

THE SANDS END ARTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

SUPPORTING ALL RESIDENTS

“I am so grateful that Martin (pictured to the right) has the opportunity to get out and do something he enjoys and which stimulates him. It’s wonderful for me, too - I am a 24/7 carer and it gives us both some variety in our week, as well as giving us the chance to use art to express ourselves and – even now - to learn.”

Greta Chaffer (pictured below), 82, from Parsons Green, attends the weekly Active Minds art sessions with her husband Martin, 87. Part of a Hammersmith & Fulham health programme and organised by H&F Dementia Action Alliance (HFDAA), the 10-week course at the Sands End Arts and Community Centre is offered free to the whole community – anyone over 18 can attend. It is designed to be ‘dementia friendly’ and supports the needs of all those who attend. The smiles and sense of accomplishment of those creating drawings, paintings and prints tells a story the power of art to support learning and wellbeing at any age and state of mind.



Martin Chaffer



Greta Chaffer

Greta, a member of the Society of Fulham Artists and Potters, added: “It’s also about being with others. We love coming down to the centre and that sense of community in these classes also really helps Martin.” That sentiment is echoed by Peggy Coles of HFDAA, who runs the classes: “These creative sessions have demonstrated the efficacy and impact of community activities which bring together residents of many ages, abilities and interests. Belonging and being valued as part of one’s community and identity. It feels so open and welcoming.”

The new building, near Tideway’s Carnwath Road site and our biggest community investment, has won a series of awards for its sustainable design, using recycled materials for its bricks and a cross-laminate timber structure. It officially opened in March 2022, replacing the previous centre on Broughton Road which closed in 2010.

As well as its main hall and function rooms providing a wide range of community activities and events, the Walnut Tree Café (which uses equipment and employs staff from the former café at Tideway’s London Bridge offices) provides refreshments and a popular local meeting place.

The centre’s aims to be for the whole community, helping people of all ages and backgrounds, is demonstrated by another of its regular users, Active Successful Engagement (ASE), which runs a weekly taekwondo session. The session is part of a programme centred on mentoring young people from across Hammersmith and Fulham, many of whom have troubled childhoods or are at risk of marginalisation and dropping into a life of exclusion and crime. ASE also gives opportunities for teenagers to develop into mentors and instructors themselves.

ASE Director Pauline Zepherine said: “We empower and train parents and carers to support their children and we extend this to the young people, training them to lead groups themselves – we call this the ripple effect.”

The centre’s first major tenant was DanceWest, which supports wellbeing through dance and has its main studio at the centre. It offers a wide range of free and subsidised classes for any age and ability and founder and CEO Rosie Whitney-Fish is passionate about both the benefits of dance and the value of the charity’s new home. “Eighty per cent of our work takes places directly in the community in schools, care homes, hospitals and pupil referral units but having a professional dance studio here creates not just a home but a destination for dance in the borough. The DanceWest studio supports our intergenerational work, bringing different parts of society together to achieve a goal.”

For Tideway the centre also represents the effect of focusing on long-term stakeholder relationships and on providing wider support than just a cash investment. We worked closely with Hammersmith and Fulham Council on the



project, and Community Investment Manager Kelly Bradley was appointed to the centre's Board of Trustees. We also supported through volunteering, mainly from the Carnwath Road site team but also through recruitment and other professional advice.

Andy Mitchell, Tideway CEO, said: "The SEACC offers a safe and welcoming place for people to connect, socialise and learn. It is a fantastic legacy for Tideway and we are confident that it will offer opportunities for all members of the community in Sands End and beyond to get involved."

Cllr Stephen Cowan, leader of LBHF, added: "We always promised we'd try and replace the Sands End Community Centre so I'm really pleased the new Sands End Arts & Community Centre is already becoming a destination spot and adding to our residents' quality of life in this beautiful part of south Fulham. I was glad to have the opportunity to work with Tideway on this amazing project."

No one encapsulates the dedication of the Sands End staff like Vanessa Lock, one of the centre's managers who is a local resident herself and who ensures the centre can operate all week. "I love meeting, greeting and helping people who visit the centre. It will be a brilliant resource for years to come."



Vanessa



Peggy Coles



Pauline Zepherin