



**CLUB
SODA**

IMPACT REPORT

2019/20

ABOUT US

Who We Are

We are a group of adults with learning disabilities and we are creating exciting social and creative opportunities in Croydon for ourselves and for other people. We formed in 2009 with the help of Croydon Council and became an independent not-for-profit social enterprise in 2014 before registering as a charity in 2019.

Our Vision

We want Croydon to be a place where people with learning disabilities are as happy, social, creative and valued as everyone else.

Our Values

friendly, ambitious, supportive, proud, experimental, forward-looking, welcoming and successful!

Our mission – how we're achieving this

Club Soda's mission is to create opportunities and change perceptions. We create opportunities for people with learning disabilities to be happy and social, creative and productive. And we change perceptions about people with learning disabilities, and about Croydon. We do this through social and creative activities which empower and excite us.

We are also:

Campaigners

Performers

Musicians

DJs

Pioneers

Communicators

Club Soda ingredients:

6 committee members who make all the important decisions

5 part-time staff

4 freelance music leaders

53 members who attend weekly workshops and projects

20 volunteers

100s of people who attend our regular programme of events

All of our members have a learning disability and/or autism and some may also have a mental health condition.

OUR ACTIVITIES

- **Workshop programme** for aspiring DJs and young musicians
- **Supporting & developing** artists through projects such as Emerging Artists
- **Live events** including Soda Beat and SoDaDa, which give a platform for our artists to share their work in local venues alongside other disabled and non-disabled artists
- **Volunteering** opportunities to support our artists and through our Gig Buddies Croydon project, which matches people with and without learning disabilities who share the same interests
- **Campaigning** about issues that are important to us, like the Stay Up Late campaign that supports people's rights to have control of their own social lives
- **Training and work experience** to help people to gain confidence and learn new skills
- **Fundraising** and generating income to help Club Soda and our members develop and grow



HEADLINES

FOR 2019/20

2194

Instances of face to
face engagement
(Decrease of 318
from 2018/19)

2489

Social media
followers
(Data not collected
in 2018/19)

4276

Likes, Comments and
shares on social media
(Data not collected
in 2018/19)

88

Newsletter
subscribers
(Data not collected
in 2018/19)

7

Live events
(Decrease of 2 from
2018/19)

53

Members
(Increase of 15 from
2018/19)

6

Gig Buddy matched
pairs
(Data not collected
in 2018/19)

185

Workshops
(Increase of 25 from
2018/19)

20

Volunteers
(Data not collected
in 2018/19)

£120,771

Money raised
(Increase of £88,916
raised from 2018/19)

£71,706

Money spent
(Increase of £42,364
spent from 2018/19)

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

"One of my highlights this year has been going along to the Gig Buddy Socials. I loved the trip to the virtual reality café. I had wanted to go there before but didn't feel confident to go in alone. It was great fun spending time with old and new friends there."

Joe, Officer

"My highlight of the last year was Bamstock Festival in Wandle Park. I enjoyed promoting the re-launched Gig Buddies Croydon project and meeting the general public. The music and food were really good too."

Holly, Officer

"I've enjoyed the events this year more than ever. We seem to have lots more new faces at our events and the audiences are definitely more mixed and inclusive now we're using places like Fun House and Fairfield."

Sedley, Officer

"Our social media has taken off this year, we definitely have a much wider reach, and this is having an impact on the number of people coming to our events. It's good to see."

Yasmin, Treasurer

"I have enjoyed working with the staff at Club Soda and recruiting Elli, the new Project Manager. I like to have more responsibility."

Loraine, Secretary

"The Birthday Bash to celebrate our 10 year anniversary was brilliant fun and such a great turn out. Everyone enjoyed themselves and it was a fitting tribute to what we've achieved since we began in 2009."

Terry, Chair



DIRECTOR SUMMARY

It is difficult to summarise 2019/20 without mentioning Coronavirus, as it started to impact us at the end of March 2020. But it is important to look back in order to move forward, so I will try to summarise the year gone by, as it was without question the most important 12 months in Club Soda's history.

Spring

In April 2019 we officially became a charity and published our first 3 Year Business Plan. Our major project, Gig Buddies Croydon re-launched thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund; and we welcomed the new Gig Buddies Project Manager, Cherilyn Yeates, to our small team of staff. In May, young musicians from Soda Jam were presented with an award by Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

Summer

Summer was characterised by an awesome event to celebrate our 10 year anniversary. Our 'Birthday Bash' took place at The Front Room in St George's Walk, where we had an outdoor (and an indoor) stage that hosted singers, bands, and other performers who have been associated with Club Soda since the very beginning. It was so much fun to celebrate with old and new friends alike.

Autumn

We moved our office into a studio at TURF Projects on Keeley Road. Our members love the project space at TURF which is central, easy to access and nice and quiet (at least until the DJs do their thing!). Young people from our Soda Jam project were invited by Croydon Music & Arts to perform at the Fairfield Halls in one of the first events in the concert hall since it reopened.

Winter

We were successful in applying for three new funding grants to launch new strands of work in 2020 and further develop Gig Buddies Croydon. SoDaDa and Emerging Artists both launched in January and we were excited to welcome a new Project Manager, Elli Hall, to take the lead on both new projects. A grant for Gig Buddies Croydon was secured to develop closer ties to local GP surgeries in order to recruit new volunteers through social prescribing.

Onwards and upwards!
Oliver Tipper

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

This year we held a huge party to celebrate our birthday. We invited all our current artists to perform as well as artists who have graced our past events and many friends we've made over the last decade. It was so much fun and we can't wait for the next 10.

"Being part of a charity driven by such passionate and inspiring people is brilliant. I love working alongside so many talented artists in Croydon and feel proud to have been part of what Club Soda has achieved in the last 10 years." Rachael, Committee Coordinator



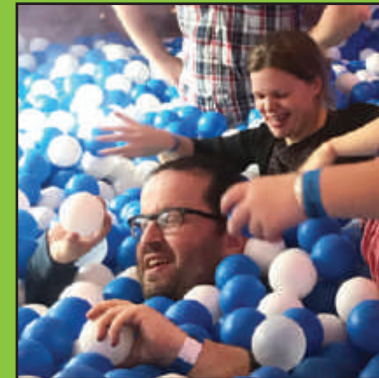
SODA CREW EVENTS

"Last year was a decent year. The club night was great, all the people were there. I loved all of it. Dennis is brilliant. The FunHouse was my favourite." George Cary aka DJ X

Soda Crew club nights are our most popular events which take place quarterly in central Croydon venues. An inclusive clubbing environment for adults run by our fantastic Committee with the Soda Crew DJs banging out the latest top tunes and club classics. This year we partnered with FunHouse and some of our audiences enjoyed partying in the ball pit.



"It's fun and you can meet new friends". Audience member



SODA CREW DJ's



"2019/20 was a good year for the Soda Crew DJs. We found our new home in TURF studios in Croydon and the DJs played at numerous venues in and around Croydon. Soda Crew DJs have come together and supported each other and in doing so they have built a strong community for themselves. I thank them one and all for their commitment, drive and passion for the project and the music." Nick Carling, Music Leader

"I really enjoy my DJing & MCing. I'd be lost without Soda Crew." Dennis Ellis aka DJ Mennis

"I played Mycenae House in Blackheath back in August and it was great - I had a load of people dancing to my music. I also did a gig for Croydon Council housing dept and totally smashed it! Oh and beware the corona virus!" Julie Brickley aka DJ Soul Sista



SODA BEAT

Soda Beat is a quarterly live music event featuring bands and musicians with learning disabilities, including all of the artists we support. This year we started running Soda Beat at the new look Fairfield Halls.



"This is a great project which makes a real difference to lives. Croydon is developing a fantastic cultural scene and it's really important to us that it is inclusive and accessible for everyone in our community." Councillor Oliver Lewis

"My favourite part is everytime we perform live, we end the set with Ava screaming the last line of the chorus 'What the *** Teresa May, what the ****'. I'm looking forward to performing our new song, 'The Blood Stains of Human Soul' live."

Manoj, Musician and Participant



GIG BUDDIES

Gig Buddies matches adults with learning disabilities to volunteers who have similar interests, to go to events together that they both love. Gig Buddies is about empowering people, building friendships and giving people choice about what they do with their own lives!.

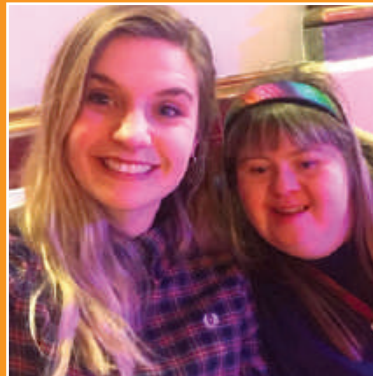
"The program is inclusive, friendly and joyous. It has been a unique opportunity to share my passion for music with others who have the same excitement for live music." Volunteer

"My experience has been great because we decide on different places to go out that we enjoy, and I look forward to the next gig buddies socials too." Gig Buddy

Some of the achievements of the project this year

- Matched 6 pairs of buddies
- Organised 20 social events
- Had over 130 people attending across those events
- Engaged 40 volunteers and participants onto the project
- Received funding for the Gig Buddies Social Prescribing Project
- Hired a new Project Assistant

"We have had what feels like a whirlwind first year at Gig Buddies Croydon and have loved every minute of it! I have been blown away by the strength of the friendships that have formed, our buddies dedication to the project and the power of our little community to spread infectious joy wherever we go. I can't wait for another year of amazing matches, fun socials and countless laughs." Cheryl Yeates, Project Manager



THE CARBONATORS



This year, The Carbonators recorded a new album called Conversation, wrote another load of songs and loved performing at Fairfield Halls and the Summer of Love Festival in Wandle Park.

"The highlight of the year for me was recording the new album. It sounds unique, so I'm happy with it."

Adrian Clarke, band member

"We really managed to capture the live sound of the band with the album; entitled 'Conversation'. We'd progressed so much since Simon Bennett joined. We'd developed into a dynamic and energetic live act and I feel it was a real achievement for us to capture this on record." Alex Holmes music Leader and band member

SYSTEM EXPERIENCE

"My favourite part is every time we perform live, we end the set with Ava screaming the last line of the chorus "What the ** Teresa May, what the ****"."** Manoj, Musician and Participant.

"Zoe's mystical lyrics and gothic fashion brought the first ballad 'The Bloodstain of Human Souls' to the collection of songs written by the band. Her enthusiasm has been instrumental in keeping the band focussed on their goals."

Leo Babi, Music Leader

"I felt really happy having my picture in the papers meeting the Mayor of London. I was very excited about receiving the award and loved the trip to London." Zoe, Musician and participant.

"Manoj's performance at Croydon's LGBTQ+ History month event at Fairfield Halls was a highlight of the year. He regularly posts fantastic clips on social media of his solo performances under the name 'The Virtual Pianist'." Leo Babi,

Music Leader

The band began recording new material at the start of 2020 and plan to release their first EP later in the year. The band are proving to be a big hit at Soda Beat events with their energetic stage presence and in-er-face lyrics

"The passion that comes through Ava's lyrics and performances is infectious. Her self-esteem and confidence as a singer, lyricist and guitarist seem to grow with every rehearsal and live performance. She has encouraged the band to experiment with funky clothes and make up, creating a non-conformist look and breaking gender and disability stereotypes."

Leo Babi, Music Leader



TRANSIENT VISITORS



"Transient Visitors have progressed so much over the last year. Honing a modern post-punk sound with great music and thought-provoking lyrics. Writing, recording and releasing their first EP to a fantastic reception, the future looks very exciting." Sam Baldwin, Music Leader

"The highlight for me has to be forming a new band with equal creative input that get along like a second family. The proudest moment has to be releasing a successful debut E.P."

Matt, Musician and participant

This year the band have recorded and released a self-titled debut EP as well as two music videos. They also enjoyed giving live performances at Soda Beat and Rock House in Brighton.

SODA JAM

Soda Jam is for young people aged between 15 and 25 who love music and want to jam with others.

Highlights of the year

- Soda Jam won a 'Made by Young Creators' award and some of our members received it from The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan
- Released an EP, 'Together Now!', on iTunes and Spotify
- Members performed alongside the Youth Orchestra at the Fairfield Halls in a concert organised by our partners, Croydon Music & Arts.
- Enjoyed the support of two new Young Music Leaders, Anton and Matt, both former members of Soda Jam

"It was a real achievement for the group to record and release the Soda Jam EP, 'Together Now!' on all digital platforms. They also made a promo video for one of the songs, 'Be Yourself'."

Alex Holmes, Music Leader

"Oh my god! Teamwork, this is awesome!" Anu, Participant

"I got to play in front of lots of people - a big audience. I got to play the grand piano - Phoenix. I would love to do more of these in the future." Manoj, Participant



EMERGING ARTISTS

Our Emerging Artists project started in January 2020. It supports ten young people aged between 15 and 25, to develop their skills as musicians and realise their personal goals on their musical journeys.



Manoj, 22, is a pianist and singer. He wants to perform more gigs as a solo artist.

Zoe, 19, plays the electric violin and sings. She wants to write more songs.

Ava, 19, is a singer and guitarist. She wants to record her songs.

Louis, 19, is a drummer and guitarist. He wants to improve his drumming.



Jordan, 24, is a singer and guitarist. He wants to improve on guitar.

Sophie, 23, is a singer and guitarist. She wants to improve on guitar.

Theo, 23, is a singer and keyboardist. He wants to release his own compositions online.

Tom, 22, is a guitarist and bassist. He wants to form a punk band to play regular gigs.

Laurie, 17, is a grime MC and electronic music producer. He wants to write more songs.

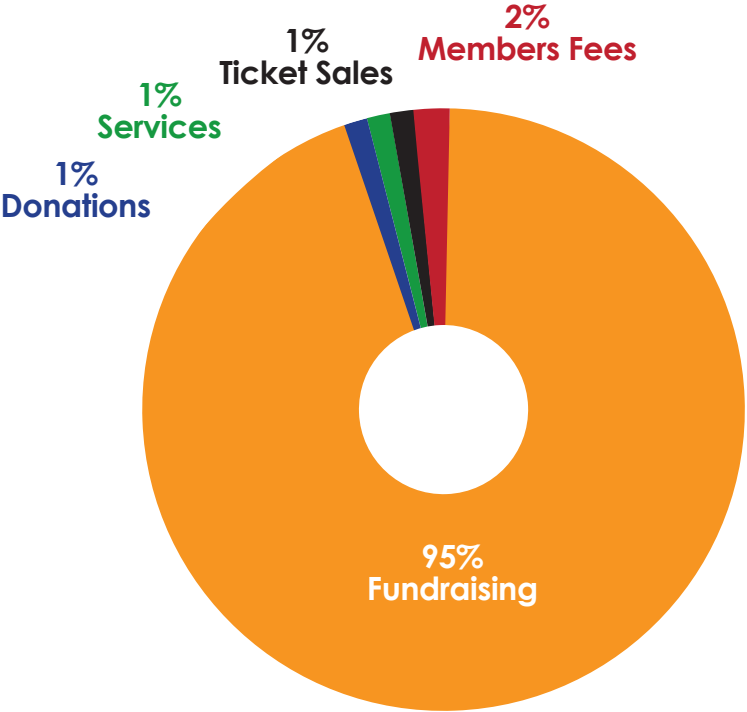
Simon, 24, is drummer and bass player. He wants to write more songs.



FINANCIAL REPORT

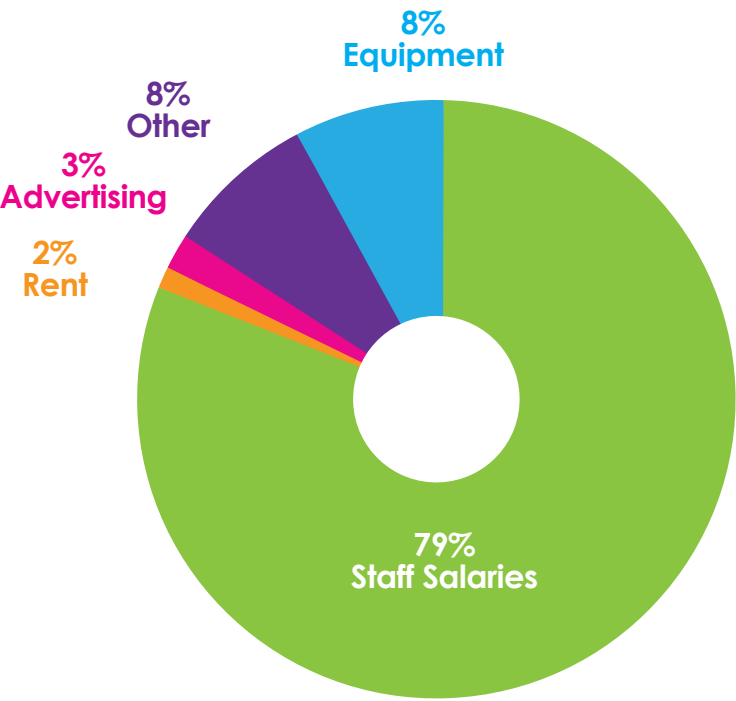
Income

Fundraising	£115,307
Members Fees	£2,134
Ticket Sales	£1,718
Services	£1,021
Donations	£592
TOTAL	£120,772



Expenditure

Staff Salaries	£56,955
Advertising	£2,268
Equipment	£5,606
Rent	£1,178
Other	£5,699
TOTAL	£71,706



PLANS

FOR 2020/21

Launch

SoDaDa a new quarterly live event

Deliver

4 Soda Beat events

Establish

Soda Crew DJs residency
at Boxpark

Work

with our THRIVE partners to develop
Croydon's inclusive arts scene

Match

6 new pairs of Gig Buddies

Secure

funding to continue music
workshops for young people

Partner

with Croydon Council to support delivery
of Leisure Link newsletter

THANK YOU

A massive thank you to the following people for supporting our work in 2019/20

Funders:

Croydon Council, The National Lottery, Youth Music, Arts Council England, Jack Petchey Foundation, Team London

Donors:

Collingwood Services, Michael Alexander, Alan Brooks

Artistic partners:

Croydon Music & Arts, TURF Projects, SLiDE Dance, Drunken Chorus, Fresh Track, Stay Up Late

Supporters:

Museum of Croydon, Screen 25, The Shift Collective, Shuba Rao, Richard Hamilton, Josie Hamilton, Pete Hamilton

Volunteers:

Mary Lee, Giles Frampton, Anton Bland, Matthew Thompson, Jo Huggins, plus all our fabulous Gig Buddies

www.clubsoda.org.uk

