, sometimes I think why I should worry at my age, but I suppose that's me I have always been a worrier, but this Virus has made my anxiety worse and it is a thought that is always there. Look at Captain Tom he raised all that money and he caught it, I cried when I heard he died. Thank god I have a bit of greenery outside so I can open my window and get some fresh air on my face. I wonder how long we are going to live like this as I feel we are only existing you cannot call this living. I also understand that everybody is in the same boat and let's hope it will go away in time and we will get back to normal. I have been managing at my age for so long and being housebound is hard enough but not being able to even see your family is harder as they all keep their distance you can't give them a kiss and a hug.

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What have we achieved this year?

As soon as the lockdown was announced, our staff and volunteers ceased face to face befriending, and we began distance befriending primarily through our tele befriending service. This year we made just under 6,500 calls to older people, around 600 calls per month.

We undertook a snap evaluation of the telephone service which was very positive. Of the people we called since the lockdown:

- Out of 150 people, 70% thought the THFN response to the coronavirus crisis was 'Excellent', and a further 30% thought it was 'Good'.
- Out of 150 people 90% said they felt less isolated because of telephone calls from THFN.
- Out of 150 people 94% of people said that having someone from THFN regularly calling them made them feel less anxious
- Out if 150 people, 94% of people called said the new THFN telephone service made a positive difference to them during the coronavirus crisis.
- Out of 150 people, 100% of people we call said they had more information about what was happening about the virus because of information directly from THFN.

As lockdown continued, we found some clients struggled with staying in and began developing activities to keep people occupied. This included puzzle packs, activity projects, group calls which developed into coffee mornings, and music groups. We found our poem writing project particularly popular as it allowed clients to express themselves.

Like many other charities, THFN faced major issues in terms of fundraising at the beginning of the lockdown. We were fortunate, however, that our existing funders allowed us greater flexibility in how we could spend our funds, whilst also being able to raise sufficient monies without having to furlough any staff. It was essential for us to be able to continue to deliver a service to our clients at a time when they had the greatest need.



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What we will do in 2021/22

The situation for the coming year is still unclear. Whilst shielding restrictions have been loosened it is still not possible for our staff and clients to restart face to face visits in their homes. When this happens, it will very much be client led; they will tell us when they feel it is safe for us to come and visit them. We will begin by undertaking pilots meeting clients outside, and only when it is safe for our clients, staff and volunteers will restart our home visits.

However, we already know that the easing of the lockdown restrictions has only led to some clients feeling even more anxious. Isolation and loneliness have been some of the cruellest effects of the pandemic; not being able to see anyone, locked up in a house and forced to stay indoors, and for many of our clients this will continue into the next year. Whilst most people are looking forward to going to pubs, restaurants, cinemas etc in the next few months, many of these options will not be available to the people we support for some time. We know they are anxious about us visiting them and even more anxious about going out after a year of lockdown. We will therefore:

- Continue to provide distance befriending and ensure our clients have social contact with our staff/volunteers at least once a week. Some clients have already told us that they prefer twice weekly phone calls to a visit instead.
- Develop new reminiscence tools to keep clients engaged as they continue to remain indoors. This will include a reminiscence book of photographs and memories of Tower Hamlets that befrienders can use to trigger conversations.
- Maintain the current number of volunteers and recruit more if need be to meet demand. We have found that our volunteers benefit as much as our clients, and loneliness is not restricted because of age. People have formed good connections; we match people of different ages who can volunteer and call from home.
- To help clients to ease out of restrictions when the time comes, providing support as required which could include accompanying clients outdoors to places they used to visit such as shops and parks to help them rebuild their confidence.
- Organising group activities outdoors, such as picnics when it is deemed safe.

Whilst our tele befriending service has been a huge success, we are looking forward to returning to visit people in their homes to provide the face-to-face support and reassurance so many need, whenever it is deemed safe to do so. Staff, client, and volunteer risk assessments will be undertaken as well as guidance provided to our befrienders. We will do what is necessary to ensure our staff, volunteers and clients are safe. We will procure the necessary PPE required to ensure this and offer flexibility to our staff in working arrangements whilst ensuring the office is manned.

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Fundraising – As ever, a key priority for next year will be fundraising; the funding environment has become even more challenging, with research undertaken by NCVO showing record amounts of charities closing over the past year.

Bangladeshi Befriending Project – We will set up a new bespoke Bangladeshi befriending project targeting women from this community. This will include one to one visit, groups outings and meet the needs of potential clients.

Volunteers - Our use of volunteers will continue whilst the number may reduce as many of our interim tele befrienders return to work from an office-based environment instead of home. We already have indications that many of our new interim tele befrienders plan to continue volunteering for us.

Partnerships – We will continue to develop partnerships to extend our offer and diversify our service. We plan to continue working with new partners such as Shearman & Sterling, whilst identifying new organisations we can work with.

Dementia – We will continue to support LB Tower Hamlets in their target to make the borough a dementia friendly place by 2022. We will ensure all our staff receive the required training around dementia and ensure our Befrienders will retrain as dementia champions when possible, and re start escorting clients to dementia events such as Singing for the Brain when it restarts.

Advocacy - Since the lockdown, the demand for advocacy has increased considerably. We have been working with clients to organise food deliveries, prescription collections and liaising with other organisations including the council, NHS helpline, and food banks to support our clients as required. Where possible, we will continue to enable independence and empower people to make the most of their lives, for as long as they can.

Staff – We will continue to support our hardworking staff who this year have to had to overcome many personal challenges and hurdles to ensure services to clients are available. Without the hard work of our team, we would not have been able to achieve so much, and we will ensure we have a workforce that has the training and skills required to meet the needs of our service users.



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Financial Review

Funding improved during the year to 31 March 2021. The total income for the year was £250,297, an increase of 42% on the previous year. The restricted income attributable to this year was £186,033 (2020: £152,345); an increase of 22%, due in part to new funding and Covid-19 emergency funding. We increased the amount of general unrestricted donations to £64,196 from £23,769 in the previous year, as the number of one-off donations increased.

In October 2019 we secured funding from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, increasing our annual grant to £50,000 a year over a 3.5-year period. In this year we received a total amount of £50,000 (£42,500 in 2020), to provide befriending services to clients from the borough. This year we were successful in securing funding from City Bridge Trust for 5 years for a new project to support elderly Bangladeshi clients. We were also successful in securing funding from two national providers, specifically Mind and Independent Age.

We have been fortunate in being able to access funding from the London Community Response specifically released to help smaller charities with providing extra services or having to modify the way they deliver their services as a result of Covid-19.

We are very grateful to all our other funders for supporting us in recent years and are also immensely grateful to a number of the City of London guilds and liveries, and other charitable bodies for supporting us with general funds.

The total expenditure for the year amounted to £186,033 (2020: £180,734), resulting in a surplus for the year of £64,264 (2020: deficit of £4,339); taking our general reserves at 31 March 2021 to £153,820 (2019: £89,556). Costs increased in the year when the rent holiday expired in July 2020. We were very fortunate that our landlord at St. Margaret's House allowed us a rent holiday from May 2019 to July 2020.

As outlined at the beginning of the Annual Report, we have continued to provide a service to as many of our clients as we were able. Whilst all face-to-face visits had to cease, we have been maintaining our service through telephone contact and other media. All staff have remained in post throughout the crisis, and as a result of an increase in the number of volunteer befrienders joining us during this crisis, we have been able to increase the number of tele-befriending clients we have been able to support.

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

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Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has examined the organisation's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation. Alongside the funding issues identified above, it has borne in mind the support needs of our client group who are particularly vulnerable and the time needed to find and arrange alternative ways to address these needs in the event of the cessation of activities. It has therefore established a policy whereby unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be six months of expenditure. This also acknowledges the financial risks and contractual obligations associated with the employment of staff and contractual requirements relating to premises. The policy is reviewed annually. The charity's running expenditure is forecast to be around £240,00 for next year and the target for reserves is £120,000 in unrestricted funds.

At 31 March 2021 the unrestricted funds totalled £153,820, above our target. THFN's strategy is to meet its reserves target and will allocate reserves in excess of this towards forecast funding costs.

Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is also a registered charity. The company was established by a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed by its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and Appointment of Board of Trustees

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as the Board of Trustees. At each Annual General Meeting one third of the members of the Board of Trustees both elected and co-opted shall retire but all are eligible for re-election. Those longest in office since co-option or election shall retire first. In the case of an equal period of service in default of agreement those to be retired shall be selected by lot. At an Annual General Meeting the Board of Trustees may elect two of its members as Chair and as Treasurer, each to serve for an initial period of three years. At the Annual General Meeting marking the end of his/her first three years in office the Chair and/or the Treasurer shall retire from office but each is eligible for re-election for a further three- year period. A Chair or Treasurer shall normally retire from office after a six- year period in office.

The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the charity's client group and the ethnic diversity of Tower Hamlets are appropriately reflected on the Board. It also tries to ensure a good mix of skills from the business, social and health care and voluntary sectors. The Board regularly carries out a skills audit and has an ongoing policy of identifying suitable potential Board members who can be approached to offer themselves for election to the Board as and when required. During the year to 31 March 2021, two of our trustees stood down and four new appointments were made, to bring skills which address needs on our Board.

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
DIRECTORS' AND TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

New trustees receive a trustee handbook and would normally attend an induction day which includes visiting clients with a Befriender as well as meetings with the Chair and Chief Executive. These face to face activities with staff and clients have had to be curtailed during the current COVID-19 restrictions, but will be re-introduced as soon as possible.

Organisational Structure

The organisation has a Board of Trustees of not less than five and not more than twelve persons (currently 9), elected by the members of the Company at the Annual General Meeting, and not more than three additional co-opted members. The Company Secretary, who is also the Chief Executive of the organisation, attends Board meetings but has no voting rights. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the strategic direction, policy and human and financial resources of the organisation. It meets at least four times a year. Day to day operational management of the organisation is delegated by the Board of Trustees to the Chief Executive, who is responsible for ensuring that the organisation delivers the services specified through its team of staff.

Risk Management

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the major risks to which the organisation is exposed and developed a risk matrix which is reviewed regularly at Board meeting. Internal and external risks have been identified and action taken to mitigate these to best ensure that the charity is able to carry out its purposes as securely and efficiently as possible. All procedures are reviewed on an ongoing basis to safeguard the charity's assets, to ensure the health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors in the offices and in clients' homes, and in relation to data protection and confidentiality.

Fundraising policy

We have not made any appeals or solicited funding from the general public in the year. We do not use any professional fund-raisers to carry out any activities on our behalf. Through our website we have an ongoing request for funds, and have provided a link via Local Giving, for individuals to support us but funds from this source are very limited. We are aware of the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice and will not put undue pressure or unreasonably intrude on anyone to make a gift. Any appeals we make in the future for donors will be developed with respect to our current and potential donors as well as for the people we are here to support. We have not received any fundraising complaints from our donors.

Public Benefit

The trustees have given due consideration to the Charity Commission's published guidance on the Public Benefit requirements under the Charities Act 2011.

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
DIRECTORS' AND TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

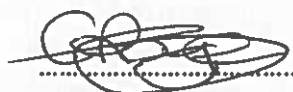
The charity trustees (who are also directors of Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with the applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the board of trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable it to ensure the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

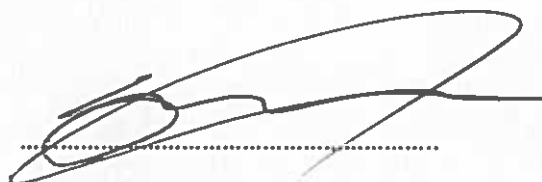
Approved by the Board of Trustees of Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours and signed on its behalf by:



Gemma Roye

(Director and Trustee)

2 November 2021



Stephen Robarts

(Director and Trustee)

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours

I report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2020, which are set out on pages 21 to 30.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

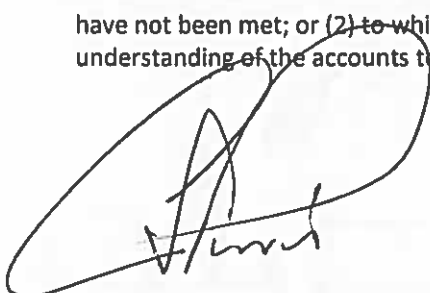
Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, and comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Gavin Purvis (FCCA), Chartered Certified Accountant

2 November 2021

Purvis Stevens LLP, Hayles Bridge Offices, 228 Mulgrave Road, Cheam, Surrey SM2 6JT

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Income:					
Donations	2	64,196	137,333	201,529	133,614
Income from charitable activities	3	-	48,700	48,700	42,500
Investment income	4	69	-	69	281
Total income		<u>64,264</u>	<u>186,033</u>	<u>250,297</u>	<u>176,395</u>
Expenditure:					
Costs of raising funds	5	-	26,741	26,741	27,208
Expenditure on charitable activities:					
Befriending services	5	-	159,292	159,292	153,526
Total expenditure		<u>-</u>	<u>186,033</u>	<u>186,033</u>	<u>180,734</u>
Net income(Expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year.	14/15	64,264	-	64,264	(4,339)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		89,556	-	89,556	93,895
Total funds carried forward		<u>153,820</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>153,820</u>	<u>89,556</u>

Statement of Financial Activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

Continuing Operations

None of the company's activities were acquired or discontinued during the above two financial periods.

The notes on pages 22-29 form part of these financial statements.

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible fixed assets	10	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-
Current assets			
Debtors	11	3,648	-
Cash at bank and in hand	12	212,694	142,618
Total current assets		216,341	142,618
Liabilities			
Creditors due within one year	13	(62,521)	(53,062)
Net current assets		153,820	89,556
Total assets, less current liabilities		153,820	89,556
Net assets		153,820	89,556
The funds of the charity			
Unrestricted income funds	14	153,820	89,556
Restricted income funds	15	-	-
Total funds		153,820	89,556

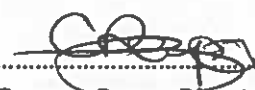
The notes on pages 22-29 form part of these financial statements.

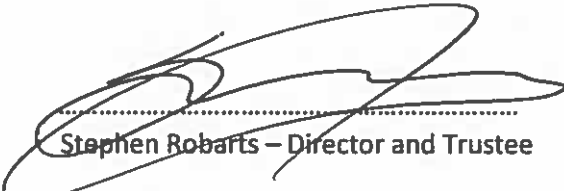
For the year ending 31 March 2021 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- *the members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476,*
- *the directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts,*
- *these accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.*

Approved by the Directors on 2 November 2021


.....
Gemma Roye - Director and Trustee


.....
Stephen Roberts - Director and Trustee

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year and in the preceding year.

a. Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, and the Companies Act 2006.

Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are recognised at historical cost, or transaction value, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

b. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are subject to the restriction on their expenditure imposed by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

c. Income

All incoming resources are recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

d. Donated services and facilities

Donated services and facilities are included at the value to the charity when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the economic benefit to the charity is probable and the economic benefit can be reliably measured. On receipt, donated professional services and facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain the services or facilities in the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

In accordance with the Charities SORP FRS 102, the general volunteer time provided by volunteers has not been recognised and refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

e. Interest receivable

Investment income is included when receivable and the amount can be reliably measured by the charity; this is normally upon notification by the bank.

f. Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise those costs incurred in seeking voluntary income, including staff time.
- Expenditure on charitable activities comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

g. Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs are allocated between the expenditure categories on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly; while others are apportioned on an appropriate basis e.g. estimated staff time or usage as set out in Note 5.

h. Tangible Fixed assets

Fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided at the rate calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its useful economic life. The fixed assets are mainly computer equipment, and these assets are depreciated over three years on a straight-line basis. Equipment, including computers and software, costing less than £500 per individual item are not capitalised and are charged to expenditure in the year of purchase.

No assets were held by THFN as a custodian.

i. Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

j. Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in a transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due can be measured or estimated reliably.

k. Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

2 Donations and legacies

All of the charity's voluntary income was received in the form of grants and donations. While the charity receives a small portion of this income in the form of unsolicited donations, it generates much the greater part by application to charitable trusts and statutory bodies.

3 Income from charitable activities

The charity was in receipt of income from certain performance related grants ancillary to the delivery of its charitable activities. Income from charitable activities comprises a grant from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (2021: £48,700; 2020: £42,500).

4 Investment income

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
Income from investments	-	-	-	-
Bank interest	67	-	67	281
	<u>67</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>281</u>

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

5 Total resources expended

	Befriending Services			
	Unrestricted	Restricted	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
<i>Cost of raising funds</i>				
Staff costs	-	26,645	26,645	26,604
Sundry costs	-	96	96	604
	-	26,741	26,741	27,208
<i>Cost of charitable activities</i>				
Staff costs	-	115,186	115,186	115,157
Reflexology	-	-	-	-
Transport and travel	-	350	350	2,491
Outings with clients	-	599	599	1,033
Telephone	-	2,893	2,893	2,684
Postage and stationery	-	1,594	1,594	1,436
Recruitment costs	-	265	265	135
Independent Evaluation Report	-	-	-	2,000
Marketing	-	413	413	-
Training	-	1,002	1,002	378
<i>Support costs allocated to charitable activities</i>				
<i>General support:</i>				
Staff costs	-	23,537	23,537	23,365
Premises	-	7,190	7,190	719
Insurance	-	541	541	550
Sundry expenses	-	2,117	2,117	1,232
Computer support	-	662	662	208
IT and systems upgrade	-	520	520	-
Payroll costs	-	921	921	832
<i>Governance cost:</i>	-	-	-	-
Independent examiners fee	-	1,504	1,504	1,250
Sundry costs	-	-	-	56
	-	159,292	159,292	153,526
Total expenditure	-	186,032.84	186,032.84	180,734

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

6 Net income for the year

	2021	2020
	£	£
This is stated after charging:		
Independent Examiner's fee	1,504	1,250

7 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and cost of key personnel

	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries and wages	118,975	149,154
National Insurance contributions	38,021	9,584
Pension costs	8,373	6,388
	<u>165,368</u>	<u>165,126</u>

No employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension contributions) of more than £60,000. (2020: nil)

The trustees were not paid, or received, any benefits from employment with the charity or reimbursed for expenses during the year (2020: nil).

The employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £91,405 (2020: £90,582).

The average number employees (and full-time equivalent), analysed by function was:

	2021		2020	
	Average	Full time Equivalent	Average	Full time Equivalent
Management	2	1.8	2	1.8
Service delivery	4.5	3.9	4.7	3.3

8 Taxation

As a charity, Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within Section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charge has arisen within the charity.

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

9 Related party transactions

Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours rents its office premises from St. Margaret's House- a charity which provides office accommodation to local community organisations and charities. Anthony Hardie (a trustee of THFN) is a Director and Chief Executive of St Margaret's House. Our accommodation payments for the year to 31 March 2021 were £7,190. (2020: £719). St Margaret's House kindly granted us a rent holiday from May 2019 to July 2020.

10 Tangible fixed assets

	2021	2020
	£	£
Fixtures and office equipment		
Cost at 1 April 2020	925	925
Additions	-	-
Cost at 31 March 2021	<u>925</u>	<u>925</u>
 Depreciation		
As at 1 April 2020	925	925
Charge for the year	-	-
As at 31 March 2021	<u>925</u>	<u>925</u>
 Net book value:		
At 31 March 2020		<u>Nil</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>Nil</u>	

11 Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Other debtors	-	-
Prepayments	3,648	-
	<u>3,648</u>	<u>-</u>

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

12 Cash and cash equivalents

	2021	2020
	£	£
Cash in hand	212,694	142,618
	<u>212,694</u>	<u>142,618</u>

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Deferred income	51,986	43,875
Taxation and social security costs	3,682	3,475
Holiday pay	4,600	3,231
Accruals	2,253	2,481
	<u>62,521</u>	<u>53,062</u>

Deferred income represents grants attributable to the following accounting period.

	2021	2020
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	43,875	73,878
Amount released to income	(43,875)	(73,878)
Amount deferred in the year	51,986	43,875
Balance at 31 March	<u>51,986</u>	<u>43,875</u>

14 Movement in unrestricted funds

	General Fund	
	2021	2020
	£	£
Balance at 1 April 2020	89,556	93,895
Incoming resources	64,264	24,050
Resources expended	0	(28,389)
Funds at 31 March 2021	<u>153,820</u>	<u>89,556</u>

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

15 Movement in restricted income

Movement in Restricted Income	1 April 2020	Income	Expended	Transfer to Unrestricted	31 March 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Big Lottery- Awards for All	-	5,813	(3,863)	-	1,950
Independent Age	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
MIND	-	18,045	(146)	-	17,899
London Community Response WAVE 2	-	32,576	(32,576)	-	-
City Bridge Trust	-	10,210	-	-	10,210
Merchant Taylor's Company	19,500	-	(17,167)	-	2,333
Clarion Futures	-	5,000	(2,500)	-	2,500
Field Family Trust	1,875	7,500	(6,875)	-	2,500
Garfield Weston Foundation	22,500	-	(9,206)	-	13,294
Henry Smith Charity	-	50,000	(50,000)	-	-
LB of Tower Hamlets	-	50,000	(48,700)	-	1,300
	<u>43,875</u>	<u>194,144</u>	<u>(186,033)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>51,986</u>

TOWER HAMLETS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
(A company limited by guarantee)

Funders and supporters:

The Trustees and the staff of Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours would like to thank all of those charitable foundations and organisations, and people, who make our work possible. Without your support, we would not be able to do the work that we do, to support the elderly and vulnerable residents of Tower Hamlets.

Thank you also to our excellent staff, volunteers and community partners - all working with skill, dedication and passion to improve people's lives - and to our partners in health, social care, and commissioners in our local authority – from whom we get the majority of our client referrals.

Finally, our biggest thank you is to our clients, the reason THFN exists, and who make our jobs fulfilling.

Thank you.

Big Lottery- Awards for All
City Bridge Trust
Clarion Futures
Field Family Trust
Garfield Weston Foundation
Henry Smith Charity
Independent Age
LB of Tower Hamlets
London Community Response WAVE 2
Merchant Taylor's Company
MIND