



**ANNUAL
REVIEW**

2023

Welcome!

We hope that this review of 2023 will give you an idea of this place, the energy poured into all of the work that we do here and our continued commitment to social justice and inclusion.

We work with intention, to bring our neighbourhood together, we celebrate collaboration, creativity and support.

2023 though unblighted by the separation that we endured through the pandemic, has seen the continued cost of living crisis bring into sharp focus the gap between the richest and the poorest in our neighbourhood.

We work here to create a safe harbour, we welcome everyone and we do what we can to help.

This is a place for people to meet, connect, build friendships and find solidarity.

Come in!



Thank you!

First things first! Thank you to everyone who makes everything that happens here possible! Thank you to everyone who comes along and joins in and shares what they have! Thank you to all the chatters, the dancers, the cooks, the eaters, the sewers, the yogis, the washeruppers, the chair stackers, the mums and dads and grandparents and kids, Thanks to everyone who keeps this place interesting! Keep things happening! Keeps the energy flowing! Thanks for your compassion, your patience, your kindness and all your amazing work **Our incredible staff team** Michelle Baker, Julia Andrews, Alex Collins, Leila Zebrini, Cheila Ferreira, Fiona McAllister, Rob Truscott, Tomas Malinovsky. **Our brilliant nursery team** Emma Spinelli, Modina Begum, Edem Alorvor-Nunepeko, Dalwinder Jaglish, Saada Adus, Farzana Patel, Maria Smith, Ayesha Sultana **Our wonderful volunteers** of which there are many but special mention to Mary, Joel, Anis Kari, Petra, Richard, Karen, Joanne, Ruth, Nazia, Nathalie, Patsy, Amal, Trina, Astrid, Mariam, Hawa, Joe, Meg, Sulainatu, Carol, Catherine, Aya and Maria, Petra, Yolanda, Mariam, Hiwot and Amal **Our lovely sessional workers** Olga Filatova, Sheena Gleeson, Chris Wong, Andrew Coombes, Farzana Patel, Madlyn Maya Ray-Jones, Gabi, Keshia, Maya Matharu **Our unflappable trustees** Hannah Henderson, Lynda MacInnes, Rachel Turner, Abi Kingston **Our generous funders** LB Hackney, National Lottery Community Partnership Fund, URC Thames North Synod, John Dorsett Trust, East End Community Foundation, Blakemore Foundation





Urban Table turned 18 years old in November 2023.

The number of guests each week has grown again and we are now up to pre-Pandemic numbers proving a sit down **lunch to around 65 people each week.**

Many guests have been coming for years and hugely enjoy the companionship, food and donations. New people arrive regularly. Most weeks the atmosphere is very convivial and we can have a laugh. Guests frequently help volunteers.

Urban Table has teams of **amazing volunteers** that take turns each week. Across the month 60+ volunteers make the meals happen. Shopping and cooking and hosting and welcoming people every week. Our volunteers are dedicated and experienced and give joyously of their time. New people frequently volunteer and our lead volunteers work closely with them to bring them into the team..

We are incredibly grateful for the support of our local community and their generous individual donations through our annual Just Giving campaign and to Hackney

Giving and the London Borough of Hackney for their support of this work.

This year we also received generous donations of money and food from the congregation of St Jude's Catholic Church on Blurton Road nearby in Hackney.

We have also received weekly donations from local food businesses, helping to boost our provisions and reduce food waste locally! Donations include bread and pastries from Charles Artisan Bread and fruit, veg and dry goods from The Green Basket and uncollected produce from the Growing Communities shed.

Our incredible volunteers add extra value and interest to the weekly meal collecting and distributing good quality clothes donations which are incredibly popular with guests and are supported by their families including regular cash donations from the mum of one of our volunteers!

As we look towards the next year we will do all that we can to keep going and keep being a place to come for anyone who needs it..



Community Nursery

In 2023 the nursery team have continued to provide a friendly, varied, warm, safe, nurturing, fun and **caring** environment for our children and their families!

Highlights this year have included celebrating our **diverse** staff team and children learning about lots of different types of festivals, food, languages, traditions as well as arts and design from different cultures including mandalas, Tibetan, Chinese and Islamic patterns.

Sensory, craft and art and **creative** activities are an important part of our day and are always a huge success with the children. They have loved getting messy and exploring textures making food like bread and omelettes, exploring open ended materials expressing themselves with imaginative role play.

2023 also included lots of **fun** outdoors. Getting messy in our mud kitchen, climbing the cherry tree, and investigating natural habitats. We have painted and made drawings outdoors, planted flowers, herbs and tomatoes, played with lots of water and visited our local park!

We have also made space for a gentle focus on wellbeing, providing time for a calmer indoor environment with music and sensory equipment such as sensory balls, pop up tubes, books as well as mindfulness exercises developed especially for the smallest children such as breathe like a bear.

To add even more variety to the week we have also loved welcoming visiting tutors to provide the children with yoga and capoeira classes too!

Through nurturing each child, responding and supporting them with their individual interests, needs and emotions, they gain the confidence to socialize and become happy learners. Children learn to care for each other and to look after the younger ones as well as gaining independent skills.

In 2023 as with each year we said a happy goodbye to lots of children as they moved on from the Round Chapel nursery to reception places at local schools. We are delighted that the nursery here remains a happy and positive memory for them and have welcomed many families back for a visit!

All of this is possible through the commitment and enthusiasm of our long-standing nursery team who continue to work hard to develop their practice. A very special congratulations this year to Edem, for achieving a 2.1 grade with her BA (Hons) Level 6 in Early Childhood studies..



Church



We think of all the 'projects' happening at the Old School Rooms as 'church' too. But we also continue to gather every Sunday at 11am to sing, pray, discuss and create together, recharging ourselves for the week to come, and trying to make sense of faith in the city. We aim to be an authentic and people centred community, embracing the messiness of humanity, supporting each other in our daily struggles and celebrating each others joy.



As we continue to run without a minister in 2023, the congregation took it in turns to lead our Sunday worship services. This made our Sundays a lovely creative space as everyone brought their different skills and gifts into running services.

Our weeks varied from being reflective and discussion based, to sharing poetry and music, putting on dramas, responding to situations in the world with creativity, and sharing communion together.

Social justice issues are a huge part of our worship and this year we have particularly been praying for peace, justice and hope around world – in Gaza, the West Bank, Israel, Ukraine, Sudan and Yemen. Our discussions have also focused a lot around economic justice and climate change.

Our church congregation went away together for our annual retreat to Othona in Essex in early July. This retreat provides the opportunity for the church to reconnect and reflect. We spend time praying, worshipping, eating together and thinking about our mission in the community.

The church youth group meet once a fortnight after school on a Friday. Spending time together, sharing a meal, going on picnics sharing concerns and curiosities while being supported by an adult member of the church. This group creates a space for them to build strong connections with each other. The discussions are wide and led by the youth often involving school life and social issues.



The Youth Group also work together to lead two services a year for the whole congregation. As our young people go off to university others are finishing primary and looking forward to participating in youth group from September. It is a positive and dynamic group and enriches the life of the whole church.

We are for the wanderers, the wonderers, the risk takers, the question askers, the makers, the dreamers, the agitators, the believers and the doubters.



Community Support

We offer 121 support within our family activities so that it can fit in with the demands and realities of caring for a young family. Families can also arrange a longer meetings outside sessions if they need support with a more difficult or complicated situation.

The support offered varies and responds to the needs of the family but this year included understanding the content of letters, housing options and the bidding process, food bank vouchers, grants for essential items and school uniform, mental health support, doctor's appointments, signposting access to debt advice, immigration advice and educational needs assessments. Getting to know the families that come here each week and supporting them as they work to solve their own problems builds trusting relationships and helps people to build confidence in their own capabilities.

We have worked with LB Hackney in the distribution of supermarket vouchers to support families through the cost of living crisis. We have also distributed Christmas gifts and high street vouchers thanks to generous support from East End Community Foundation and the East London Business Alliance. All of this is a huge help to the families that we support.

We stay informed, connected and up to date through attending Public Health Community Champion forums and LB Hackney Poverty Reduction meetings throughout the year. The information that we share from these networks is practical and varied including letting people know about where to access meals or food or grants or find mental health support, where to go for a hearing test or info about childhood vaccinations - we make sure that we share the up to date information with as many people as we can.





Family Outreach

Word of mouth is a key to our outreach - our focus is on connecting with families living locally on a low income, in temporary or inadequate accommodation.

We promote our projects and receive referrals through local organisations and networks. We work closely with the Hackney Playbus, Bump Buddies at Shoreditch Trust, Social Action for Health, Family Action, local baby banks and children's centres and attend the VCS Children and Families forum.

We collaborate on direct outreach with our partner charity Parent Club. Together we visit local hostels, knock on doors, introduce ourselves and invite families to join our sessions.

There is a good flow of families within and between our projects, Wellbeing Club, Kitchen Club, Stay & Play and All Ages Thursday and holiday workshops. Our staff and volunteer team work hard to connect with families and make people welcome, keeping our reputation as a friendly and inclusive place to bring young children!

Families tell us they love that our all our projects offer hot drinks, snacks, activities and space to roam for children, a 'free shop' for children's clothes and toys and - crucially - lunch! Each project has its own character but they all offer a place to connect with others and be in community together



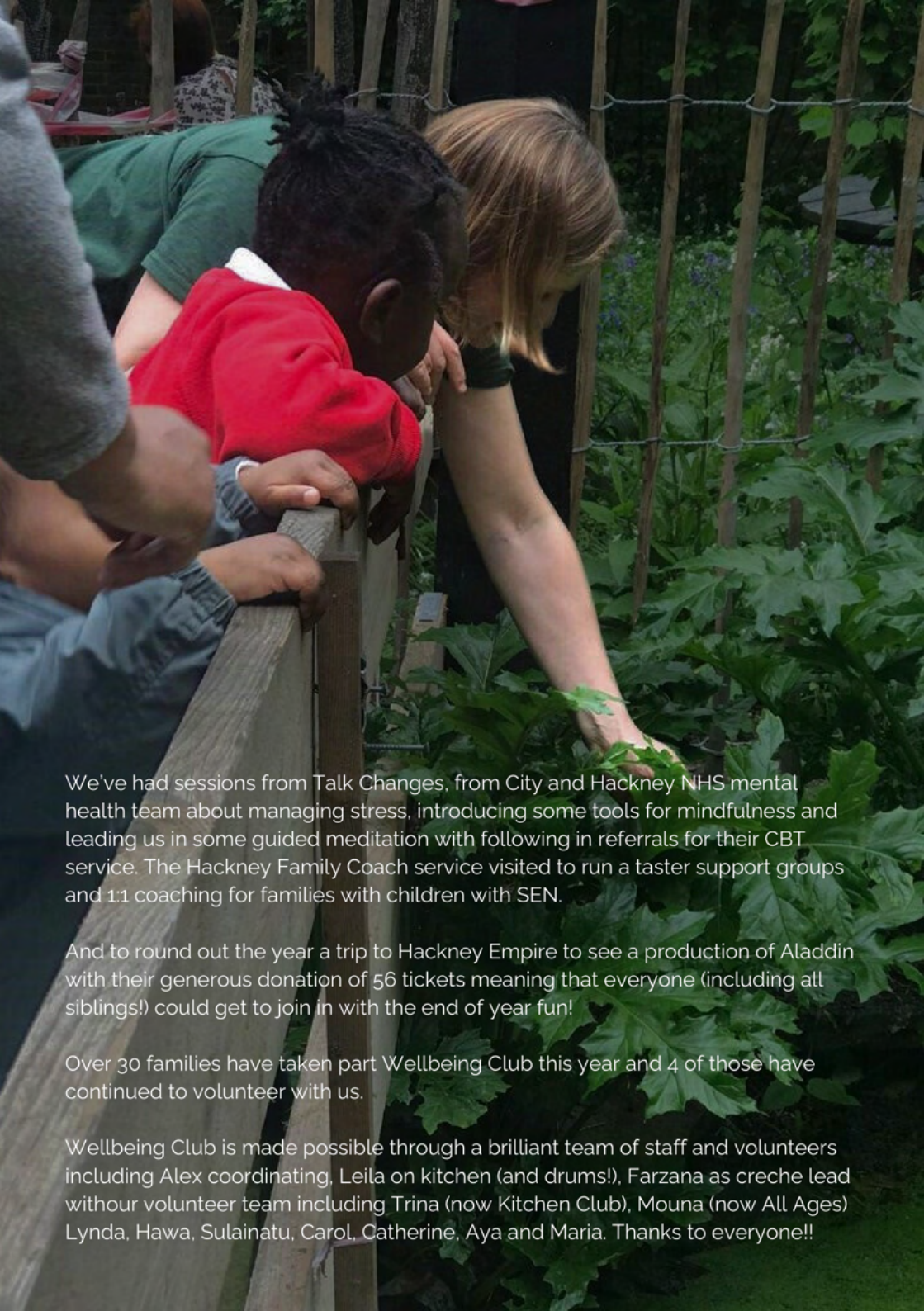
Wellbeing Club

At Wellbeing Club we offer places every Monday in term time to 10 – 15 families who live in temporary hostel or inadequate privately rented housing. It's an opportunity for mums to have some time for themselves at the start of the week, to reflect on their wellbeing and access activities that are normally prohibitively expensive like movement classes, mindfulness and crafts. We provide a creche place for the activity time and a healthy lunch eaten together family style at the end of each session!

As well as bringing in people to deliver sessions as we get to know each other everyone is encouraged to share their skills whether that is leading a workshops or cooking lunch! In 2023 Eden cooked Ital Stew and Hawa and Hawa made their amazing Jollof rice, Simone ran a body scrub making workshop, Irina led a yoga Nidra sessions and Mouna shared her hand massage skills and cooked up a storm including nori wraps and nourishing soup!

We have made body balms, learned some Ethiopian dance moves, tried yoga, got moving with Afrofit, bonded and set intentions through a tea ceremony and blended essential oils for pulse point aromatherapy! We had a drumming circle, a cushion making workshop with local business Yodomo, made draft excluders, learned about self-massage and explored and created with clay. We visited groundwork London's free range garden sowing seeds, making dandelion playdough and spotting frogs in the pond. And Abi led a pilot DIY session where 10 women made 4 tables in 1 hour!





We've had sessions from Talk Changes, from City and Hackney NHS mental health team about managing stress, introducing some tools for mindfulness and leading us in some guided meditation with following in referrals for their CBT service. The Hackney Family Coach service visited to run a taster support groups and 1:1 coaching for families with children with SEN.

And to round out the year a trip to Hackney Empire to see a production of Aladdin with their generous donation of 56 tickets meaning that everyone (including all siblings!) could get to join in with the end of year fun!

Over 30 families have taken part Wellbeing Club this year and 4 of those have continued to volunteer with us.

Wellbeing Club is made possible through a brilliant team of staff and volunteers including Alex coordinating, Leila on kitchen (and drums!), Farzana as creche lead withour volunteer team including Trina (now Kitchen Club), Mouna (now All Ages) Lynda, Hawa, Sulainatu, Carol, Catherine, Aya and Maria. Thanks to everyone!!

THE PLAY IS NOT
THE THING
PRESENTS...

THE WOMEN'S CENTRE

COMMUNITY THEATRE FOR ALL

"AN ODE TO
SISTERHOOD
AND THE
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"AN ENTERTAINING
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THE PLAY
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The Women's Centre Play

We were delighted to share our space for a performance of a play by community theatre company, The Play is not the Thing. Exploring structures of power, the challenges of seeking support in places weighed down bureaucracy, the importance of providing welcoming spaces in the community for people to meet and find peer support. We provided a place and a creche so that single parents, who so often need and know these services were also able to attend.

JOIN US:
14 OCTOBER 2023
4:30PM

ROUND CHAPEL OLD SCHOOL ROOMS
2 POWERSCROFT ROAD
LONDON, E5 0PU

BOOK YOUR FREE OR DONATION TICKET HERE:
THEPLAYISNOTTHETHING.ORG

Social Prescribing from Family Action

In 2023 we opened up our space to host Family Action to deliver social prescribing drop in surgeries in our building. The team from Family Action worked to signpost people to other organisations that could help to improve their quality of life and supported families in our Wellbeing Club to access cost of living grants from the Family Action Fund.

Warm Welcome

From January to March, we increased our offer with the support of the Warm Space initiative. We extended the hours of our Wellbeing Club with craft and play activities and extended the opening times of All Ages with lots of tea and newspapers! We were able to welcome people to come together for longer rather than paying for the expensive heating of their own homes.





Mothers Who Make

In the Spring of 2023 we loved welcoming the Mother's Who Make project to deliver a series of three workshops within our Wellbeing Club session. We were delighted to be able to support local parent Abi Park who has been taking part in activities at the Round Chapel Old School Room for several years.

With successful funding secured from LB Hackney Community Chest "Mothers who Make" put together a series of workshops to design and build a piece of functional furniture. Thinking about how to solve a problem in designing a mobile multi function storage unit and how to safely use power tools to build. Collaborating, learning and playing - all the things we love!



Window Wanderland

2023 saw another year of Window Wanderland! This year the local neighbourhood community light up street gallery filled Homerton & Clapton with images on theme of JOY. Alex and Mary worked with Wellbeing Club and Stay & Play Families and the church youth group to fill the windows with colour and delight. All the things that bring us joy; music and flowers, bikes and bed!



S T A Y & P L A Y

In 2023 we continued to host the very popular Stay & Play session for children under 5 and their adults to meet connect and play every Wednesday in term time!

Every week we welcome 40 families into the building as children and adults get to know one another. This year we revamped the play equipment, we have a play doh table and a sensory play area (using materials from the Children's Scrap Project!).

We have tea and coffee flowing and a free shop to circulate outgrown children's clothes and each session ends with storytime and songs from Kari followed by Maya's much loved Indian lunches! All donations help to support our work with families in activities across the week.

In 2023 we have four sessions alongside Stay and Play led by both the Real Nappy Network and Plastic Free Hackney and we established a Stay and Play Whatsapp 'community' with over 70 members so far and everyone appreciates the reminders to book their space each week and it's better enabled generous support from people passing on items needed by other families in our community!

The session could not run without our fantastic and committed staff and volunteer team. A heartfelt thanks to core volunteers Kari, Petra, Yolanda, Mariam, Hiwot and Amal, welcome to Hannah and Emma who have recently joined, and a fond farewell to Trina who has progressed to volunteer with the Kitchen Club team on Fridays!



Kitchen Club Partnership

Kitchen Club is a drop in cook-play-eat session that we host in partnership with Parent Club every Friday during term time. We collaborate on outreach with Parent Club and we manage the Kitchen Club whatsapp group with information and reminders as well as provide a 'free shop' to share clothes and toiletries. Our community support worker is on hand each week to provide families with signposting or support while Parent Club deliver the session.

The Friday Kitchen Club prioritises families with children under 5 who are living in temporary accommodation, over 60 families took part in 2023. There's food to prepare together, activities for families to take part in with their children including making paper African necklaces for Black History Month, lanterns for Diwali, Chapattis to go with lunch, yoga, dancing, story and song, then always a tasty healthy lunch together!

The Kitchen Club staff and volunteer team are experienced and dedicated in supporting early years families with healthy eating on a budget, encouraging play and language development and building peer support networks. They are an excellent partner to work with and we are delighted to continue our relationship into another year.

All Ages Partnership

Throughout our second year of funding from the National Lottery our partnership project with Hackney Children's Theatre has continued to inspire and flourish. We love opening our doors to provide a space for the intergenerational magic that seems to bring so much value to local people's lives and enrich not only on an individual basis but also at a community level.

A lot happens here – a dance class for people over the age of 50, a Stay & Play and Art Play for parents with their under 5s, a craft corner for people to learn a new skill or get on with their knitting project in a warm and inclusive environment, and an opportunity to volunteer in the kitchen cooking.

Although each of the Thursday activities is specific and targeted, the beauty is that everything takes place under the same roof and everyone is invited to share the same space...and crucially, invited to stay on afterwards for a shared community lunch. Our volunteer-led Community Café never misses a beat when it comes to celebrating and marking cultural celebrations. This year included a Scottish Burns meal, St Patrick's Day and the Mexican festival Dia de los Muertos when we also took the opportunity to remember loved ones no longer with us by creating an area in the space where we displayed photos and memories.



"This community project is the high spot of my week. It makes me feel more alive and connected than anything else in my week. It's given me a new lease on life!"

“The atmosphere is always very welcoming and supportive, a very unique and important place for many people who have formed lasting friendships – particularly between different ages and generations.”

We developed our offer and responded to need, of our community welcoming school-age children during the Teacher strikes and collaborated with art group BUST who delivered a taster workshop called **Strike a Build** showing our solidarity!. We celebrated **International Women's Day** offering participants the opportunity for a portrait by local photographer Manal Massala. We also ran a **clothes swap** and offered **therapeutic massage** for our volunteers and dancers with Madlyn Ray-Jones.



We have offered extra creative opportunities, including welcoming back the **Women Over Fifty Film Festival** for a film screening of Moving Pictures 2 in July AND we have been busy compiling favourite recipes from our All Ages kitchen and inviting participants to share their own favourite recipes from home to publish the **All Ages Cookbook** to tell our story in 2024!

We rely on an incredible team of volunteers, continued input and co-production with project participants and a core team of practitioners and coordinators that have become like family - Fi, Andrew, Olga, Farzana and Chris! Over the last year our programme has been the busiest it's ever been, with full dance classes, a bustling toddler morning, sold-out theatre shows and the café now averaging 70 meals every week!

All Ages Partnership Theatre Shows

With Hackney Children's Theatre we've developed a playful and inclusive programme of creative school holiday workshops for low-income families that link directly to accessible engaging and affordable theatre shows for people of all ages 3 times a year! The shows open up more opportunities for play and connection between the generations, with craft project 'merch' created at our Thursday sessions for sale and participants of our term-time programme coming together to host and run the café for the shows, creating even more inter-generational magic!

February saw dance play and paper craft with Olga and Gabi providing connection to a performance of an immersive and interactive dance show from Club Origami exploring whole new ways of thinking, playing and moving.



In the summer holidays Gabi and Kesha explored the themes of family, belonging and culture in our family workshops, leading up to our all-singing, all-dancing Variety Show which brought two hundred people into the building for affordable, inclusive and whacky family entertainment, the perfect antidote to the end of the summer!

For Christmas alongside the annual fundraising market creative workshops were followed by Christmas Capers from Danny the Elf!



Other things going on in our building!

Throughout the year, we've proudly provided a home for lots of different activities, hosting everything from informative workshops, **NHS** groups, book discussions led by our amazing local bookshop **Pages of Hackney**, political group meetings to lively dance classes from **Adrenlin Dance**, **Ballet North** and **Felix**, drama clubs from **Showkids** and **Perform**, theatre shows, yoga groups with **Amanda** and **Emma** and birthday, henna and Eid parties.

We continue to host a **Growing Communities Veg Shed**.

We've welcomed two new artists into our studio space; **Yuma Burgess** and **Millie Turner**, as well as continuing to house small community businesses **Carry Me Bikes** and **ARTBASH**, and our long standing hirer **RCCG**.

We are committed to keeping this place flexible and accommodating, providing a welcoming venue for people in the local neighbourhood to mark their personal milestones with friends and family. It is a thing of beauty to be able to play a role in bringing people together and we look forward to continuing to share these moments of joy!



Our Values

We are the Round Chapel Old School Rooms CPURC - a vibrant church and community centre opening our doors to the people of Clapton.

We are inclusive. A space for people to gather together, pray together, eat together, create together and change the world together. We are committed to partnership and collaboration.

We are rooted in our neighbourhood. We want to strengthen communities and see that all who live here are treated with love, compassion and dignity.

We are rooted in our world. We care about and campaign for our environment and aim to tackle the root causes of poverty and social inequality in Hackney.

We are rooted in our Christian tradition, which shapes our values. But we also welcome people of all faiths, and none.

We are a community of risk takers, agitators, good trouble makers. Seeking transformation of ourselves, our neighbourhood, our society and our planet.

We are creative. We want to make, imagine and create a new world together. We respond to our world and our faith through a creative lens.

We are curious. We don't have all the answers but we are committed to dialogue and transparency. We aim to be authentic. To wrestle with the big questions. To laugh and cry at the wonders and mysteries of faith.

We are a church on a journey. Join us.