

## City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

<b>Organisation:</b> St Hilda's East Community Centre	<b>Grant ref:</b> 9801	<b>Programme area:</b> Older Londoners\b) Healthy lifestyles of those over 65 years
<b>Amount, date and purpose of grant:</b> 18/03/2010: £93,000 over three years (3 x £31,000) for the salary costs of an Older People's Project Co-ordinator.		
<b>Visiting Grants Officer:</b> Martin Hall	<b>Date of meeting:</b> 14/02/13	
<b>Met with:</b> Rupert Williams (Director) and Vicky Harrison (Older People's Co-ordinator)		
<b>1. Introduction to the organisation:</b>  St Hilda's in an organisation well-known to the Trust, having received several grants over the years for a range of work. Based just outside the City in Shoreditch, it provides a wide range of services to the local community and has adapted well over the years to the changes in population and needs.		
<b>2. The project funded:</b>  This grant is for the salary of a Project Co-ordinator who manages the various services that the Centre runs for older people in the community. These include a Lunch Club, IT classes, exercise & healthy living activities and outings. Activities are designed with the needs of the beneficiaries in mind and based on user-feedback and suggestions. Recent innovations have included the development of a regular session of 'boccia', the sport similar to bowls which was part of the Paralympics and can be played by everyone, regardless of age and physical ability.  Other activities are designed to keep users mentally and socially active, such as quiz's, board games, art & craft sessions (knitting, sewing, drawing, painting etc), bingo and a book reading group. With different activities taking place throughout the week, users can take part as they choose depending on their individual interests, with the diverse nature meaning that there is literally "something for everyone".		
<b>3. Work delivered to date:</b>  This grant is now nearing the end of its three-year period and during that time has been a resounding success with over 200 older people taking part during the second year of the grant, over 70% of whom have been aged over 75. Efforts have also been made to increase participation amongst the large Bangladeshi community which now live in the area through a Bangladeshi Elders Lunch Club.  Outings have included a trip to the Paralympics, visits to local museums & galleries, and trips to schools to undertake Intergenerational activities. All activities are devised based on discussions with users and adjusted depending on feedback which includes informal "chats" and an annual Centre-wide user survey. Pilot sessions for new activities are run to test out ideas.		

**4. Difference made:**

The project and service funding by this grant has made a large difference to those taking part. This has included increasing skills such as the ability to use a computer for basic internet and communications tasks; healthier lifestyles through increased exercise and fresh fruit and veg which can be bought at a food co-op that runs on the same day as the Lunch Club; reduced isolation and loneliness, resulting in improved mental health amongst the beneficiaries.

**5. Grants Administration:**

The grant has been fully monitored and reported on. Sadly the original postholder had to resign due to ill health in August 2012 (having previously been on sick leave for 3 months) but has been successfully replaced by an experienced worker, who was present at this meeting.

The grant is due to expire at the end of March 2013, so the organisation is seeking replacement funding from a range of sources, but has contingency plans in place to fund the post from reserves to ensure that this valuable work can continue.

**6. Concluding comments:**

This is a well-used and effective service, ran by a highly regarded organisation. Both the project and the organisation are well-managed, and so were able to overcome difficulties created by the change of postholder. The organisation is conscious of the changes occurring within the local community and is actively working to adapt both this and other services to meet the changing needs.

An excellent project which is making a significant difference to its users.