

Bede is a local community charity. We believe strong, confident communities enable people to flourish.

Recent months have seen Bede's support for our community called upon in unprecedented ways. As soon as the initial lockdown struck we adapted and extended many of our services, helping local people suddenly confined to their homes, delivering food parcels, organising online activities - and much, much more.

It has been a time full of challenges but we have been heartened by the positive and imaginative responses of both our Bede teams and the people who we help. We have all discovered new resources by working through this crisis, and will continue to build on all that we have learned.

At Bede House the young volunteers learnt as much - if not more - from those they set out to help, and it is this principle of mutual learning between people of different backgrounds and circumstances that holds true in the professional, secular charity that Bede has become today.



Following a hugely active and often challenging year, Bede stands poised to enter a new era. Bede's Director since 2002, Nick Dunne, retired in July 2021, and our new Director, Mahua Nandi, is already leading Bede into an exciting future.

We hope we can inspire you to be part of this next chapter in Bede's history.

BUILDING for the FUTURE on strong foundations

Bede has done many different things since opening its doors in 1938: relief work during the bombing of World War 2, community relations during times of great change (such as when the docks closed) and teaching local people how to use computers when they first began to change our lives. During the coronavirus pandemic of 2020/21 Bede has been a vital resource of practical and emotional support for people in Southwark.

Our focus has always been to support the most vulnerable people in our community, and today we run four key services:

- Supported volunteering, social and development activities for adults who have a learning disability
- The Starfish Project for women and men experiencing domestic violence and abuse
- The Youth Adventure Project for young people aged 8 to 19
- Community Engagement work supporting local people to improve community life

Each service aims to bring people of different backgrounds, skills and experiences together to build long-term, supportive relationships that help to create new opportunities for those involved.

According to government reports, some of our local neighbourhoods are still among the most deprived in the country, with 47% of children growing up in poverty. We work hard to reach those who need our support the most. Our flexible 'local and personalised' approach is very effective in helping people overcome hardships and achieve their potential as active citizens in the community. Bede achieves so much that it is hard to tell the full story. However, everything we do contributes to the four great aims of Bede House Association:

- Alleviating the effects of poverty and increasing education and employment prospects
- Reducing isolation and finding fresh purpose in life
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Caring for our environment





Normally, Bede benefits over 2,000 people each year through our different projects and activities. Half of that number benefit directly from our services, from our facilities and from being involved as volunteers. We estimate another 1,000 people indirectly benefit. For example as relatives or carers of those who attend Bede, or by attending an event we've helped organise.

Covid restrictions have reduced the number of people we've been able to benefit this year. Person to person contact has been severely limited, community events have been cancelled and recruitment of new volunteers and youth club members put on hold.

However, we have continued to fulfil our four main aims working closely with over 800 vulnerable people this year, 510 of whom were children and young people. Bede has a significant local impact in reducing poverty and isolation, improving health and well-being and caring for our environment.

ALLEVIATING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY AND INCREASING EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

PROSPECTS

For example, we enable carers of children and disabled adults from low income families to go out to work safe in the knowledge that those they care for are happily involved at Bede. We provide voluntary work and training opportunities for those who are unemployed. We help solve problems, such as abuse at home or difficulties at school, which are affecting a person's education or employment prospects. Bede's Starfish Domestic Abuse service gave food bank vouchers, toiletries and Christmas parcels to 28 clients last year because they had very little money, and our youth workers delivered food to 32 families during lockdown.

OUR LIMPACT



REDUCING ISOLATION AND FINDING PURPOSE

We do this through our youth clubs, our social events and our volunteering opportunities.

Our **Inside Outside** project enables people who have a learning disability to visit elderly and housebound neighbours and do jobs around their homes and gardens. They help each other to learn new skills and enjoy each other's company.

Our **Starfish** Domestic Abuse project enables people who have suffered in silence for years to tell their story and live safer lives.

Our **youth clubs** help young people make friends and discover positive, exciting things to do. During the pandemic, our daily Zoom sessions, phone calls and doorstep visits gave hope and encouragement, reducing the isolation of many people who had to stay indoors.

At Bede, we make it easy for young people and those who have a learning disability to be physically active and eat healthily.

More than two thirds of women who contact our Starfish Domestic Abuse project have a formal diagnosis of mental ill-health. 90% of our clients live safer lives after help from Bede, and their mental health improves as a result. Each year, social services avoid having to take children into care because Bede has helped their mothers to end the violence at home.

How to have happy, healthy intimate relationships are an important part of the discussions that happen in all of Bede's projects. Our Youth Workers run courses in schools, and help club members discuss issues they have as teenagers.

During the coronavirus pandemic, we taught our clients who have learning disabilities how to wash their hands regularly and keep social distance. We hosted vaccination sessions at Bede Centre so we could support our most anxious clients to receive this treatment.

CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

Volunteers who have a learning disability look after our Aspinden Garden. They come to feed the birds, and learn more about the wildlife that live there. We keep it tidy too – without our care it would become a rubbish tip. These volunteers also grow their own vegetables on our allotment in Southwark Park, and help elderly neighbours look after their gardens. Our allotment is now fully accessible to wheelchair users, so all of our clients can now take part.



IMPROVING **HEALTH**AND **WELLBEING**

Bede's Youth Clubs have a strong adventure theme, taking groups of young people into the countryside every year to ride horses, scramble down caves, wade through streams and learn how the countryside is very different from life on a housing estate in London. Many see sheep and cows for the first time when they are on a trip with Bede.

Bede's New Centre, which we hope will be open in 2023, is being designed to create an environmentally friendly building we can be proud of.

At Bede, people with learning disabilities can learn new skills, make friends and help others by volunteering in the community. There's enjoyable work on our allotment in Southwark Park or in the Bede Café, and help to find employment as well as plenty of social, sporting and artistic activities to enable those who come to Bede to flourish.

We are able to support those people who need constant one to one attention, as well as those who have good prospects of finding and keeping a paid job. Because we believe in community, we look beyond our buildings and find ways that everyone can play their part in society.

The service offers:

- individual training, education and guidance on personal skills such as travelling independently, sex and relationships, handling money, looking after your personal appearance, behaving appropriately and meeting your responsibilities.
- a timetable offering over 30 activity sessions a week that includes art, music, dance, drama or sport. We work closely with Millwall Football Club, and Create dance and drama company.
- over 40 special events, including parties, day trips, summer and Christmas fairs.

LEARNING DI

When the first lockdown was imposed in March 2020, we had to close Bede Centre and adapt our support to the new circumstances. Over 120 telephone calls to clients and carers were made every week, providing guidance and reassurance. Social media and Zoom were explored. Clients were helped to join a secure Cluster group to share news and photos and Zoom activity sessions were organised by staff from home to engage clients in arts, crafts, baking, keep fit, music and more. 82 individuals attended our Learning Disabilities services in 2020/21

Some clients became very demotivated during lockdown, spending more time in bed because they couldn't see the point of getting up. Our Zoom programme and doorstep visits gave them something to look forward to.

We have been surprised and encouraged by how quickly clients have adapted to using Zoom and Cluster. We provided a number of tablets, free of charge, to households who lacked the necessary equipment, and made visits to teach clients and carers how to use them. Sometimes, the client was quicker to learn and began to teach their carer.



A young man was referred to Bede during the first lockdown. We couldn't meet him in person, but we could see and talk with him and his mother on Zoom. Lockdown was proving hard for them she had to go out to work, and, whilst he was safe at home, he was very bored.

While we waited for social services to assess his case, and decide if they would fund a place for him at Bede, we invited him to join our Zoom sessions for free. He was delighted, and soon he was attending nearly every session, baking, exercising, playing bingo and sharing his favourite songs. Although they'd not met, all the other participants got to know him - he became part of Bede without walking through the door.

Six months later, he finally met his new friends in person. Desperate to play football again, he joined our session with Millwall FC's Community Trust and was delighted when he scored a goal.

RESPECTED VALUED SACTIVE



The Starfish Project changes lives. Surveys of former clients consistently record that around 90% are living much safer lives after working with Bede. External agencies, such as social services, or mental health workers, also report tangible improvements in clients' safety and wellbeing.

Our Starfish Project specialises in helping those in complex situations, including child project's clients are women. Most have been in abusive relationships for more than 5 reaking

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We work one-to-one with our clients to assess the risks they face and achieve a successful safety plan. Our counsellor will provide in-depth support with long term issues. A unique feature of Bede's service is that it is open-ended – staff will work with clients for as long as

helped 27 clients obtain non-molestation orders from the courts.

Our Survivors' Groups and Freedom Programmes bring women together to share

children off the Child Protection Register as a result of the progress our clients had made in achieving a safe home environment. The children were therefore no longer at risk of being taken into care.

Many clients have no access to public funds due to immigration issues. We gave 28 clients Food Bank vouchers, toiletries and Christmas parcels because they did not have enough money for basic necessities for themselves and their children.

During the first, and strictest coronavirus lockdown, H was violently attacked by her partner in front of her young children. After her partner had thrown her phone out of the window, her only contact with the outside world was by email. Police arrested her partner and referred H to Bede for a risk assessment by video call. We arranged an emergency change of locks to her flat and ordered the same day delivery of a phone and sim card.

Her partner was released on bail so the next step was to organise an emergency Non-Molestation Order and to liaise with police to fit specialist alarms to her home. Social services were also concerned for the safety of her children, and our worker attended child protection video conferences with H to ensure that the authorities knew exactly what was happening and that H received the support she and the children needed.

However, when her partner was summoned to appear at the Magistrate's Court to face charges of assault, H was called to give evidence in person, even though the lockdown restrictions on travel outside the home were still very strict. We knew that this would be a very gruelling experience for H, and our worker decided to accompany her to court in person.

The case took several hours to be heard. If Bede's worker had not been with her, H would have been alone in that court room in the presence of her violent partner and his legal representative. Having heard H's evidence, the court found her partner guilty of assault and the sentence ensured that he could not have any contact with her for the next five years. This gave her the security she needed to begin to rebuild her life, and ensure her children's safety.

Bede's counsellor provides a vital service in helping clients recover from the trauma of abuse. The pandemic changed not only the way counselling took place over Zoom, but also what the clients brought to counselling: health anxiety, coping with educating their children at home when schools were closed, feelings of isolation and in some cases feeling guilty for that they felt safer in a lockdown - it has added a layer to the client's experience which is already filled with emotion and trauma from their domestic abuse.





Young people often need somewhere outside home and school where they can belong, find friendship and excitement and benefit from wise guidance from adults who understand the challenges of growing up in this part of London.

Our youth clubs, detached youth work on the streets, activity programmes and adventure residentials during the school holidays give young people aged 8 to 19 creative alternatives, like music and adventure activity, through which they can express themselves and discover their potential.

Bede has provided this for generations of young people - there are many parents, and grandparents in the local community who fondly remember their time "at the Bede".

YOUTH PROJECT
DISCOVER
WHO YOU
CAN BE

For over 10 years, the Bede Youth team have been running healthy relationship sessions in schools to raise awareness of abusive behaviour within intimate relationships.

A teacher gave us this example of how the sessions make important changes in young lives: "Just wanted to update you on that student who looked so depressed during the Bede session. She came back today and told me she's being pressured by a student in another class, to be her girlfriend. She described her as being very jealous and controlling and stopping her from having other friends. She said that session was very triggering for her, as she realised for the first time that she was in an unhealthy relationship. She said she just wants to be friends with this girl and not romantically involved but she's too scared to tell her, as she gets angry and upset. I asked what she would have done if the session hadn't have happened and the three of us hadn't seen her so depressed and she said she would have just continued to put up with it until they left school.

I made time to very delicately mediate between them. The other girl was also very quiet and straight away apologised for being jealous and possessive. She was nearly crying herself and didn't have a clue that she was having that effect on her! They agreed to be friends and established some boundaries they were both comfortable with. It's just another example of why your work is so important!



Our city is in flux, and some feel that they don't belong, or are forgotten. Fortunately, there are many others who want to nurture community spirit, to act as volunteers and turn where they live or work into friendlier, happier places.

Normally, over 70 people are involved with Bede as volunteers, our halls are used by community groups, and our staff and volunteers take leading roles in coordinating and organising activity in the neighbourhood.

But the pandemic significantly limited our ability to involve volunteers in our day-to-day work during 2020/21. When Bede House and Bede Centre closed, many staff were placed on furlough whilst services continued to operate at a basic level using telephone and Zoom.

We kept in contact with our regular volunteers, giving support to those who were particularly vulnerable.

Many, including staff, became volunteers through their own social networks and in their immediate neighbourhoods. They used their local knowledge to ensure vulnerable households received food and essentials. Staff volunteered with **Fooditude** to distribute meals, and parents were grateful for the Bede activity packs for youth club members. Volunteer roles will reopen in 2021 once restrictions are lifted and our normal person to person work is fully restored.

Local residents involved in the management of Wade Hall, their community centre, agreed to let us use it to run additional activities for Bede clients with a learning disability. This extra space was needed for socially distanced person-to-person sessions. Such collaboration with local residents and Southwark Council enabled Bede to welcome back clients more quickly once lockdown regulations eased.

David Omorogbe was chosen to receive the **Southwark Stars Disabled Volunteer of the Year** Award in June 2021 for his work in the community during the pandemic.

Our **Inside Outside** project enables elderly and housebound neighbours and Bede volunteers who have a learning disability to help each other. During the coronavirus lockdown, we made sure our elderly neighbours had food and other essentials, as well as someone to talk to regularly.

Bede hosts community groups including **Aikido Alive UK** and **Siblings Together** – a charity which works with children in care – and benefits from fundraising, technical and volunteer support from individuals and businesses who are among our **400 Friends of Bede.**

Brenda Sempare was one of the country's top female footballers in the 1980s and 90s. She played for England in the 1995 Women's World Cup and is celebrated in English Football's Hall of Fame. Today, as a Bede Support Worker, Brenda works with players who have a learning disability.



Football is so much fun at Bede, everyone looks forward to our sessions with Millwall FC and our teams have been successful in the Special Disability League. We love it!





Southwark Council are redeveloping the Abbeyfield Estate in SE16

It's an exciting opportunity to create a new bigger and better Bede Centre just a few yards from where we are now. Our existing premises will be demolished in 2024 and we have successfully negotiated for Southwark Council to build us a New Bede Centre. All of our activities will then be in one, purpose designed building.

Planning permission has been granted for the new 1,000 sq metres premises which will include a multi-use hall, Youth Club rooms, a community café run by trainees of our Learning Disabilities project, a music studio, bike repair workshop, one-to-one and small group spaces where our Starfish clients can meet, plus offices for all Bede's staff, including our central administration.

Our new space has been specially designed to meet our purposes and will enable us to do even more in the years to come. We'll still be overlooking Southwark Park and there will be a new gate right beside us to make it easier for our groups to use it. The New Bede Centre offers outstanding value for money as well as greater efficiency, suitability and sustainability for Bede's future. The contractor, Bouygues, is expected to start work on site at the end of 2021.

To secure a 125-year lease, furnish and equip the new building and meet the revenue costs of such a major project, we need to raise a total of £1.2 million by 2023. As of June 2021, we've secured over £780,000 in pledges and donations and now we're asking all of our supporters to help us raise the rest of the money.

You too can be a part of this moment in our history

In 1938, the local community raised £400 (a huge sum for its time!) to buy Bede House and convert it from an old bakery. By 2023, as well as raising our annual revenue budget of around £1.2 million, we will need to raise an additional £1.2 million to complete our move to the New Bede Centre. Local and central government funding continues to be squeezed very hard, so we rely even more on the charitable support of trusts, businesses and individuals in the community.

We hope many people, including those who benefitted from Bede in the past, perhaps as youth club members, or as former clients of the Starfish Project, will help us pass our magic on to the next generation. Watch our short online film *Bede Now and Tomorrow*, on our website at bedehouse.org.uk/support-our-new-centre, to find out more.

How you can help

Whether you choose to support this appeal individually, as a family, group, through your company or charitable trust, together we can make this happen!

We will be pleased to offer a range of naming opportunities within the New Bede Centre to acknowledge those who help us achieve our appeal target of £1.2million. Members of the community who donate at least £1,000 (excluding Gift Aid) will have their names, or those of a loved one, recorded in a specially commissioned piece of artwork.

Major donors can dedicate an entire room in which discrete plaques will be placed to acknowledge their gift. Room dedication opportunities will start at £50,000, with larger multi-purpose spaces valued at up to £150,000.

If you'd like to support us with a donation or a regular standing order, please contact our Central Office on **020 7237 3881** or check our website **bedehouse.org** for further details.

thank you!

THE NEW CENTRE

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President The Lord Bishop of Southwark, Right Rev Christopher Chessun Vice Presidents Roger Harrison, Andrew Sutton

Patrons of Friends of Bede Cllr Sunil Chopra, Sir Simon Hughes, Jane Holbrook

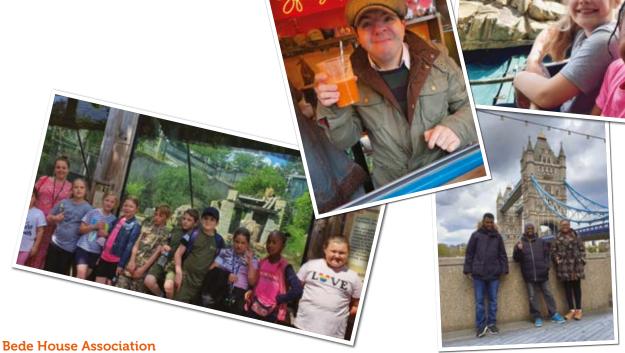
Members of Bede Council

Wendy Cookson, Chair Nitu Panesar, Treasurer Alison Booth Martyn Hickson John Kent Caroline Knight Jamaria Kong Paul Lindsay (until June 2020) Catherine Carter-McGrath (until June 2021) Shane Murphy (from November 2020) Robert Ogilvie (from November 2020) Katrina Ramsey (until November 2020)

Senior Staff Team

Nick Dunne, Director (until July 2021) Mahua Nandi, Director (from July 2021) Carole Brady, Learning Disabilities Service Manager Ahlam Laabori, Starfish, Domestic Abuse Project Manager

Fokrul Meah, Youth Project Manager John Phipps, Facilities and IT Manager Pam Whyte, Finance Manager



bedehouse.org

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The MBE for volunteer groups