



# South Brent Old School Community Centre

## Reaching Out To Everyone - Our Strategy



South Brent Old School Community Centre is a charity that sits at the very heart of South Brent. The Centre offers a wide range of opportunities to local groups and individuals - including permanent homes for Art House, South Brent and District Caring, Sustainable South Brent, the Community Library and South Brent Archive, along with a range of flexible community spaces.

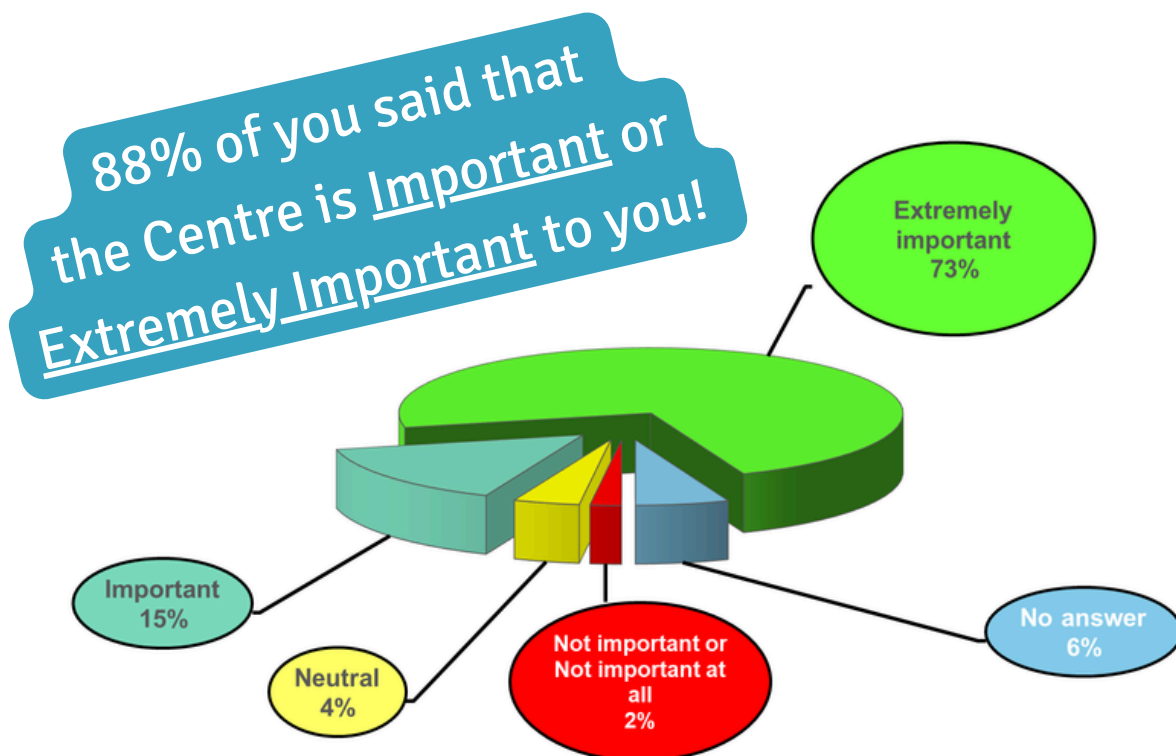
More than this the charity aims to reach far beyond the building itself. The primary aim of the charity is to promote facilities and activities supporting social welfare and recreation for residents of South Brent and its environs. Whilst the Centre is fundamental to this the trustees are keen to further explore how we can promote wider community resilience.

The Centre was secured for community use through a widely supported public campaign in 1997 and the building will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2026. In 2017 trustees undertook a review of the charity with the aim of refreshing the roles and aims of the work it undertakes which included a public consultation seeking the views of anyone with an interest in the Centre. A further public consultation regarding the Rejuvenating the Centre project was undertaken in 2024, and results widely endorsed our aim to ensure the centre stays warm, dry and welcoming for the next 150 years.

The 2017 review led to Trustees identifying 7 key areas for work which remain as relevant and important today as key aims for the charity. These are set out on the following two pages in this document and achieving these will ensure the charity meets the future needs of the South Brent community. This document also includes a short strategic plan that sets out our key successes and identifies how our aims will continue to be delivered and developed to ensure we get maximum community benefits, while securing the fabric of the building for future generations. Trustees will use this strategic plan to focus and drive all activity, and it will form a key part of our regular meetings.

Our primary measure of success will be that everyone in South Brent and surrounding areas knows about the Old School Centre and feel they can access it and benefit from it. This means there should be something for everyone at the Centre without discrimination of any kind, acknowledging the wide diversity of our users. Of those who responded to the 2024 consultation (over 400 people), 88% said that the Centre was important or very important to them, with a wide range of strengths cited. A full copy of this consultation report is available to accompany this plan.

A key piece of work for the next few years is the Rejuvenating the Centre project which seeks to improve the fabric and energy efficiency of the building to support us in delivering our aims in the future. Through grant funding and the generosity of the local community, over £500,000 has already been raised towards this project at the point of writing this strategy, and planning is at a relatively advanced stage.



# Our Seven Aims

# 1

## **Grow membership and volunteers**

We want to promote a greater sense of ownership of the Centre and encourage everyone in the community to think about what they can bring to the Centre; what they can use it for and how they can help us to secure a long-term future. This will include fundraising but, more importantly, will help shape the future direction of the charity's work.

# 2

## **Work with other groups**

We want to reach out to other village groups and organisations to identify where we can work in partnership, supporting their aims or working in a way which is mutually beneficial. This may involve sharing our expertise and resources or attracting new resources or funds into shared community activities. This will build on the parish plan, and recent discussions around shared management or oversight of the village's community buildings.

# 3

## **Foster new activities**

We want to be seen as an organisation that encourages new activities, especially with groups who have not yet used the Old School Centre as a venue. We propose doing this through the fields of arts & culture, health & wellbeing, education and social eating, building on the successes of partners and initiatives including South Brent and District Caring, Art House, Sustainable South Brent, the Community Library and South Brent Archive. The responses to the 2024 consultation will be key to this.

# 4

## **Invite everyone in**

We will look at what the barriers are to people using the Old School Centre and work towards removing them, adopting a plan to ensure there is something here for everyone. Again, the 2024 consultation identified potential barriers to this (not least parking!) and suggested potential ways forward for trustees to consider.

# 5

## **A home and support for other groups and organisations**

From using the Old School Centre as a registered postal address to using space on a permanent basis we want to encourage groups to use the Centre and identify how we can support them. Our key partners will form an intrinsic part of future plans, particularly around Rejuvenating the Centre.

# 6

## Rejuvenating the Centre

This is now a key part of the charity's work and much has been achieved – not least the raising of significant funds. We are working closely with our key partners and appropriate professionals to explore possibilities, refine plans and seek funding to ensure the centre is as welcoming and efficient as possible, to ensure effective delivery of maximum benefit to users.

# 7

## Marketing the Centre and improving communication

Acknowledging that not everyone knows about us or that we are here and what we stand for. Ensuring we get the message out through a range of media and events.

It is a very friendly place, I would be very lonely if it was not there.

A vital part of village life reaching more and more people with the Hub, Post Office and Community Fridge. Friendly. Always something going on.

## Our Strategic Plan

The aims won't deliver themselves. The South Brent Old School Community Centre trustees and Centre Manager, working with our key partners and considering views put forward by the local community, need to consider how we use all of our resources to focus on delivering the aims.

This will involve looking at how the trustees, volunteers, members, friends and staff all work to deliver clear outcomes. We need to look carefully at how we raise funds and manage both budgets and the Centre itself to focus on supporting local groups and individuals.

To focus the work of the charity the following community action plan will shape our activity in 2025 and in coming years.

Our aim	Our target	What we will do	The outcome
<p>1. Grow membership and volunteers</p>	<p>Increased number of members and trustees.</p> <p>Increased number of volunteers.</p>	<p>Communication with our community requesting support.</p> <p>Clear and accessible recruitment and induction process for trustees and volunteers.</p> <p>Ongoing support for volunteers and trustees.</p>	<p>Old School is supported by robust board of trustees, volunteers and members.</p> <p>A high quality volunteer offer for those wishing to support the charity and activity at the Old School Centre.</p>
<p>2. Work with other groups</p>	<p>Increased partnerships with other community groups.</p>	<p>Continue to explore existing partnerships.</p> <p>Actively seek and develop further partnership opportunities, including with other village community assets.</p>	<p>Joint projects are developed and pursued that benefit the community.</p> <p>Increased collaboration around management and operation of community buildings.</p>
<p>3. Foster new activities</p>	<p>Increase new user attendance (currently around 800 visits each week).</p>	<p>Collaborate with other organisations, individuals and funders to maintain a relevant and well attended programme of activities at the Centre.</p> <p>Target hard to reach groups with a focus on youth, wellbeing, and those at risk of social isolation.</p> <p>Identify funding for activities.</p>	<p>Increase attendance from new users – particularly young people and those at risk of social isolation and with health needs.</p> <p>Partnership agreements and/or licences with those who can provide activities at the Centre.</p>

Our aim	Our target	What we will do	The outcome
<p>4. Invite everyone in</p>	<p>Increase accessibility of Centre.</p>	<p>Provide a welcoming and friendly environment, accessible to all.</p> <p>Ensure Rejuvenating the Centre project focuses on ensuring the entrances to the centre are accessible and welcoming.</p> <p>Ensure equal opportunities of provision and access.</p>	<p>Individuals and families use the Centre and feel that there is relevant and supportive provision for them at the Centre.</p>
<p>5. A home and support for other groups and organisations</p>	<p>More groups and services working in partnership with Old School Centre.</p>	<p>Market the Centre across a range of media and provide clear and attractive branding.</p> <p>Improve the website and the accessible booking system.</p> <p>Supportive user agreements for groups and individuals and flexible tenants' licences.</p>	<p>The Centre provides facilities that meet the range of needs of the community.</p> <p>Increased numbers of groups and organisations based at or operating from the Centre.</p> <p>Online, accessible booking system.</p>
<p>6. Rejuvenating the Centre</p>	<p>Roof replaced and solar panels installed.</p> <p>Significantly improved energy efficiency.</p> <p>Improved external and internal spaces that respond to increased activities and uses.</p>	<p>With key partners, plan, fund and deliver the RtC programme focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roof replacement and solar installation;</li> <li>• Improved heating, insulation and energy efficiency;</li> <li>• Redeveloped and rejuvenated internal layout, including possible additional usable space above current accommodation;</li> <li>• Improved access to Centre and car parking.</li> </ul>	<p>Centre environment is inviting and aesthetically pleasing.</p> <p>Centre warm, dry, welcoming and significantly more energy efficient.</p>

Our aim	Our target	What we will do	The outcome
7. Marketing the Centre and improving communication	Everyone in South Brent and environs knows about the Centre and feels they can access it.	Marketing of Centre with targeted activities based on what people want.  E-mail database of members, friends and others developed and used as a means of communication.  Opportunities provided, in collaboration with partners, that attract a wide range of users.	Centre is a community hub for all.

Delivery of this plan will lie with the Trustees and manager to oversee. There will be a need for the Centre to be well managed, as it is currently. However, the greatest change will be achieved by the energy, imagination and enthusiasm of key partner organisations, members and the South Brent Community.

The management of the charity and Centre needs to be simple and straightforward to allow its offer to the community to be developed and delivered with passion. These are trying times for small rural communities and the Old School Centre can be central to a strong and confident South Brent in future years. Not least, ensuring that the fabric of the building is warm, dry and welcoming for generations to come. There is a role for everyone in delivering and benefitting from this.





**SOUTH BRENT  
OLD SCHOOL COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**South Brent Old School Community Centre,  
Totnes Road, South Brent, Devon TQ10 9BP**

**[www.theoldschool.org.uk](http://www.theoldschool.org.uk)  
[info@theoldschool.org.uk](mailto:info@theoldschool.org.uk)**

**Charity Number 1146269  
Company Number 07593522**

