

## **OUTCOME OF THE CAMDEN 4 PILOT PROJECT**

In January 2022 the HRBA's Roving Reporter ran a story about the Camden 4 pilot project <https://www.hrballiance.org.uk/news/roving-reporter/camden/> where four churches within a mile of each other in Camden were awarded a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to work together to find a way of facing the challenge of repairing their buildings and identifying the best way to meet the needs of their congregations and communities.

This note summarises the outcome of the project. Further details are available from Alice Yates (contact details at the foot of this email).

### **THE PROJECT**

All four churches are on the Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and all four are surrounded by massive housing and commercial regeneration projects. They were also all detrimentally impacted by COVID-19.

They are:

- St Mary Magdalene, Munster Square, Grade II\* listed
- St Mary, Eversholt Street, Grade II listed
- Holy Cross, Cromer Street, Grade II listed
- St George the Martyr, Queen Square, Grade II\* listed; and the nearby burial ground at St George's Gardens, Grade II listed.

The Roving Reporter was particularly interested as the idea of the four working together was a pilot project for the Diocese of London which hoped that other churches could learn from the model.

The aim was to strengthen each of their capacities, improve the management of their buildings and identify the strategic focus of their outreach work through adopting a more co-ordinated approach.

It was hoped that each church could be assisted to thrive and grow. And feel equipped to develop their own action plans, funding campaigns and get a much stronger understanding of their particular community's needs.

The project came to an end in September and Parish Property & Fundraising Consultant, Alice Yates, who was the Project Organiser sent us a copy of the project report published in December 2022.

## **KEY FINDING**

The key finding was that the project team would increase the budget for activities if they undertook the project again, as they generated “real traction for the pilot” and they could have achieved more with additional funds.

## **ACTIVITIES AND THEIR RESULTS**

Activities included walking tours of five heritage sites for 15 international students and hosting Open Days at each church - it was quickly recognised that there was a “real will to deliver at least one Open Day at each church” hence they successfully applied for a National Lottery Community Funds Award for All to support them.

All four Open Days attracted good numbers including first-time visitors and offered an array of activities. All four churches asked participants what they most enjoyed and “Activities, history and local connections came up repeatedly”.

Running the Open Days bolstered confidence among the volunteers and the wide attendance underlined their communities’ regard for the buildings. Visitors also suggested a range of activities they would like to see the churches used for.

The project aimed to engage with local primary schools specifically Y5 and Y6 pupils but due to timetable clashes etc the Engagement Officer worked mainly with Y5 pupils.

Running a fourth activity based on ‘holiday hunger’ and support for local families was challenging and the churches felt unable to deliver it during 2022, but all agreed it remains a key objective in the future.

What emerged clearly during the Open Days was the deep regard that all four communities have for the Camden 4 buildings and these feelings were captured in short, filmed interviews made with the Engagement Officer.

Overall, the project team found that the Camden 4 pilot gave all four churches a boost and “developed a supportive and collaborative environment to deliver its outcomes’.

The project activities proved to be a real success – although their delivery was an ‘exceptional challenge’ to the Engagement Officer. The report says that

obtaining further resources moving forwards will be a “real asset and have a real impact on how the churches interact with their wider community”.

## **IN SUMMARY**

The “pressing capital needs of all four of the buildings proved to be a real area of concern during the project” and cannot be understated. However, it is clear that this pilot project provided a “really strong basis for the churches to move forward” and said keeping up momentum was vital in order to ensure this can be built upon.

The Ven John Hawkins, Archdeacon of Hampstead, and chair of the Camden 4 Steering Group said about the value of bringing the 4 parishes together: “This has never been done in Camden before and largely we do not work across our differences but are more comfortable with our silos. It has given all four churches such a great boost.”

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

\* If you would like to read the full Evaluation Report, please email Alice Yates, the project organiser at [alice.yates@london.anglican.org](mailto:alice.yates@london.anglican.org)