

# Consistent care for young people



# We are Knights This is what we do

**Knights Youth Centre (KYC)** 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 200 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 8-21 regardless of their gender, race, sexuality or disability. In addition to 'standard' activities, we provide sports coaching, offsite trips, regular residentials, 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.



## Our core principles

# Community

We feel that each young person should belong and have a positive role within their community.

# Support

It is our intention to ensure that each young person is equipped and confident to make positive choices.

# Equality

KYC is open to any young person regardless of gender, sexuality, disability, culture or religion.

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## Chair's introduction and overview

# A year of innovation and growth



**Sitting down to write this introduction feels a little like Groundhog Day: COVID-19 is still with us more than one year after leaping into the world and disrupting all our lives.**

This past year has been one of joys and sadness and I convey my sympathies to those who have suffered from ill health or lost loved ones. We at Knights have supported each other and our members throughout and, working within the COVID guidelines, have been able to continue functioning and thriving. I am thankful for the hard work of our staff and volunteers - led by Ryan Bish - as well as the behind-the-scenes support of the Trustees who have committed their skills and time to supporting our work. We have benefitted from their experience and dedication, and I am beyond grateful.

Lockdown has unlocked pools of creativity in our workers who have designed new ways of supporting and working with members. On those occasions when lockdown was lifted, we held activities on site and made the most of facilities at Wey Island. In between, our team took the opportunity to train and improve their skills and knowledge. We have grown during this period, increasing the number of staff and trustees to expand our work and support its delivery. You'll read more detail on all this over the coming pages.

We do not take for granted the funds we receive at a time when many individuals, funding organisations and charities are struggling financially. We give thanks for the generous grants, donations and bequests we have received over the past year. Thanks also for those of you who support the work and our members in prayer.

Formed in 1936, Knights started with a game of football on Tooting Bec Common and has now provided love and support for young people in Clapham Park and the surrounding areas for well over 80 years. We owe a debt to the volunteers, staff and management whose dedication was unwavering across this huge stretch of time and who made it their responsibility to develop others who could continue to take the baton forward. We are, of course, incredibly grateful to all those responsible for the valuable work you will read about in this review.

More up to date information about our work is available at [www.knightsyouthcentre.org.uk](http://www.knightsyouthcentre.org.uk). Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you want to support us, financially, prayerfully, by volunteering or by sharing your time or skills in any other way.

Enjoy the review – I look forward to hopefully seeing you all very soon.

**Millicent Grant**  
Chair



**We have grown during this period, increasing the number of staff and trustees to expand our work and support its delivery.** 

# A year at Knights

Updates from our engine room:  
Juniors, Girls at KYC, Inters – and  
our youth workers and partners, too



Lockdown has unlocked  
pools of creativity in our  
workers who have designed  
new ways of supporting and  
working with members.



Millicent Grant, Chair



# COVID and beyond

## **Like everyone, over the last year we've faced down a pandemic of the like none of us have ever seen before.**

We made the difficult decision to close our doors on 20th March 2020, unsure when will would be able to open our building again. Although there were many uncertainties, we did know one thing for sure: more than ever we had a duty to support our members, their families, and the local community. We knew many would find life difficult.

In response we set up a remote youth service that delivered a range of creative and support services for three months. Online 'hangouts' replicated onsite sessions and helped to maintain routine and provide a safe platform for young people to interact with one another positively. 'Catch up' sessions provided one-to-one goal setting and resilience support for our young people and a phonenumber service made youth workers available to give general advice on local services that callers may be able to access.

Elsewhere, we delivered food parcels with recipe guides to families – deliveries that also enabled fruitful discussions with young people and their families that were well appreciated. These were a difficult few months that challenged the concept of youth work, but one of our main allies were our members' parents: it was them who helped us shape what the community needed, believed in what we were trying to achieve and encouraged their children to take part.

Once restrictions began to ease, we gradually began to meet the young people in person and restore some normality – but not without PPE being worn and guidelines being followed. Nevertheless, the young people were delighted that the club was back open. From there we – alongside our partners – organised small group activities and offsite trips to places like Hindleap Warren, Wey Island, Thorpe Park, Chessington and the theatre.



**I'm overwhelmed by the quality of food which has supported us throughout lockdown. The selection of meals was good and nourishing. The staff went out of their way to provide an amazing service.**



**It's nice to know that someone out there cares. Even now, with things the way there are, there's support out there.**



In June we were in a position to increase our staff levels and hired three additional youth workers. Two 'detached' workers helped run and oversee the six-week pilot phase of an afterschool club which ended in December. The initiative ran a variety of structured programmes including cooking, mixed martial arts and music production. The feedback from the 12 students, schoolteachers and parents who took part has been positive. The programme was such a success it is now part of our core offering.

We also increased our memberships across all age groups and, despite the lockdown in November, stayed operating throughout 2020. For us this was an amazing achievement.

In the beginning of 2021, and with news of lockdown three breaking, we were more prepared. We grouped together as a staff team and conducted a survey with our members and their families. The survey asked specific questions about what support they would benefit from and any recommendations they had. The results were used to tailor individual packages of support and identify any emerging issues and concerns. The work continues.



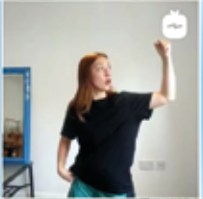
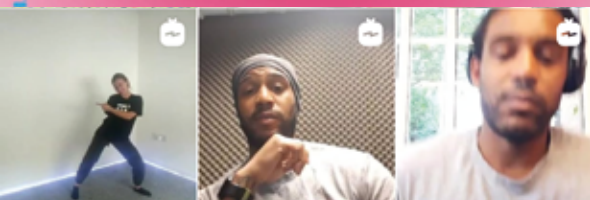
**The support has been really amazing. I don't know what I would have done without it.**



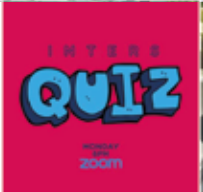




# WEDNESDAY GIRLS ONLINE HANGOUT



"I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO HEAL MYSELF, AND I'VE FOUND THAT KINDNESS IS THE BEST WAY"  
- Lily Page



## Knights' lockdown in numbers

While we couldn't deliver services face-to-face between April and July 2020, we were still able to support young people in the area.

# 247

Hours of youth work provided

# 54

Sessions delivered to young people

# 97

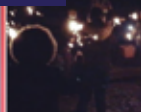
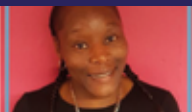
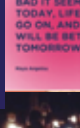
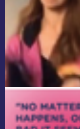
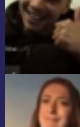
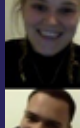
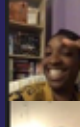
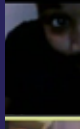
Food packages delivered

# 72

Young people accessed services

# 1

Launch of a new live programme of dance sessions on Instagram



# Juniors

## Juniors are an age group full of energy and the desire to learn.

They're at a key stage in shaping their own identity. The children that attend Juniors participate in play and self-discovery initiatives to enhance their self-awareness and esteem to overcome challenges they're facing now and will face in the future.

We believe that young people are the masters of their own destiny and, with the right support, can make positive choices for themselves to increase their life prospects. This is why we make sure their voices and opinions are heard when deciding how the club is run and what activities they want to take part in.

Despite the challenges experienced with COVID-19 – not least the constant rearranging of plans as guidance changed – we managed to safely set up weekly programmes that consisted of sports and games, cooking and food safety, music production, culture and identity, martial arts and life skills such as identifying and reporting hazardous situations. We also create time for the children to come together to speak about themselves and provide opportunities for staff to take an active interest in who they are as individuals.

Alongside onsite activities, we also arranged trips to places like Wey Island and Hindleap Warren where the Juniors got to work as a team to solve problems and overcome fears.



Elsewhere, we struck up a partnership with a local school to create an afterschool club which has developed really well and established good attendance. The aim was to integrate this group with our regular Juniors members but, due to having to work in bubbles, this sadly wasn't possible. Once the restrictions have fully eased we'll have another go, bringing both groups together for a session that runs from afternoon into the evening.





# Girls at Knights

**Our girls work at Knights continues to be one of our greatest assets and is regularly of interest to prospective partners, funders and referrers.**

The national lockdown and club closures have of course played an enormous part in this year's narrative, but we have not let them stop us cultivating a space for the girls to flourish. Thankfully we've not lost touch with many members and, in some ways, coming through this together has strengthened our relationships with the girls. Not only have we maintained a great core group of girls, but we have also welcomed some new members who have quickly become established at the club and found new friendships here.

Throughout the lockdown we made sure we stayed connected in any way we could. Video calls were a challenge as many of the girls did not have the confidence to show their face on camera and others found it difficult to engage over the phone. However, our deliveries and doorstep chats were a definite success. In the first lockdown we delivered care packages including self-care treats and essentials to every single girl on our database.

We welcomed two new staff members to the girls' team this year. Joey Miller and Beverley Deniran brought a wealth of youth work experience and have already begun some excellent work challenging and encouraging the girls and building trusted relationships.



Whenever we got the chance to meet with the young people we jumped at the opportunity. This included a couple of trips to Wey Island where we enjoyed a summer afternoon taking the boats down the river and a very rainy Bonfire Night where the young people impressed us with their perseverance in trying to light a fire in the rain and wind. We're looking forward to a longer stay next year.

Our main focus at Girls this year has been about empowering our members to know their true value. This focus is behind the development of our 'I am...'  
programme, which is a catalogue of resources that provide targeted support to girls at risk of, or vulnerable to, criminal activity. The programme provides girls space to reflect as well as equipping them with tools and affirmations to help them thrive in what we know is an increasingly complicated and challenging world.



**I've absolutely loved working in my local community alongside amazing, experienced youth workers and providing a space for these vibrant, vivacious, resilient young women.**



**Joey Miller**

Other highlights include a sexual health workshop with Brook in which the girls were free to ask absolutely any question. They were totally absorbed, curious and engaged. Our trip to the Archlight Cinema in Battersea for a private viewing of acclaimed film, Rocks, was brilliant. This extraordinary film made with young black girls from North London definitely inspired our girls.





# Inters

**Given everything the world has thrown at Inters, it has been a good year.**

The section was closed for a long period due to COVID but, thanks to the team delivering innovative online sessions, we've managed to keep a large group of young people engaged in our services.

The pandemic actually served to bring the staff team together. During the lockdowns the team – Shem, Paps, Ellie and Ryan – have worked well, each bringing their own value and expertise, and we've delivered food parcels, run online competitions and offered mentoring and one-to-one catch-ups to members over the phone. Online sessions can't match face-to-face work, but we found that playing Pictionary and running quizzes via Zoom has gone down very well with our young people. We were delighted to continue to be able to give Jack Petchey awards despite the restrictions of the pandemic.

We were able to open for a couple of months in 2020 of course, and when we did ran both informal social sessions and also take the young people on an offsite trip to Hindleap Warren.

We're looking forward to the chance to deliver more consistent face-to-face and one-to-one work later in 2021 as well as the opportunity to design more trips, workshops and activities to engage our young people with the issues that matter most in different ways.





A spotlight on...

# The story so far

## Paps Doukoure



**Paps Doukoure was a member at Knights Youth Centre not so long ago. Now he's a valued part of the staff team. Here he looks back at his journey so far.**

Knights Youth Centre has been an incredibly important part of my life. Just down the road from the house where I grew up, there were so many things that I got to do and see because of the Centre. One of my highlights was our trip to Abergavenny – as an active person I loved being so close to the beach and the golf course.

Sadly, gang violence is a regular part of being a young person in the local area. Knights did more than sway me away from trouble – it allowed me to become, and stay, confident. I was taught to believe that if I wanted to do something I could. My big brother went to Knights too and I it was a proud moment when I passed through Juniors like he did before me.

Now I'm a Sessional Youth Worker and I can see the potential in the young people that come to the Centre. They've had a very difficult year, but I know that with the right support they can achieve all of their big creative and entrepreneurial dreams.

Looking at my own career, I'm ambitious and still have a lot to learn. Working alongside Shem has been a highlight – he was a Youth Worker at Knights when I was an attendee – and I've already gained so much knowledge in this role. I'm looking forward to what comes next, and in the next few years I'd like to progress to become a Team Leader. What next after that? We shall see!



A spotlight on...

# Coming full circle

## Ryan Bish



**Local to the area, Ryan initially joined Knight's apprenticeship scheme (TYLAP) 13 years ago and recently returned in September 2019 as lead youth worker, responsible for our youth work services. Here Ryan reflects on an unprecedented year, what young people need and shares his hopes for the future.**

**Ryan, you've had a long history with Knights. How best would you describe it? What would you say is your favourite memory?**

I've known and have been involved with Knights for a long time, and definitely consider it a home away from home.

I've got many favourite memories, but if I were to pick one it would be a residential held back in 2009. The young people who came were from a real variety of backgrounds and we did an exercise in positivity where they would say nice things about each other. Some of those involved became quite emotional hearing such lovely things said about them. It was a brilliant experience.

**You weren't back at Knights for very long before the pandemic hit. What did Knights do to switch its services after lockdown?**

In March 2020 we immediately switched to delivering exclusively online sessions, modifying all our youth work so that it could be delivered digitally. We also helped to support the wider community by coordinating food deliveries for local families and set up a phone line which acted as a 'one-stop shop' for people seeking advice in the area.

## **That's a lot of work! What worked well?**

Working with partners (including Lambeth Council, local schools, housing associations and other charities) really helped us to stay connected with what was going on and to keep up with best practice.

The crisis reinforced our belief that by helping the wider community, you also help young people. We never look at them solely as individuals, but also as part of a support network of family and friends. We knew that we were trusted locally, and that we had the capability to do things like deliveries and the phone line well – so it made sense for us to step up.

The relationships we have built with parents have definitely improved. Through things like WhatsApp groups and mentoring we've been able to get people to open up about their concerns and get involved in new ways.

## **What were the biggest challenges?**

More went right than went wrong, and switching how we do our work immediately meant that people knew we were there for them.

However, there were definitely some challenges. Youth work is by nature face-to-face. It's more difficult to have conversations and build rapport online. And, like many organisations, we had to deal with the issue of IT poverty, which meant that some young people struggled to access our services.

For me personally, it was sometimes tough to keep motivated and optimistic when we've never experienced anything like this.

## **As lockdown (hopefully) continues to ease, what lessons have you learnt for the future?**

There's a lot more support that young people and their families can access now, which means we can take a more targeted approach to our work. We will keep doing our regular surveys of young people, which will improve our on-boarding process and monitoring.

The pandemic has reminded us to never get side-tracked from the need, and to always stay relevant.

## **Lastly, what are your hopes for Knights and the young people it serves?**

For the Centre, I'd like it to remain open, embedded in the community and providing opportunities. I'd like some of our cohort to return when they're older as volunteers, trustees and donors too.

And I really hope that this generation can overcome the trauma and the uncertainty that they have faced. They can lead the way in doing things differently, and I know that they have the resilience and entrepreneurial spirit to thrive – if given the right support.

# Partnering with schools

## Richard Atkins school

**Our work with local schools continues to be an important part of our service. Teachers are extremely busy and the additional pair of hands and pastoral support we provide goes a long way.**

Over the last year we have run two successful funded programmes at the local primary school, Richard Atkins. The first, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, used storytelling to increase confidence and creativity with young people across years four, five and six. Unfortunately the programme was cut short due to the national lockdown, but we maintained contact with the school and provided ad hoc support wherever possible.

We knew schools would be facing new challenges as their students returned after such a long time at home. The teachers and school safeguarding leads voiced fears that the return to school would inevitably be followed by overwhelming numbers of concerning disclosures.

In response we built the 'Reset' programme to provide wellbeing support to students, giving them a space to reflect on all they've gone through. The programme equips the students with the tools to face challenges in the future. In September we began this programme to the new cohort of Year Six students at Richard Atkins Primary School.

By meeting young people at school, we meet them where they are at, in a space that is hopefully safe and nurturing. Building relationships in these places helps us to introduce the club and eventually get more young people through our doors. It provides an opportunity for us to offer additional support outside of school and become an important bridge, especially during the transition to secondary school.

Additionally, many of the young people who attend Knights struggle engaging with school for many varied reasons – exclusions and school refusal are a common trend. Our work in schools is one way in which we can support our young people to reengage and demonstrates to them that we believe in the benefits of education.



**The children feel more 'held'. They feel like someone is there for them. I've seen children be better at regulating themselves. I've seen a situation where Knights taught a child breathing techniques, then I've seen a child practicing those independently.**







**Knights' staff are persistent, use their initiative and are very flexible. The children really enjoy the sessions. Children's feedback is always a good indicator.**



**As a result of their work with Knights, the children are getting into trouble less. There's less conflict and better peer-to-peer relationships.**



# Catching up with our local councillor Liz Atkins



**Liz Atkins is the local Councillor for Streatham Hill. We asked her a few questions about her role, Knights' place in the community and her views on supporting young people.**

**Hello Liz. Perhaps you could explain your role at Lambeth Council?**

I'm Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This means that I hold the Council's cabinet and senior officials to account for the decisions that they make, and we check that they are looking out for residents' best interests.

Previously, I was Chair of the Children's Services sub-committee, and had a more direct role with young people. We made sure representatives from the youth council and young people's organisations were both members of the committee and presented at meetings.

**How does Lambeth Council engage with its young residents?**

We've still got a long way to go to better co-produce services with young people, but we're definitely getting better at it. We support lots of apprenticeships and speak to local people regularly about how the council can help them.

**Knights is in your patch. When did you first become aware of the Centre?**

I've known about Knights for a long time. I started to engage more with the centre when I was elected Councillor in 2014. I came in for a tour and was hugely impressed with everything it does. I've remained in touch and speak frequently with trustees about the operations of the centre.

**In your view, what role does Knights play in the local community?**

It's so much more than a youth centre. It's a vital hub of activity. The fact that it works closely with schools and provides young people with off-site activities means that it plays a huge role in the lives of many in the area.

**2020 was a difficult year for young people. What are your hopes for them in 2021?**

Young people today are facing phenomenal challenges. At a basic level our schools need to be properly funded and resourced, and children need to have safe spaces to turn to when they need help.

More needs to be done to tackle the mental health crisis, to support care leavers and to tackle the root causes of youth violence. Locally we need to make sure that good jobs are available and that housing is affordable for all. Of course, we need to make sure the youth sector is properly funded too.

# Partnerships in Practice:

## building a community hub

**We're determined to become a 'community hub' where a range of services relevant to young people are provided through the week - not just during the evening when youth centres traditionally open.**

Research suggests that organisations serving children and families should be located close together whenever possible and try to wrap themselves around the young person and their needs rather than them have to be passed from pillar to post to get the support they need.

Knights has therefore opened its doors over the last few years and invited other like-minded organisations ranging from Lambeth Council and the Metropolitan Police to Hope Pilates and Fulham FC to join us. COVID-19 hasn't stopped this effort. Coming up: a close-up on two of our most important partnerships.

**Lambeth Council**



**Young Lambeth Cooperative**



**YClapham**



**South London Refugee Association (SLRA)**



**Ecclesia Ministries**



**Fulham FC**



**Metropolitan Police**



**Hope Pilates**



# Our partnership with **IntoUniversity**



**IntoUniversity Brixton helps disadvantaged young people attain either a university place or another chosen aspiration. Here they explain the importance of what they do and their relationship with Knights.**

Two years on from our move to Knights, we've established excellent opportunities for young people in the local area while maintaining our relationships with long-term users and families. As an educational charity aiming to raise aspiration among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, we embed our staff and resources in communities where we can achieve the most impact. We see thousands of young people aged 7-18 every year and work with nine partner schools.

Operating during the pandemic has been tough as we've had to adapt our approach to combine virtual provision with highly stringent, in-person regulations (not least reducing class sizes to 15, wearing PPE and maintaining social distancing). This makes teaching more challenging, and our teams have shown admirable creativity and resilience. As and when we move towards 'normality', we're hope to return to a full delivery calendar in time for the next academic year (September 2021).



Reflecting more holistically on our operations in recent years, Knights has been a delightful upgrade on our previous site. Once the sports hall is transformed into a working classroom, the space, light, and utilities available make it a great learning environment for our users. Also, the 'sharing' of users has been a fantastic advantage for our two organisations – one student in particular has benefited greatly from the combined pastoral and academic support that has been triaged between IntoUniversity and Knights.

On a more personal level, getting to know the different organisations that access the centre has been enjoyable and eye opening. It demonstrates just how local residents can access a range of high quality support from one single 'hub'.

The work we carry out is significantly improved and supplemented by the other opportunities provided by Knights, making it a very special and important place for both staff and families.

# Our partnership with **Da'aro Youth Project**

**Da'aro Youth Project was established in 2018 by members of London's Eritrean community in response to the deaths of a number of teenage Eritreans by suicide. It works to support the wellbeing of young people arriving in the UK alone from the Horn of Africa. Here they explain what they do - and how their partnership with us helps their effort.**

Da'aro Youth Project has weathered the COVID-19 pandemic by moving online and adapting to the needs of the young asylum-seekers and refugees who attended our 'Injera Club'. During multiple lockdowns in London, Injera Club became a delivery service, reaching young people in the community by offering them home-cooked traditional food and providing support on the phone. Through this service, we remained in contact with young people and they continued to approach us when they had a problem or needed advice.

As a result, the reach of our casework service has grown as we continue to support young people dealing with mental health crises, homelessness problems, issues with social services and immigration difficulties.



As a charity, we've also grown during the last year - we now have two staff members and are about to welcome a third. Our trustee board has grown and become stronger. We have just welcomed a new array of talented volunteers.

We're super excited to be returning to Knights Youth Centre in mid-2021 - welcoming back young people for food, games and community engagement. Though we've needed to be reactive to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, young people have been asking us 'when is Injera Club coming back' every time we call them. The desire to socialise and be together again has been overwhelming and we're really thankful for Knights' support.



# Accounts and finances

**We're pleased to say that this has been a balanced year financially - with a small surplus (4 per cent of our income). This was broadly in line with expectations, although both income and expenditure were somewhat lower than forecast at the start 2020.**

Our ongoing staffing challenges at the beginning of the financial year were resolved by the start of the autumn term, but some impact on our service delivery could not be avoided.

This meant that not only were our staffing and associated costs lower than expected, but some of our funding income was delayed until our service delivery could catch up. We were however able to set aside £25,000 towards the modernisation and redevelopment of the club building and add a further £5,000 towards replacement of our minibus.

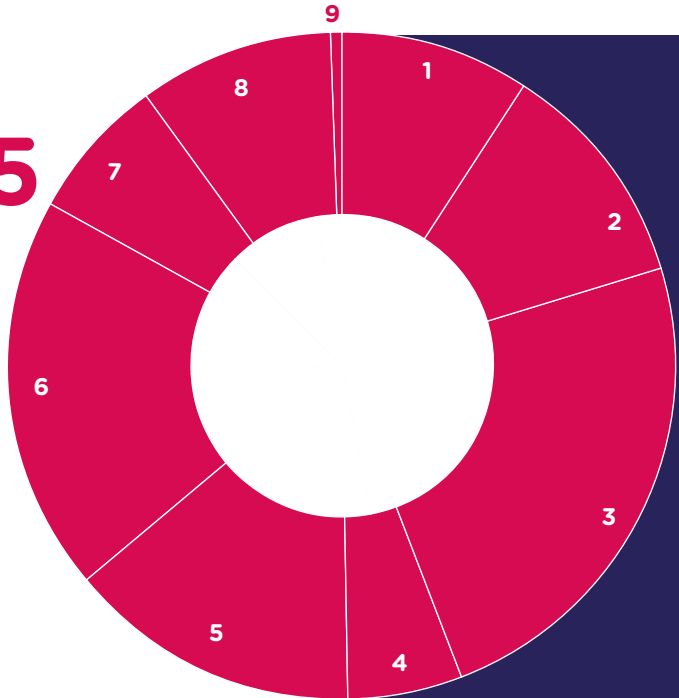
As ever the full accounts are available from us or via the Charity Commission website.

Where our money came from...

# 183,835

Total income

1. Personal donations inc. Annual Review donations and KYC 900	<b>£17,052</b>
2. Lambeth YLC	<b>£20,622</b>
3. Lettings	<b>£43,795</b>
4. Harriet Trust	<b>£10,000</b>
5. BBC Children in Need	<b>£26,480</b>
6. National Lottery	<b>£35,186</b>
7. Young Londoners	<b>£12,761</b>
8. Other grants	<b>£17,181</b>
9. Miscellaneous	<b>£758</b>





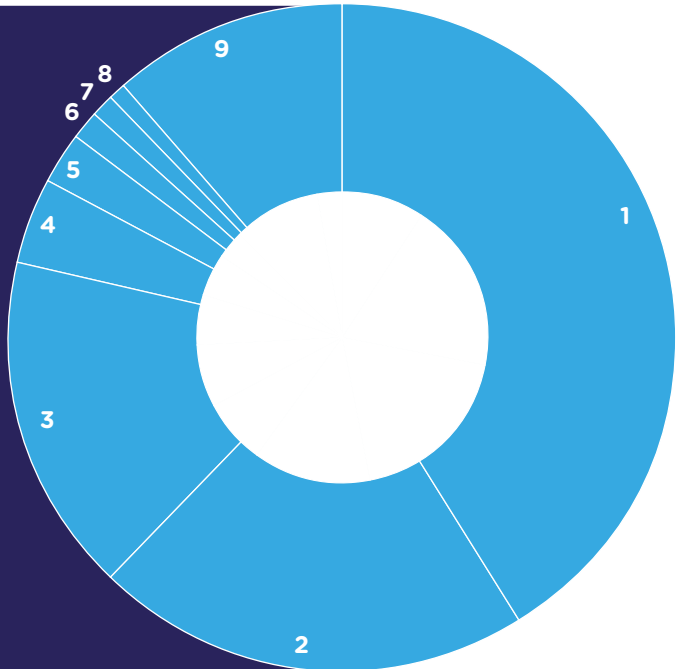
Knights Youth Club, as seen from Streatham Place

Where our money went...

**176,531**

Total expenditure

1. KYC Staff costs	<b>£72,809</b>
2. Property costs	<b>£37,145</b>
3. Club activities and projects	<b>£28,915</b>
4. Maintenance	<b>£7,650</b>
5. Insurance	<b>£4,485</b>
6. Telephone, internet and photocopier	<b>£2,172</b>
7. Minibus	<b>£2,113</b>
8. Training	<b>£1,141</b>
9. Other expenditure	<b>£20,101</b>



# Memories and visions

Members, volunteers, supporters - thousands upon thousands of people have passed through our doors over the last eight decades. Here we revisit four of them and ask - who were they, what did they get from Knights, and what did Knights get from them?



Looking back, the responsibilities we were given and the organisational skills we learnt at Knights helped to set us up for our adult lives and careers.



Michelle Marquis-Brorson

# 30 years of memories – and a vision for the future



**Michelle Marquis-Brorson has been involved with Knights for more than three decades. Attending as a member from the age of seven, she eventually became Centre Manager. Having recently moved to Sweden with her family, here she recalls some of her most cherished times and shares her vision for the Centre in the future.**

**Michelle, you first joined Knights at a very young age. What was your first memory of the Centre, and how did you come to join?**

I joined just as I turned seven – a baby! I remember walking through the reception doors and just taking it all in.

I came along because both of my older brothers attended the youth club. For a while my brother Dave worked there too.

**What were your favourite pastimes at Knights?**

Without a doubt, the best things about being a Knights member were the holidays and residentials. I still remember well how much fun we had at the seaside in Clacton.

We were exposed to so much sport and culture. I took part in diving competitions, participated in baking classes with Tim, and went to see so many shows (although the less said about Babes in the Wood the better. It's important to show kids what a bad show looks like, right?).

**Later on, you became involved with the Trainee Youth Leaders Apprentice Programme (TYLAP). How did that happen?**

I became a young volunteer at Knights with my friend Becky, and we became young leaders in an early apprentice programme. Looking back, the responsibilities we were given and the organisational skills we learnt helped to set us up for our adult lives and careers, and being involved in some an innovative and impactful programme was incredible.

**As you rose up the ranks to run TYLAP, what gave you the most job satisfaction?**

Nothing made you feel as motivated or as proud as seeing a young person getting into university – it was a magical feeling. I also vividly recall helping CJ – a Tylapper – to get ready for a job interview, and the pride he felt when wearing his first suit.

I was involved with TYLAP for nine out of its ten years, and I loved working on it. The enthusiasm of fellow staff members was infectious, and I watched it develop from being a generic young leaders' programme to having a far sharper focus on educational attainment.

**Which other staff members played key roles in the programme?**

Stu Thomson, a former lead youth worker, had the initial idea, and two leaders called Sharna and Karis coordinated the project together. Sharna eventually ran it herself.

The staff team was so passionate, and our training weekends at Woodrow High House were so useful for team building and strategic thinking. My favourite memory as a staff member was the affirmation ceremony where I heard just how grateful the staff and Tylappers were for my hard work and dedication to the programme. It makes me feel a bit emotional even now!

**Your last role was as Centre Manager. What did you enjoy the most in that role?**

I relished getting the best deal for Knights and attaining pro-bono support from local businesses to keep the Centre ticking along. I found that once you talked to people about the Centre, and why we need youth work, people would 'get it' and become far more generous than they were initially.

**Looking to the future, what hopes do you have for Knights Youth Centre and the young people it works with?**

The Centre building itself needs a facelift. It's an amazing space but is looking a bit tired now. And for the young people I hope that Knights continues to have a solid and dedicated team. The Centre is a vibrant community hub and there is more to do to contribute to the wellbeing and health of the wider community.



# Memories from Brian Hamer

**Brian Hamer attended Knights for ten years from 1960. Football was a big part of club life back then: here he shares his memories of the team - and a whole lot more besides.**

Having spent ten years in a boys' home, I was introduced to Knights in 1960 when I was 16 by Len Renouf. Len was a Housemaster in the home and a peer of the Knights leadership at the time: Maurice Smith, Les Long, Ron Saunders, Jim Drury and Mac McDonald. I'd get to know them all in future years.

To me, Knights represented an opportunity to make friends, build confidence and grow as a person. It's staggering to think of the variety of activities offered. I counted 23 and there were more besides. What follows is just a brief sample.

## Football

Football was a huge part of our lives. Trevor Allen and Mervyn Wright proved to be dependable in midfield. Martin Dell was a gifted left-footer and quick. Colin Belcher, fiery, had more bookings than a holiday hotel (it's extraordinary he ended up as a referee). We were later joined by two talented Balham Club players, Dave King and Mickey Bushell.

At 6' 4", Ian Williams (or Rugs) played centre-half on occasions. His speciality was heading the ball, mainly because he'd arrive at it before any of us had left the ground. The direction, though, was all too often indeterminate.

One unkind comment credited him with more own goals than the opposing centre-forward. Amazingly, our goalkeeper, Martin Glassborow, took it all in his stride.

Dave Pilcher was a strong, uncompromising full-back. On a trip to Bournemouth, we were playing a combined churches team when Dave launched a sliding tackle that left a trench you could plant potatoes in and took out their left-winger (and three rows of spectators).

On the left wing was Dave Bradshaw. One game, played on the muddiest and wettest pitch you could ever see, sticks in the memory. We all walked off at the end of the game unrecognisable from the splatted mud, but Dave didn't have a mark on him. Science has yet to explain this phenomenon.

So we had the players. But were we successful? Well, yes. We entered and won a London five-a-side competition. Gold medals were presented by the Lord Mayor (at least that's who I think he was - if it wasn't the Lord Mayor, goodness knows where he got that gold chain from).



It shows how successful the Knights leadership was when football tours were arranged to Glasgow, Switzerland and Belgium. I am personally grateful to Knights for arranging a tour to Norfolk where I met my future wife. Unfortunately, the opposing centre-half had his leg broken. Ron Saunders arranged a charity return match with all proceeds going to the unfortunate centre-half. Ron, being in the print business, had a special poster made, now framed and taking pride of place in our kitchen.

### **The Brighton to Streatham Road Race**

Having a car, I was part of the support team – not quite brave or stupid enough to enter. It was won by my flatmate, John Constable (later I was best man at his wedding). Our other claim to fame – or, more accurately, claim to shame – was the accumulation of 43 empty milk bottles which the milkman refused to remove.

### **All-night hike, Devil's Punchbowl**

Boy, did it rain. I have never been so wet in my entire life. We might as well have been walking in the river as on the road. As for thoughts of romance, forget it.

### **Cricket**

Jim Drury was our cricket captain and arranged a more-than-useful team around him. He batted mid-order and, being well-built, when he hit the ball, it stayed hit. I enjoyed opening the bowling with John Love and also have fond memories of travelling with Tross Gibbons to play Sunday village cricket in Sussex.

### **Discussion Group**

I remember evening Discussion Groups at Les Long's house, covering all manner of subjects. Looking back, it was remarkable that Les, having done a day's work, found the time and patience to put up with us.

### **Driving Lessons**

Another indication of the forward-thinking and progressive attitude of Knights was the arranging of driving lessons. We were paired with another member, half-an-hour driving and half-an-hour in the back while the other member drove. I was paired with Richard King, a fellow cricketer. Richard was known, on occasions, for his direct approach. Our instructor was a charming lady, who turned to Richard and said 'Right, shall we move off?' Richard replied, 'The key, lady, the key'.

### **Leadership**

The wheel had turned full circle when Ray Kennard, who ran the Juniors, asked me, Russ Evans and Bob Tyler to help out. Encouraging their natural enthusiasm and daring them to 'have a go' was most rewarding.

### **In summary**

It is difficult if not impossible to quantify the debt of gratitude owed to the leaders of the club at the time. One can only hope the opportunities open to us at an impressionable age are still available to teenagers today.

# Remembering Jim Drury

**Jim Drury, a volunteer at Knights for more than 25 years, sadly passed away in 2020 of covid-19. Here Chris Saunders shares his favourite memories of Jim and looks back at his contributions to the youth centre.**

It would be an understatement to say Jim led a varied and interesting life. Born in 1935 in Bow, Jim and his parents and sisters fled south of the river to Brixton during the war, where he remained and became a valued part of the local community and Knights Youth Centre.

He didn't become a part of Knights through entirely virtuous intentions, however. In fact he was sent to the youth club by a Court Advocate in the late 1940s after he appeared in front of a Magistrate for stealing wood (yep, you read that right). Clearly a more serious crime back then, Jim credited this intervention for getting him out of a very hairy situation and 'setting him on the straight and narrow'.

From there on in, Jim was a Knights stalwart. He started as a volunteer leader at the club (briefly interrupted by national service) and was supported by fellow Knights leader, Alf Treneman, to set up his own heating business.



As the business took off, he continued to give back by taking on local apprentices, all the while still running youth centre programmes, residential holidays and – perhaps most importantly to him – the Knights Cricket Team.

Following a stint as the Seniors Club team leader, Jim became the Chair of Knights in 1979, and oversaw a huge innovation: the building of an extension to house a new ‘Skills Wing’ to offer training for young adults struggling to find work. He stepped down as Chair in 1988 to concentrate on his other voluntary activities, but still remained in the Knights fold.

Jim never stopped. Aside from being involved with Knights he was a School Governor, a Trustee of Wey Island Trust, and a Church Warden. He was also a devoted Christian. Furthermore, he was as dedicated to his family as he was to giving back to the community and his faith. He leaves behind Maureen, his wife of almost 60 years, his children Lesley, Lorraine and Billy, nine grandchildren, six great grandchildren and many foster children.

In fact, if it weren't for Knights, Jim never would have met his wife. He made the (not so) romantic gesture of asking Maureen out on a first date to help out on a residential trip to Norfolk, and despite his car breaking down on the way back, they were inseparable from then on. Maureen loved his sense of humour, as did we all. We will miss the man with a big laugh and a bigger heart.

# Remembering HRH, Duke of Edinburgh

**Prince Philip was a passionate supporter of the youth sector. Throughout his long life, his charity visits and patronages, the Duke of Edinburgh Award helped to amplify to the public the importance of having positive activities available for young people.**

The Duke visited Knights Youth Centre twice – in 1963 and 2002. During both visits, he praised the organisation, the staff, and its volunteers for their dedication to serving the local community and making sure that local young people had the opportunities they needed to thrive.

He signed the Visitors Book and engaged with every single young attendee who he met on both visits. Far more interested in young people than the adults, he listened to their thoughts and views on youth work, the challenges they were facing, and their aspirations for the future.

An account of his visit to the centre in 2002 reports that, despite the media hype about Prince Philip's apparent penchant for inappropriate remarks, his ability to engage young people over 60 years his junior was genuine and remarkable. There was much excitement and anticipation and, as members of management, leaders and over 60 young people awaited the arrival of the Prince's 'cavalcade', we remember a certain nine year-old approaching every adult male in the building asking, 'are you the Prince?'

Chris Saunders, former Chair of Knights Youth Centre, said: "I remember Prince Philip visiting the Centre so well. Due to security reasons his visit in 2002 was a 'whirlwind', and we had to prepare very quickly for his arrival. Of course, it was all worth it. The Duke of Edinburgh was kind and gracious and made everyone at the Club feel important and special. To me he is the grandfather of youth work".

Many will miss him, and may he rest in peace.



# Looking to the future

It's been an unprecedented year for Knights - the club, our people, our members, our community. But what's next?



COVID-19 has taken up huge amounts of time and manpower, and we're proud of how we've pulled through. But none of that has stopped us thinking ahead. We've got innovative plans for 2021.



Millicent Grant, Chair



# Time to listen - a Service Review

**Even when a voluntary organisation has been running a service for many years and has a good reputation, it is sensible to occasionally stop and deliberately listen to partners, staff and statutory agencies to explore how they see you and what could be done differently or better.**

We continuously listen to and involve our young people in shaping what we do, but going 'outside' to hear what our community partners and neighbours think of us and giving staff the freedom to speak openly is different - and even a little scary. But it's critical.

A year of lockdown seemed a good time to do such a 'Service Review'. Fortunately we were able to secure help from a seconded consultant provided by the wonderful Cranfield Trust to steer us through the review process.

25, 90 minute 1-1 confidential interviews were conducted by our independent consultant, Gareth, who was able to engage and listen to all our key stakeholders and staff as part of a broad conversation about Knights, our approach and our community impact. Perhaps most importantly he could explore with the interviewees what should come next if we were to be even more effective.

This huge piece of work culminated in Gareth presenting his findings to the whole team - staff and the board. This was a good learning and team-building experience in itself, but from it Knights has been able to identify and agree what our three main service development priorities will be over the next five years. These service aspirations have now been mainstreamed into our 21/22 post-COVID service plans and included in our fundraising priorities. They'll help keep us future-fit and relevant for the years ahead.

# Looking ahead

## **Much of what we've covered in this review focuses on the impact of COVID-19: how it has affected us, how we've responded, and what it's meant for the young people in our care.**

Perhaps that's not surprising. This is an annual review after all. It looks back by nature. More than that of course, COVID-19 has over the last year or so become an utterly dominant theme and force in all our lives. It's taken up huge amounts of time and manpower, and we're proud of how we've pulled through.

But none of that has stopped us thinking ahead. As you'll have read, we've taken the time to run a full service review and, beyond that, to think carefully as a team about what the future should hold for Knights.

We have some innovative plans for 2021 and beyond. Chief among these plans are working towards increasing our Girls programme by setting up more targeted work and increasing the hours of delivery. We are excited by our 'I am...' programme which, devised by one of our staff, will cover a wealth of themes for young women relating to their wellbeing including self-esteem and confidence over a 16-week period. We have been awarded additional funding and resources to run 20 wellbeing workshops for our Girls, delivered by Hope Pilates.

Re-launching seniors has been a stop-start process due to the COVID restrictions and the nature of setting up a sustainable project for young adults. We are committed to 'growing our own' through Inters alongside attracting new members through a creative provision including music production, paid employment opportunities and a weekly sports offer.

Our detached work is growing and will actively respond to the needs of local children and requests from schools. We want to make sure we can offer safe spaces where young people can meet and receive structured activities within the community. Our after-school services are likely to grow in the future with the post-school period often being the peak period of crime among this age group.

Within all our programmes it will be important to continue to listen to our young people and hear what they have to say about our services and, of course, make sure we have a robust set of monitoring and evaluation tools in place. Many of these have grown through our own experience and working with funders. In general, we use simple tools that measure impact; are young people friendly; understood by all workers; and can be used for service wide learning to help us improve and celebrate successes.



## Defining 'detached' youth work

Detached youth work is a practice that targets working with young people on their territory – whether that be schools, streets, parks or shared public spaces.



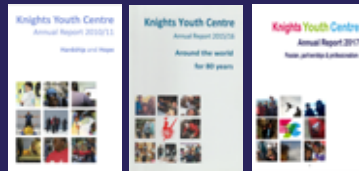
# A new future for our annual review

## We need your email address

**We're ending this year's review with a bit of announcement and we need your help.**

**Next year we're going to break with one of our longest traditions of sending out our annual review by post to all our friends, ex-embers, staff, volunteers and contributors. What you're holding in your hands now is our last printed annual review.**

But we don't want to lose touch, and we don't want to stop sharing news of our progress (or, indeed, walks down memory lane) every year via an electronic annual review. And in that we need your help. To be able to send you our annual review from 2022 onwards, we need your email address .



If you're not completely sure that Knights, or one of our board of trustees, has your address, then please get in touch with Chris Saunders via [chris\\_rsaunders@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chris_rsaunders@yahoo.co.uk).

Thank you.

# A big thank you to Esco

**As we print and post an annual review for the last time, we thought it was only right and proper to pay tribute to our friends at Esco.**

For the last 15 years this wonderful company have printed and posted our annual review to over 500 of you – and without charging a penny to Knights. They've put up with moving deadlines and last-minute requests. They've kept us organised, proofed our copy to a level of detail we couldn't have achieved, and done it all at blistering speed and with a smile on their faces. It may be the smallest project they deliver each year, but we've always been made to feel welcome, valued and prioritised.

Esco and its people are, to us, a wonderful example of how a business can make such a huge difference to a small community project like ours. Esco's CEO, Sue Duffin, briefly worked at Knights in the 1980s as a tutor in our then ground-breaking apprenticeship programme for young people. She subsequently went on to build her own successful company but has always remembered us and supported us generously.

Thank you, Sue. Thank you, everyone at Esco. Let's please keep in touch.



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# We hope you've enjoyed reading this report.

A quick, final word of thanks. Firstly to Esco who, as we've mentioned, have printed and mailed this review 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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