

Higher Folds Community Centre, 2 Year Olds and Pre-school Nursery

Annual Report 2018-19

1. Introduction

The Centre and Nursery is the community anchor for the people of Higher Folds. We are working in partnership with other local and national organisations and local public services to address issues of improving health, reducing isolation, early year's education and reducing unemployment on the Higher Folds estate. Those organisations included:

- Wigan Council
- Wigan Council Early Years Team
- Wigan Borough CCG
- Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles
- Leigh Caring Kitchen (the Bridge)
- Harmony, Unity and Belonging (HUB)
- BIG Lottery Community Fund
- Coalfields Regeneration Trust
- Family Action

2. Regular groups during the year included:

- Nursery for two, three and four year olds
- Tiny Tots (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) for 0-2 year olds and parents
- Family Gang and Hope Group for families and parents
- Youth Groups for children ages 7-11 and 11-16
- Golden Years Older People's Group
- Councillors Surgeries
- Citizens Advice Drop-In
- HMRC Advice Drop-In
- Bristles Art Group
- Bingo sessions twice weekly
- Reducing food poverty business
- Holiday hunger sessions during school holidays
- Sports and health sessions including Slimming World, Karate, Pilates, walking and cycling groups

The Centre operates a charging policy of full price for public service and commercial organisations and offers concessionary rates for third sector organisations.

3. Other events during the year. One off events or sessions included:

- Healthy and economical cooking – six week course
- Family Action Holiday Brunch
- Spring and Summer Fun Days
- Leigh Folds JFC Fun Day
- Christmas Fair
- Christmas parties for all groups

4. Customers

Customers included:

- Higher Folds residents and groups attending Nursery, regular groups and other events. Footfall of over 22,000 each year.
- Express IT Digital - private company
- Harmony, Unity and Belonging CIC (HUB) - community interest company
- Talk First Family Mediation – registered charity
- Wigan Council – local authority
- Wigan Borough CCG – local health organisation
- Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles – local sport and wellbeing organisation
- Other local charities and social enterprises

5. Customer comments

- “Thank you to all at Higher Folds Community Centre! You've always gone above and beyond to help myself and my family through a difficult period and gave us a Christmas to remember”.
- “We are lucky to have such a great community centre on our doorstep!”
- “My little boy utterly loves attending nursery here, and both my children love coming along to Tiny Tots playgroup”.
- “We think they are the most helpful & caring staff in the world”
- We do get negative comments and as a matter of course any customer concerns are addressed as they are made to maintain our very good reputation.

6. Total income

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% increase over the last 12 months
£	£	£	
241,069	261,438	269,328	3%

- There has been a dramatic change in the way the Centre generates income. For example in 2010-11 Income was £155,058. £28,474 (18%) from trading and £126,584 (82%) from grants.
- In 2018-19 this was income of £269,328. £162,761 (60%) from trading and £106,567 (40%) from grants.
- In February 2019, BIG Lottery declined our Reaching Communities grant bid for a planned project to reduce the social isolation of older people and vulnerable families and people. This will considerably reduce our grant income in 2019-20.
- There is an identified need to address food poverty on the Higher Folds estate which offers an opportunity for the Centre to develop a “Community Business”. An application is being prepared to Power to Change to formalise and grow the existing informal business.

7. Total expenditure

2016-17 £	2017-18 £	2018-19 £	% increase over the last 12 months
240,523	271,342	290,754	7.2%

- As a cautionary note expenditure has increased at a higher percentage rate than income has, although the Centre and Nursery are still making a small surplus.

8. Workforce

- There were 9 employees. 2 full time and 7 part-time (full time equivalent of 4.8)

9. Summary

- The Community Centre and Nursery have considerable social impact for the families and people of Higher Folds and our future planning will always have this at the forefront of our plans.
- The Nursery has shown considerable benefits for children and families and along with the work of Tiny Tots and Family Gang groups, we are giving children a strong start in their early year's education and a good grounding to help them live healthy and prosperous lives.
- Other activities in the Centre, including Brownies, Youth Group and physical activities continue the development of minds and bodies into teenage years and beyond.
- Our plans for 2019-20 include a community food business to address food poverty on the estate and health and well-being activities in partnership with Wigan Council and Greater Manchester organisations through the Local Delivery Pilot.
- Financially we made a small surplus in 2018-19. This is an improvement on 2017-18 when the organisation operated at a small loss and had to rely on reserves to continue the considerable excellent social impact we have on the Higher Folds estate.
- However, as the BIG Lottery funding ended on 31st March 2019, it is a matter of urgency to considerably reduce costs and identify ways and means of making our business financially sustainable through trading income. We must focus our minds on generating income, not relying on grant income and at the same time increase our social impact.
- We will continue to be major employers of Higher Folds area people and we will always plan to employ those people if they meet our aspirations.