



**CLUB
SODA**

Galaxy Tab A

IMPACT REPORT

2020/21

ABOUT US

Who We Are

We are a group of people with learning disabilities, and we are creating exciting social and creative opportunities in Croydon for ourselves and for other people. We formed in 2009 and became a registered charity in 2019.

We are also -

Pioneers

We do things that no-one else has done before here in Croydon, like accessible club nights in mainstream venues.

Artists and creatives

We produce new and original music and events by musicians and DJs.

Communicators and campaigners

We help to create better understanding of people with learning disabilities. We are working towards a more inclusive, accessible, and fairer Croydon.

Friendly, ambitious, supportive, proud, experimental, forward-looking, welcoming and successful.

Our vision (the world we want to see)

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

Our mission (how we're achieving this)

Club Soda's mission is to create opportunities and change perceptions. We do this through social and creative activities which empower and excite us.

What we do

DJ Workshops

**Soda Jam workshops
for young musicians**

Band rehearsals

Soda Beat Gigs

Soda Crew Club Nights

**Leisure Link Socials,
Newsletter and Podcast**

Gig Buddies Croydon

Volunteering

Work experience

Training

OUR ACTIVITIES

- **Workshop programme** for aspiring DJs and young musicians
- **Supporting & developing artists** through regular rehearsals and projects
- **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
- **Promote inclusive events and celebrate accessible local venues** through our monthly Leisure Link socials, newsletters and podcast
- **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** to help more people with learning disabilities access music and the arts



HEADLINES

FOR 2020/21

1,628

Instances of face-to-face engagement
(Decrease of 566 from 2019/20)

3,081

Social media followers
(Increase of 592 from 2019/20)

16,934

Likes, Comments and shares on social media
(Increase of 12,658 from 2019/20)

109

Newsletter subscribers
(Increase of 21 from 2019/20)

20

Events
(Data not collected in 2019/20)

54

Members
(Increase of 1 from 2019/20)

10

Gig Buddy matched pairs
(Increase of 4 from 2019/20)

247

Workshops
(Increase of 62 from 2019/20)

27

Volunteers
(Increase of 7 from 2019/20)

£83,526

Money raised
(Decrease of £37,245 from 2019/20)

£114,113

Money spent
(Increase of £42,407 spent from 2019/20)

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

"One of my highlights this year has been hosting the SoDaDa event. I compèred and really enjoyed it. It was a new thing for me to do online without a live audiece. I thought it was really entertaining and great to work with other artists."

Joe, Officer

"In this last year the gig buddy socials have been amazing. The afternoon tea get togethers are so popular on Zoom. It's lovely seeing each other, having fun and being a part of something online"

Holly, Officer

"It has been great to be a part of finding new ways to reconnect our members online. We could have easily lost our audience and members if we didn't adapt. Not everybody finds it easy to use social media. It took me a while. I've learnt a lot "

Sedley, Officer

"My highlight for the last year has been moving events online and keeping them going during a difficult time. Really bringing people together when it's been sorely needed."

Yasmin, Treasurer

"It felt good to be able to keep our supporters updated; letting them know that we had moved our DJ and band workshops online and that we planned to keep events running. We even had enquiries from people out of Croydon who had heard about us."

Lorraine, Secretary

"It was so important to move our activities online in this last year. By doing this we have created exciting new possibilities for Club Soda and connected so many of our members."

Terry, Chair



DIRECTOR SUMMARY

The UK entered lockdown on 23 March 2020, and it instantly changed everything for everyone. We were quick to make plans to transition our workshops and events online and I am grateful to our staff and committee for all they did to make the transition as smooth as possible. Our funders, in particular Arts Council and Youth Music, were supportive of our plans to reschedule events and deliver them online. We learnt fast how to stream our events and run virtual workshops and it was pleasing that so many members continued to take part online. There were still many members who did not or could not take part online and we did our best to stay in contact with them throughout lockdown. The whole experience has highlighted for us how important it is that people have digital skills and access to the internet.

My personal highlight of the year has been re-launching Leisure Link after the Council stopped the project after more than 15 years. It was certainly the right time to bring it back as so many in our community were feeling lonely and without a voice. We now have plans to launch a Leisure Link podcast!

As we enter 2021/22 and have started to emerge out of lockdown, we have already held our first live event at a local venue and Gig Buddies have started meeting up in-person too; it feels amazing to be in venues and enjoying each other's company again. We have big plans for the future, but our first priority is reconnecting with all our members, audiences and partners. There are big challenges ahead for us too as the funding landscape has changed, it's more competitive than ever and we will need to focus on evidencing the wider impact of our work. That said, I have no doubt we will succeed and get stronger and stronger as an organisation. We have an amazing team of staff, a wonderful committee, talented members and a growing audience and community of supporters around us. There is so much to look forward to and I am really excited about what the next year has in store.

Oliver Tipper, July 2021



SODA BEAT



"I loved The Wire magazine article and photoshoot."
Narendra, The Carbonators

"I loved hearing the band's music played on the radio in Italy, Belgium, Holland and Japan." Adrian, The Carbonators

"Soda Jam went online in April and members collaboratively wrote and recorded a song called 'Lockdown' as well as a music video. The Carbonators released a mini album, 'Conversation', and were featured in The Wire magazine. Theophilus wrote and recorded a song called 'Destination West Africa' and 'NHS Heroes', a tribute to NHS staff." Alex, Music Leader



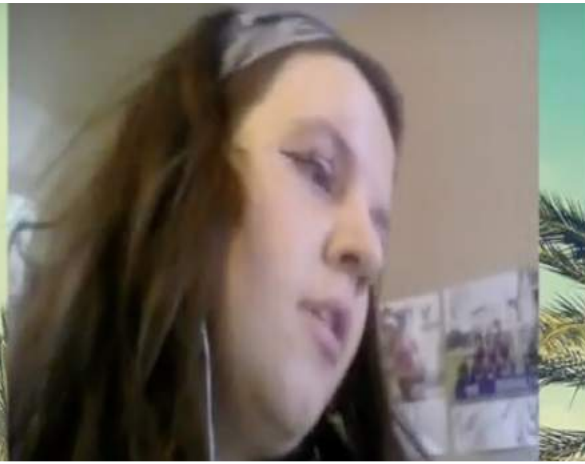
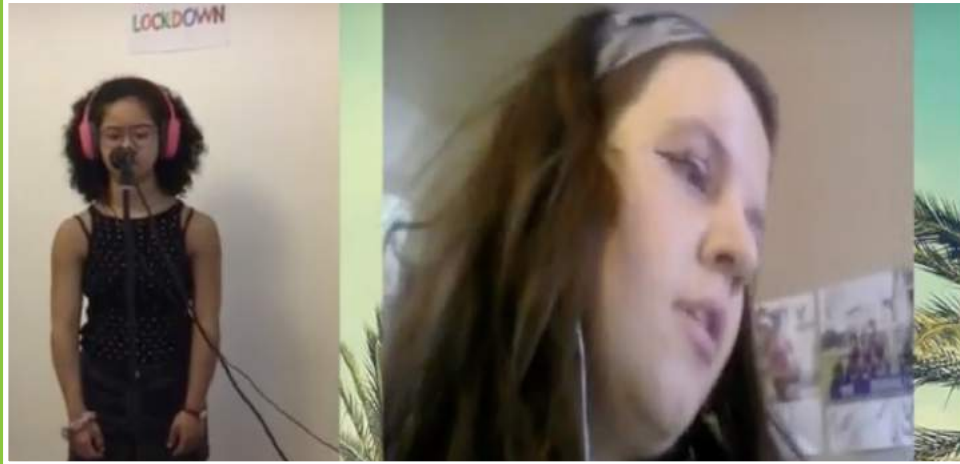
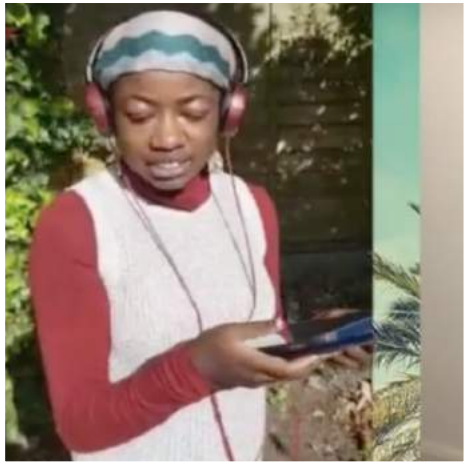
SODA BEAT

"I started composing EDM music on Soundtrap and producing my first single, 'Dreamscape'." Manoj aka The Virtual Pianist



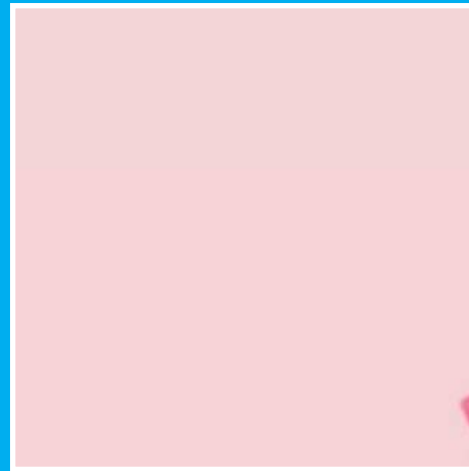
"Paula started a new project, 'Paula & the 4 O Clock Club', writing and recording her first songs. Transient Visitors wrote and recorded 3 new songs for a forthcoming release." Sam, Music Leader

"For System Experience the transition to online sessions was a challenge and the band were only able to write two new demos remotely. Members naturally leaned into working on their own projects." Leo, Music Leader



SODADA

SoDaDa is an inclusive clubnight and showcase for learning disability arts in Croydon, bringing together four local arts organisations that support artists with learning disabilities. SoDaDa is enjoyed by our regular audience who love clubbing and live music but also those who like live art, contemporary dance and immersive theatre. SoDaDa is our vision of an extraordinary, fun, whacky and nonsensical night out.



"Collaborating with Club Soda on SoDaDa was the best thing the youth co did last year. It gave our dancers a creative focus and the much needed experience of performing for an audience that they were SO missing." Gemma, SLIDE



"With learning disabled people running most of the elements of the event, it demonstrated Club Soda are at the top of their game when it comes to inclusive events. The special guests were awesome too and the evening as a whole was energetic, experimental and engaging." Gemma, SLiDE

"We really enjoyed collaborating with Club Soda on the SoDaDa project. It gave our theatre group DISCO DISCO the opportunity to explore surrealism within their performances." Sheena, Drunken Chorus



GIG BUDDIES

- Hired a new Project Assistant
- Ran **44** online social events
- Our biggest online social had **30** attendees
- Were able to support **12** people on Zoom to celebrate on Christmas morning when many could not see their families
- Created **Gig Buddies At Home** - a weekly newsletter to keep buddies engaged, connected and happy
- Developed an **online training programme** which makes it more efficient and accessible to train new volunteers
- **6** new volunteers completed the online training course
- Developed **accessible online application forms** which reduce the amount of paper/time/effort it takes to apply to be a Gig Buddy
- Moved our **DBS checks online** which is cheaper and more efficient
- Formed a group of **Gig Buddies Ambassadors** made up of Gig Buddies who have a learning disability to meet once a month to help direct the project



GIGBUDDIES CRO

“The thing I like about GB is the more we go out the more we can socialise with people, and we don’t get bored and we don’t stay at home doing nothing. It is like a therapeutic thing. It’s like joining in with new friends and new people. Some of us know each other, some of us don’t. The more we get to know each other the more we get to socialise and have fun. That is what it is about.”

“The regular and creative range of activities on zoom have, I am certain, played a huge part in maintaining good mental health for my daughter and I am sure the other ‘buddies’, over this hugely challenging year. As someone who has had to shield over many months, the social isolation she would have felt without Gig Buddies could have been extremely damaging. The team even arranged a get together on zoom on Christmas Day, probably her lowest point emotionally in the lockdown.”



“Honestly, I would say Gig Buddies has been really helpful for me to have a nice space to socialise, getting to know people, making a difference with the ambassadors meetings. And I have just enjoyed the sheer variety of activities we have had. I’ve also enjoyed writing reviews for the magazine because it’s got me to try out new things and share things that people might want to give a go. It’s so lovely to have a nice social space. It has been a lifeline.”

“I cannot praise the staff and volunteers involved in this project highly enough.”

“She loved the early get-togethers of meeting for afternoon tea, drinks in the pub, things which most young adults take for granted.”

LEISURE LINK

During lockdown we recognised an urgent need to reach out beyond our regular audience, to support an even greater number of people with learning disabilities and autism in Croydon. We launched the Leisure Link project so we could socialise with each other from our own homes and stay connected with leisure and arts opportunities in our community. Our online socials and monthly newsletters have been popular in lockdown and are reaching a growing audience as we begin to emerge and start meeting in-person again. We delivered:

- Monthly Online Socials so people could stay in touch and meet new friends
- Monthly Digital Newsletters co-produced by our members
- A team of ambassadors and producers to carry the project forward



"Leisure Link is great for finding out about events. I loved the gig buddies event at the Oval Tavern so much I was actually regretting leaving. I absolutely loved it." Jamie (GB)

"Leisure Link has become such a vital way to connect people with learning disabilities and autism with organisations in Croydon. I love to find out what Leisure Linkers have to say and can see how passionate they are to share information and experiences of venues and events in the borough. I have thoroughly enjoyed working on the Leisure Link project this year." Rachael

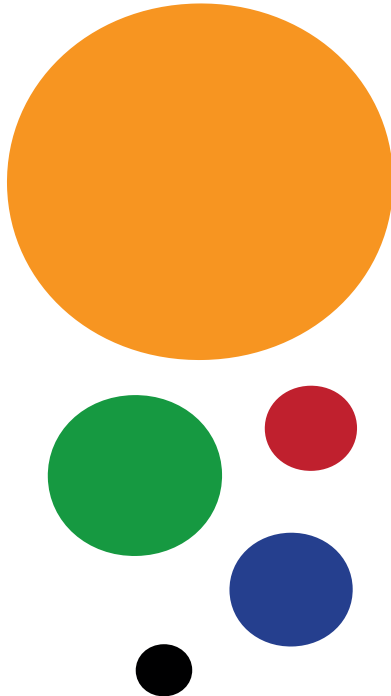
"I think the project is absolutely brilliant. I was honoured to be part of it. I really enjoyed it." Joe



FINANCIAL REPORT

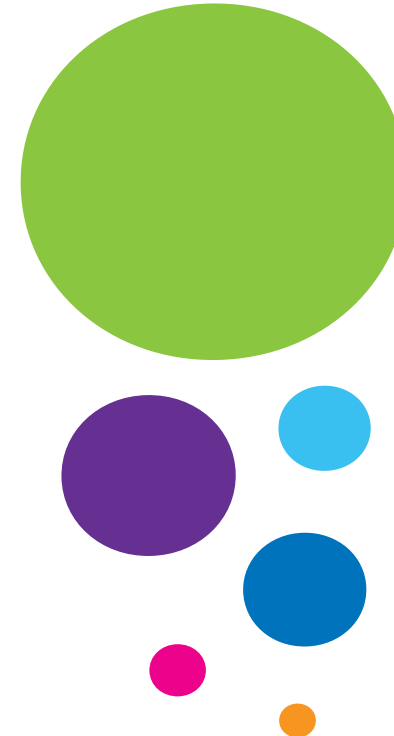
Income

Fundraising	£80,936
Members Fees	£90
Ticket Sales	£0
Services	£2,200
Donations	£300
TOTAL	£83,526



Expenditure

Staff Salaries	£96,302
Advertising	£230
Equipment	£4,066
Rent	£858
Overheads	£5,069
Other	£7,608
TOTAL	£114,133



PLANS

FOR 2021/22

Deliver

3 in-person Soda Beat events

Establish

Soda Crew DJs residency
at Boxpark

Work

with our partners to develop
Croydon's inclusive arts scene

Launch

a new Leisure Link Podcast

Match

6 new pairs of Gig Buddies

Secure

funding to continue all our work
for another 3 years

THANK YOU

Funders:

The National Lottery, Youth Music, Arts Council England, Jack Petchey Foundation and The London Community Foundation

Donors:

Collingwood Services, Jan and Graham Keane

Artistic partners:

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

Supporters:

Museum of Croydon, The Shift Collective, The Oval Tavern

Volunteers:

Giles Frampton, Anton Bland, Matthew Thompson, Jo Huggins, plus all our fabulous Gig Buddy Volunteers

www.clubsoda.org.uk

