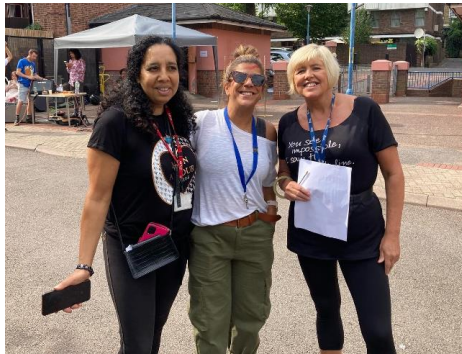


New River Green Good Neighbours Scheme

Health and Wellbeing Insight Report

October 2021 to September 2022



"They (GNS) have changed my life so much for the better. My mental health is so much better now. I feel good about myself which I didn't for many years. Having a safe, and welcoming place to go means everything to me, makes me feel connected to others." – New River Green GNS user

Executive Summary

The New River Green Good Neighbours Scheme (GNS) is a **community-led initiative** that builds local networks so residents can work towards achieving a community vision together. Help on Your Doorstep has been running this GNS since 2012. Islington Giving and the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board jointly fund the scheme. The GNS in New River Green is based in the Walter Sickert Community Centre at the heart of the New River Green estate.

This report outlines some of the key achievements and challenges for the last reporting period from October 1st 2021 to September 30th 2022. In the last year, although we've seen COVID restrictions lighten substantially, the aftermath of numerous lockdowns, pro-longed anxiety and reduced access to vital services is still being felt within the community. Furthermore, the drastic rise in the cost of living is proving to be a major concern for many residents. These challenges reiterate the importance of initiatives like the GNS that ensures people get the support they need to thrive including access to; social networks, free services, information and more.

We have **engaged 432 residents** between October 1st 2021 and September 30 2022. Using a relational approach we have fostered strong relationships and trust in the community. We're delighted to report that this year we have seen **2,210 more attendances** compared to the previous year. We speculate that this increase is a result of less disruption to services caused by COVID restrictions.

This year, together with our residents and team of volunteers we facilitated 51 Arts and Crafts sessions, 49 coffee mornings, 23 children's football sessions, 40 chair-based exercises classes, 42 yoga classes, 4 lunch clubs, 40 gym sessions, 4 ADHD support groups, 37 mindfulness sessions, 31 Asian Women's Group meetings and 8 garden club sessions. We also ran a number of events including a jubilee celebration garden party, a community fun day and a health and well-being event to name a few.

In November 2022, we captured **80 survey responses** that explored how resident participation in the GNS intersects with wellbeing. The findings showed that;

- 84% of New River Green GNS respondents identify to be **more active** as a result of their engagement in the GNS
- 81% of responses indicated that engaging in the Good Neighbours Scheme has contributed to them having **better mental health**.
- 70% of the respondents agreed to **feeling more connected** to others
- 81% of respondents said they have **learned something new** from GNS.
- 56% of respondents had **volunteered** often or occasionally with the GNS.

Looking ahead, we look forward to exploring opportunities to engage more young people, especially teenagers, into our New River Green GNS groups and activities over the course of the next year. We also want to continue to grow our volunteer team as the scheme continues to grow. We would like to **thank our funders, partners, volunteers and all our residents** for their continued support over the past year.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 About the Good Neighbours Scheme

Ten years ago, Help on Your Doorstep launched our first Good Neighbours Scheme (GNS) in Islington. This was prompted by the recognition that high levels of isolation and disconnection were not only fundamentally damaging the quality of individuals' lives, but were also damaging communities as a whole.

Today we have 3 Good Neighbours Schemes in Bemerton, Canonbury (New River Green), and King's Cross to strengthen communities in Islington by building hyper-local networks. Each scheme is located near estates and aims to bring people together to identify what the community vision is and empower community members to achieve this vision together, building residents' sense of belonging as we go. The schemes are designed by the community and community-led when it comes to implementation too.

We bridge divides in the community by bringing all walks of life together at our regular group and community events. We empower residents by linking them up to opportunities including but not limited to; grants, training and volunteering opportunities.

The GNS has developed a focus on the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) (New Economics Foundation, 2008), enabling residents to:

1. [Connect](#) - talk and listen, be there, feel connected
2. [Keep learning](#) - embrace new experiences, see opportunities, surprise yourself
3. [Give](#) - your time, your words, your presence
4. [Be active](#) - do what you can, enjoy what you do
5. [Take notice](#) - remember the simple things that give you joy (also listed as be mindful/ care for your mental health).

Evidence suggests that even a small improvement in these five areas of wellbeing can help to decrease mental health problems, improve physical health and help people to flourish.

1.2 About the New River Green Good Neighbours Scheme

The New River Green Good Neighbours Scheme (GNS) has been running since 2012. The GNS is hyper-local for the residents of Northampton Street, Canonbury Street, Canonbury Crescent, Walter Sickert, Marquess Estate and New River Green Estate in N1. The GNS in New River Green is based in the Walter Sickert Community Centre, which is at the heart of the New River Green estate.

Help on Your Doorstep manages the New River Green GNS. Islington Giving and the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board jointly fund the GNS.

The GNS in New River Green is staffed by a full-time GNS Manager – Nicky Ludgate and a part-time Community Development Worker names Tracey Boothe. This year, we have revised our staffing arrangement so instead of having one staff member per scheme both Tracey and Nicky work across New River Green and Bemerton schemes.

2. Methodology

We have used a range of evidence to gather information for this report, including:

- Reports written by the Head of Community Development (Gill Carter) and GNS Manager (Nicky Ludgate)
- Photos from events and activities
- Statistical information on the numbers of group/ activity users and attendees.
- Information from a survey that completed by 80 New River Green GNS residents in October/ November 2022
- Case studies

3. The year in review – a staff report of achievements and challenges

The reporting year from the 1st of October 2021 to the 30th of September 2022 has seen some incredible highs but also some challenging lows. In December 2021 we saw the introduction of COVID restrictions once again meaning engagement at events was reduced as communities heard of reports of high rates of COVID infections. As we entered into 2022 we saw COVID restrictions loosening substantially however the aftermath of residents experiencing numerous lockdowns, pro-longed anxiety and reduced access to vital services is still evident within the community. Poor mental health remains high amongst residents and unmanaged health conditions means many residents have lost substantial mobility and independence.

In 2022, we also faced another challenge – this time linked to the drastic rise in the cost of living. Of late we have seen a rise in the number of people attending our weekly groups and community events. Although it is incredibly positive to see more people engaging with the scheme we also have to navigate covering the cost of activities when prices are considerably higher compared to previous years and when the number of people being catered for has also increased considerably. Staff are working innovatively to keep activities going at the same scale so we can continue to provide warm and welcoming spaces for more residents with light refreshments, especially during winter months when many people cannot afford to stay at home with the heating on.

With less COVID restrictions to navigate in 2022, our team of staff and volunteers have placed a strong emphasis on community outreach over the last year. The team have been going door to door on a weekly basis to encourage residents, especially those who have disengaged from the community considerably as a result of COVID to participate in GNS groups and planning. Our team of volunteers continue to grow in numbers and capacity. We currently have a team of 23 volunteers to support our work. This year our volunteers ran their first volunteer led fundraiser for the GNS. Volunteers and residents planned and implemented the entire event and decided how the money should be reinvested into activities. This shows not only how dedicated the volunteer team is but also their sense of ownership over the scheme too.

In the last year we have launched a new partnership with a South Asian Women's Group and we now facilitate weekly sessions as part of the GNS in New River Green. We are delighted to be diversifying our activity offers further for the local community and to be expanding our reach to communities that have been traditionally underserved.

This year we held a number of community events that brought the whole community in all its diversity together. We held a jubilee garden party, a community fun day and a 'Spring into Wellbeing' health and well-being event too. We're delighted to be able to run these large scale events where residents can find out about service offers in the borough and have a chance to connect with residents from a multitude of different backgrounds and ages. We have also accessed a number of new initiatives this year for residents, we have distributed subsidised tickets to the ZSL London Zoo and various training opportunities and grants programmes.

Overall we have seen that we are engaging more people this year and that people are attending more regularly. This in part is due to reduced COVID restrictions but we believe also a result of new activities being held and our team doing a huge deal of outreach.

4. Statistical Overview: this year vs last year

	1 Oct 2020 – 30 Sep 2021	1 Oct 2021 – 30 Sep 2022
Total no. of unique individuals engaged	414	432
Total no. of new users engaged	267	230
Total no. of attendances	2,737	4980
Number of regular activities held	312	524
58% of our interactions were with people living in the 20% most deprived areas of the country		

Comparing these overall figures to last year:

- The New River Green GNS worked with a total of 432 people this year, 18 residents more than the 414 unique individuals supported last year. The number of residents recorded above are those who come to regular events and excludes residents who attend on a one-off basis at large community events. As our result, we anticipate our reach is far larger than 432 people.
- The GNS had 4,947 total attendances at its regular activities this year, which is 2,210 more attendances than last year. Furthermore, the GNS in New River Green ran 521 regular activities, 209 more than previous years. This is a result of more activities being held in person and because less activities were disrupted by COVID restrictions and safety measures.

4. Statistical breakdown by weekly activity from 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2022

Regular weekly activities

The GNS in New River Green run a number of weekly groups and activities as indicated on the timetable below.

New River Green Good Neighbours Scheme Timetable 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Coffee morning and chair based exercise 10AM-12PM Walter Sickert Centre		Hatha Yoga 10.30AM-11.30AM Walter Sickert Centre	ADHD Parent Support Group 9.30AM -11.30AM. Rose Bowl Youth Centre, N1 2PT First Thursday of the month	Asian Women's Group 11AM - 1PM Walter Sickert Centre
Would you like to join our Wellbeing Walks? Contact Nicky for times & days!	Arts & Crafts 1PM-3PM Walter Sickert Centre N1 2FB	Gym Session 10.30AM - 11.30AM FREE Gym session at Mary's, Upper Street Contact Nicky for details		HIIT Exercise Class 10AM -11AM Walter Sickert Centre N1 2FB
		Garden Club 1PM -3PM Communal Gardens Seasonal only	Lunch Club 12.30PM-2.30PM Walter Sickert Centre N1 2FB Last Thursday of the month Light lunch provided Book in advance	For more information call Nicky on 07875224386 /02073540319 or email nicky@helponyourdoorstep.com
Help on Your Doorstep is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales number 06960313 and a registered charity number 1133145. Our registered office is 13 Elliott's Place, London N1 8HX.	Mindful Meditation Reduce stress in the comfort of your own surroundings 4PM - 5PM Delivered on zoom		Football Training 4.15PM-5.15PM Walter Sickert Centre N1 2FB Ages 7-10	

A breakdown of the number of sessions held, average attendance and total number of unique users engaged in each activity is provided in a table below.

Activity	No of sessions run in 2021/22	Average weekly attendance	Total no of individual users in 2021/22	Notes
Coffee Morning	49	21	123	(1012 total attendances / 49 sessions)
Arts and Crafts	51	13	76	(656 total attendances / 51 sessions)
Children's Football	23	14	53	(316 total attendances / 23 sessions)
Chair based exercise	40	14	84	(573 total attendances / 40 sessions)
Hiit fitness	43	6	32	(235 total attendances / 43 sessions)

Yoga	42	6	57	(250 total attendances / 42 sessions)
Monthly Luncheon	4	14	37	(56 total attendances / 4 sessions)
Mary's Gym	40	3	25	(121 total attendances / 40 sessions)
ADHD support group	4	9	22	(37 total attendances / 4 sessions)
Mindfulness (online)	37	8	25	(278 total attendances / 37 sessions)
Asian Women's Group	31	14	23	(443 total attendances / 31 sessions)
Garden Club	8	7	23	(52 total attendances / 8 sessions)



Residents at Garden Club



Residents stretching at chair based exercise



A resident shows off their creation made at Arts and Craft



The South Asian Women's Group meet on a Friday

Events and Resident Opportunities

In addition to running weekly events, we have run a number of larger community events and promoted other initiatives and opportunities to residents throughout the year. Please find a timeline of one-off events we also facilitated throughout the reporting period.

November 2021

- On November 4th we brought residents and partners together at a **reference group** to discuss what is working well in the GNS and what potential changes need to be made to the scheme for the upcoming year. Our programme of services offered at New River Green are always decided with user consultation. Residents have a real stake in the planning, development and delivery of activities and initiatives.

December 2021

- We facilitated a community **Christmas fair** on December 11th 2022 at the Walter Sickert Centre. At the fair, residents enjoyed refreshments, browsing stalls selling festive treats and goods. Meanwhile children enjoyed arts and craft activities and visiting Santa's grotto for a gift.
- We also ran a **festive party** for residents to come together for a Christmas dinner and celebrate the end of the year together with singing and activities.
- In December we received **toy donations** from ELBA. We distributed over 100 toys to low income households across all 3 GNS including New River Green to support residents experiencing financial hardship and who would benefit from support over the holidays.



Figure 1 Staff members Nicky and Mel at the Christmas Fair



Figure 2 Toy donations for low-income families

January 2022

- On January 21st, our GNS team organised a **resident trip to Sadlers Wells** for an evening theatre show.
- Also in January we were awarded subsidised tickets for **ZSL London Zoo** for elderly residents and low income households. We distributed 42 tickets to residents.
- On the second of February we hosted our first **wellbeing walk**. Residents came together and led by GNS manager Nicky the group walked to Victoria Park. Residents enjoyed getting out and about, enjoying nature and catching up.



Figure 3 GNS manager Nicky and resident make it to Victoria Park on Wellbeing walk

February 2022

- On the 22nd of February, our GNS team including volunteers and residents did a **litter pick** around the Marquess Estate to help keep the local environment clean and safe for everyone in the community.

March 2022

- The GNS team are regularly promoting training and learning opportunities to residents. In March, we promoted a free **Community Change Makers training** that was offered by Voluntary Action Islington. We had 3 residents sign on to the course.



Figure 4 A resident ready to get going at the litter pick

April 2022

- Together with our Connect Advisors, we held a **'Big Knock' outreach** in the New River Green area. Our team went door to door to speak with residents and to explore if any support was needed.
- On April 2nd, our GNS team held a **'Spring Fair'**. Partners including; Octopus communities, freightliners farm, cook for Good, gingerbread charity, the sounding board charity, rose bowl, came together to share health and wellbeing activities and opportunities available in the borough.
- On the 6th of April, our GNS team brought residents together for our second **Wellbeing walk** to Hackney City Farm.
- In April, we bought and distributed 50 more subsidised zoo tickets for families in low income households.



Figure 5 The Help on Your Doorstep team ready for outreach at Big Knock in Canonbury



Figure 6 Residents take a break on their Wellbeing Walk

May 2022

- We promoted Islington Giving's **'Make it Happen'** micro grant fund to residents. One GNS resident from New River Green was successful and secured over £400 of funding for more beds and improvements in the communal gardens at New River Green.
- We partnered with **St Marys Youth Club** to host a group of young people from Northern Ireland who volunteered to clean up our communal gardens ahead of the busy summer growing period.

- In late May we secured funding from the council to run a **jubilee celebration** event to celebrate the Queen's 70 years as sovereign. We brought the entire community together for a garden party and celebrated with arts and crafts, face painting, food and refreshments and a quiz. The arts and crafts group made decorations for the event and volunteers organised an array of food and drink for residents to enjoy. A great time was had by all.



Residents at the Jubilee celebration

June 2022

- In June, we thanked our volunteers for all their hard work and support by hosting them on a **canal trip down Regent's canal**.
- We also joined with New River Green History Society to do a resident **wellbeing history walk** down the canal on the 22nd of June.

July 2022

- In July, our volunteers came together at a **picnic** for a planning session. Volunteers discussed how the GNS can continue to meet resident needs and how volunteers can work together to support local initiatives.

- In August, residents and volunteers ran a **community-led garage sale** at the Walter Sickert Communal Gardens on the 20th of August. Volunteers raised £372 which was reinvested into GNS activities.



Figure 7 Volunteers pictured after the garage sale fundraiser

August 2022

- On August 18th, GNS brought families on a 56 seater coach day trip to **Southend** to enjoy the seaside and to give people the opportunity to get out of London. Residents enjoyed exploring a new place together and for many families it was a welcome break from London whilst children were on school holidays.



Residents at the sea at Southend

September 2022

- In September, we promoted Islington Giving's '**Golden Grant Maker**' opportunity to residents and we had numerous residents apply to the participatory grant making panel.

- Thanks to funding from the Local Initiatives Fund, we secured £2,300 to run a **Community Fun Day** at the Walkter Sickert Community Centre on Sep 3rd. The objectives of the Fun Day were to;

- 1) Increase access to services and information (around health, wellbeing and services in Borough) for residents
- 2) provide access to entertainment (especially for residents on low incomes and families) that is accessible to all.
- 3) increase social cohesion and to reduce isolation by bringing all of the community together.



Figure 8 Partners at the Fun Day providing information and advice to residents. Pictured; staff from Sadler's Wells and North London Cares



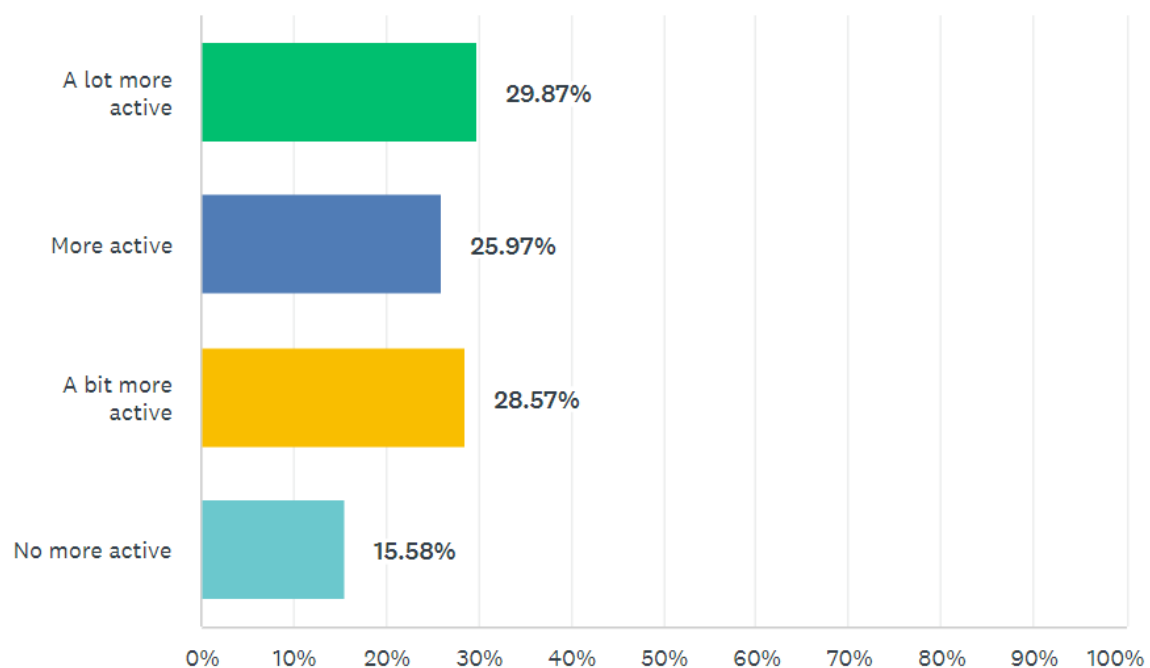
Figure 9 Volunteers enjoying themselves at the Fun Day

5. Resident survey – 5 Ways to Wellbeing

In November 2022 we sent an online survey out to residents who are engaged with the New River Green GNS. We also contacted residents who are not online and went through the survey with them in person. In total 80 people completed the survey. The survey questions explored how engaging in GNS has promoted residents' 5 ways to wellbeing; [connecting](#), [learning](#), [giving](#), [being active](#) and [taking notice](#).

The surveys captured qualitative and quantitative data. Findings and discussions from the data analysis are detailed below. Further information about the respondents can also be found in Appendix A.

5 Ways to Wellbeing Question (Be Active): Are you more physically active as a result of taking part in GNS activities?



84% of those asked 'Are you more physically active as a result of taking part in GNS activities?' said they were either 'more active', 'a lot more active' or 'a bit more active'.

Resident responses indicated that engaging in GNS exercise activities encouraged them to be more active. However, engaging in non-exercise focussed activities also provided them with an incentive for residents to be more active on a regular basis where they would often otherwise be inside at home.

Respondents said;

"Keeps you active and you're not sitting in doors instead you can mix with people and sometimes have good conversations or busy focusing on what is going on in activities."

“Taking part in activities and the thought of attending Chair-based Exercise gets me out.”

“It (activities) gives you something to do in the morning. And you are meeting people. And you feel more fit and healthy”

“Not only does GNS offer the opportunity to exercise more, it’s just comforting, encouraging and uplifting knowing there are organisations like GNS out there working specifically to make our community better.”

“Because it makes me walk more to go to GNS activities”

Residents indicated that engaging in groups not only makes them more physically active but also more cognitively, socially and creatively active.

“My brain is working all the time for Arts and Crafts”

“Health issues can stop me being active for a while, but knowing there are activities to attend, physical as well as social, means when I’m feeling well I don’t just sit at home, as I have fun things to do, with other people”

Based upon responses it is evident that many residents are managing long-term health conditions and value the exercise support offered by the GNS. Responses indicated that residents find the exercise offer to be accessible, safe and beneficial to managing their health conditions.

“I needed to build strength after a knee issue and these classes being so close and accessible helped.”

“I have a medical condition so it helps to get out and stay active as a priority.”

“My mobility is not good and it (GNS) wakes me up and gets me out to attend the activities. Especially Chairbased Exercise.”

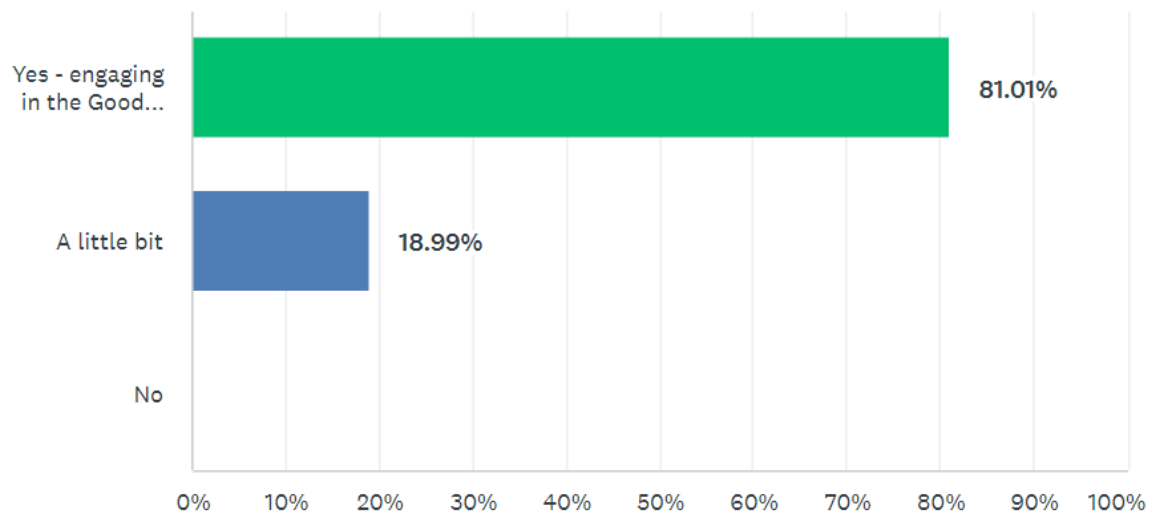
Responses demonstrated that the exercise offers provided through GNS are beneficial to a wide range of ages with many parents indicating that the children activities encourage children to be active.

“Kids get to burn of energy in a safe environment”

“Children are happier doing activities they enjoy”

“My Son is happier knowing he is coming to football training”

5 Ways to Wellbeing Question (Take Notice): Has engaging in the GNS brought you joy and/or helped you to maintain good mental health?



81% of responses indicated that engaging in the Good Neighbours Scheme has contributed to having good mental health. From the responses we see that many residents focus on how **building stronger community connections** has aided their mental health as they have a stronger sense of belonging in their local community.

“Yes made lots of new friends, I look forward to going out and get up to attend, enjoy talking with people and the chairbased exercise. My social life is busier than when I was younger.”

“Meeting people and making new friends helps me and everybody.”

“feel less depressed, doing more of what I love in life, being with people, teaching people and being around people.”

“I suffer depression so being with my community members helps”

Residents have formed strong relationships with others and have a more stable support system to rely on. Many responses indicated that the GNS felt like a **safe, welcoming and supportive** environment to all.

“Always a pleasure being in the company of fellow neighbours. I feel safer and happier knowing who lives around me.”

“Relaxing, peace of mind, friendly environment and it's good for your wellbeing.”

Furthermore, a reoccurring theme in responses indicated that many residents felt being part of the GNS provided opportunities to engage with other residents that they would not usually engage with. They learned about different cultures and value systems and it is evident that the GNS helps to bridge socially constructed divides in communities. There is a strong sense of GNS being an **inclusive and welcoming** space for all residents, where **diversity is celebrated**.

“I get to meet people from different cultures.”

“Being apart of the GNS team has allowed me to participate in Community projects which I had not known of before. Through the GNS I have made more friends of different age and different background.”

“I've been able to meet new people and made some good friends over the years I go out alot more now and have fun! I get to help out as well and use my skills to help others, which makes me feel happy and useful”

Many residents engaged in GNS are managing mental health challenges and it is evident that having a space to connect with others acts as a successful **coping mechanism** for many, as indicated in the responses below;

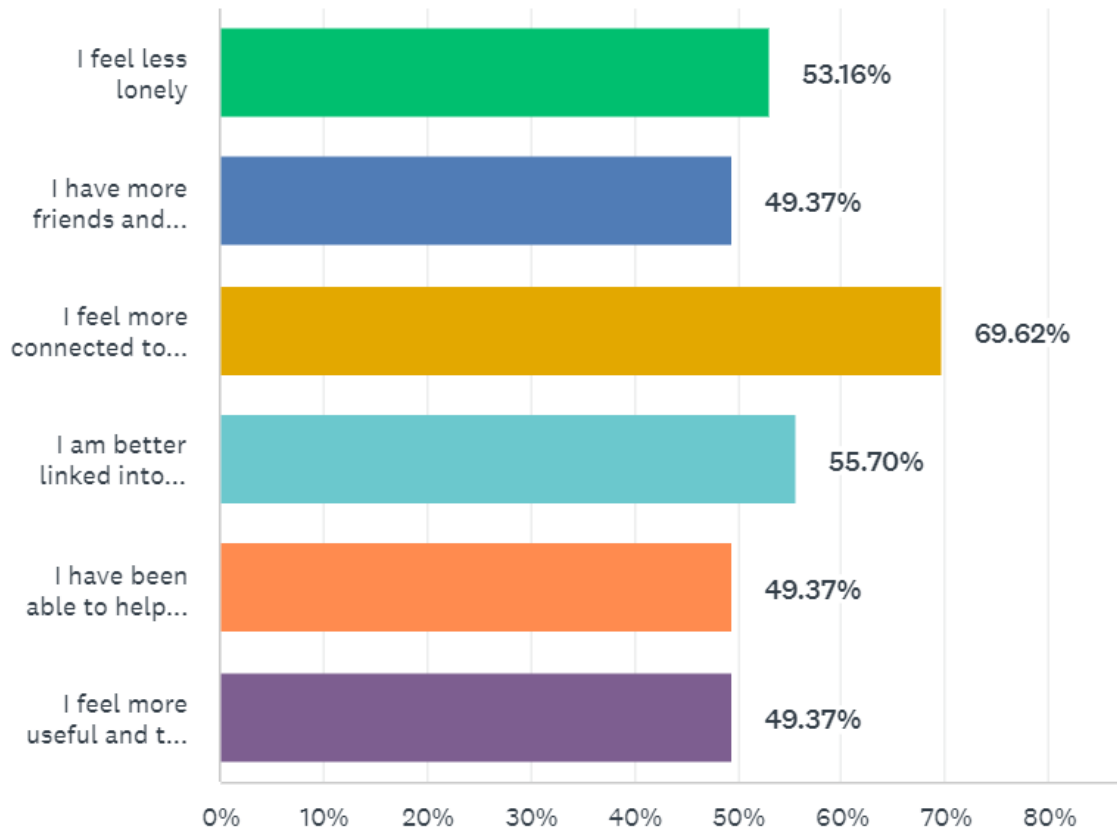
“If it wasn't for them. I really don't think. I would be here. As I suffer from bad depression.after having 4 deaths. Didn't go out, had no money or house hold items. And that's to connect.they have helped me. Every step of the way. And I'm so grateful to all the team that works there.”

“Without the club I might not be here.”

“Confidence to go out after becoming agoraphobic due to health issues”

“I absolutely support the GNS as it helped me get back into the community as I was housebound & became agoraphobic and cut off. The service provided is very specific to the individual and the guidance and support of Nicky Ludgate & the team should be continued to be supported as they are invaluable. It helped save my mental health.”

5 Ways to Wellbeing Question (Connect): Has engaging in GNS activities helped you to connect with others more?



When asked 'Has engaging in GNS activities helped you to connect with others more'?

- 53% of the respondents said 'I feel less lonely'
- 49% of the respondents said 'I have more friends and social interactions'
- 70% of the respondents said 'I feel more connected to my local community'
- 56% of the respondents said 'I am better linked into local organizations and services as a result of GNS'
- 49% of the respondents said 'I have been able to help others'
- 49% of the respondents said 'I feel more useful and that I have something to give back to the community'

From responses there was strong sense that the GNS was an inclusive space for everyone where **discrimination is not tolerated**. People feel like they belong and a part of their community. Residents said;

"Great community atmosphere, get to know friends, theirs activities on, snacks for the local community and your not discriminated. Happy with the way things are and its a successful place for people to come together"

"The atmosphere is nice, parties, bizarre's, meet other people, activities and it's more like a family and you feel welcomed."

“The added value of the service providing free food and services was also commonly reference, this has been something that has been valued more and more as the cost of living rises. It is evident that the GNS is a space for people to share opportunities and advice on where to access services in the borough. People make connections and share experiences on where other supports and services can be accessed.”

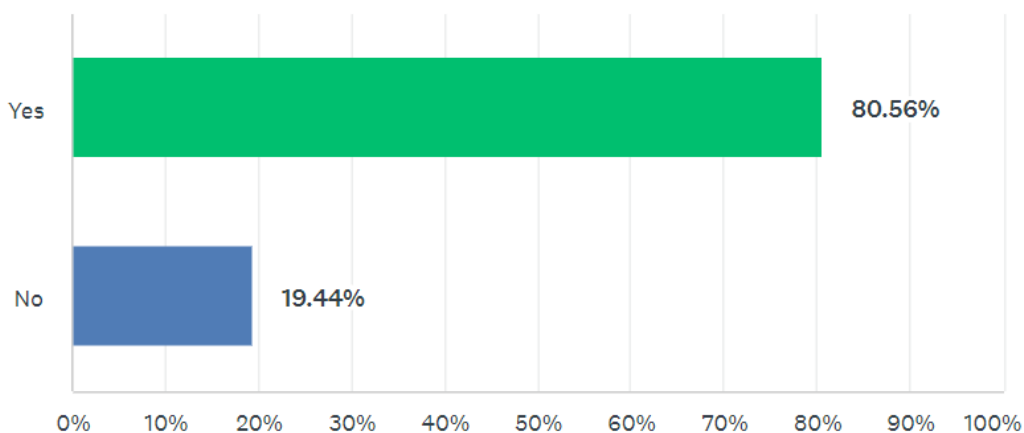
“GNS activities is what people need. There's a lot of very lonely people. Living in Islington is amazing with the community centre's and all the things they offer.”

“I feel welcome and can form different relationships with different people and I have been introduced to other events outside the GNS community.”

Parents noted how GNS provides free activities for children which are often hard to find. This provides an opportunity for children to socialise with their peers and forges deeper bonds with other generations in the community as residents often all come together at special events such as the Fun Day event or at festive celebrations.

“It excellent for the young children to have a activity to go to that they enjoy and free for them to go and there isn't many places for young kids to go and enjoy in a safe and friendly environment.”

5 Ways to Wellbeing Question (Learning): Have you learned any new skills and/or information as a result of taking part in the Good Neighbours Scheme?



72 responses were collected in responses to this question. **81%** of respondents indicated 'yes' that they have learned something new from engaging in the GNS. Responses indicated that the skills and information learned has been very varied. **Practical skills** have been developed by residents engaging in specific activities such as the exercise class, arts and crafts and mindfulness sessions.

“Arts and crafts got me back into doing art, and I have learned how to paint now”

“I’m always inspired when I go to the Arts and Crafts club at Walter Sickert.”

Yoga is great and advice I got from ADHD support group was a life line for my son”

“More exercises how to breathe properly better at mixing with people ability interest in the garden and art”

Soft skills such as **interpersonal/communication skills** were also reported as areas that have been developed by engaging in the GNS.

“New skills all the time and about people and how their mind functions. Everyone is different and on their own journeys. How people respond to things and I’m learning different skills to assist others with disabilities and different ways of thinking.”

“Interacting more with people as I am a quiet person and less prejudice.”

“Never was a good mixer or good at conversations with others but now I am.”

Residents indicated they have also developed greater **digital competency** as a result of the support provided through GNS and more people being active in GNS Whatsapp groups.

“Learned how use my mobile phone and I’m more confident using my computer”

“Better with technology ie. phone and laptops.”

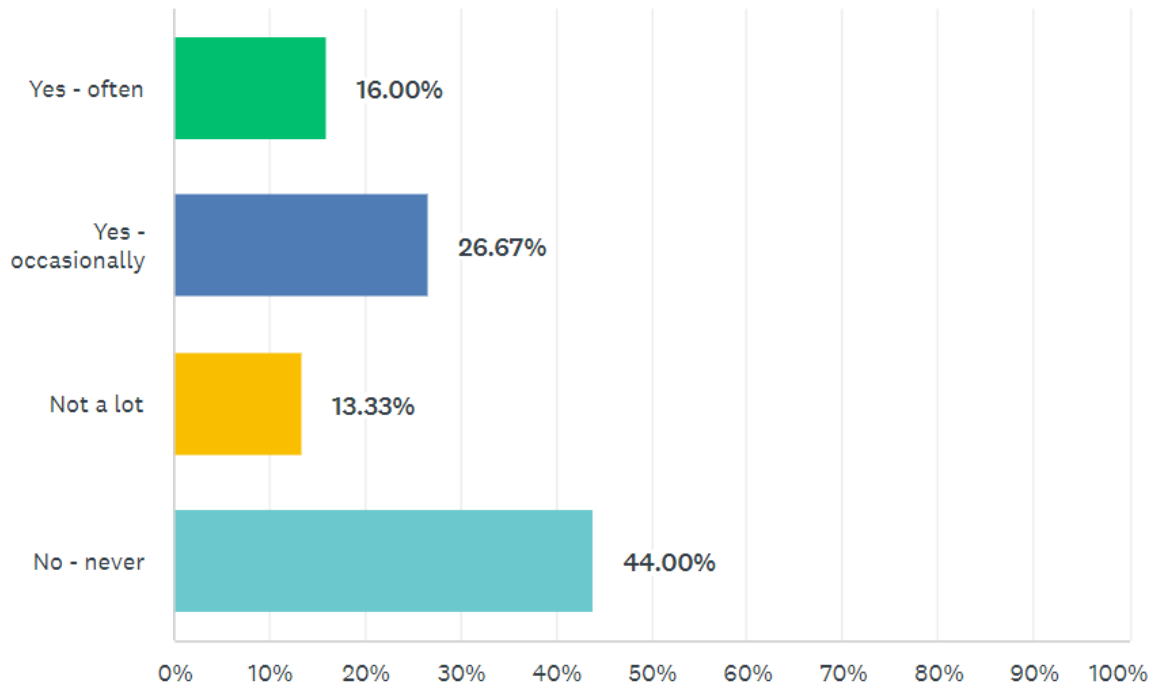
Through the responses we also see that residents have developed **an increased awareness of services and opportunities** in the borough by attending GNS. Residents value hearing about specific support offers that partners offer and like having guest speakers attending weekly groups. Residents said;

“Become more flexible. Find out about other services and information in the local community.”

“I have an increased awareness of community groups and activities that are available locally”

“More services coming in to give us information on what they do, like arthritis society etc. Really help me because it a lovely safe place where people are nice to each other. I other clubs people are in groups and that’s why I like coming to GNS activities. Including Tracey and Nicky who are very helpful.”

5 Ways to Wellbeing Question (Give Back): Have you volunteered with GNS activities?



Of the 75 responses collected when asked about volunteering, **56%** of respondents indicated they have either volunteered often or occasionally with the GNS. Responses show that the level of volunteer involvement varies with some people taking on light duties and other volunteers being engaged on a daily basis. The responses demonstrate that being part of the GNS volunteer team has enabled residents to feel more empowered and more informed about what is going on in the borough. Residents spoke about the benefits of volunteering by saying the following;

“My experience has been good volunteering at the GNS project, I have learnt new skills and it has improved my confidence.”

“Being a part of the GNS team has allowed me to participate in Community projects which I had not known of before. Through the GNS I have made more friends of different age and different background.”

“It made me aware that I can contribute and there are many opportunities out there to do so”

“Teaching other new things makes me want to do more.”

6. Case studies

Resident story 1 – Mike

GNS staff were out on outreach in the local area when they met Mike on the street. Mike stayed at home for 10 years suffering from depression and also hoarding was a big problem. Mike didn't form nurturing relationships even with his own family who live locally – Mike was feeling in despair for many years.

The GNS team encouraged Mike to attend the free activities held at the Walter Sickert just around the corner from Mike's home – it took a few conversations but eventually, Mike attended a coffee morning. He stood by the fire exit door the entire time and was really nervous and shy. As time went by Mike was talking more and more to the GNS staff and becoming more comfortable.

Then lock down happened. The GNS & Help on Your Doorstep advisors started a befriending service that supported Mike with phone calls and shopping. As the lock down lifted Mike was talking to the GNS team more and more. We encouraged him to come on an outreach session. That was the start of something big and now Mike volunteers across all three GNS sites!

Mike helps with setting up and clearing down activities. At events he is busy in the kitchen making refreshments, leafleting GNS areas and assisting the team with shopping and event preparation. This year, Mike was awarded Islington Volunteer of the Year and we couldn't be prouder!

How has it made a difference?

- **Connect:** Mike now connects with so many people now making him in his words "I feel like a human being again – not a hermit"
- **Be Active:** I now move I go out to volunteer the outreach gave me a love for walking so I now walk miles and have lost a lot of weight – I have now joined my local gym!
- **Learn:** I am learning social skills by communicating with the GNS users staff & volunteers I now speak to people at GNS events which I never did before! Even my spelling is improving through using my phone more being connected to the GNS WhatsApp groups and having friends I have helped GNS users & volunteers connect to the Centres WIFI I have delivered a volunteer picnic which led to a GNS fundraiser
- **Give:** I give up to eight hours a week in volunteering – can be more when busier eg: event time I give my time, I have set up and delivered coffee mornings with other volunteers when needed.
- **Take Notice:** I feel now I take notice of my life – my health the way I present myself has changed dramatically I care now about others and take notice if others are suffering I notice that

Support from Help on Your Doorsteps Connect advisors have helped Mike in a big way by getting a walk in shower fitted from Occupational therapy, support from Shine with energy saving items such as a draft excluder & energy saving light bulbs and finally extra help from Age UK for Mike's new wet room.

Resident story 2 – Jerusalem

- Jerusalem Good Neighbours Scheme Volunteer



Volunteering

Jerusalem has been volunteering with our Good Neighbours Scheme for 6 years. She is part of a network of volunteers who help us to deliver our group activities and to do outreach to promote our groups with residents. We're dedicated to involving residents not only in the design of our work but also the implementation.



Before volunteering I was really shy. I started off volunteering in the kitchen. Slowly, I started engaging with residents more and more... Now I'm a different person - talking to everyone! Volunteering has given me the chance to engage with different people and has helped me understand people better. I've also received training such as first aid training and given me more responsibilities.

- Jerusalem



7. Partnerships

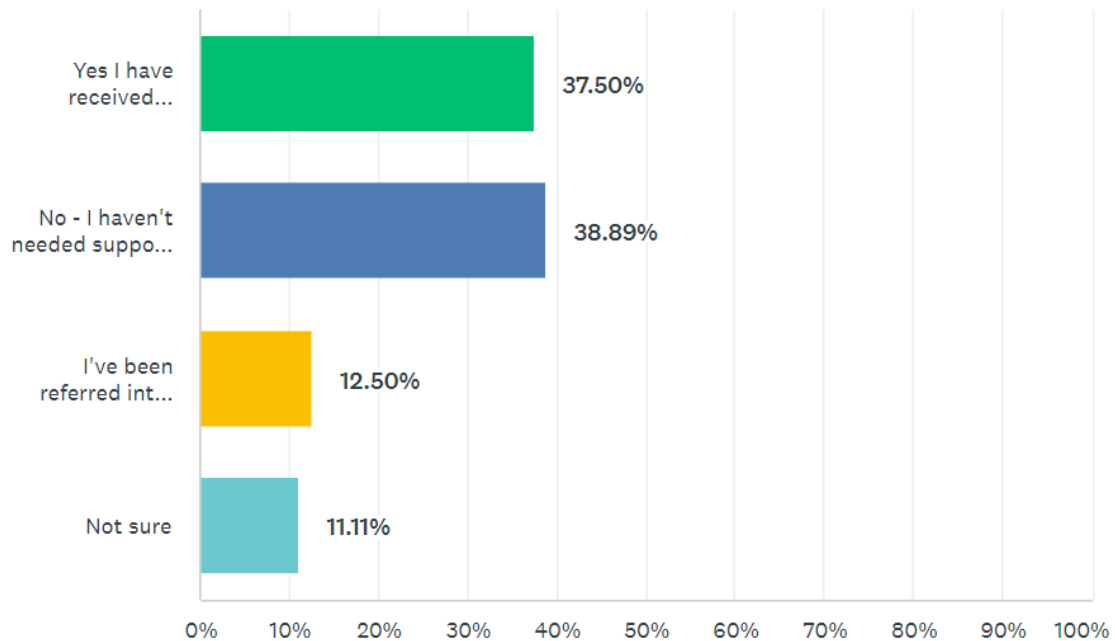
We work in partnership in order to work towards ensuring services for residents are integrated. Over the past year, the GNS has collaborated with many different organisations to maximise the impact of all the services available in the area. Key partners this year have included:

- Sadler's Wells Theatre
- Mary's Gym
- Rose Bowl Youth Centre
- Age UK Islington
- North London Cares
- Ward Councillors and Islington Council
- ZSL London Zoo
- ELBA
- Arthritis Society
- Cook for Good
- Sounding Board Network
- Freightliners City Farm
- New River Green History Society
- Shine
- Gingerbread
- Islington Giving
- BIG Alliance

8. Connect Support to residents in New River Green

Help on Your Doorstep's Connect advice service works across the London Borough of Islington including residents in the New River Green area. During this reporting period, 69 residents in New River Green postcodes were supported by our Connect team – this could be referrals into services, information and advice, support with form filling, grant applications and more.

Have you been referred into our Connect service for advice/support on housing, welfare benefits, money management or other issues?



In our resident survey in November 2022 we asked 'Have you been referred into our Connect service for advice/support on housing, welfare benefits, money management or other issues?' Of the 72 responses collected;

- 37.5% of respondents said 'Yes I have received support from the Connect team'
- 38.9% said 'No - I haven't needed support from the Connect team'
- 12.5% said 'I've been referred into other services through GNS'.

In the comments section, residents provided more context about the support they received saying;

"To do with benefits. And food banks."

"to Citizen Advice Bureau for law advice."

"Regarding careers."

"The team encouraged me to apply for PiP and found an organisation (citizens advice) to help me me fill in forms ect as I am dyslexic. I was also able to access help to get my kitchen and hall painted as I am physically disabled."

"Nicky got a referral sorted out for me as I had issues with my employers."

"Appying for a Taxi Card and I've been helped a lot by Ann Marie."

9. Moving forward

Going forward we would like to do more monitoring and learning of all three Good Neighbour Schemes in order to fully evaluate our approach and to assess the planned and unplanned effects of our work. Ideally this would take the shape of an external

evaluation of all 3 schemes so we can track our progress to date. An evaluation would also inform how best for the schemes to move forward. We would share learnings from this evaluation with other stakeholders so we can influence wider system change. As our existing activity budget is already under pressure due to the increase in costs, we would need to secure additional funding for an evaluation.

As we look ahead into the next year we would like to continue to grow our volunteer base. We value community members not only contributing to the design of activities but also in their day to day implementation. We will look to increase engagement of residents to take on formal and informal volunteer roles so activities are community owned and led. In the next year we plan to continue to grow and support our dynamic team of volunteers.

We want to ensure our GNS programme reflects our community and is inclusive and accessible to all. With this in mind, we want to expand our programme of work to work more closely with young people, especially teenagers over the next year. We have started to explore opportunities with Youth Bank England to explore the possibility of setting up a youth bank grant scheme New River Green GNS over the coming 3 years.

10. Our thanks

Many thank our supporters – NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board and Islington Giving for their continued support of our work in New River Green.

Our thanks to all at the Walter Sickert Community Centre for accommodating and supporting our work. Our sincere thanks to all our partner organisations for working with us and supporting our Islington residents. We are delighted to work in a community where partners work collectively to meet residents' needs.

Many thanks to all our dedicated colleagues at Help on Your Doorstep who have supported at events and supported GNS users with advice support.

Finally, big thanks to all the amazing residents, volunteers and community groups who have been so passionate about our GNS activities over the last year – your involvement is what makes this project happen! We look forward to continuing to work together to make GNS continue to grow and evolve.

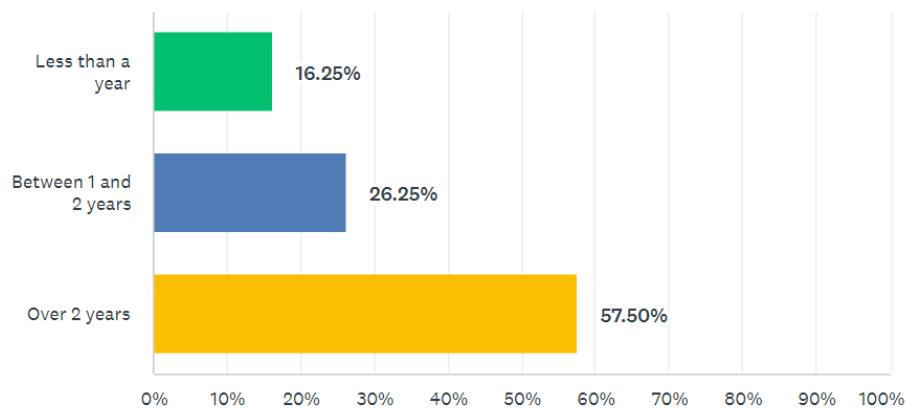
“A brilliant organisation run by dedicated people who go above and beyond expectations. Loved and appreciated by the community. They have also made a positive difference that is felt and seen in how the community interact and support each other through these event. Well done team 🍷 and most of all thank you.🙏”

-New river Green GNS user

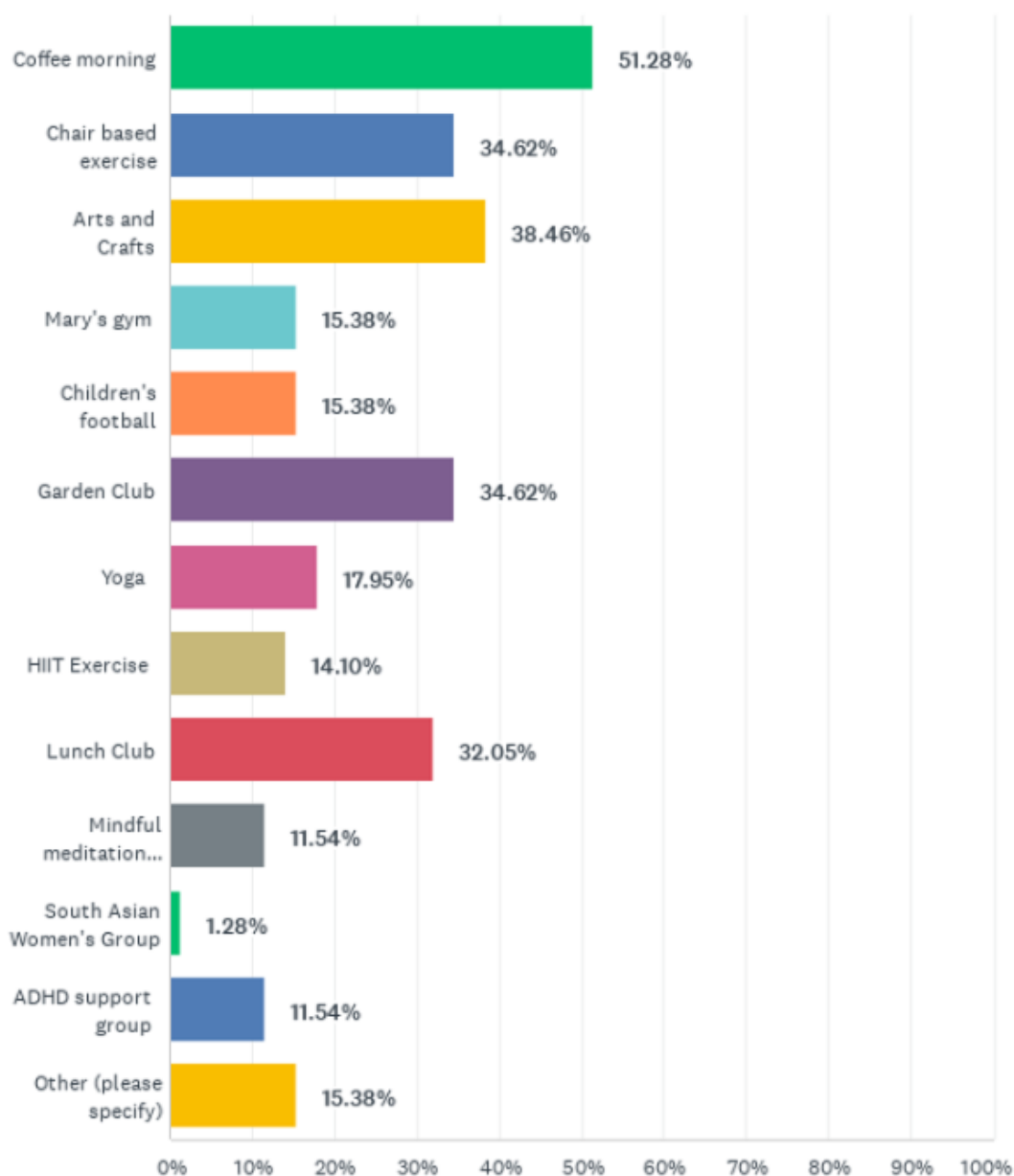
Appendix A – About the residents in the survey

How long have you been attending our Good Neighbours Scheme activities?

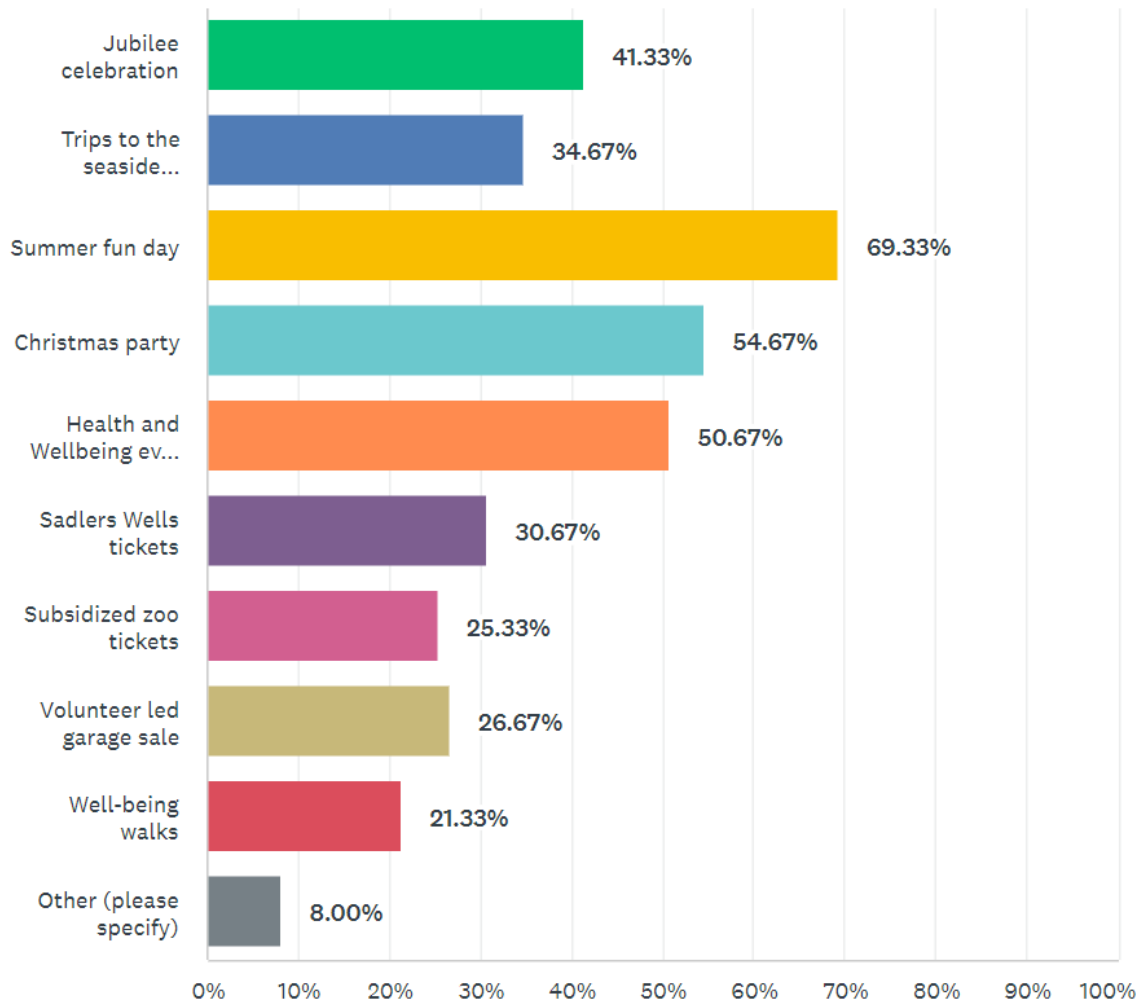
Answered: 80 Skipped: 0



What regular GNS groups and activities have you attended in the past year?



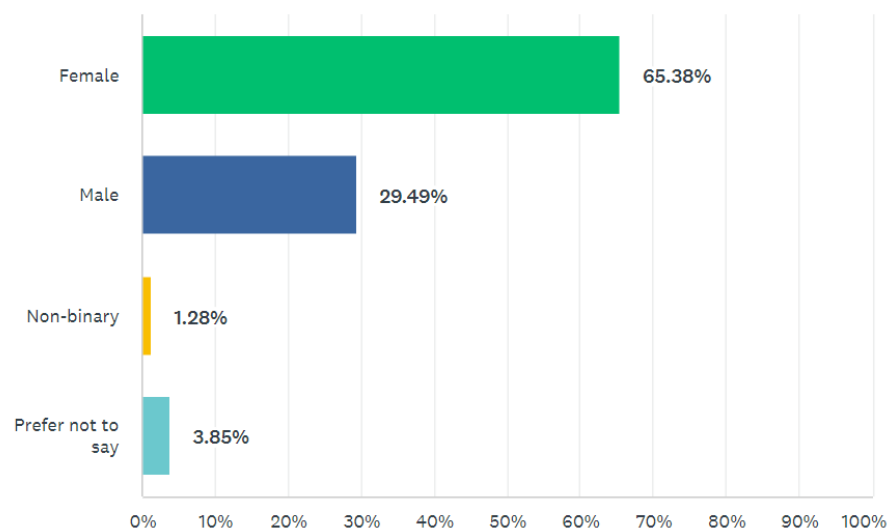
In addition to attending weekly activities have you attended one-off events?



About the residents who completed the survey

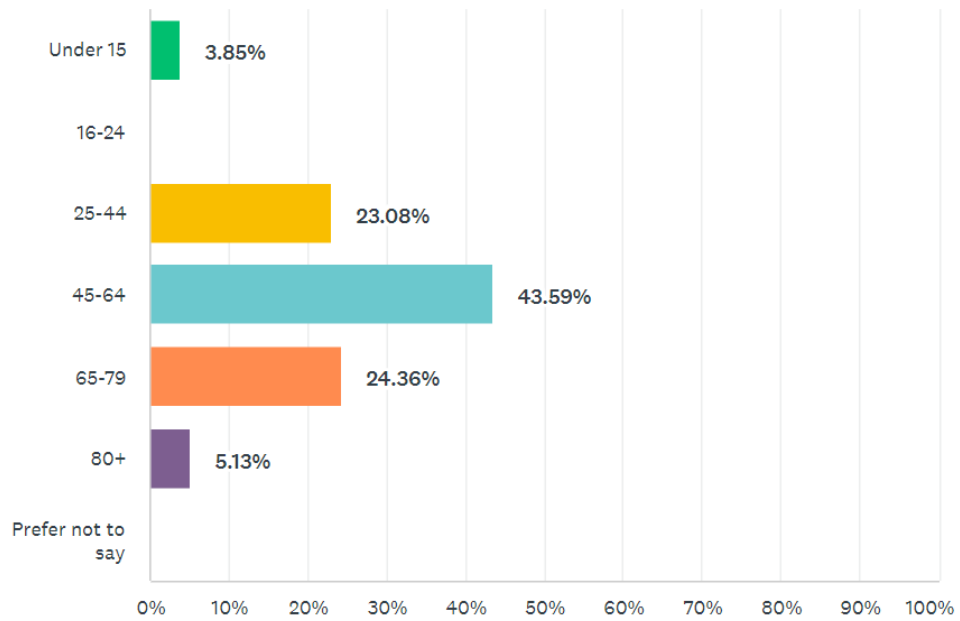
What is your gender?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 2



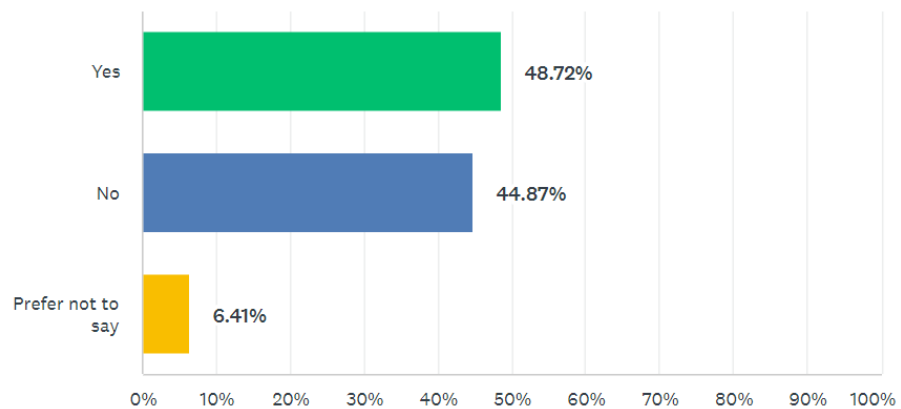
What age are you?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 2



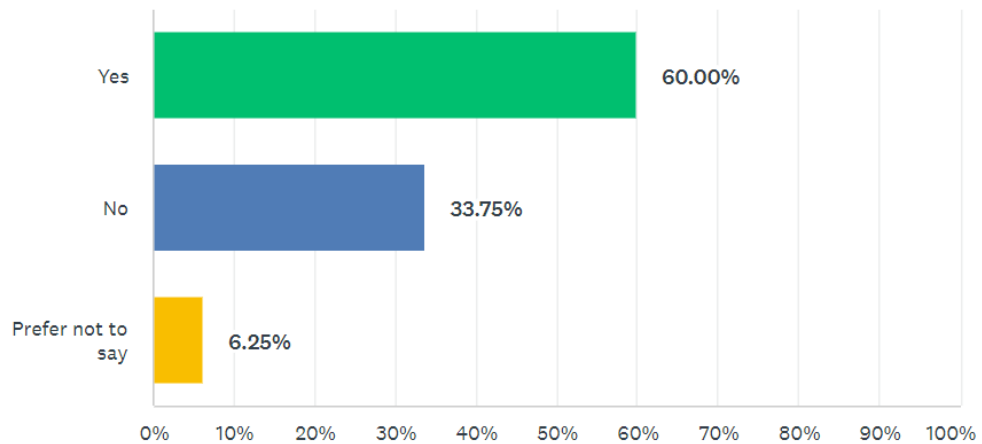
Do you have a disability?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 2



Do you have a long-term health condition?

Answered: 80 Skipped: 0



What race/ethnicity best describes you? (please put 'prefer not to say' if desired)

White other	4
White British	20
British	11
Asian British	1
British Bangladeshi	1
Indian/English	1
Greek	2
English	2
Mixed Race	6
Black British	4
Afro euro Caribbean	1
Black British African	1
Black British Carribbean	1
African Caribbean	2
Irish	5
Italian British	1
Ukrainian	1
Eutherian	1
Maltese	1
Swedish	1
Prefer not to say	6