



The Palmers Greenery Community Cafe Broomfield Park

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2023

3	PART ONE: Introduction
4	About Us
5	Our Story
6	Our Purpose
7	Our Milestones
8	The Palmer's Greenery in Numbers
9	PART TWO: Evaluating our Success
11	Evaluating Social Impact Goal 1
14	Case Study 1: Coming together to create a welcoming space
15	Evaluating Social Impact Goal 2
18	Case Study 2: Community response to Covid-19
19	Evaluating Social Impact Goal 3
22	Case Study 3: Volunteer feedback
23	Evaluating Social Impact Goal 4
25	Evaluating Social Impact Goal 5
27	Conclusion

PART ONE: Introduction

The Palmers Greenery Community Cafe is now in its 10th year. We are immensely proud of our dedicated volunteer team, loyal customer base, thriving partnerships and that we continue to generate surplus for reinvestment into park wellbeing projects. But above all, we are proud of the difference we've made and continue to make - a positive impact on people's lives, Broomfield Park and Palmers Green.

Our journey to capture and measure our social and community impact was planned for 2020, when Covid put a stop to it - and much else too. This report is an opportunity to record what sitting at one of our tables for an hour will tell you - to recognise and share the wide range of ways in which we are making that difference.

The success of The Palmers Greenery is in every way the story of a huge team effort that requires thanks (although of course, mere words never quite cut it). First and foremost, to our team - our Greenery 'family' of volunteers who turn up week in week out in extreme cold, rain, heat and everything in between to serve our community with a smile. To our small Steering Group - Ema, Rachel, Deborah and Simon for hours of unsung input.

To our customers who have plenty of other choices to grab a coffee and cake but choose us. Choose us for a chat, to share life's ups and downs - know that every minute and pound you spend with us makes a difference.



To our closest partner - Friends of Broomfield Park, for all you do in the park and to support us and to Enfield Council (and in Neil Isaac's memory for taking a chance and doing things differently) for giving us a fair wind.

To Daniel Anderson for getting a decade's worth of stuff in my head into a meaningful report, to Steve Quinn for making it look beautiful and finally, thanks to Gidon, Evie and Isaac for all your support and for welcoming this little pink kiosk into your lives and hearts over the last 13 years.

Sarah Cotton

About Us

We are powered by Volunteers

Our team freely give their time, skills and energy



We are a Social Enterprise

Our profits are reinvested into park wellbeing projects



We are a Community Hub

Our cafe is an affordable, accessible and friendly space to get together



We aim to be Zero Waste

Our customers are encouraged to reuse and recycle. All of our disposables are compostable



We are a Skills Platform

Our partnerships provide work experience and employability training for young people and adults



We support Local

Our suppliers are local wherever possible. We work in partnership with Friends of Broomfield Park (FoBP) and Palmer's Green Action Team (PGAT)



Frustrated by the lack of a cafe in the park, a group of friends and neighbours got organised and, after a 3-year journey and formal tender, we opened our hatches in June 2014.

Following our successful bid to what was then Enfield Council's Residents Priority Fund, we were awarded a grant of £35,000 to transform a disused and dilapidated park toilet block into a family and dog-friendly outdoor haven.

Operating on a peppercorn rent lease from Enfield Council and coordinated by a Steering Group of 5, we are staffed entirely by a dedicated team of volunteers. Our kiosk-style setup includes an indoor kitchen, serving hatch and plenty of outdoor seating.

Initially able to open three days, we now open five days a week all year-round and complemented by our social media profile, we have grown our customer base and earned recognition for our role in park enhancement, sustainability practices, work experience opportunities and positive impact on people, the park and Palmer's Green.

Investing our surplus in Broomfield Park

As a social enterprise committed to fostering community wellbeing, we channel our efforts into generating surplus that directly benefits Broomfield Park and the park-using community. Surplus stems from our business operations and is thoughtfully reinvested in a range of impactful park-based projects.

Since 2014, over £35,000 has been directed towards a host of transformative wellbeing initiatives in Broomfield Park, documented within this report. This enduring commitment to park enhancement and

community wellbeing remains at the heart of our mission, exemplifying our resolute dedication to creating a lasting positive impact.

Our pricing strategy

At launch we made a conscious decision to keep our prices as low as possible so as not to discourage anyone from enjoying our hospitality. This remains the case in the face of the cost-of-living crisis gripping the UK, where rising prices and wage stagnation have left many struggling. As a small enterprise, we too face rising wholesale costs and constantly strive to balance affordability, quality and generating surplus for reinvestment.

We have always believed that The Palmer's Greenery, as a community asset, must stand and remain as a beacon of hope, offering a place where individuals from all walks of life can gather, connect, enjoy refreshments at affordable prices, and find pleasure in each other's company.



Our Purpose

The Palmers Greenery is committed to making a positive social impact through our dedicated efforts and initiatives. In alignment with our mission, we operate on the basis of five key social impact goals that guide our work and shape our contributions to the community.

1. To enhance Broomfield Park and complement existing park initiatives

By providing a vibrant, safe and welcoming gathering place for residents and visitors.



2. To reduce loneliness and social isolation

By providing a welcoming physical and virtual space where individuals can come together.

3. To broaden volunteering, skill development and work experience

By empowering individuals through offering valuable experiences and the chance to develop new skills.



4. To support local business and enterprise

By collaborating with local producers, suppliers and businesses wherever possible in sourcing our supplies and promoting their products.



5. To champion environmental sustainability By minimising our ecological footprint in the park.

Through our relentless pursuit of these social impact goals, we aim to create a lasting and transformative influence on the well-being of individuals, the vibrancy of our community, and the preservation of our environment. This report serves as a testament to our commitment and progress toward these objectives, highlighting the positive outcomes we have achieved together with the support of our volunteers, partners, and the wider community.

Our Milestones



2010

Informal discussions between Palmer's Green neighbours about lack of meeting hub in the park leads to an outline plan for a Community Cafe in Broomfield Park



2011

Community engagement grows support for our idea from FoBP, Enfield Council and diverse park users. Incorporate as a Social Enterprise entrenching our commitment to serving our community.



2012

Local survey confirms need and informs our business plan. £35k funding to transform derelict toilets into a cafe approved and we start building our volunteer base. Facebook page launched to engage a wider audience



2013

Enfield Council grants licence and planning permission after an open tender. We soft launch our volunteer-powered pop-up in the Bowls Club during the North London Netball League season



2014

Contractors work on site and we open in June. A busy first 6 months training volunteers, hosting a launch party and supporting FoBP's Remembrance Day ceremony with special war-time bakes



2015

Introduce duck & swan food to tackle bread feeding and support our first FoBP event with a special Halloween opening. First round of surplus funds distributed to FoBP, Orchard, Conservatory and Festival projects. Our first 2 fixed tables are acquired and installed



2016

Break-ins and ongoing vandalism cause a mess but don't dampen our team or customers spirit. After years of hard work and significant volunteer contribution, Broomfield Park achieves Green Flag status



2017

Our cafe actively supports new volunteers and contributes to various park events including an Easter Egg Hunt and hosting The Dogs Trust Microchip drive



2018

£5k surplus funds new fencing around the Community Growing Space, interpretation boards for the small pond and benches for the children's playground



2019

We phase out single use plastic bottles, incentivise reuse with branded reusable cups and finally open more days during the week! Our new partnership with West Lea school provides work experience for young people with additional needs



2020

Covid-19 is a huge challenge for our team and community. We reopened as soon as we are able, having installed more fixed tables to expand our seating options to keep the community safe.



2021

Significant surplus funds a youth project in collaboration with FoBP, Broomfield School and Build Up. Partnerships with PGAT and LBE EQUALS deliver litter picks, our mural and work placements for vulnerable adults



2022

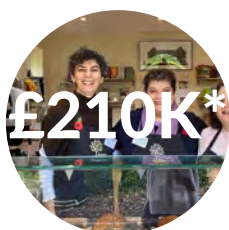
Install more fixed tables and upgrade other furniture to provide more flexible seating. We support FoBP's work with young people (REACH), fund wellbeing mosaic making sessions and host musical afternoons. Implement 25p charge for take-away cups to encourage reuse



2023

Commission social impact project. Surplus funds a duck house for lower pond and a creative Wetlands project for families. Planning underway for 10th anniversary celebrations and reinvestment in 2024

The Palmer's Greenery in Numbers



in salary costs if cafe run by paid staff



followers on social media



spent with local suppliers within 5 mile radius



current volunteers of whom a quarter joined the team at launch



park wellbeing projects funded



adults and young people with additional needs who have gained work experience



invested in Broomfield Park



Level 2 Food Safety & Hygiene courses completed



internal waste recycled



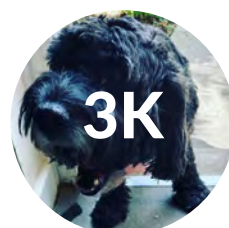
affordable hot drinks served by our team



bags of floating Swan and Duck food sold



collaborations with local groups, schools and statutory providers



dog treats sold in 2022 alone



volunteers trained and supported over the years

*Based on average minimum wage between 2014 - 2023

PART TWO: Evaluating our success



As we approach our 10th anniversary in 2024, we want to evaluate the effectiveness of The Palmers Greenery as a community hub, not least in addressing our five social impact goals. This is the reason for commissioning an impact assessment project, at the heart of which was a Community Impact Survey.

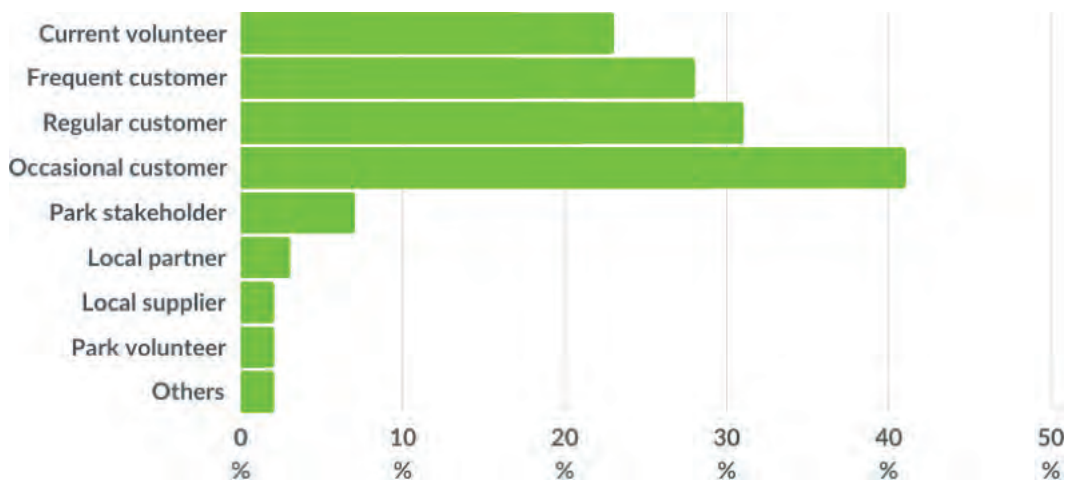
The survey process focused on gathering feedback from key stakeholders, including customers, volunteers, partners, park stakeholders and local businesses. It was conducted over a 4-week period and utilised various channels to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and the Friends of Broomfield Park website were used to make the survey accessible. Physical copies of the survey were also made available at the cafe for those who preferred non-digital options.

Additionally, a dedicated volunteer consultation feedback event was organised to gather in-person comments and opinions from volunteers.

The survey received a total of 229* responses, comprised of 47 volunteers, 45 frequent customers, 58 regular customers, 78 occasional customers, 20 park stakeholders, 9 local partners, 6 suppliers, and 9 others.

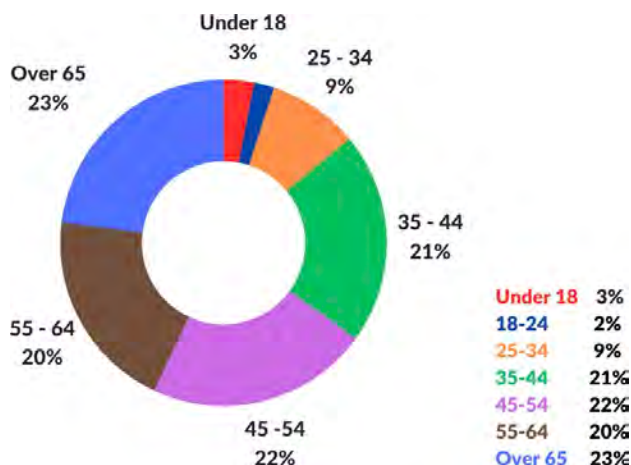
Respondent categories*



*Some respondents fell into more than one category

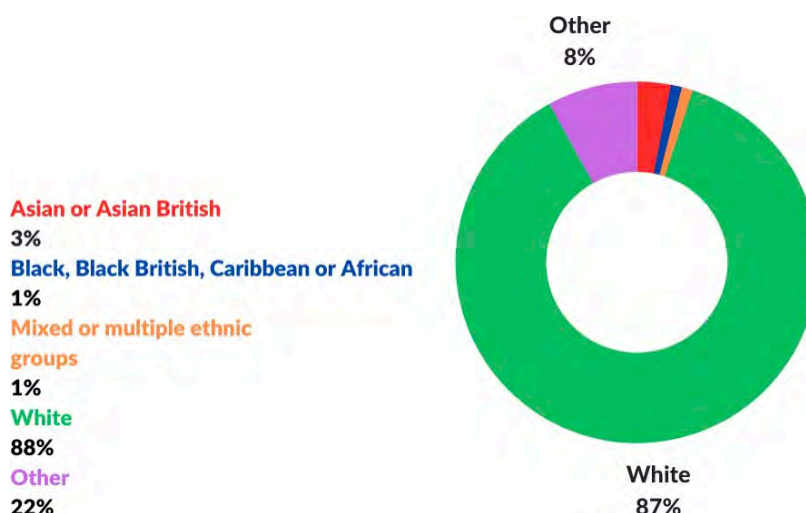
Age of respondents

Respondents were evenly split between those aged 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and the over 65s, though the 25-34 age category were well represented. Less represented were the younger aged categories, though it could be said that they are less likely to complete surveys and may well not be direct users but secondary beneficiaries of teas, coffees and cakes from older adults included in the other categories.



Ethnicity

The ethnic composition of survey respondents closely reflects that of the general park user population.



Interviews

To further enrich the assessment, interviews were conducted with some volunteers to gain a deeper insight into their personal experiences and perspectives on the impact of volunteering at The Palmers Greenery. Their feedback provided valuable qualitative data to complement the survey results.

Through this comprehensive survey process, a holistic understanding of the effectiveness and value of The Palmers Greenery in generating social impact was obtained. The diverse range of stakeholders who participated in the survey ensured that multiple perspectives were considered, contributing to a more accurate assessment of The Palmers Greenery's impact on the community.

EVALUATING SOCIAL IMPACT GOAL 1

To enhance Broomfield Park and complement existing park initiatives



We strive to enhance Broomfield Park, one of Palmer's Green's most beloved green spaces, by providing a vibrant, safe and welcoming gathering place for residents and visitors. The projects we fund from our surplus are carefully and collaboratively developed to ensure they complement existing park projects and create opportunities for all to benefit from the park environment.

Research has demonstrated that contact with nature, such as seeing trees, the sky, and hearing birds, can significantly reduce feelings of loneliness. Moreover, when combined with feelings of social inclusion, the beneficial effect is further enhanced¹. Similarly, the presence of green spaces and the opportunity to take a walk in a park have been shown to improve mood, cognitive function, and memory².

Recognising the importance of these findings, we have actively worked towards creating an environment that incorporates nature, providing a vibrant and welcoming gathering place for residents and visitors alike. In addition, over the last decade we have successfully developed and nurtured collaborations with various park and local organisations and participated in several initiatives, showcasing our commitment to park-based community development and wellbeing.

By aligning our goals with the enhancement of Broomfield Park and complementing existing park initiatives, we have fostered a powerful example of the positive benefits of groups working together for common good.

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-03398-2>

² <https://www.froglife.org/2022/03/29/the-benefits-of-green-spaces-and-nature-on-mental-health->

The Friends of Broomfield Park (FoBP)

The collaboration between The Palmer's Greenery and FoBP has been pivotal in enhancing the look and feel of the park, making it as inviting as possible. This collaboration has seen us (among many other things) fund a range of park improvements and projects including new Conservatory railings, fencing for the Growing Space, playground benches, enhancing the Community Orchard and supporting FoBP's vital work with the REACH programme (supporting young people who have been excluded from school). This has not only beautified the park but (in line with research, our survey responses and our empirical experience), contributed to reducing stress levels, rates of depression, anxiety, and cortisol levels among park visitors.



North London Netball League

An important early collaboration was teaming up with the North London Netball League, which utilises the park's netball courts - directly adjacent to The Palmers Greenery - on alternate Saturdays from October to April. The league, which has operated since 1950 and attracts more than 1,000 players each season, encouraged us to offer a 'pop-up' facility using the disused bowls clubhouse during the 2013/14 season, which enabled us to trial our offerings and operations. This collaboration proved immensely successful, providing valuable experience and paving the way for our official establishment the following year and the happy serving of the Netball community ever since.



Palmers Green Action Team (PGAT), Enfield Climate Action Forum (ENCAF), Cooking Champions and This Girl Can, Period.

We have forged partnerships with local organisations as diverse as PGAT, ENCAF, Cooking Champions and This Girl Can, Period, extending our reach beyond the immediate park environment. Family-friendly, park-based litter picks delivered with PGAT and FoBP encouraged the community to start thinking more holistically about waste management and recycling as we launched our sustainability drive post-Covid.



Through our collaboration with Cooking Champions (and acting as an incubator for this community interest company) we have subsequently funded Level 2 Food Hygiene training and a cooking workshop for two cohorts of young people with SEND. Through our association with This Girl Can, Period (who provide essential toiletries to foodbanks), we have acted as a drop-off point for their 'Bags of Life Christmas Appeal', recognising the importance of inclusivity and addressing the needs of all individuals within the community.



COMMUNITY SURVEY: Enhancing Broomfield Park & complementing existing park initiatives



Our survey asked whether respondents agreed that The Palmers Greenery makes a positive impact and whether it complements other park initiatives. 98% agreed that we make a positive impact on Broomfield Park, with 87% strongly agreeing. Similarly, 97% agreed that The Palmers Greenery complements other park activities, with 69% strongly agreeing.

Here is a selection of their comments:

"The Palmers Greenery makes a big impact on park life. The cafe engages park users on a regular basis who visit the park for a wide range of reasons. The cafe's generous support for a wide range of activities and initiatives, particularly for young people, has made a big difference over a number of years."

"It has become the centre of the park and links all the other activities which go on there. There is a sense of 'looking out' for its customers and generally helping park visitors who have questions or with items lost/found. There is a general atmosphere of looking out for people."

"The cafe almost feels like a second home! I have much more awareness of the life of the park because of it."

"Broomfield is my local park and the cafe makes me feel grounded and connected to nature and the community in one!"

"The Palmers Greenery gives back to the park and its projects and initiatives such as the West Lea students on a Thursday and supporting the netballers and putting money into the wetlands and play area the children built."

"The cafe's generous support for a wide range of activities and initiatives, particularly for young people, has made a big difference over a number of years. It is amazing that the cafe raises money for other wonderful things which happen in the park as well as being a lovely place in itself."

"I love the fact that all profits generated by the cafe are reinvested back into the park."

"Being able to have a reasonably priced hot drink in a lovely setting bought from friendly local people is a really positive feature of Broomfield Park."

"The cafe effectively complements a wide range of activities and events in the park and is an essential element for many of them as a social space."

"The cafe notice board is informative and volunteers and customers often report and discuss issues. It's also great for lost and found!"

Our commitment to fund initiatives has clearly had a positive impact on the park and its users, making it a more desirable destination. It has helped create a safe environment for families and visitors as a whole, and it's a place where people meet over a cuppa to share their respective experiences and stories.

CASE STUDY 1

Coming together to create a welcoming space



During the height of the pandemic when the nation's mood was subdued, The Palmers Greenery, using set aside surplus funds, commissioned construction charity Build Up Foundation to deliver a youth build project in partnership with Broomfield School and FoBP to create a structure to inspire and uplift the community during the most challenging of times.

A group of 120 enthusiastic Year 7 students embarked on the design of a covered seating area, offering a cosy spot for the community to relax and connect. With their creativity ignited, a team of 15 determined young people eagerly took on the challenge of bringing their vision to life. With guidance from experienced builders and youth workers from Build Up, they rolled up their sleeves and got to work, digging, measuring, cutting and crafting.

"This project was important because it gave young people the chance to make an important decision in the park. Our work has provided a nice place for the community to enjoy and has promoted the use of natural, sustainable materials!" Edlira and Helios, Y7 build team

In July 2021, the community seating area was proudly unveiled, with a colourful roof generously donated by the construction group Filon. The young builders presented their project to their peers, teachers, and community members, including representatives from Enfield Council, The Palmers Greenery & FoBP. The combined efforts of The Palmers Greenery, Build Up Foundation, FoBP and Broomfield

School empowered young individuals and brought a welcoming space to life.



EVALUATING SOCIAL IMPACT GOAL 2

To reduce loneliness and social isolation



Addressing the prevalent issue of loneliness and social isolation, we actively work in the park and through social media to create a sense of belonging and connection within the community. By providing a welcoming physical and virtual space where individuals can come together, we foster meaningful social and intergenerational interactions and build a stronger, more supportive community fabric.

Loneliness and social isolation are a significant contributory factor in causing heart attacks, strokes³, and dementia⁴. In England alone, approximately 3 million people feel lonely often or always⁵, with Londoners being particularly affected⁶. Women, young people, those living alone, and the widowed are among the most vulnerable⁷.

Thus, at the outset of our project, we recognised this pressing issue and took action to address it. We have worked hard to ensure that The Palmers Greenery is a welcoming inclusive space, which actively fosters a sense of belonging and connection within the community. By providing opportunities for meaningful social interactions, we have striven to ensure that The Palmers Greenery plays a vital role in reducing loneliness and social isolation from the very outset.

Community support during the Pandemic

In March 2020, the world came to a grinding halt. COVID-19 changed everything. Like most projects, we were forced to shut our doors for three months from March to June and again from January to March 2021, creating significant operational difficulties. However, we remained committed to supporting the community in every way possible, especially for those most impacted by loneliness and anxiety.

Recognising the importance of staying connected during the pandemic, we adapted our services to offer support beyond our physical location. We took proactive measures to reach out to those affected by isolation, utilising approaches such as shopping assistance, phone calls, and online meets and quizzes. By providing these avenues for connection, we aimed to alleviate feelings of loneliness and anxiety that were prevalent during the pandemic.

When we reopened, we prioritised the

³ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/loneliness-has-same-risk-as-smoking-for-heart-disease>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202021-wellbeing-and-loneliness/wellbeing-and-loneliness-community-life-survey-202021>

⁶ <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/tackling-loneliness/loneliness-in-london-why-are-some-londoners-severely-lonely/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/factors-associated-with-loneliness-in-adults-in-england/investigating-factors-associated-with-loneliness-in-adults-in-england>

safety and wellbeing of our customers and volunteers, ensuring that the space provided a safe environment, implementing necessary precautions and adhering to health guidelines. Some volunteers even served alongside their spouses in family bubbles, demonstrating their dedication to the community and making the functioning of a community cafe possible.

To meet the evolving needs of the community, we adopted a more flexible approach to our opening hours, which allowed for increased accessibility, as well as ensuring that we continued to provide

a welcoming space for people to gather, fostering a sense of togetherness and support during a time when it was needed the most.

Our efforts during the pandemic were deeply appreciated by our customers. We believe that the community came closer together as a result of our support and adaptability. Despite the operational challenges we faced, we remained resilient and committed to our social impact goals, reinforcing our role as a pillar of support and a vital part of the community fabric.



COMMUNITY SURVEY: Reducing loneliness and social isolation



Our survey asked how respondents felt about other people, Broomfield Park and Palmers Green as a whole as a result of their experience of frequenting The Palmers Greenery. 95% agreed with the statement 'The Palmers Greenery helps me feel connected to other people', with 58% strongly agreeing. 97% of respondents agreed with the statement 'The Palmers Greenery plays a vital role in creating a sense of affiliation to Broomfield Park', with 55% strongly agreeing. Regarding our role in 'facilitating a greater sense of connection to Palmers Green', 86% agreed and 41% strongly agreed.

Here is a selection of their comments:

"The Palmers Greenery helped me immensely when I was a stay-at-home mother of two infants who just moved to the UK. It saved my mental health"

"The last three years have been difficult for everybody, but the Cafe has offered a welcoming space and a safe and comfortable environment, for all who visit. I can't imagine how we managed without it."

"The cafe is a focal point of my walk and I know that I can find people to chat with, be it customers or volunteers. When I have problems or good news there is someone to share it with and that is such a gift. It reminds me of the sitcom 'Cheers' and the closing line of its theme song 'Where everybody knows your name'."

"It is quite unique in my personal experience in encouraging and facilitating connections across the many park users and other

stakeholders. I have made friends there and found links to other activities in the community by a sort of osmosis!"

"Kids in the park in the playground, mums and dads taking the kids out, runners and those exercising, those taking a gentle stroll. It's a real hub of activity for everyone to stop and sit."

"It's always lovely to sit admiring the nature of the park, whilst having a cuppa"

"The park is an important focus for the local community and therefore feel a greater connection to everything going on within our town centre"

"Shared information about local events and happenings has been so useful",

It is reassuringly clear from respondents that The Palmers Greenery has successfully fostered connectivity among individuals, resulting in new friendships and a strong sense of community. Our survey overwhelmingly confirms that our commitment to creating a welcoming space and fostering connections has significantly contributed to reducing loneliness and social isolation.

CASE STUDY 2

Community response to Covid-19



As highlighted in the community impact survey, The Palmers Greenery's commitment to staying open provided a much-needed respite for individuals during lockdown.

The Palmers Greenery has been described as “a Godsend” that “kept us all going through Covid” and proved to be “a lifeline” during the pandemic, with many feeling that the volunteers went above and beyond, creating a sense of comfort and support, “being amazing during those difficult times”.

We became a sanctuary for mothers on maternity leave, “I was very grateful for you staying open during Covid”, said one, “since the only thing I could do on lockdown maternity was walk around parks”.

Additionally, the cafe’s welcoming atmosphere served as a convenient meeting place, “Our book club met round your tables during Covid (when it was permitted!). And staff in the cafe are always so friendly”, fostering connection and camaraderie during permitted times.

Throughout the pandemic, The Palmers Greenery sustained the community

during the most difficult of times, providing a sense of normalcy and familiarity when everything seemed uncertain. “The Cafe offered a welcoming space and a safe and comfortable environment”.



Our volunteers played a vital role in ensuring the cafe’s operations and lending a helping hand during those trying times, “I can’t imagine how we managed without it”. Their dedication inspired others, even prompting individuals to consider becoming volunteers themselves “I should have offered and become a volunteer earlier” said one, recognising the invaluable service provided by The

Palmers Greenery Team.

The Palmers Greenery’s role as a lifeline during the pandemic cannot be overstated, as we provided not just a cup of tea and a slice of cake, but also a sense of community, resilience, and support.

EVALUATING SOCIAL IMPACT GOAL 3

To broaden volunteering, skills development and work experience opportunities



Volunteering, skills development and work experience opportunities are central to our mission. We believe in empowering individuals by offering valuable experiences and the chance to develop new skills. Through our volunteer-led operations, we provide a platform for personal growth and the enhancement of employability.

We thrive on the dedication and passion of our incredible volunteers who breathe life into every aspect of our project. Volunteering plays a pivotal role in the sustainability and viability of The Palmers Greenery. Our team is without question the driving force behind our success, propelling us forward from the very beginning, generously contributing thousands of hours each year. Their commitment not only ensures the smooth operation of the cafe but also fosters a strong sense of community and shared purpose.

Without the tireless efforts of these volunteers, The Palmers Greenery would not be able to offer its invaluable services and support to the local community. Their unwavering commitment demonstrates the power of collective action and the profound impact that individuals can have when they come together for a common cause.

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of The Palmers Greenery, embodying the spirit of community engagement and serving as an inspiration for others to get involved and contribute to its long-term sustainability.

We therefore wholeheartedly believe in the transformative power of investing in our volunteer workforce and recognising individual contributions. From young people looking for work experience to those looking to transition from full-time work and others looking for a bit of time out the house, we have cultivated a community where unique journeys and friendships have unfolded.



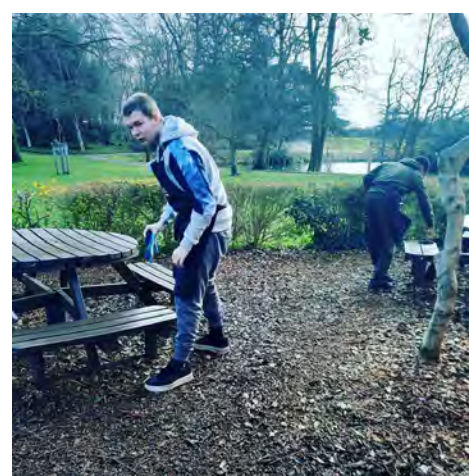
Partnerships

We have fostered effective partnership collaborations that have brought about significant positive outcomes, the most notable of which has been with West Lea School, which caters for students with special educational needs and disabilities. Despite the relatively low number of students participating (eight over the past four years), the impact on those participating in regard to positive self-esteem, confidence and employability has been substantial. A year-long supported pathway arrangement has been established for 2 year 12 students every Thursday during term-time, spanning the academic year from September to July. This collaboration has provided valuable opportunities for the students involved.

Building on the success of this partnership, we were approached by EQUALS which operates under the auspices of Enfield Council and focuses on assisting adults aged 18 and above with learning difficulties in finding employment. Recognising the alignment of values and objectives, we joined forces to offer suitable candidates half a day per week (three hours on Tuesdays) for employability assessment. This collaboration is still in its early stages but holds great potential for empowering adult individuals with learning difficulties and fostering their integration into the workforce.

We are also working with the Barnet, Enfield, and Haringey Mental Health Trust to explore opportunities for supporting ex-offenders under supervision in their journey of community reintegration. This partnership aims to provide a nurturing and supportive environment that helps individuals successfully transition back into society after their time in prison. By extending a helping hand, we actively seek to contribute to the rehabilitation and wellbeing of these individuals, creating a sense of belonging and purpose within the community.

These effective partnership collaborations exemplify our commitment to inclusivity, empowerment and social impact.



COMMUNITY SURVEY: Broadening volunteering, skills development and work experience opportunities

Our survey asked whether respondents agreed that The Palmers Greenery has provided them with new skills and opportunities. For many of course this question was not applicable (38%). However, for those who did respond, 73% agreed, and 40% agreed strongly.

The Palmers Greenery is seen as a valuable resource for increasing and improving skills and opportunities. Many volunteers have learnt new skills, developed confidence, and have even managed to secure seasonal or permanent jobs as a result of their experience.

In their own words:

"It has given me the opportunity to meet new people and learn new skills, enriching in and of itself - though I did also secure a seasonal job as a direct result of the skills the cafe had enhanced."

"This job led me to become a barista, I learned people skills like no other and made friends with generations I wouldn't typically befriend."

"Gaining the Level 2 food hygiene through The Palmers Greenery helped me get a job at Holtwhites Bakery."

"I have met so many people while working in the cafe and my social skills and cafe volunteering skills have been invaluable. I can talk with people from all walks of life and at different stages in life."

"I have always stated that volunteering in the cafe is 'so much nicer than the day job'! I do it as much for myself as I do to 'give back to the community.'"

"I am thankful and grateful for the Greenery as it has helped me going forward on my CV and finding paid work."

"I have learnt new skills and have become more independent and welcome the customers."

"The Palmers Greenery supported our young people to learn new skills through building a new structure for the park."

"I have gained other accountancy work with local community organisations and charities through my connections with The Palmers Greenery, such as with Stitch and Cooking Champions."

"Some of our employees are ex-volunteers. The skills and confidence that they gained through volunteering have been invaluable for their current role."

"An opportunity to take part in the mosaic project and build confidence and a sense of belonging."

The feedback from our volunteers overwhelmingly highlights the positive impact of volunteering at The Palmers Greenery. The comments confirm that The Palmers Greenery serves as a platform for personal and professional development, creating a supportive environment where individuals can learn, grow, and make meaningful connections.

CASE STUDY 3

Volunteer interviews



The Palmers Greenery's social impact can be best understood through the experiences and perspectives of dedicated volunteers. Their valuable feedback highlights the positive effects of the cafe on the community and individuals involved. The following statements from the volunteers interviewed as part of this process provide insights into the significant contributions made by The Palmers Greenery

Simone has been with The Palmers Greenery for 18-months. A full-time carer, she has found volunteering to be *"a vastly rewarding experience"* that allows her to feel active and valued within the community, given her restricted circumstances. She recognises *"the positive impact the cafe has on the health and wellbeing of the community."*

Kate, who started volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic whilst on a career break, views her role as *"a way to give back to the community"*. She emphasised the importance of The Palmers Greenery as *"a friendly and welcoming space, accessible to everyone"*. Kate believes that *"the cafe plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of community and making a tangible difference in people's lives"*.

Norma, Mark, Helen, and Cathy all share a deep appreciation for The Palmers Greenery and its commitment to the community. They highlighted the cafe's *"welcoming atmosphere"* and its role as *"a social hub, bringing people together regardless of their backgrounds"*. They also acknowledged *"the positive impact volunteering has on young people, providing them with essential skills and work experience"*.

Helen, a longstanding volunteer, emphasised *"the inclusive and appreciative environment"* at The Palmers Greenery. She values the not-for-profit nature of the cafe, which allows *"all proceeds to be reinvested back into the community"*. This unique approach enables the cafe to offer *"affordable and accessible food and drinks"*, benefiting everyone.

Tim, another dedicated volunteer, emphasised the *"welcoming and inclusive"* nature of The Palmers Greenery. He acknowledged the cafe's affordability and its vital role in providing *"a safe space for relaxation"*, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst Sue highlighted *"the transformative role"* it played

during this difficult period. She described the cafe as *"a godsend for individuals struggling with isolation and loneliness"*, providing a safe and welcoming space for socialising outdoors.

Mary, who has been involved since the cafe's inception, described The Palmers Greenery as *"a magical and therapeutic place that fosters a strong sense of community"*. She highlighted *"the learning opportunities"* and *"the positive impact of the cafe on recycling practices"*.



EVALUATING SOCIAL IMPACT GOAL 4

Supporting local business and enterprise



Supporting local business and enterprise is another key aspect of our social impact strategy. We collaborate with local producers, suppliers and businesses wherever possible in sourcing our supplies and promoting their products. By doing so, we contribute to the local economy and help sustain a thriving food ecosystem within our community.

We go beyond sourcing local food and actively engage with a wide range of local producers, suppliers, and businesses to contribute to the thriving economy of our community. By nurturing these relationships, we seek to create a positive ripple effect that extends beyond our cafe.

All the food served to customers at The Palmers Greenery is carefully selected from local suppliers, which directly contributes to the economic growth of the community.

Our rationale is based on the following three priorities:

Firstly, choosing locally produced food significantly reduces the distance it travels to reach our cafe, resulting in lower fuel consumption and decreased pollution, promoting a more environmentally sustainable approach.

Secondly, local food-based enterprises often employ traditional methods and high quality, natural ingredients.

Finally, we firmly believe that it helps nurture community cohesion since, when individuals choose to buy locally, they actively support their neighbours and local businesses.

To these ends we have upheld our fundamental policy of sourcing produce within a 5 mile radius wherever possible.

Among our valued suppliers are Holtwhites Bakery (*Enfield and Palmers Green*), as well as Chris Brook and Gillian Morgan, local home bakers - all of whom have supplied us since launch.

But we have gone further than just local bakes. Whether it be ice-lollies (*D'Auria Bros*), Hummus (*Yasar Halim*), building and maintenance works (*W.J. Norman*), glazing (*Hond & Langer*), cleaning supplies (*Amy's Housewares and Refill @ The Grange*), stationery (*Office Interiors*), printing (*Toxico*), kitchen equipment (*North London Catering Supplies*), our branded mugs (*Hector & Bone*), our aprons (*Campino Embroidery*), bookkeeping and accounting (*Luna Muncaster*), we source from local and independent businesses wherever and whenever possible.

Through these collaborative efforts, we not only strengthen the local business ecosystem but also showcase our unwavering dedication to uplifting our community. By prioritising local suppliers and businesses, we aim to create a ripple effect of support and economic growth, fostering a thriving and interconnected local economy.

COMMUNITY SURVEY: Supporting local business and enterprise



Our survey asked, where applicable, whether The Palmers Greenery had complemented a respondent's business or community project. Of those this was applicable to, 92% agreed, of which 61% strongly agreed.

From actively supporting established local businesses to nurturing emerging initiatives, The Palmers Greenery is celebrated for its role in uplifting the community. Numerous comments highlight the cafe's strong partnerships and collaborations with a diverse range of local suppliers, businesses and projects.

In their own words:

"The Palmers Greenery has been very supportive of Holtwhites over the last decade, and they remain one of our best & most loyal wholesale customers. They encouraged & embraced our expansion in Palmers Green (rather than seeing our close proximity as a threat)."

"The Palmers Greenery have been great advocates for my work on their social media and I am very grateful for this."

"As a Nordic walking instructor and fitness coach The Palmers Greenery has always supported me and my groups."

"Cooking Champions are extremely grateful for the long-standing support we have received from The Palmers Greenery. This has mainly focused on supporting us to deliver key educational programmes to local school West Lea. This has included teaching students what is needed to achieve Food Hygiene qualifications, key principles about healthy living and essential cooking skills."

"I'm very proud to support The Palmers Greenery as their accountant...From a business point of view it has enabled those vital connections that happen when conversation is allowed to take place and people are able to easily meet."

"It has really helped my projects with period poverty within the community. The team is so supportive and accommodating, for three years they have been a local collection point for hygiene products to be distributed to local food banks."

"As a local artist I was delighted to be commissioned to paint a mural on the outside of the cafe. I felt involved with the cafe team in agreeing a design and the opportunities that have come from this project - locally and internationally - have been very beneficial"

It is reassuring that the feedback underscores The Palmers Greenery's significant contribution to complementing local businesses and community projects. Overall, The Palmers Greenery is widely perceived as going beyond sourcing local ingredients and extending our support to the wider local economy.

EVALUATING SOCIAL IMPACT GOAL 5

To champion environmentally friendly practices



Environmental sustainability is a core value at The Palmers Greenery. We are committed to championing environmentally friendly practices, such as waste reduction, reuse and recycling. Our aim is to minimise our ecological footprint in the park and serve as an example for sustainable operations.

We have sought to establish ourselves as a champion of environmentally friendly practices, embracing a core value of sustainability. From the outset, we worked closely with Ethical Eats, attending their 'Cracking Community Cafes' workshops, to ensure we had the fundamentals in place prior to start-up, and so establishing best practice. From the get-go we implemented a biodegradable strategy on our disposables and sourced Fairtrade tea, coffee and hot chocolate. Our commitment to minimising our ecological footprint and setting an example for sustainable operations is evident in our actions.

Over the years, we have steadily increased our environmental commitments; introducing reusable cups, discontinuing the sale of single-use plastic water bottles in favour of cans, and installing an outdoor water tap. In addition, our ice lollies, sourced from D'Auria Brothers, now come with a biodegradable wrapping that goes in our food waste bin for the FoBP compost heap.

We have actively engaged in recycling projects and community litter picks alongside the FoBP, PGAT, and ENCAF's Big Green Climate Festival. Our actions, partnerships and dedication to promoting environmentally friendly practices demonstrate our genuine and continuous efforts to make a positive impact on the environment, so contributing to a greener, more responsible future.



COMMUNITY SURVEY: Championing environmentally friendly practices



Our survey asked whether respondents agreed that The Palmers Greenery champions environmentally friendly practices. 94% agreed, and 61% strongly agreed. The comments regarding The Palmers Greenery's practices, values, and ethos, together with our environmental impact are overwhelmingly positive, with many customers appreciating our commitment to being environmentally friendly.

In their own words:

"The Palmers Greenery has been a leader in environmental activities in the park, particularly focussing on reuse and composting of waste products in partnership with the Friends of Broomfield Park."

"Nearly everything is environmentally friendly. Compared to most businesses who buy cheap single use plastics. The Palmers Greenery goes above and beyond with their practices, quality in every sense."

"Reusable cups are readily available to buy at the cafe and reusable cups cost more which means that people are more inclined to use the mugs which can be reused."

"Very environmentally friendly and leading the way for others to observe and put into practice."

"But for the cafe the Palmers Green Action Team would not have been able to link up with other organisations to run a litter pick on Alderman's Hill."

"Separating waste at the cafe has taught me a lot and changed my practice at home."

"Good to see strong push for reusable cups and fully compostable disposable cups."

"Such an important issue to promote - great to have recycling bins in the park and to lead the way on reusables."

"The commitment to being environmentally friendly is genuine and underlies all practices."

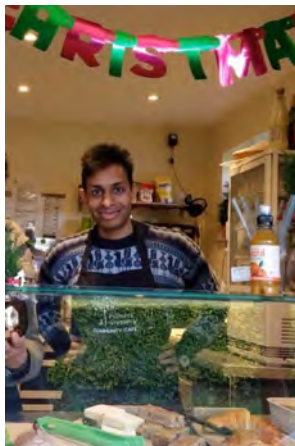
The community survey responses reflect the positive impact of The Palmers Greenery's efforts. The feedback reinforces our reputation as a champion of environmentally friendly practices. The majority of respondents strongly agree that we demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Conclusion

This social impact assessment of The Palmers Greenery Community Cafe highlights our significant contribution over the last decade to people, Broomfield Park, the local community and beyond. We believe our team has successfully achieved our social impact goals in multiple areas, including enhancing the park, reducing loneliness and social isolation, championing environmentally friendly practices, supporting local businesses and enterprises and complementing other community projects.

Through our various initiatives and inclusive programmes, The Palmers Greenery has created a strong sense of community, fostering connections and relationships among residents and visitors. Our commitment to sustainability and environmental consciousness sets an exemplary standard, inspiring others to adopt similar practices. The dedication and hard work of volunteers, along with effective project management and stakeholder engagement, have been instrumental in driving forward our commitment to social impact.

Overall, The Palmers Greenery demonstrates how a community-led, community-focused 'bottom-up' approach can bring about positive change, improve wellbeing, and create a vibrant and inclusive environment for all.



Contact us at: thepalmersgreenery@gmail.com

Follow us on: <https://www.facebook.com/thepalmersgreenery/>
<https://www.instagram.com/thepalmersgreenery>

Find out more at: <https://www.fobp.uk/community-cafe>