



Blackfen

Community Library

Blackfen Community Library

Creating Community Investing in Lives

Three Year Business Plan
2020-23



transformation

noun

a complete change in appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved in nature or appearance.

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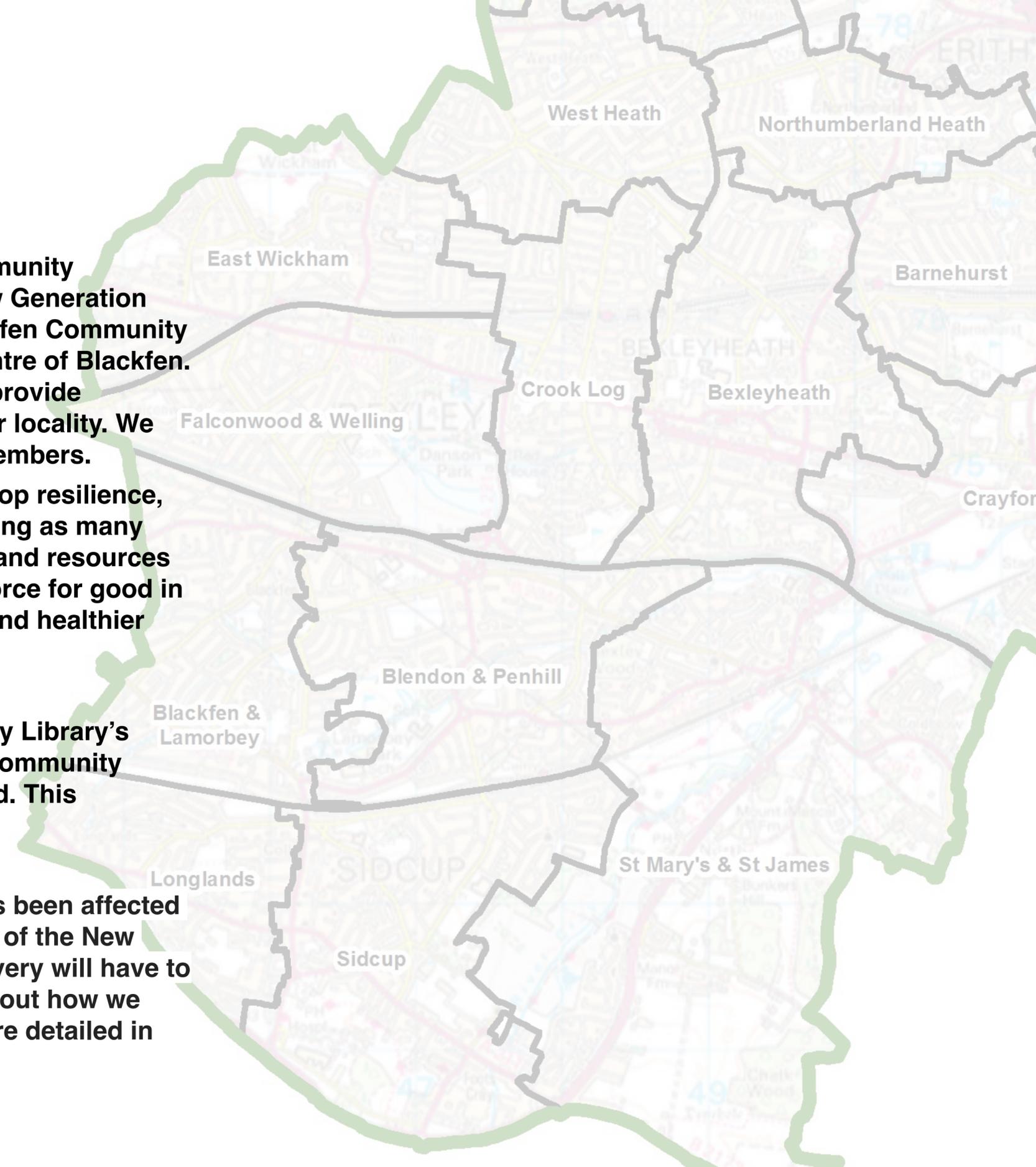
Summary

The Blackfen library in the London Borough of Bexley was brought into community ownership in 2016 and is run by a newly formed independent charity, the New Generation Community Trust. Staffed by a mixture of paid staff and volunteers, the Blackfen Community Library has become a trusted and accessible civic and cultural hub in the centre of Blackfen. Its purpose is to advance education through public library provision, and to provide recreation and relief to those across all ages and those facing hardship in our locality. We provide a comprehensive library service to our community and have 5,000 members.

Our aim is to ensure that the library is used by the whole community to develop resilience, learning, connection and self-development. Our targets are centred on ensuring as many people as possible can benefit throughout their lifetimes from the sanctuary and resources the library offers. The community library is and will continue to be a strong force for good in Blackfen, developing community cohesion and creating a stronger, happier and healthier community.

This business plan explains in detail the current focus of Blackfen Community Library's work and its aspirations for the future. As an organisation, New Generation Community Trust is dedicated to growing its mission and delivering to those most in need. This document therefore looks in detail at how this growth can be managed.

Like other organisations across the country, Blackfen Community Library has been affected by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and had to close for three months. The aims of the New Generation Community Trust remain the same, although some financial recovery will have to take place. The pandemic has presented an opportunity to think creatively about how we can serve our community in these unusual circumstances, and these ideas are detailed in this document.



From The Beginning...

The New Generation Church Trust has a passion for building community and has been working in the Bexley area for 25 years. It runs several community projects locally such as the annual Lark in the Park a free annual community festival, running since 1996 and Hope Community School, Bexley's first free school which was launched in 2013.

In 2015/16, the London Borough of Bexley invited community organisations to apply to run several local libraries. New Generation Church Trust applied and were approved to re-open Blackfen library as a community library.

A new independent charitable body, The New Generation Community Trust, was set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to deliver a service level agreement in partnership with Bexley Council. It has a close working relationship with the Council and reports on a quarterly basis on progress against key performance indicators and events going on at the library.

When its bid to run the library was successful, the New Generation Community Trust had only a few weeks – and scarce funds - to refurbish. It was a steep learning curve to begin running a library management system, managing stock and gathering volunteers.

As part of the business plan to help keep the library sustainable the trust also installed a coffee shop, “Rooted Coffee House”, designed to help deliver the various programmes and events that were needed to bring the community together.

The Blackfen Community Library opened its doors in April 2016. Now in our fourth year of running, we are a well established presence on the high street of Blackfen. The membership and programmes, have grown the financial position is strong and the library has become a successful and lively hub providing great library services and a creative and empowering space for the local community.

During



Before



After



After



Our Building

Library and Coffee House

The library occupies a central position in Blackfen High Street, with a wide shop front. Totalling xxxx square feet, the library is a huge community space in a position accessible to all, so it offers a tremendous opportunity to deliver great benefits to the community. It is divided into several zones, is airy, warm and welcoming, and has an ancillary room for meeting use. This capacity means that the Trust can plan for the development of its many ambitious schemes to deliver its charitable objectives, without worrying about a lack of space!

The Rooted Coffee House is sited right at the front of the library, overlooking the street. It is a large spacious, friendly and accessible space, serving barista coffee, fair trade drinks, meals and snacks, and is always busy. It functions as an income stream but more importantly it is integral to the strategic vision of the Trust.

Not only is the café area a great place for people to pop in for some company or to meet each other, it is an excellent space for hosting activities and events. It is fundamental to facilitating our programmes and an excellent way of drawing people into the library that might otherwise be reluctant to visit us. Our events for the lonely and isolated are very often based around a meal or coffee.

All profits from Rooted Coffee House go towards the running of the library.



Our People

Trustees

The Library is run by the board of Trustees of the New Generation Community Trust, who meet quarterly. Their membership is reviewed every two years and there must be a minimum of three Trustees. Currently there are five trustees:

- Clare Stevens (Chair) – Clare has lived in the local area for nearly 3 years and is a regular user of the library, especially with her three young children. She has extensive experience working in charity project management and fundraising.
- Chris Regan – Chris has lived in the local area for his whole life and worked extensively on setting up the library. He works in IT where he manages a large team and he regularly volunteers his expertise towards the library's computer systems. His key role as a trustee is finance.
- Jon West – Jon has lived in the area for his whole life, volunteers at the coffee shop regularly. He has extensive legal experience, which is his area of responsibility on the Board.
- Janet Dubbey – Janet has responsibility for safeguarding. She has lived in the area her whole life and is a regular user of the library, particularly with her young grandson, and regularly attends and volunteers at a range of library events. She has experience working with children and administration in her roles as PA and art teacher at a local school.
- Jane Wright – Jane has lived in the area for her whole life and regularly uses the library and volunteers at events. As a manager at HomeBase she has extensive management and HR experience, so she has responsibility for the library's HR.

Employed Staff

The library and coffee house employ 7 part-time staff (equivalent to 2.5 full-time). Staffing roles have developed in line with the needs of the business. Currently there are 4 part-time staff in our Coffee House – the coffee house manager and 3 baristas – to meet demand and assist in events delivery. The library also employs a finance officer and a community manager who work alongside a development officer to grow the charity.

Successful grant applications recently have led to the creation of 2 part time roles that we have been able to create short-term contracts – to further develop our inter-generational reading project, and our Friends and membership schemes, promote our hire offer and to develop the volunteer scheme.

Volunteers

The library has a team of over 30 regular volunteers, many of whom have been with us since the start, volunteering from an hour a month to 3 days each week. They help to run the front desk, order and control of stock, and help to deliver a great library service and full programme of groups and events. They also help in the coffee house.

We strive to improve a worthwhile volunteer offer, which not only benefits the library but also the volunteers, Blackfen Community Library is now a recognised organisation for Time Credits – a national reward programme for volunteers.

Our Mission

Creating community, investing in lives

Blackfen Community Library and Rooted Coffee House are at the heart of the community in Blackfen. Our purpose is to offer an 'open door' for our community and a home away from home. We provide opportunities to access not just a great world of books in a comforting 'third space' but also the opportunity to cater for individual population groups who need a place to belong as well as a brilliant way to bring together those different groups in our community. Our motto is; a big hello.

Mission

to create:

- A launch-pad for lifelong learning
- Community and celebration
- Great beginnings
- Opportunities
- Curiosity

Transform through:

learning, connecting, inspiring, including, building, growing, and realising that everyone has unique potential



Our Values

- Passionate about people – interested, empathetic, authentic, relating
- Bringing our best – attention and focus, creative ideas, top quality interactions
- Making good things happen – problem solving, sparking ideas, igniting potential, involving community

What We Do

In addition to the library services we have developed a range of social and educational activities. In 2018/19 there were over 76,000 visits to the library, and over 4,000 local residents attended our group activities and events.

The library team have worked hard to develop groups that meet the needs of the community, offering something for everyone, young and old. The library is always buzzing, particularly when one of the four busy pre-school groups is there! Over 1000 people attend our weekly groups per month.

Our weekly and monthly activities include:

- Rhyme Time (pre-schoolers)
- Lucy Library (pre-schoolers)
- Mini Makers (pre-schoolers)
- Sparkles Babies (babies and parents)
- Little Numbers (maths for pre-schoolers)
- Book Buddies
- Come and Have a Yarn - weekly knitting group
- Vinyl Cafe
- Stitch and Craft (fortnightly)
- Monthly reading group
- Friday coffee mornings
- Befrienders café
- Twice-weekly Scrabble club
- Monthly Parkinson's Group coffee mornings



What We Do

We offer a wide variety of events including open mic nights, quiz nights, film nights, craft events and reading challenges – the last Summer Reading Challenge saw 332 people register, and helped by 20 volunteers, 184 people completed the challenge.

Open mic nights have proved both productive and entertaining, and as a direct result, the Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance in Sidcup invited the library to partner with them by attending their freshers' fair and helping them to run an open mic day.

As well as these regular events, we also run special seasonal events for the community.

We run regular open-door events aimed at the lonely and isolated, based in the coffee shop and involving a meal plus entertainment, such as a choir performance, bingo, a quiz or a magician. Many local businesses are very supportive and regularly donate towards the running of these events, providing balloons, flowers, drinks, discounted fish and chips, cakes and raffle prizes



Holidays

Half-term and school holiday activities including Harry Potter themed activities, cupcake making, a Pom Pom Bugs event, robotics workshops, puppet show and pumpkin carving



Easter

Community Easter Event – our Eggstravaganza gives away hundreds of Easter eggs every year at our free event for the community



Christmas

Free Christmas meal for those in need (by opening up the library on a day it's normally closed and offering a free lunch to anyone in need). We advertise this with the local food bank and homeless shelters.

Christmas carol singing

Blackfen Community Christmas event – hosted by the library annually, it includes the turning on of the Christmas lights. Each year local councillors and the Mayor have attended and contributed financially. From our free Santa's Grotto, Father Christmas gave away 300 presents last year

Santa's letters are delivered by the library's very own elves.

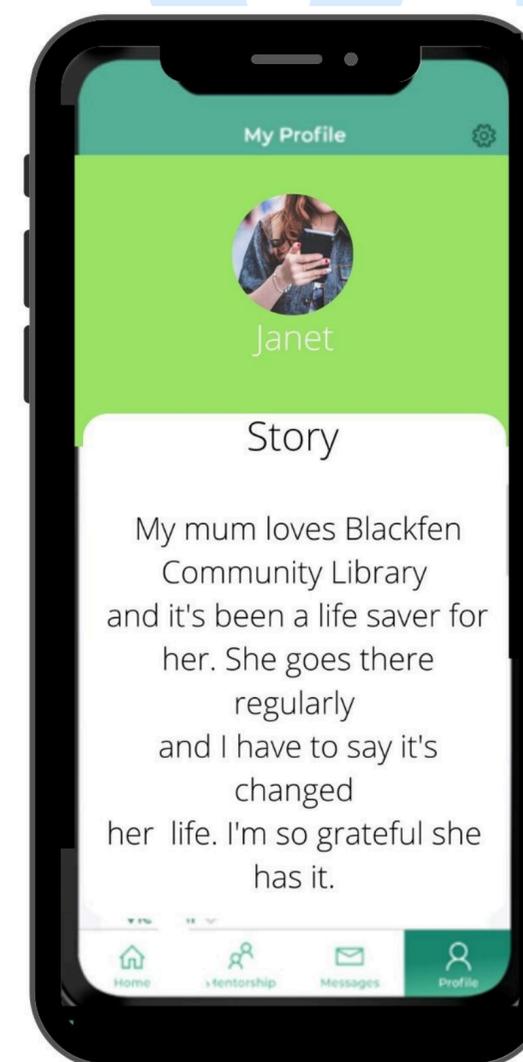
Our Services

There are regular services based at the library and external groups also use the space to deliver their services to the community, including:

- ✓ Police drop-in
- ✓ Ward surgery
- ✓ Local councillor and MP surgeries
- ✓ School visits
- ✓ Police Community Contact Session
- ✓ Homes for Good drop in
- ✓ Pathways Project drop in
- ✓ Crossroads Care (support to unpaid carers)
- ✓ Shine (self-confidence course for girls)

We also partner with a local charity, Bexley Counselling Matters, to offer low cost counselling sessions weekly (with free use of one of our rooms, to keep costs to users low).

Services



01 Memberships and Friends of the Library



The membership figures for Blackfen Community Library speak for themselves: membership has grown from zero to 5,000 in just three years. By comparison, the previous council library had a membership of 2000.

Footfall figures have increased steadily as well, from 69,501 in 2016/17 to 76,311 in 2018/19.

We keep and collate our statistics around book borrowing and computer usage, and as part of our social impact monitoring we will be assessing frequency of visits, demographic information such as age groups and distance travelled, and also seeking feedback from the members on their perception of the library and its services.

We shall be running a membership campaign in 2021 with the target of growing our membership to 6500. This will also give us the opportunity to grow our Friends scheme.

The Library receives some financial support from our Friends of the Library scheme. We have developed a package whereby for an annual subscription of £35 they get 10 free hot drinks, 25% off venue hire, 10 free printouts or photocopies, 25% off all ticketed events, 25% off all drinks when purchased with food, one free book from the sale rail, one fine waiver and our special book bag.

One of our plans for financial development of the Library is to create an auto-renewal system for Friends, and to update and promote the scheme.

02 Outreach



We run a pop-up library and pop-up coffee house at Lark in the Park, the largest free community event in the borough, which allows us to extend our reach.

We visit primary schools to promote participation in the Summer Reading Challenge, and local secondary schools to recruit volunteers to help run it.

We visit schools to advertise and promote our Book Buddies project (a scheme where over-65s are paired with children to listen to them read).

Each staff member and coffee house volunteer is permitted to give one transaction free per month to a customer of their choice, to make their day.

03 Book Buddies Scheme



In 2018 we launched a pilot for our Book Buddies project with the help of a grant from William Kendall. The project benefits both the buddies, who tend to be of retirement age and older, and the children who participate.

There has been real bonding amongst the buddies, sharing a focus and purpose alongside a visible increase in confidence. The benefits are to both parties – the children obviously benefit from a sense of achievement while the older buddies have a renewed sense of being needed and valued, as well as a reason to come out of their homes and interact with others.

04 Partnerships



Blackfen Community Library partners with many local community organisations and programmes, including:

- Bexley Counselling Matters
- Age UK
- Bexley Voluntary Service Council
- Children's university - An educational reward scheme
- Tempo Time Credits (a volunteer reward scheme)
- Community Policing
- Bexley's Therapist Directory
- Dementia UK
- Shooters Hill Sixth Form College – providing apprenticeship for students with additional needs
- Blackfen School for Girls and other local schools – running courses for students on self-confidence.

We also retain links with the New Generation Church Trust. The Community Trust is financially independent from the Church Trust but continues to work in partnership, New Generation Church supply some resources and equipment for some vents and a number of volunteers come from the church community. The Church Trust also provides a chaplain, who makes a weekly 2-hour visit to the library, building a supportive relationship with the community and providing a listening ear.

We have been actively developing partnership working and information sharing with other local community libraries. In 2020 we are working with two other libraries on a bid to fund an expansion of our programmes targeting the vulnerable in our community, in this case pre-adolescents and the isolated elderly.



MEETING THE SOCIAL NEEDS

Meeting The Social Needs

In addition to meeting educational needs through providing library services, our charitable objectives are aimed at improving social welfare particularly for those in need in Bexley by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage. These programmes and activities have these objectives as paramount and we continually assess our plans against them. Section 4 describes the types of planned activities and services that we believe will help to address these social needs. In particular, our plans over the next three years will include a focus on young people and the older demographic, particularly the lonely and isolated.

We believe that libraries, as safe, trusted, cultural and civic spaces and information points, have an invaluable role in offering sanctuary and connections for those undergoing hardship, change and isolation.

Reaching Our Market

OUR STRATEGIC VISION



A core objective of the Blackfen Community Library is to grow its capacity to meet the community's needs. We have strong ideas for the future, and all the trustees, staff and volunteers are committed to seeing our space used in a way that impacts Blackfen for good.

Our immediate strategies for developing the library's reach and financial success are:

Offer for and engagement of young people

Offer for the older population and the isolated

Partnership with major donors

Partnership working with existing and new partner organisations

Development of the coffee house

Improvement and extension of our Friends of the Library scheme

An increase in membership and book borrowing

Rewarding and increasing our volunteer team by building capability through formal training and enshrining experiences



SWOT

Our SWOT analysis gives us the information we need to be mindful of our weaknesses and to address these at a strategic level, while building on our strengths and opportunities.

Strengths



- Good location (on high street, with paid parking)
- The only local community space
- Can respond quickly to customer / local need
- Child friendly environment with play area
- Free groups and events for children and adults
- Library with coffee shop
- Free community events
- Free unlimited use of Wi-Fi, computers and charging stations
- Volunteer support means more time to talk and interact with customers
- Helpful staff, able to anticipate regulars' needs
- Not institutional, no self-service tills
- Friendly welcoming atmosphere
- Community partnerships create joined-up services



- Need in the area for events / activities / space for young people
- Potential for working with other community libraries on joint funding applications and projects
- Few competitors in the area
- Improving marketing of library and coffee shop
- Partnering with other organisations to deliver a wider range of services



Weaknesses

- No online books available
- Less buying / lending power than other libraries
- Cannot use this library card at other Bexley council libraries
- Limited stock for choice and reservation
- Less varied menu than other coffee shops
- Heavy reliance on volunteers, and a low number of paid staff
- Limited financial resources
- Largely reliant on funding from external donors



- Reduction or cut in funding
- Departure of volunteers
- Other competitors opening a coffee shop or community centre nearby
- Termination of the contract by the Council
- Problems with the computer system
- Staff sickness
- Impacts of a pandemic

ANALYSIS

Campaigns and Communication

Social Media Refresh

Marketing

Improve the online marketing of the library, updating the website and search engine optimisation.



Increased Visibility

We will be increasing signage and adding outdoor seating for increased visibility.



Run Targeted Campaigns

These will let people know what we offer and publicise all the different activities, events and income-generating activities across all of our social media accounts.

Customer Testimonials

Update customer testimonials, photos and reviews.



Campaigns And Communication

Social media refresh

We are keen to turn our wish list into reality, and this will involve refreshing and linking our social media accounts. Currently we have Instagram accounts for both the Library and for Rooted, and Facebook and Twitter accounts for the Library, and these need to be updated simultaneously.

We plan to:

- Improve the online marketing of the library
- Update the website and SEO (search engine optimisation to improve our Google ranking)
- Run targeted campaigns to let people know what we offer
- Publicise all the different activities, events and income-generating activities across all our social media accounts

The website content will include:

- Customer testimonials
- Refreshed photos on the library home page (library photos, rather than stock photos)
- Event promotion
- Coffee House promotion
- Business descriptions on Google (with photos and menus, and inviting reviews)

Website training has been shown to be a necessity and we plan to address this with the Bright Ideas grant received in 2019.

Targeted campaigns

We plan to run a social media campaign focusing on our customers and volunteers, their stories and what they love about the library, creating a new website page called Volunteer Stories, using information and pictures from the campaign to show what volunteering is like and what benefits it brings, to both the volunteer and the library. It will promote:

- Our regular groups and activities, with photos, quotes and information
- Our Friends scheme with information about its benefits and what it helps to fund
- Our volunteering opportunities with the aim of increasing our volunteer base

We plan to launch a promotion of Rooted Coffee House, which will require:

- A revamp of the website's coffee shop page, with new text, photos and a sample menu
- A social media campaign to promote the rebranding and new menu
- Creating entries for the coffee shop on Trip Advisor and Yelp with pictures and menu information

We plan to run a campaign focusing on our offer for parents and children, including children's activities and events, child-friendly aspects of the library and coffee shop, party hire and so on. This social media campaign would promote:

- Our regular children's groups and activities – photos, quotes and information
- Child-friendly aspects of the library – the children's corner, high chairs and space for buggies, children's menu items
- The library as a space for children's parties
- Promote the library on sites such as www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk, Net Mums, etc

We also intend to target students with what we can offer them at certain times of the year (for example, a poster and social media campaign just before summer, the time students are most likely to come in and study.

Newsletter

We plan to create regular newsletters for our members, using the content from our social media campaigns and promoting upcoming events in the library, and to promote the newsletter on social media. We would like to have this in place in 2020. This is an important way to reach those that are not engaged with social media.

Signage

We plan to improve the signage, marketing and promotion of the library by:

- Increased size of signage
- Vinyl writing giving more visibility and information on the front windows
- Planters and external seating outside the front of the library

- Printing, advertising and social media updates for events and groups
- Partnering with local radio stations who will advertise our events
- Advertising in local papers, including New Shopper and The Trader

Benchmarking, Reporting and Measuring Success

Benchmarking

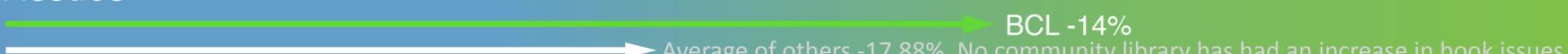
We have compared our current and forecast business performance with other enterprises (community libraries and community cafes) within Greater London engaged

in the same activities. Our statistics in comparison with the five other Bexley community libraries in 2016 – 2019 show:

Visits



Book Issues



Members



Reporting

Currently we monitor and report on the work of the library with:

- quarterly accountability meetings with the council
- monthly statistics reports
- results from ongoing surveys
- regular case studies
- a planned series of consultations with the community
- regular reports for quarterly trustees meetings

Success of Marketing Campaign

We shall carry out a six-monthly internal review of the achievements made against the planned activities listed in section 3.3, to be followed by an annual review by the trustees. This will be measured not only by outputs and outcomes but also by financial data.



Our Plans for the Library

We have worked on identifying our target markets and areas of need and with our current resources, supplemented wherever possible by additional grant funding, we can introduce new or develop existing activities and services that will reach as many as possible. We also wish to improve our offering to volunteers as it is such an important part of our library's culture, and we hope to improve our surroundings as well.



Learning and creative activities

Addressing young people's needs



Reaching older people

Supporting the lonely and isolated



Addressing financial hardship or disability

Volunteer and staff development



Developing partnerships

Improving the building

Our Plans

Learning and Creative Activities

- Late night study A/space for students after hours
- Teacher sessions giving specialist support and/or homework clubs
- EFL sessions
- Book-related parties for children
- A creative space for young people to express their literary work (such as open mic sessions and book launches)
- Inspiring local writers and performers to use our space to promote local creativity and bring people together
- Display area for local artwork

Addressing Young People's

- A listening service (rather than counselling) aimed at young people with low-level mental health issues or depression
- Self-esteem and confidence building courses – partnering with Blackfen schools and other local secondary schools, e.g. Shine course aimed at girls and women and Strength course aimed at boys and men
- Art/photography based group – partnering with a mental health organisation to provide support for young people with mental health issues
- Barista training – for youth and ex-offenders, giving a skill, and helping with the transition to the community and work
- Creating a Mencap Safe Space or other safe space aimed at young people, such as becoming a Jimmy Mizen Safe Haven

Reaching Older People

- Develop partnerships with older people's organisations, including care homes, and education and wellbeing initiatives, so we can act as a community host and access point
- Outreach to vulnerable older people, including those at risk of isolation
- Ensure our resources and information are relevant and accessible to isolated older people
- Promote and support our existing range of relevant activities, such as Book Buddies, knitting group, and language classes
- Broaden the offer by bringing in additional resources such as volunteers as required to broaden the offer, such as dementia coffee mornings, memory games, and local history reminiscence

Supporting the lonely and isolated

- Transport services
- Home visits for people who are unable to get to the library to deliver or collect books and enjoy conversation
- Rehab service – partnering with Cornerstone Addicts support group, offering a mentoring service and accountability group
- Repeat events that have been successful in bringing isolated people in the community to the Library (in partnership with local traders)

Our Plans...

Addressing Financial Hardship or Disability

- Support and training to facilitate work experience for young people with disabilities
- Work experience opportunities in the coffee shop to give unemployed people valuable transferable skills
- Free meals for those in need
- Pay it forward scheme - customers have the opportunity to pay it forward for a customer in need

Volunteer and Staff Development

- Website training for staff to be able to operate and update the website
- Training for all staff and volunteers to include safeguarding training
- Volunteer training to include mentoring and support for young people to develop self-esteem and work readiness
- Access to BVSC training
- Training for Library specific roles in partnership with Bexley Council

Developing Partnerships

- The Board of Trustees and management are actively working to develop library's partnerships including:
- Strengthening partnerships with local groups, businesses and charities
- Exploring partnership with the British Library for training and workshops
- Continuing to develop partnerships with other local community libraries, including Bexley and Bostall Heath (currently the three libraries are working on a joint Reaching Communities bid)

Improving the Building

- We need to improve the appearance and functionality of the Library by:
- Developing the coffee shop with seating and signage
- Purchasing equipment for more effective café service delivery (including a chiller)
- Updating all the canopy guiding sets (book shelf genre signs)
- Updating the computer stations, renewing the carpet and replacing the furniture in the library and children's area, and redecorate.
- Adding a display area for local schools and groups to display artwork.
- For these costs, we plan to apply for a Lottery Awards For All grant in late 2020

Funding and Finance

Funding Streams

We are primarily funded by our quarterly grants from Bexley Council who review our key policies and outputs, including our Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Data Protection policies. The Council also support us through a peppercorn rent.

Due to the effects of austerity our core grant was cut by at least 20% in 2019. Therefore we are always looking for new grant funders and regular donors to support the library's great work and diversify our income, as well as making concerted efforts to increase our revenue and keep overheads reasonable.

To ensure our sustainability, as well as rooting ourselves in the community, we have also improved the profitability of our Rooted Coffee House which is becoming more successful each year. In 2018/19, combined with the events it facilitates, the cafe takings represented 28% of our income.

Helping us cover the costs of our IT, utilities, the Library Management System and other running costs, ad hoc grants have come from local traders (including the local Tesco and Co-op) and we are also building our 'Friends of the Library' annual subscription scheme.

Additional income comes from fundraising events where we benefit from generous donors who contribute to the event running costs, such as Garfield Weston and the School for Social Entrepreneurs.

In 2019 we were successful in a bid for a £15,000 Bright Ideas grant to cover some costs of marketing, event running costs, the costs of outside seating and signage for the Rooted Coffee House, and also included consultancy advice.

The external grants we have received are as follows:

- Co-Op: £15,211.40 (2017 – present)
- William Kendall: £750 for Book Buddies pilot (2018)
- School for Social Change: £10,000 (2018-2019)
- Garfield Weston Foundation: £15,000 (March 2019)
- Bright Ideas: £15,000 (October 2019)
- Postcode Community Lottery £6,748.28 (January 2020) to help fund our Book Buddies project and the Summer Reading Challenge.

Income and Expenditure

Over the last three years we have seen a steady increase in our overall income and have also managed to stabilise our expenditure. At the end of our third year of operation, 2018/19, a year in which the charity was successful in obtaining two external grants (Garfield Weston and the Coop) the library achieved a surplus for the year of £45,892, giving us unrestricted fund reserves of £22,654. This is a great improvement over the first two years, when the yearly accounts reported a shortfall.

	Year 1 2016/17	Year 2 2017/18	Year 3 2018/19
Income	64,460	83,140	137,851
Expenditure	76,451	94,387	91,959
Net Income (expenditure)	(11,991)	(11,247)	45,892

Future Funding Requirements

Blackfen Library is in the process of capacity building, in order to deliver its objectives via the plans outlined in section 4 of this Business Plan.

Like other organisations across the country, Blackfen Community Library has been affected by the 2020 COVID19 pandemic and had to close for 3 months, before opening for limited services. The aims of the New Generation Community Trust remain the same, although some financial recovery will have to take place. The pandemic has presented an opportunity to think creatively about how we can serve our community in these unusual circumstances, and these ideas are detailed in this document.

Revenue Streams

- **Library service.** Income from library services includes fines, sales of second hand books and DVDs, Friends of the Library subscriptions, printing, photocopying and scanning. This has steadily increased year on year.
- **Events.** The regular fundraising events now bring in over £3000 per year (£3563 in 2018/19, any idea where it's heading this financial year?)
- **One off donations.** In 2018/19 accounts, the donations are listed as £11,404. Is this all donations or is there a grant in there?
- **Grants.** In the charity's first year, grants received were £55,339. This rose to £85,514 in its third year, thanks to successfully targeted grant applications.
- **Coffee house.** The café has gone from strength to strength, with its turnover increasing from £8,232 in its first year of operation, to £16,586 in its second year, and it achieved a turnover of £35,338 in its third year.
- **Venue hire.** An income stream that offers opportunities and is still under development, the revenue from hiring library space nearly tripled from £570 in the first year to £1,431 in its third year.

Costs and Overheads

- **Staffing.** As would be expected, staffing costs are a major proportion of overheads at £33,143 p.a. (in 2018/19) but are still modest for the scale of the services being offered, due to the strong volunteer base.
- **Coffee House.** The café is operating with a satisfactory Gross Profit Margin of 62%, which after overheads including and equipment hire results in a small net profit.
- **Library running costs/overheads.** Including depreciation, the rest of the overheads (other than staff and café costs) in 2018/19 amounted to just under £42,000.

Social Impacts of Blackfen Community Library

We are aware of the strong and varied impacts at the community and individual levels, and have also begun to assess potential environmental outcomes, all of which fall within desired national library outcomes.

Outcome type	Outcome
Outcomes for the individual	Improved social environment to live, work, visit
	Increased employment, education and training for local residents
	Increased volunteering
	Increased local economic activity
	Reduced social isolation
	Improved availability of good-quality affordable arts and cultural services
	Provision of services on demand
	Improved community connections and partnering of local organisations
	Improved physical/mental wellbeing
	Different groups mix and integrate
Overall community outcomes	More positive attitudes and behaviours
	Stronger, active, more engaged community
	Good mental well-being and life satisfaction across the population
Environmental Sustainability	A thriving cultural landscape with high levels of participation and engagement
	Increased environmental understanding amongst the local community (by raising awareness)
	Building run in a more energy efficient way
National outcomes	Reduced carbon footprint on the local area
	Less demand for publicly funded services and regeneration
	Reduced levels of deprivation and burden on state



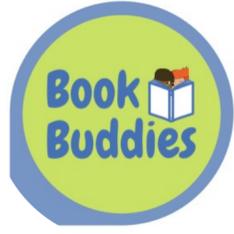
‘We love to come to events as a family.

**It’s great to have somewhere to go to
enjoy all together.’**

Neal, Maxine and Bailey

Real Life Evidence Of Impact

We have already collected a great deal of evidence of reduced isolation, improved community connections and mental and physical wellbeing, since we opened in 2016.



A Volunteer



Regular Customer

Elderly Gentleman



Group Member



“ Due to ill health and disability, I had lost confidence to leave the house alone and hadn't done so for three years. Book Buddies gave me the motivation to do so. I have since grown in confidence and am enjoying my new-found role. ”

“ When you get to my age and your friends and family have died and your neighbours have changed you need somewhere to go where people talk to you. I could go somewhere else and would just be another customer but I can come here and know I'm a friend. ”

“ There is a single parent family, who have limited English, having recently moved here from abroad. The youngest, in particular, is struggling with English as a language. The Book Buddies have tailored resources and games to help him and are also attending meetings with his mother, whose English is very poor, to help out plans in place for help for her son. ”

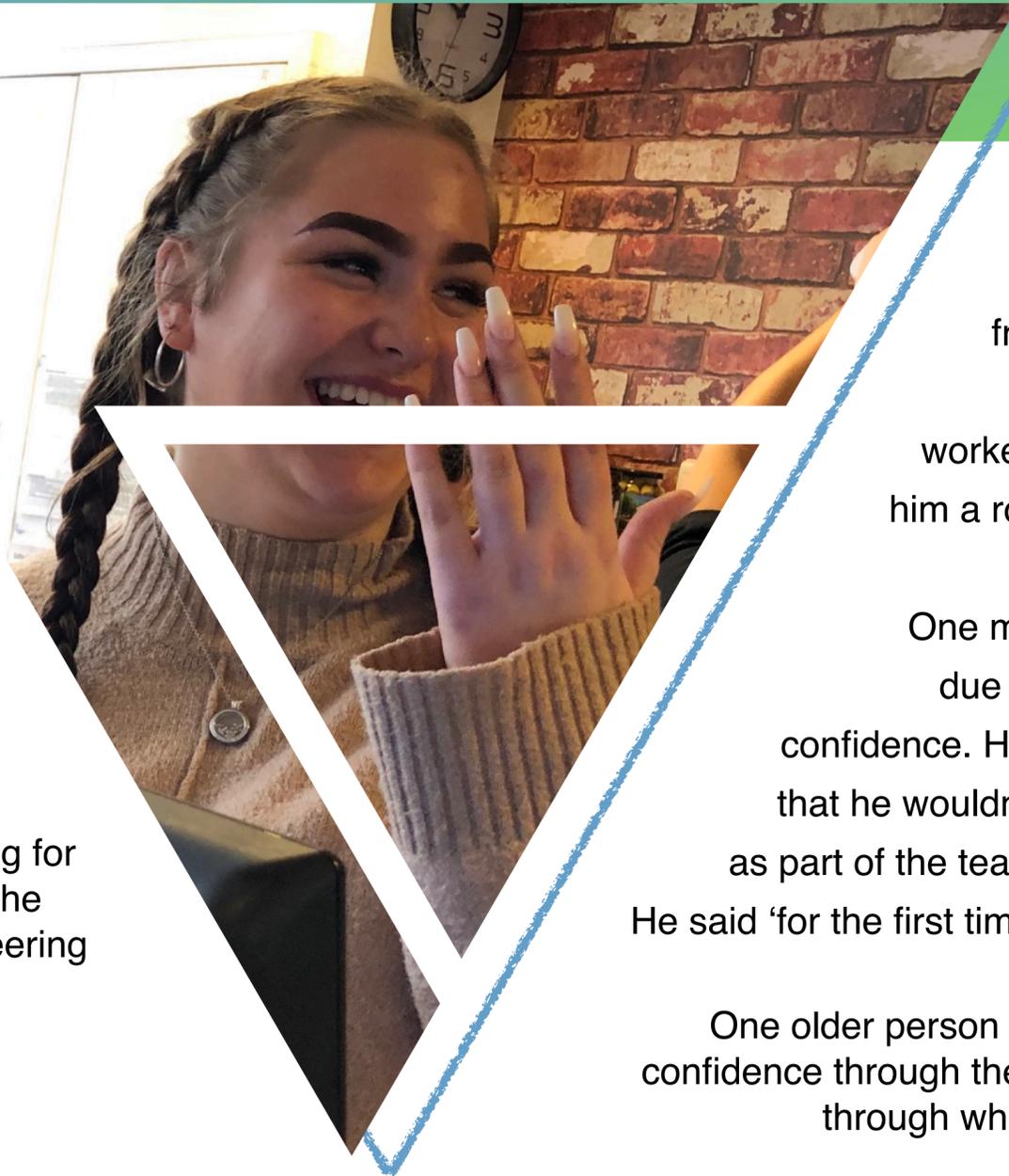
Benefits Of Volunteering

We are justly proud of our volunteering culture, and the contributions and long-term commitments of our volunteers. We aim to invest in our volunteers individually, to build better systems of volunteer management, and to recruit and sustain numbers. Although this is obviously a benefit to the library's business model, we have also been struck by the benefits to the volunteers themselves. All of our volunteers have their own story:

One NEET volunteer was unable to work and increasingly isolated due to her anxiety. Through her experience volunteering for a year in the library she gained confidence with the public and the routines and demands of work. She graduated from her volunteering role into employment.

Benefits to the Local Economy

All our staff and volunteers are from the local area. We have created employment for 7 people and enabled many volunteers to gain employment. We purchase many supplies from the local retailers and have been able to promote their services through advertising at our events. We have also helped small businesses through our shopping evenings. The high street is busier through our customers coming into the area and often using other local amenities as a result.



One of our volunteer champions, who helps to look after other volunteers took early retirement from his job and found that his week had no structure and he missed having a difference between days he worked and days off. Volunteering at the library has given him a routine and a purpose, and the opportunity to interact with people and learn new skills.

One man in his fifties, who had not worked for many years due to poor mental health, and as a result, had very little confidence. He started by helping with shelving, under the proviso that he wouldn't need to speak to anybody. He has now integrated as part of the team and gives help to members of the public who ask. He said 'for the first time in many years I feel as though I may even be able to consider working again'.

One older person hadn't left her house for a year but has regained her confidence through the Book Buddy intergenerational project at the library, through which she volunteers to read with a primary aged child.

Impact Measurement Reporting Procedures

We are currently developing our own social impact measurement system. This will give us a plan going forward for regular collection of data and will enable us to monitor and report in more detail, benchmark our data and set realistic and effective targets.

We have already determined our desired outputs/outcomes for our development plans for volunteering, youth projects, older people's projects and partnerships. This system and monitoring procedure will be completed in 2020.



Area of Benefit	Measured Outputs	Measured Outcomes
Volunteering	Level of volunteers is sustained at 40 or above	80% volunteers report that they are supported, listened to and valued.
	All volunteers appropriately trained, placed and supervised	60% volunteers would recommend volunteering with us to a friend.
	Increase in NEET volunteers to 3 annually	All NEET volunteers report that they feel supported, valued and equipped with the necessary skills.
	1 supported apprenticeship placement for learning-disabled young person	Young person and carers report increased confidence and learning?? Young person feels supported and valued.
Youth projects	Quarterly attendance of youth-led evenings	Attendees report feeling valued. Attendees report positive changes in their lives and / or mental health.
	Termly attendance of facilitated wellbeing programmes	Progress reported against relevant outcomes i.e. self-esteem, resilience.
	Termly attendance of facilitated arts programmes	Attendees report increased self-esteem, progress in developing a new skill and an improvement in their sense of identity.
Older people's projects and partnerships	Quarterly target number of library-hosted partnership activities and events for older people	Improved morale among attendees. Attendees keeping alert and active.
	Target attendance at events for older people.	Attendees have increased access to social contact and company.
	Target attendance by older people identified as isolated or at risk	Attendees report feeling valued and treated with respect.

Appendices

- A. Financial forecasts: one-year cash flow, 3 year forecasts for cash flow, I&E, balance sheet**
- B. Risk analysis See COVID19 Business Continuity Plan**
- C. Policies– See Appendix**



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Blackfen Community Library is part of New Generation Community Trust. Charity no. 1166307