



IMPACT REPORT 2021

Building Community Beyond the Challenges

Born in 1995, West Silvertown Foundation (WSF) is a local community-led charity. For the past 25 years we've partnered with our neighbours to break down the barriers we face in our unique area of London, offered a helping hand to our most vulnerable residents, and worked to help build a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community for everyone.

At the heart of our work, we manage the area's only two community centres – Britannia Village Hall and the Royal Wharf Community Dock. From these two thriving hubs we offer a wide and growing programme of activities and services for young people, children and families, and adults from all backgrounds.

There's no getting around it: 2021 was another very challenging year for many people in West Silvertown. As the pandemic continued to hold Newham in its grip, it touched us all in different ways – some of us deeply.

Yet it was also a year of many positives. Between lockdowns and as restrictions eased, it was a joy to come together and be a community once again, celebrating our diversity while sharing our burdens and experiences. It was also a year of change and growth for West Silvertown Foundation, as we restarted activities after the pandemic, launched new services, and grew our impact by reaching new groups in our community.

Some of our highlights of the year included:

A welcome return to community events

From a well-attended Eid celebration to our first post-lockdown Bring and Share community lunch at Diwali and Christmas carols on Britannia Village Green, we came together as a community – adapting our activities to the latest circumstances

Expanding our existing programmes

For example, we hosted our biggest and best Summer Scheme yet for local children, while we built on our long-established Youth Project to bring more activities to local young people, five days a week

Successfully launching new services

These included our Welcome Project helping immigrants, refugees and new arrivals to the area navigate the challenges of practical life in the UK, and a Mentoring Project in partnership with Oasis Silvertown Academy to help students plan and prepare for their future

Progress on our redevelopment plans for Britannia Village.

We continued to shape our proposals for a new community space in place of the existing hall, and secured funding to refresh and improve the Village Green.



The challenges that West Silvertown faced before the pandemic started have not gone away, and the issues it has brought will not disappear with the end of restrictions. But as we look ahead, I'm confident that our experience over the last two years has made us a stronger community, with a better understanding of each other and a greater commitment to making change happen.

For our part at WSF, I'm proud of the contribution that we've been able to make. Thank you so much to our team of staff, trustees, volunteers, activity leaders, and our many partners – including the local community organisations, schools and businesses – who have made this possible!

As we look ahead to a brighter year, our commitment to fulfilling our vision for West Silvertown is greater than ever. We look forward to working together with you to build "a vibrant, integrated community where ambitions are realised and friendships thrive."

Helen Fernandes
Chief Executive Officer
West Silvertown Foundation



Our Impact in Numbers

1,283 local residents joined our regular activities –up almost 30% on last year!

We delivered 1,551 hours of services for our community in 2021

More than 500 adults and children celebrated the diversity of our community at our cultural events

The median age of our participants was 17 with the **Youngest 0** and the **oldest 79!**

Our participants speak 57 languages from Afrikaans to Yoruba

- people gave their time to volunteer with us from organising community events to serving as trustees
- different community groups made use of our community spaces through regular hire

We provided paid employment for 23 people – up from 14 last year

Youth Project



It was in 2007 that our charity's work started with the launch of a youth club for West Silvertown's young people. This has been running successfully ever since, engaging them in positive activities and helping them to fulfil their true potential.

So it was especially satisfying to significantly expand our Youth Project in 2021, thanks to funding from Newham Council and our growing partnership with other local community organisations. Our focus this year was bringing young people back together to 'resocialise' safely after lockdown, while providing out-of-school support alongside their return to education after the disruption.

In early spring, we restarted two youth sessions weekly at Britannia Village Hall, along with our popular pre-teen dropin at Royal Wharf. Throughout the year, we added regular activities from popular football sessions, to boxing and martial arts, and dance and debating. By year end, we were offering 11 hours of activities spread across five days a week.

Highlights from the second half of the year included our popular monthly Takeaway Night, the launch of a new Saturday Arts & Crafts session where 9 to 14 year olds tried everything from creating art stickers to biscuit making; a teambuilding trip to Surrey which included building a shelter out of branches; and an inspiring girls' empowerment event.

Our 14th consecutive annual Summer Scheme took place in July and August and was our biggest and most successful yet! Parents told us how much they appreciated it after the stresses of lockdown, and children were excited to make the most of their new-found freedom.

Some 25 local young leaders were trained to co-produce and deliver the Scheme and we hosted three weeks of activities, followed by a final week of trips and workshops. All ages from 5 to 21 were able to take part in different ways and, thanks to additional funding from Newham Council and Britannia Education Trust we were able to offer the programme completely free this year – including a daily hot lunch courtesy of the 5 Es holiday provision. This year's highlights included a workshop with an African drumming band and a trampolining trip!

Student Mentoring Programme

At the start of the year, we launched a new mentoring programme in partnership with Oasis Academy Silvertown to help year 10 students think about and plan for their future.

After a period of detailed research and planning, we nervously advertised for volunteer mentors not knowing what response to expect! But West Silvertown's community spirit showed its true colours and we were thrilled to launch in spring with some 35 volunteers committed to 11 weeks of mentoring.

The programme was very future-focused, with discussion on topics such as finding the right career, CV writing, and an opportunity to learn about different industries. Several students also took up the opportunity to stay in touch with their mentors and follow up on opportunities for work experience.

For some students, the programme gave them a much clearer insight on what they wanted to do after school. For some, it led to greater engagement with their education and being less disruptive in class. And for others, it was simply helpful to know they had another adult they could talk to who cared. In the end, the programme was judged to be so successful that we repeated it with a second group of students in the autumn.

In addition to supporting 59 local teenagers, the project engaged a whole new group of local volunteers with their community. Only a handful of volunteers had known each other beforehand. But, when we celebrated the end of the first round together at a BBQ in the community garden, it felt like a gathering of close friends who had established great relationships – not just with their students, but with each other too.

This work with local students was further complemented by a series of new initiatives led by our youth team. These included a leadership programme and social action project in partnership with Peabody Homes, which saw a group of young people running an event at Bishop Challoner School featuring talks from motivational speakers, dance workshops and a pizza lunch. We also launched one-to-one mentoring for vulnerable year 11 students with the goal of ensuring they don't "fall through the net" after leaving school, as well as personal advocacy sessions for ages 18-25 supporting them to access education, training and employment.



Youth Project Highlights



- By the end of 2021, we offered up to 11 hours of activities for young people up to five days a week!
- A total of 343 children and young people joined our biggest Summer Scheme yet
- 59 students participated in 504 hours of mentoring with 48 volunteer mentors to help them plan for their future!
- 25 young leaders benefited from training, volunteering or work experience with us



"Mentoring has given me a lot of confidence in myself, and I have received a lot of good advice that I will use for a long time"

– A student from the mentoring programme

"Without doubt, I feel more integrated into the Silvertown community and feel I have added value to my mentee's life journey"

- Sean, one of our volunteer mentors

"Summer Scheme has given me the opportunity to gain the confidence to work with kids. It's helped me to solidify that this is the type of career I want to pursue"

- One of our young leaders

"Thank God for the Summer Scheme. It has had such a positive impact on my daughter and us as a family. She has learnt new skills and we've both made new friends!"

– A mum whose daughter attended Summer Scheme

Meet Max

"Youth club is like a breath of fresh air after lockdown!"

Max is 13, and a year nine student at Oasis Academy Silvertown. Like most teenagers, his education and social life have been disrupted by the pandemic which has made leading a normal life challenging.

Max first attended youth club quite a while ago but started to go more regularly in 2021 between lockdowns, when the youth project relaunched with new activities and extended hours.

He says he found lockdown very boring, but youth club has given him the chance to spend time in his local area with friends – and has helped him make new ones too. Without it, Max says he would probably still be bored at home, playing on his phone or computer.

Max says youth club has also given him the opportunity to improve his skills and the confidence to try new things. He particularly enjoys pool – and says playing regularly has helped him improve his game – as well as ping pong and card games.

Through his participation, Max has also got involved in other activities too. For example, at Christmas carols on Britannia Village Green, he helped with setting up and the event serving drinks, which he enjoyed as it allowed him to spend time with his mates as well as getting to know other people and generations in his community. Max hopes to continue as a regular at youth club and get involved in more activities in the future, because it has really helped him to stay active and connected to his community!

Children & Families

At one point last year, after talking with parents, we were taken aback to learn that some toddlers in our community had never met others outside their immediate family because of the pandemic!

This realisation reinforced our long-standing commitment to supporting busy, isolated and vulnerable parents and carers, and the need to help children of all ages engage with their peers and get active. It was so encouraging to see new parents grow in confidence after lockdown and observe new friendships forming as children shared activities and experiences together.

During lockdown, we held 1:1 check-ins with isolated and vulnerable parents on the phone, via WhatsApp and through walks. Many told us they were grateful for the support which helped them to grow in confidence, especially several new and young parents.

Supporting families with under-5s has long been a focus for WSF. So, during lockdown, we continued to provide online Stay & Play sessions with songs and stories and, when restrictions eased, we returned to meeting face-to-face. Local parents said they were so thankful to be back together and, by the summer term, we had relaunched a regular timetable of sessions for under-5s and their families six days a week across our two community centres. As well as mums, we welcomed several dads, grandparents, and nannies and carers to the sessions too!





In lockdown, we also launched Kid's Games for primary school children on Zoom to give parents a breather from home schooling and encourage children aged 5-8 to interact together. This evolved into a popular face-to-face session afterschool in the spring with a series of open play and group games activities. These included puzzle-solving, learning to share, dance sessions and classic favourites such as giant Connect 4, Twister and Snakes & Ladders.

From spring onwards, we hosted a series of busy family gardening sessions in the community garden and games on Britannia Village Green. A creative Stories from Silvertown collaboration with Stratford East supported primary school children to write songs and lyrics, record personal stories and position themselves as tour guides for their neighbourhood. This culminated in a fantastic screening at Royal Wharf Community Dock.

It was lovely to see our community start to come together again in person, and our programme of family celebrations was popular and well attended. Over Easter, a quiz trail, bake-along and egg hunt gave 163 adults and children the opportunity to meet outdoors. Our Eid celebration was attended by more than 70 people in small groups during the day sharing food, music, craft and games. Our Halloween celebrations, which were oversubscribed, included dressing up and spooky crafts. For the second year we had volunteer-led Black History Month events, featuring inspiring storytelling and practical activities such as fruit salad making. A successful meal for Diwali was our first Bring & Share since the pandemic started, and Christmas carols on Britannia Village Green, along with a craft fair and trail, provided a joyful end to the year!

Thank you for all the hard work you are doing – West Silvertown Foundation has been a great support for us. We have met many other families and learned how great it is to have a sense of community!

– Paula

"I just want to say a BIG BIG thank you for everything that you do. Because of you, I can see how my boy is changing and how happy he is every time coming to play! You're doing an amazing job."

- Rasvita

"The Stories from Silvertown workshop is just super epic! I heard all the singing and creativity going on so and it's so much fun and means so much to the kids. Thank you for organising this!"

- Hannane

My kids joined the brownie baking with their Dad on Saturday. He loved the way the kids were kept interested with activities and the way in which the story of Easter was incorporated! We are still enjoying the delicious brownies!

A local family who joined our Easter activities

Children & Families Highlights



- We hosted up to 9 hours of activities, six days a week, for under-5s including Stay & Play, Messy Play and Baby Sensory
- Our most popular activities at Kids' Games included Just Dance and What's the Time Mr Wolf!
- More than 500 local people took part in our cultural celebrations, from Easter to Eid and Diwali to Christmas, including repeat guests
- Our outdoors Summer Fun Day was attended by 300 adults and children, despite bad weather!

Meet Neki



"We would be lost without the WSF team. They have given us amazing support in so many areas of our life and they feel like family now!"

Neki and her husband have six children aged 2 to 18. Work first brought them to the UK, and they subsequently decided to settle in London and moved to Royal Wharf in 2018.

As the pandemic was taking hold, their landlord served notice on their tenancy, Neki's husband lost his job, and they faced a bleak lockdown as a large family stuck indoors. However, Neki says West Silvertown Foundation has been a lifesaver for her family, especially since the pandemic started, with a welcoming, listening ear and lots of practical support to help them navigate their challenges.

Over the past three years, the family have also been keen participants in WSF's children's activities where Neki says there is something for everyone and all ages. Her three youngest children have been regulars at the Stay & Play toddler group, while the older ones have joined the youth club, and the middle children have loved activities such as the new art and craft club.

Most recently, the WSF team has been supporting the family in finding a nursery place for their youngest child and helping Neki prepare to return to work. She says that joining English classes, and a six-week employment workshop, have been instrumental in helping get her CV into shape and giving her the confidence to start applying for roles.

With a large family and the challenges the pandemic has brought, Neki says she would probably be facing depression without the support she's received – and that it's really helped make Royal Docks feel like home!

















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The Value of Partnership



Partnership is vitally important to us as a local community charity. At WSF, our key partners include local government and council teams, our funders, the fantastic neighbouring community organisations we collaborate with, West Silvertown schools and businesses, and our neighbours and supporters who help shape our services, donate and share words of encouragement!

Partnership helps us to continually improve what we do at WSF – and working together enables us to make a bigger collective impact in the community that we love and serve. We simply couldn't do what we do without our partners. For example, our collaboration with local schools to provide holistic care for children and young people; our youth workers meeting with their peers at other charities to share best practice; support from our funders to reshape our programmes in the wake of pandemic disruption; or council-led opportunities to learn and act together on forums for vulnerable groups of people.

West Silvertown Foundation is a great ally for Fight for Peace. We have established a fantastic collaborative relationship that builds on each other's strengths and we are benefiting from WSF's expertise in engaging young people to be active in their community. It's been great to see our teams co-producing services with and for young people, increasing youth participation, regularly sharing best practice and working towards our mission of building a stronger and more equal community in Newham!

Giancarlo Angelucci, Head of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Fight for Peace

Fritannia Education Trust has hugely benefited from its partnership with WSF over many years. More recently, our 'Families Plus Project' has supported local families with regular activities such as toddler groups, after school clubs, a school uniform bank and more — and I'm particularly proud of our holiday club collaboration and creative support for families during lockdown. Working together enables us to see the bigger picture and be efficient in serving the community. Long may it continue!

Linda-May Bingham, CEO and Executive Headteacher, Britannia Education Trust

We've been especially encouraged this year by the opportunities we've had to strengthen our relationships and build new alliances too. So to all of you, our partners, we're hugely grateful for your support and we look forward to continuing our work together!

A BIG Thank you!

Ascension Community Trust, Ballymore,
Bonny Downs Community Association, Britannia
Village General Management Company,
Britannia Education Trust, Care 4 Calais,
Creative Kids After School Club, Fight for Peace,
Greater London Authority, Groundwork, Igloo,
London Borough of Newham,
Oasis Academy Silvertown, Peabody,
Royal Docks Community Church, Real Urbanism Ltd,
Royal Docks Learning & Activity Centre,
Stratford East, Tiny Town Daycare and
Vibrant Minds After School Club.

*WSF is a central asset to Royal Docks and the surrounding communities. With its community-led and responsive approach, it plays a crucial role in addressing the needs of local communities and supporting community cohesion. Having their local expertise and input in our programme is vital in ensuring that local people can contribute and benefit from the changes happening as part of the area's regeneration. We're very grateful to work in partnership with them!

Rawnak Jassm, Community Engagement Officer, The Royal Docks Team

West Silvertown Foundation have a passion for the local community, underpinned by a deep knowledge of and care for the people in the area. Our students benefit greatly from mentoring, away days, youth clubs, classes, high quality facilities and positive role models through the work of WSF and we are very grateful for this!

Emily Boxer, Acting Principal, Oasis Academy Silvertown

Welcome Project

When team member Emily restarted our weekly English as a Second Language (ESOL) class in February, we had little idea how popular it would be - or what it would lead to!

One of the wonderful features of our West Silvertown community is its diversity, but for our many new arrivals it isn't always easy to access education or navigate the practicalities of daily life here. Our English classes therefore focus on practical lessons such as shopping and visiting the doctor, with students helping to plan the programme.

As demand continued to grow, we ended the year with five classes a week for beginners, improvers and advanced level students. It quickly became clear that there was a need for additional support and, thanks to funding from Awards for All and a growing group of dedicated volunteers, our Welcome Project was born.

It's an inclusive project with no eligibility checks, meaning people who cannot access education elsewhere are welcome, while our classes with creche means parents of young children can join too and thanks to our funding we can provide expenses to those who need it.

Some of our Welcome Project at beginners English class

In addition to English classes, we held a programme of Employment Workshops with training on how to find a job, local employment opportunities and support with CVs and applications; and a short series of Practical Life in the UK workshops provides support on issues like applying for school places.

Another important aim of the project is to help people integrate with their new community, so we take the opportunity to bring people together in less formal ways too. We held our first Bring and Share lunch in August and began a monthly London group trip with 10-20 participants each time visiting places such as the South Bank, Greenwich and London museums including walks and picnics – with free travel provided by DLR!

The results so far have been very encouraging. As participants have grown in confidence, it's been hugely satisfying to see them make new friends, go onto find work, seek out volunteering opportunities and begin formal education at local colleges!





Activities for Adults

Over the past few years, WSF has significantly invested in supporting the grown-ups in our community too. 2021 was no exception, as we restarted activities in line with easing restrictions and added new ones in response to local demand.

Whether you're a resident who needs a helping hand to navigate your challenges, or a time-poor employee seeking to improve your work-life balance, our activities and services are designed to connect you to your community and help you stay active, healthy and learning.

During lockdowns, our Coffee Meet Up, Board Games Club and Book Club continued to meet online and grew in popularity and we partnered with Ascension Community Trust to run a regular online quiz. It was encouraging to see active WhatsApp groups develop, with members swapping ideas and individuals meeting up for companionship.

As spring arrived, we were able to enjoy being outdoors together again, providing opportunities to deepen friendships and find mutual support. We launched a local walk group, a coffee morning in the community garden, a weekly lunch break meetup in Barrier Park, and we restarted community breakfast at Britannia Village Hall as soon as restrictions allowed.

At work in the Community Garden!

With wellbeing such an important theme throughout the pandemic, our fitness classes were in high demand. Adults of all ages, backgrounds and abilities appreciated our regular Yoga, Meditation and HIIT workout classes and we restarted table tennis too.

For those who like to get creative, our weekly Craft Group offered the opportunity to learn new skills such as crochet and jewellery-making, while our Art Courses Group provided the chance to have a go at everything from seascapes to portraits.

In October, we restarted a monthly Swap Shop, with neighbours coming together to bring and take away old clothes and household items, meet their neighbours and find new treasures!

In response to local needs, we also launched a new initiative, which we call the Welcome Project, to support the many migrants, refugees and other new arrivals who have decided to make West Silvertown their home.





Activities for Adults Highlights



- We hosted 122 hours of fitness-oriented activities during the year, from highintensity fitness training to yoga and table tennis
- Our Book Club has enjoyed a wide variety of reads, from classics such as 1984 to light-hearted books such as Away with the Penguins!
- Our Welcome Project has supported 147 adult migrants, refugees and new arrivals to settle into their West Silvertown community through practical language, employment and life skills sessions
- 124 adults have benefited from 180 hours of English classes, with up to five sessions a week!

Meet Marina

"My life would be so boring and difficult without WSF. I had no family or friends here when I came to the UK, but now I've met so many people and have learnt so much!"

Marina is a young mum who came to the UK in 2019 from Chechnya and has been living in Britannia Village ever since.

With no family or friends in the UK and limited understanding of English, she struggled to integrate with her new community – something which the pandemic made even more challenging.

Last year, Marina began attending our weekly Stay & Play toddler group with her young son. She says it's been fantastic to watch him make new friends and develop his social skills! "He really enjoys the playgroup and without it he would still be playing at home, alone."

Marina then enrolled at our 'improver' level English classes. When she started, she could understand some of what people said to her but had difficulty speaking English herself. "I've learnt so many things and they have really helped my confidence! The classes are very practical with fun activities and games, and now I can have much better conversations with people, like my neighbours and the doctor", she says.

Joining the classes has also helped Marina to get out and about and improved her social life. She recently enjoyed a group day trip to Greenwich and can't wait to go on more, taking her son along too!

The English classes are great! London can be a challenging place, but everyone at WSF is so welcoming and makes time for you, especially Emily and Burhana. The classes are very practical and I learn a lot. I also love that there's space to talk, and group visits to other places in London, which allow me to get to know people from so many different nationalities.

- Annette

It's such a nice and thoughtful thing to do – thank you I really appreciate it. I can't wait to see you in person to catch up properly!

- A local adult who appreciated our lockdown check-ins

The community centre was an anchor outside my home life

- A local adult who benefited from our community activities

I enjoyed every moment at the yoga class and the community breakfast. Thanks so much for the opportunity!

– Johanna

Looking ahead



Looking ahead, we'll continue serving the community through a diverse range of activities and services for adults, young people and families from all backgrounds. We plan to build further on the successful new programmes we've recently established such as our Welcome Project and Student Mentoring Programme – and we'll refine and add to our schedule of weekly activities in line with feedback from local residents.

This spring, with the pandemic receding, our staff and trustees will also take the opportunity to refresh the strategy for our charity. In particular, we'll be looking at how we can best support West Silvertown's Covid recovery, help our community come back to life following the end of restrictions, and become an even better advocate for the people we serve including those who are most vulnerable.

Ultimately, we want to serve as an effective bridge between residents and the various bodies who make decisions about the future of our area. To do this, we will continue to strengthen our partnerships and alliances with other community organisations and local government and council teams so we can be an effective 'community glue' that helps connect stakeholders together.

Turning to the redevelopment of Britannia Village Hall, we've made good progress over the past year and established a team to manage the project. 200 residents took part in our community consultation and we formed a development advisory group with 20 residents and stakeholders who held four meetings over three months. We submitted a preferred approach for the redevelopment to Newham Council in the summer and during 2022 we'll continue to meet, consult and refine our ideas — with the aim of submitting a formal plan for the redevelopment next year.

In the meantime, we look forward to working with the community to progress the refresh of Britannia Village Green; expanding our partnership with local schools by managing their sites at evenings and weekends to offer more activities for local people; and offering our community perspective to plans for the Silvertown Quays development which includes 6,000 new homes for our area.

So we have plenty to do and to consider at WSF this year. But thanks to the fantastic input, support and friendship of the people in West Silvertown I know we can achieve our goals – and we look forward to building an even stronger community together!



Chief Executive Officer
West Silvertown Foundation







Get involved

If you live in West Silvertown and haven't joined any of our activities before - or it's been a while since you have - we warmly invite you to get involved!

Most of our activities are **free** – and those that aren't are affordable. We aim to offer something for everyone and we're a friendly bunch.

Not sure which activities would be the best fit for you? Why not start by taking a look at our website and following us on social media. We also recommend signing up for email news on our website so we can keep you in the loop about what's happening each week.

Alternatively, you're welcome to drop in at our community centres at Royal Wharf Community Dock or Britannia Village Hall or call or email us.

All our details are on the bottom of this page, and we hope to see you soon!









To our employees and trustees; our volunteers and activity leaders; our local community partners; our friends, neighbours and donors, West Silvertown simply wouldn't be the same without you. Thank you for everything you do for WSF and for our community!

We'd like to close with a special thank you to our funding partners. Your support, guidance and collaboration has been absolutely fantastic once again this year. Our community is so fortunate to have you and West Silvertown Foundation is so thankful for you!

Thank you to our funders Ballymore, Britannia Village General Management Company, Britannia Education Trust, Community Led Housing London, East End Community Foundation, Greater London Authority, Jack Petchey Foundation, London Borough of Newham, the National Lottery Community Fund, Peabody, and The Royal Docks Trust.



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