

Changes, challenges and progress

Knights Youth Centre
Annual review 2018

We are Knights





...and this is what we do

Knights Youth Centre has provided a safe, fun, inclusive and engaging place for thousands of young people for more than 80 years.

It is the main provider of youth services in and around the Clapham Park Estate in Lambeth, London, an area of high social and economic need. Many of the 300 young people who come through our doors each week live in the area, but the impact of our work reaches across the borough.

Our work focuses on offering continuous and consistent care, transformative opportunities, positive role models and new experiences to the young people aged 8-24 regardless of their gender, race, sexuality or disability. In addition to 'standard' activities, we provide sports coaching, offsite trips, regular residentials, international social action programmes, specialised work with girls, arts and dance, access to IT equipment and vocational training.

Crucially we also undertake targeted outreach with young people who, through disengagement with 'traditional' services, are at risk of involvement with gangs, drugs and anti-social behaviour.

Contents

Chair's introduction	02	Making progress	
A year at Knights		A song and dance	14
Juniors	06	Working with girls	15
Girls at Knights	08	Fundraising at Knights	16
Inters	10	The Mongol Rally	17
Seniors	12	Partnerships in practice	20
		Working with the SLRA	22
		Pursuing excellence	23
		Knights memories	25
		Accounts and finances	28

Chair's introduction

A year of goodbyes, hellos, and new opportunities



The past year has been a busy one, full of changes, challenges and development.

Joseph joined us as Head of Youth Work Services. Kemi took on a new role working with girls. A number of new volunteers joined us. And we've continued to develop our partnerships with schools.

We've said goodbye to two trustees. Simon Clarke was Vice Chair for two years - I'm hugely grateful for the support he gave to the board. Rev. John Marshall has left the board after more than two decades in which he provided invaluable support to the team, staff and members. We've also said goodbye to Este, who provided us with voluntary oversight of training and development. Thanks to you all - your contributions have been valued, and you'll be much missed.



We're committed to helping members become confident, resilient young people ready to make a positive contribution to their community.



Millie Grant
Chairperson

Sadly, Les Long and Brian Longman – both long-time friends of Knights – have passed away. Les was a youth worker during the 1940s, 50s and 60s. He played a key role in the life and management of Knights and was chair of the management team in the sixties. He was well known by young people for the rich encouragement he gave them, and many benefitted from his support and advice – particularly when entering the world of work and adulthood.

Brian Longman was appointed Knights' first full-time youth leader in the 1960s (while Les was chair). Brian led what at the time was an entirely voluntary service. It was during this time that Knights welcomed girls for the first time and introduced the so-called 'Koffee Shop': a Sunday morning debating group. On Sunday evenings guest speakers from all faiths and backgrounds came to the centre to talk to the young people.

I send condolences to Les and Brian's families and give thanks for their lives and the incredible legacy they leave behind in all those they influenced.

Time to look forward. Recognising that girls have unique needs and benefit from targeted support, we've appointed a youth worker to specialise in this area. London Mayor's Fund have given us a grant to support the work. We've also received funds from BBC Children in Need. Our team of fundraisers put in a huge amount of work to secure these funds.

In other positive news, we're delighted to welcome four new trustees to the board. Abbi Oakley, Caspar Kennerdale, Andrea Rowe and Ed Wall each bring incredible skills, experience and passion which will benefit our work.

116

The average number of young people we worked with each week in 2018.

150+

The number of regular club sessions we delivered in 2018.

Chair's introduction

Continued

We're an organisation that relies on donations of both time and money to our work. Thanks in particular to:

- Our team of volunteers who donate their time and expertise for us
- The Harriet Trust for your financial support
- The Football Association for providing members with the opportunity to attend matches at Wembley and be flagbearers or player escorts as teams enter the pitch
- The partners who help us deliver our work – Young Lambeth Co-operative, Hope Pilates, Inspirational Youth and the South London Refugee Association
- Our patron George Clarke
- Chuka Umunna, our local MP
- All the valued 'friends' of the Knights who provide all kinds of support

Knights in 2019 delivers a wide range of services and activities for young people ranging from developing leadership skills to exciting offsite activities. We're committed to helping members become confident, resilient young people ready to make a positive contribution to their community. We're always on the lookout for volunteers to work in our Juniors, Inters, Seniors and Girls sessions – especially those who have specific skills to share (for example arts, crafts, performance, cookery). If you'd like to help, we'd love to hear from you.

It's been a full but positive year here at the centre. Enjoy reading the report – and thank you for your continued interest, support and prayers for our work.

Millie Grant

Chairperson



George Clarke and Chukka Umunna are long-term supporters of our work.



A year at Knights

Updates from Knights' engine room, our four sections:
Juniors, Girls at Knights, Inters and Seniors.

A year at Knights Juniors

An update from Shem Frank, Junior Team Leader

Juniors is a fundamental part of the youth work we deliver at Knights. We engage around 30 young people aged 8-11 every week. Friday nights in Tierney Road are 'popping' (as the young people would say). The building is filled with excitement and laughter.

Juniors enjoy a varied programme of onsite activities and offsite trips. Over the last year we've visited Flip Out, gone bowling, played sports in local parks and spent a residential weekend at Wey Island (a facility by a Surrey river that Knights have taken young people to for decades). Favourite activities at the club have included football, dodgeball, cooking (our members are always hungry) and absolutely anything that involves competitions and the chance to win prizes.

Things aren't always plain sailing. Our young people often arrive with challenges that keep us on our toes. Our staff are experienced, diverse and equipped to work with those challenges and have brought in new ideas this year to tackle them in new ways. This has included developing group work discussions and individual sessions to explore a range of topics such as the transition to secondary school, youth violence and friendship choices. These discussions have allowed our members to express their hopes, concerns and worries freely. This relationship-based practice is possible due to the skill and commitment of the staff and volunteers at Juniors.

We've big plans for the next year: more offsite trips and a week-long residential during the summer. Most importantly however, we'll continue to empower, encourage and challenge young people, standing alongside them on their journeys through life, school and Knights itself.



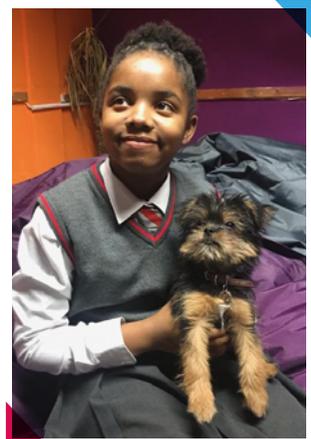
Juniors is filled with excitement and laughter. Friday nights are 'popping' - as the young people would say.

Shem Frank
Junior Team Leader



New to Knights?

Our Juniors section is aimed at young people aged 8-11. It runs on Fridays.



A year at Knights

Girls at Knights

An update from Kemi Adeshina, our new Senior Girls Youth Worker

Knights has run girls-only sessions for some years now to respond to their unique needs and deliver targeted support. Our team provides a safe environment where an average of ten girls a week are engaged, challenged, supported and empowered. We aim to help them live a well-rounded life and reach their full potential.

Sessions this year have been exciting and engaging. We've provided recreational and educational activities such as arts and crafts, day trips, cooking classes and homework support.

But we push further, too. The members and the youth workers have together enjoyed stepping out of their comfort zone, which has been positively transformative all round. 'Theme of the month' discussions, for example, provide a structured approach and a forum to discuss issues and topics that affect young girls in our culture. It has given our youth workers the opportunity to develop healthy relationships, deliver effective mentoring and targeted youth work.

Elsewhere the girls have attended workshops to encourage and empower them to work in the UK's tech industry as they prepare themselves for employment in a world that is being transformed by innovation and automation. The sessions gave the girls greater understanding of how they can channel their favourite subjects and interests into a future career.

We've also worked hard to mentor and empower the girls to think about becoming youth leaders themselves (who could in turn do the same for a new generation). We've created various opportunities for the girls to develop and connect with this vision by periodically giving them opportunities and responsibilities to lead games, activities and forum discussions, as well as plan club sessions and events. This has been hugely effective - the girls have been able to discover leadership and find out more about themselves as individuals.



Girls at Knights? It's there to provide a safe environment when girls can be engaged, challenged, supported and empowered. We aim to help them live a well-rounded life and reach their full potential.



Kemi Adeshina
Senior Girls Youth Worker



New to Knights?

Our Girls @ Knights sessions provide focused opportunities for young women in school years 7-11 on Wednesday evenings.



A year at Knights Inters

An update from Joseph Johnson, Head of Youth Services

It has been a strong year for Inters, with good growth in the number of young people attending. Members are growing more open to sharing and accepting our support because of the work of our vibrant and talented leadership team.

It has been an action-packed year. We've challenged our members in all sorts of ways ranging from wacky challenges and offsite trips to volunteering in the community or giving presentations to raise money for the club.

We've continued to encourage members to take ownership of their time at the centre by enabling them to take an active role in co-producing sessions. One member, for example, who has been coming to the centre for about two years, has become a young leader who helps organise the termly programme and recruit her friends to the sessions.

Other highlights this year have included volunteering at Brixton's soup kitchen, the members taking a big role in producing three video magazines, bonding during a summer residential at Wey Island and a karaoke night that took our ear drums beyond their natural limits. Elsewhere our work with Inters has been supported by Knights' ongoing schools programme. Our work with Richard Aitkins and the City Heights Academy has enabled us to provide greater levels of support for this age group.

New to Knights?

Inters is aimed at 11-14 year-old boys and girls and runs on Mondays.





It has been an action-packed year. We've challenged our members in all sorts of ways ranging from wacky challenges and offsite trips to volunteering in the community or giving presentations to raise money for the club.

Joseph Johnson
Head of Youth Services



A year at Knights Seniors

An update from Joseph Johnson, Head of Youth Services

2018 in the Seniors was about working hard to create opportunities that enabled the development of each young person. Our biggest focus was on exploring potential career paths for all our members and the next steps they could take. We invested time and effort developing their life skills and discussing the education and employment options that lay ahead.

Much of this careers advice and informal counselling was provided through Knights' 'drop-in' service, which operates throughout the week. Regular Thursday evenings provided good opportunities however to develop talents and enjoy ourselves – the young people enjoyed Brazilian Jujitsu, DJing, photography and film-making too.

Exploring options

One of our Seniors had been attending Knights for seven years but lacked the confidence or motivation to get into further education or full-time employment. After a few advice and counselling sessions they actively looked for work – and got themselves two job interviews.



New to Knights?

Seniors is open to all 15-18 year-olds on Thursdays at 8pm.



Making progress

Read about the latest initiatives, partnerships and fundraising at Knights and catch-up on our highlights from a busy, exciting year of youth work. And if you're a fan of nostalgia: take a walk down memory lane with Mervyn Wright as he reminisces about days of old at Knights.

Making progress

A song and dance

The Young Lambeth Consortium and gala

Building partnerships and sharing services, skills and expertise with similar organisations has always been a big part of how we work.

We continued that tradition in March 2017 when we joined the Clapham Park Bike Project, Oasis Children's Venture, Sports City and The Connect to form a new consortium.

Together we were able to secure an important two-year commission from Young Lambeth Cooperative (YLC) to provide a range of youth services from our respective purpose-built centres and offer bespoke outreach work.



What the attendees said:

“The young people were phenomenal - great job.”

“The ambassadors have formed a great relationship. It's so refreshing to see.”

“It was so nice to see people my age put on such a fancy event.”

“It's events like these that make communities stronger.”

“Young people need things like this to give them hope. Thank you for such a great evening.”



But there was another important commitment: to deliver an event that brought all the young people the partners were serving together to give them a special development opportunity.

Led by Jasmine Ennis at The Connect, the consortium held an event at the Grange Hotel at Tower Bridge in late 2018. More than 180 young people attended a 'masquerade ball' themed event and gave a range of music and dance performances. 15 young people stepped up to help plan and deliver the event itself: these 'ambassadors' sought sponsorship, arranged invites and organised the entertainment.

The event was such a success that we're now planning another for October 2019.



Making progress

Working with girls

Knights' Empowered Against Crime project

Knights' creative and motivated staff have provided a thriving girls club over recent years. Sessions are informative, exciting, challenging and busy. It's critical work – we're seeing more and more evidence of the need for distinct, specialist services for girls.

In summer 2018 we learnt we'd been successful in our bid to the Mayor's Young Londoners Fund to support 10-21 year-old Londoners either at risk of exclusion or involvement in criminal activity (or those that already have been). This set in motion a three-year project to offer mentoring and other structured activities to help young women avoid further involvement with the criminal justice system, increase their personal safety, enhance relationships at home and improve behaviour and attendance at school. By boosting their confidence and resilience we would also aim to reduce their involvement with gangs and their exposure to physical violence and sexual exploitation.

We've made a robust start. We've recruited suitable staff, designed and implemented new programmes, and engaged local schools. We've also forged links with the Lambeth Youth Offending Service, hosting a conference with them last year to explore ways the service and other community groups can reduce the number of young people coming into the criminal justice system. Attendees found that community-led services, building genuine relationships with the young people and working with schools were most effective – we're continuing to prioritise these efforts at Knights.

The important work continues.



What the girls said:

“Knights offers a fun environment for troubled kids.”

“It's a great place to make friends and socialise.”

“I can learn new skills... and take up boxing.”

“I got to do kayaking for the first time.”

“I could take my mind off the challenges I was facing.”

“It's a welcoming and warm environment where I can share issues with friends.”



Fundraising at Knights

From challenges to opportunities

Knights has always been a friendly refuge for young people for whom crime, drugs and unemployment are an everyday occurrence.

Fundraising is essential to continuing this work. We're constantly looking for ways to raise enough money to sustain a thriving, expanding service, provide basic support for disadvantaged young people and improve our building.

But it isn't easy. We don't receive public funding, so we're dependent on our own efforts. The climate of uncertainty that washed over the UK over the last year has placed even greater pressure on this. Deeper cuts to public sector funding, and Lambeth's de-prioritisation of youth funding in its Local Government Strategy, has exacerbated the issue. Brexit looms on the horizon.

This time last year we found ourselves at a fundraising crossroads. While support from our Friends (and the KYC 900) was improving and we'd secured valuable backing from the Harriet Trust, commitment from stalwarts such as BBC Children in Need was waning. Elsewhere we'd had to say goodbye to Stu Thomson, one of our longest-standing lead youth workers.

We decided to try a new approach. In early 2018 we recruited Catherine Hawkins as a specialist part-time fundraiser to focus on bids to charities that support youth services. This led to BBC Children in Need boosting its support (committing to £116,000 over three years) and funding from the Young Londoners Fund (£79,000). Other funds have also supported us with more modest amounts.

It hasn't all been plain sailing – several applications have been unsuccessful, and Lambeth Council has been unable to offer support for anything aside from our building (though Michelle Marquis has done a great job of increasing our letting income). The work continues, however: we hope to receive continued backing from the Harriet Trust in 2019, continued strong support from the KYC 900 and new funding from other recognised charities. We plan to expand Catherine's role to include identifying businesses and individuals interested in our work to try and gain direct financial support.

Here's to a successful year of fundraising: watch this space.

15

The number of youth development initiatives delivered weekly in 2018 – up from five the previous year.

Making progress

The Mongol Rally

Matt Saunders, Ron's grandson, completed a sponsored challenge

This summer two friends and I completed the Mongol Rally.

In a nutshell the rally is an incredible drive from wherever in the world you live (London for us) all the way to Ulan Ude, Russia. That's 10,132 miles. But there's more: that drive has to be done in a car with an engine no bigger than 1.2 litres and worth no more than £1,000.

The rally also requires that participants raise money for charity. We chose Knights as our main charity and were able to raise nearly £5,000 – so some good did come from our hardships along the way to Siberia.

One of the most important, make-or-break decisions we had to make early on was our choice of car. We naively went for a Suzuki Alto (a small car that came to be named Bess). Some said we wouldn't make it to Dover. How wrong they were – we made it all the way to Belgium before we first broke down. While she may have looked the part, Bess died many a time before reaching the finish line. Our theory that choosing a Japanese car would make it easier to fix in places like rural Uzbekistan didn't account for the prospect of not making it out of Europe.

After catastrophic engine failure and nine days stuck in the Czech Republic, our team and Bess were able to make a very delayed beginning to the biggest adventure of our lives.

After passing through the remainder of Europe rather quickly we entered Turkey, visiting the cultural hub of Istanbul before following the Silk Road and taking in the sites of Cappadocia, a beautiful ancient city where early Christians hid to escape persecution. From Turkey we headed into many of the countries that made up the former socialist state of the USSR, quickly visiting Georgia and Azerbaijan before taking to the seas at Baku.



Making progress The Mongol Rally Continued



Visa complications meant we couldn't enter Iran, so we had to cross the Caspian Sea by boat. We broke all unwanted Mongol Rally records in the process. A journey across what on a map looks like a small lake should have taken nine hours, but took 82 – all because it was 'too windy' (that's what we presumed from Turkmen translation anyway). From there we spent 17 hours at customs entering a country that is harder to pass through than North Korea: Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan's capital is almost entirely built up of white buildings and has been described as a mix between Las Vegas and Pyongyang. Heading north we visited the so-called 'door to hell', one of the country's most visited landmarks, a former Soviet natural gas field that collapsed in 1971. Geologists set it alight, apparently thinking it would burn out in a few days, but it has been burning ever since. It was one of the most breath-taking sights I've ever encountered.

It was at this point in the rally (with 'just' 4,500 miles to go) that we started encountering what potholes really are. Potholes on the roads were more easily mistaken for bomb craters than the sort we complain about in the UK. We became professional drone smugglers as we crossed into Uzbekistan, continuing to take aerial film of our journey despite a national ban. The country is twice the size of the UK but happens to only have about four petrol stations.

Uzbekistan soon became Tajikistan, home to one of the most dangerous roads in the world due to its exposed rocky mountain passes and high altitude. This is a road that can prove challenging for 4x4 vehicles – it certainly took a toll on our tiny car and drivers. The first few days on it took us across the river from the northern Afghan border and up several epic mountain ranges, reaching a peak altitude of 14,300ft.

We continued north into Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Russia. After a gruelling couple of days and covering nearly every 'Stan' country you can think of, we entered Mongolia. By far the most untouched country we visited during the summer, it was a pleasure to see how the real 'nomads' live in some of the harshest conditions you can come across.

From there to the finish line we only had one final mammoth car failure: breaking our right axle, front brakes and springs. Luckily Bess had the one last bit of energy needed to make the last 500 miles to the finish line, completing an unforgettable journey for the three of us and our car.

I'd like to say a big thank you to all that sponsored us, especially Ashfold Management Services, Bromley Signs, Core Five, Paul Hamerton Plumbing and Standage. Their support was invaluable to helping the team to complete the trip. Also a big thank you to those who donated to Knights raising a significant amount of money for a worthy cause.

9

Flat tyres

5

Roadkill

72

**Length in hours
of our longest
non-stop drive**

19

**Countries
crossed**

10,132

Miles on Bess' clock



Making progress

Partnerships in practice

Improving outcomes for young people

We take partnership working seriously. If we are to really improve outcomes for young people and help them lead brighter futures for both themselves and their families, we know we can't always work alone.

With the help of colleagues in other organisations we can collectively meet more of the needs of a greater number of young people. It enriches the tapestry of care and support we can provide.

Our Resources Trustee makes sure that new partnerships become operational quickly and any difficulties are resolved. Once they're set up, partnership working can be fun. Meeting colleagues who share similar values and aspirations for our young people and who have differing expertise and skills is always rewarding.

In recent years this approach has allowed us to move from being a fairly traditional youth centre towards being more of a community hub in the Clapham Park Estate. We offer a place where other groups – including those working with adults – can become involved in what the club is, does and offers. It has been a really exciting evolution – we've been delighted to see Knights take its place at the heart of other groups' important community activities.

Here's just a flavour of some of the partnerships we've established – and a few others that are in a more embryonic stage of development.

- Our work with Lambeth Youth Offending Service and Early Help Team is a response to our successful bid to the Young Londoners Fund. It aims to empower girls and young women against crime by enhancing our existing girls' provision on Wednesday evenings with individual mentoring. It offers support for vulnerable young women in our area, helping them find positive alternatives to crime and make informed, confidence-led choices.
- Our work with two schools – Richard Atkins (a Primary School) and City Heights E-ACT Academy (a secondary) – has secured Big Lottery funding as part of a Young Lambeth Cooperative programme called Building Young Lambeth's Communities. Over the last 18 months we've delivered services for young people struggling in mainstream education including one-to-one and group mentoring sessions, theatre workshops, and martial arts lessons aimed at boosting self-discipline and respect.
- YClapham is a partnership consisting of Sports City, Clapham Park Project, Oasis Play, The Connect and Knights that delivers programmes for young people aged 5-24 who live, work or play in Clapham.

- Our partnership with the South London Refugee Association (SLRA) supports its work to provide a rich programme for young refugees or asylum seekers aged 14-18. We offer a plethora of activities and the chance to talk with case workers about the challenges they face and build new friendships.
- The RAISE project meets twice a week at Knights and aims to support at least 200 local refugees from the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton. The project aims to equip them with skills to improve their work-readiness through a range of training including English as a Second Language (ESOL). It also offers job search and brokerage support and 'wrap-around' services such as counselling and access to housing support.
- Our partnership with the Injera Club/YEMA sees young people from Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia meet on a Tuesday evening. The cultural sounds can be heard from miles away.

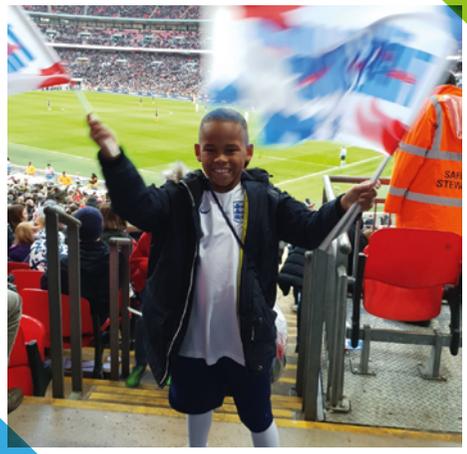
34

The number of active partnerships in 2018 including the English Football Association

Schools work in focus

In 2018 we provided weekly support and enrichment services to our members through partnerships with two local schools.

At Richard Aitkins Primary School, we delivered fortnightly group and one-to-one mentoring sessions, a debate club, and weekly lunch-time martial art and after school video magazine sessions. At City Heights Academy, a secondary school, we delivered weekly lunch-time and after school boxing sessions. Group and one-to-one mentoring went hand-in-hand with both.



Making progress

Working with the SLRA

Helping refugees in the community

Since January 2018, the South London Refugee Association (SLRA) has been running its youth project, Global Youth, from Knights Youth Centre.

Global Youth works with 14-18 year-old refugees and provides a programme of sport, art, social education, cooking, workshops, coaching and work experience as well as day-trips and residential.

Since moving to Knights, the project has gone from strength to strength. Numbers have greatly increased and the young people really enjoy the space and the atmosphere at the centre.

SLRA has organised a number of trips for its young people including swimming, football tournaments, go-karting, and the Bike Project. Knights' unique space also allows it to provide football coaching (alongside Fulham Football Club) and to run art sessions like T-shirt making and sculpture through London Youth. It also ran a film-making course with WAC Arts and a garden project through Santander.

It has been a very successful year. Young people from as far afield as Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Syria and Vietnam are learning how to interact, gain tolerance and understanding for each other, improve their English, feel less isolated as part of a new community, and keep fit and healthy.



Making progress

Pursuing excellence

Dave Dowie, Trustee, Quality Assurance and Youth Voice

High standards of youth work lead to happier young people and better life outcomes. Ultimately those better outcomes mean we become a better, more sustainable organisation.

Committing to the highest standards often means looking outside our walls to organisations that can offer expertise and accreditations that both improve our service and provide evidence of our value to the world around us.

London Youth's Quality Mark is one of those schemes. Accredited by City and Guilds and involving young people in its assessments, it provides a badge of excellence to youth organisations that is recognised by local authorities and funders. We did well some years ago to achieve bronze status, but decided late in 2017 to pursue the financial and reputational advantages that would come with achieving a silver mark.

As a new trustee at Knights – and someone with plenty of experience in this area – I threw myself into the challenge. Gaining these accreditations is no easy task. A huge amount of work was required to both bring our practices up to speed and gather the portfolio of evidence needed for the submission.

A meeting with a London Youth assessor gave us a detailed sense for the organisation's requirements. Interestingly, the Silver award focuses on an organisation's ability to engage young people in the workings of its service and give them a meaningful voice in the delivery of it. This is called 'young people's voice'. This fitted very nicely with my trustee role and, thankfully, is something we've been working on at the centre for some years.

We developed a detailed workplan and staff were allocated responsibilities for delivering the face-to-face work needed to meet the Quality Mark criteria and gathering evidence of our progress. Our portfolio was completed in mid-March 2018 alongside what's called a 'participation paper' that would provide evidence of how Knights would take forward young people's participation in the future.

We were delighted that our submission was signed off and – provided we carry out a number of minor additions – we've been awarded a silver Quality Mark. Success!



Making progress Pursuing excellence

Continued

Elsewhere, Knights has been successful in accessing Mayor of London funding for our work with girls and young women who are at risk of entering statutory services. I devised a system that demonstrates the reduced risk the young people pose to the community once we have worked with them. It requires a youth worker to take on an important working role with each of the young women who are referred to us and to complete a monitoring sheet based on their participation in activities at Knights. Designed to meet the needs of youth workers and prove the value of our service to funders, this system has allowed us to make strides forwards and win valuable financial backing.

80

The number of friends and supporters that joined us for a 'thank you' garden party at Chris and Julie Saunders' home in July.



Higher standards of youth work lead to happier young people and better life outcomes. Those better outcomes mean we become a better organisation.



Making progress

Knights memories



Knights veteran Mervyn Wright shares his story

This article starts with a photo. It's the monochrome one you can see here, with a group of lads clustering around a ship's wheel.

It evoked so many memories for me. Happy memories of joining the Streatham Hill Boys Club which met in the old Dunraven School on Adare Walk in Streatham Hill.

Streatham Hill Boys Club – which would later become Knights – was run by enthusiastic and energetic young Christian men who offered regular evening activities for boys to meet and make friends. Activities included football, handball, gymnastics, table-tennis, board games, quizzes and discussions. Every evening there was a group get-together for a talk about the love of God and the Christian way of life. And that wasn't all. Day trips. Countryside hikes. Residential weekends. Annual campaign holidays. These were amazing experiences that expanded our lives and horizons at a time when there were very limited opportunities available

Making progress Knights memories

Continued

Back to the photo. This was a day trip to Brighton back in the 1950s – a rare seaside trip with our mates. It was a very special treat for all us South London boys – you can see that most of us are wearing jackets and ties for a trip to the seaside.

I'm on the far left of the photo. The two tall figures at the back are leaders Ron Saunders and Peter Parry (a third leader on the trip, Tony Knowles, took the photo). All the other faces are familiar but I'm afraid most of the names are not. Ron Saunders, at the back on the right, has been a huge presence in the life of Streatham Hill Boys Club and Knights Youth Centre – and a major influence and support throughout my life.

My family moved to Streatham in 1949. I was very shy and had a stammer. I became friends with John Lacey (also in the photo, in the middle of the back row of boys) whose family lived just a few doors away. John had just started going to the Streatham Hill Boys Club and encouraged me to go with him. The joining age was 12 and I was only 11 – but lied about my age to join. Not a good start! At one of the evening sessions John and I became Christians. It was a life-changing decision for both of us.

At the age of 15 my mother died and the family broke up. Ron Saunders, and his wife Pat, offered me a home with them and I gladly accepted. I was, and will be, forever grateful for that hugely generous offer at a critical time in my life. John and I stayed friends and volunteered as Junior leaders at the club – sadly his life was later tragically cut short in a motorbike accident. His loss was heaven's gain.

I joined the army in 1957 and became a physical training instructor. I quickly learnt you can't do that job if you're shy and have a stammer – I was sure it was God's way of helping me overcome this. While I was in the army, the Streatham Hill Boys Club combined with the Knights Boys Club and the Crossroads Girls Club to open a new, purpose-built centre in Streatham Place. The Knights Youth Centre was born and remains in the same building to this day.



Over the years, thousands of young people have benefited by coming through Knights' doors. All those involved – the young people, the youth workers and the management – need our support.



I completed my two years in the army and, in June 1960, married Ann. We were the first to hold a wedding reception at the new Youth Centre. Throughout my life I had been a voluntary youth leader at Knights but it was a fateful day in 1977 when Ron Saunders, then chairman, and Maurice Smith, president of The Knights Association of Christian Youth Clubs, visited. They asked if I would consider applying to be the full-time youth worker at the centre. It was a huge surprise, even shock. After much prayer and consideration Ann and I decided that I should say yes. I believed that God had prepared me for this challenge.

At that time there was a good career structure in the youth service and in-service training helped me qualify as a full-time youth worker. I stayed in the post until 1989 and during that time Ron Saunders' sons, Chris and John, were volunteer youth workers and progressed to being Chairman and Treasurer of Knights. A wonderful legacy and a tribute to their father for a lifetime spent providing for young people.

In 1989 I left Knights to pursue new opportunities working with young people elsewhere, but I've never forgotten my time there (and still maintain a close connection with the place and people).

Over the years thousands of young people have benefited by coming through its doors and I was one of them. The vital and much needed continuation of God's work in encouraging and supporting the growth and development of the young people in south London continues today and is in good hands. The challenges and risks that our young people face today are greater than ever and the work has never been more important. All those involved – the young people, the youth workers and the management – need our support and prayers.

This photo has brought back a lifetime of memories. I'll be forever thankful to God for His gracious interventions and blessings throughout my life and to Ron Saunders, His committed and faithful servant.

Accounts and finances

Despite the continued generous support of the Harriet Trust there was a deficit in this year's finances.

While the current environment for organisations like ours is far from straightforward, some specific circumstances had an impact. The departure of Stu Thomson, our former head of youth services, affected our fundraising ability which temporarily reduced the flow of our grant income. A new team is now in place and working very successfully.

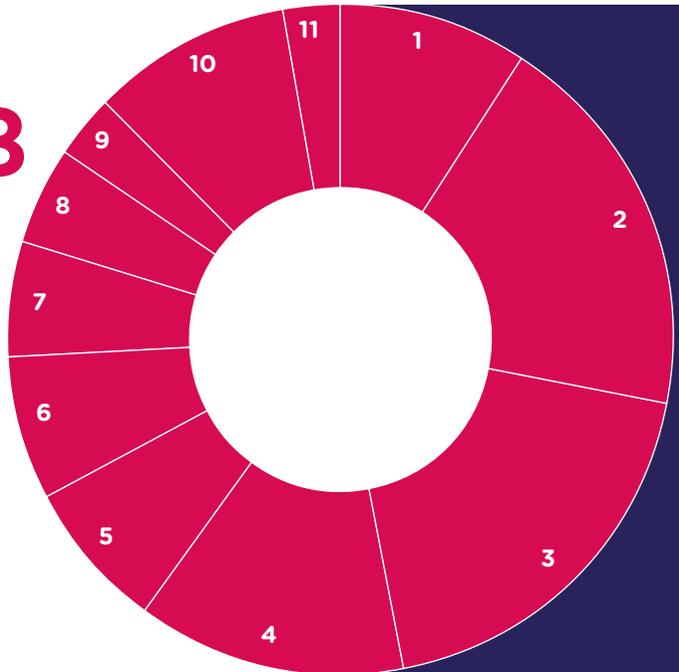
The full accounts are, as ever, available from us or via the Charity Commission website.

Where our money came from...

158,828

Total income

1. Personal donations inc. Annual Review donations and KYC 900	£14,742
2. Young Clapham	£30,180
3. Harriet Trust	£30,000
4. Lettings	£20,461
5. BBC Children in Need	£11,789
6. Building Young Lambeth	£10,958
7. Kommunity Youth Creative	£8,720
8. Young Lambeth CoOperative Summer Project	£7,560
9. Santander	£4,650
10. Other grants	£15,502
11. Miscellaneous	£4,268



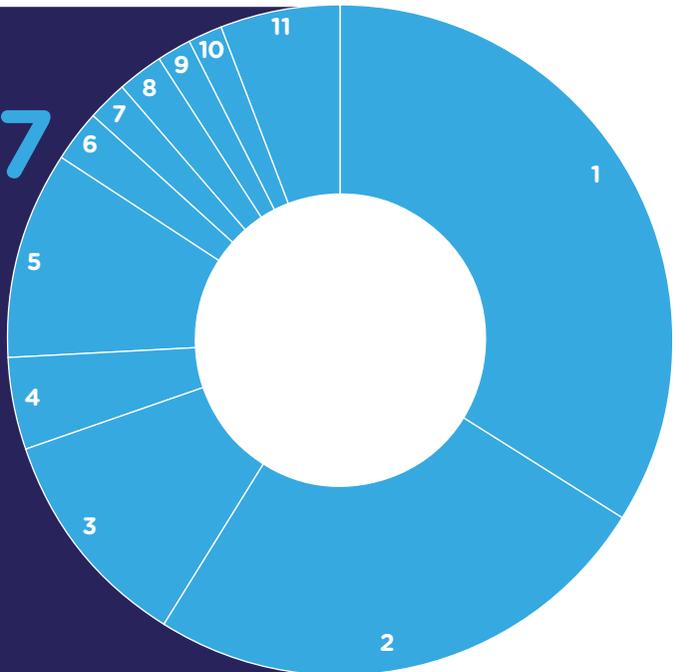


Where our money went

184,607

Total Expenditure

1. KYC Staff costs	£62,623
2. Project expenditure	£46,306
3. Property costs	£20,192
4. Maintenance	£8,122
5. TYLAP costs	£18,444
6. Minibus	£4,766
7. IT	£3,406
8. Insurance	£3,992
9. Telephone, internet and photocopier	£3,180
10. Club activities	£3,143
11. Other expenditure	£10,435



We hope you've enjoyed reading this report.

A quick, final word of thanks.
Firstly to Esco, who have printed and mailed this report to all our friends for more than a decade.
And finally to designer Tim Lacey.
Thanks so much to both for their invaluable input.

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