



THE IRISH IN GREENWICH PROJECT
ANNUAL REPORT 1997 -1998



Photo :Sass Tuffin

SERVING THE LOCAL IRISH COMMUNITY

Who Are We

The Irish In Greenwich Project was formed by a steering group of local residents in 1983, gaining statutory funding in 1985. Formed to service and provide for the Irish community in Greenwich its primary focus was initially cultural and welfare activities. The Project has since evolved to include many more facets in its day to day work.

The Project is staffed by one Full Time Development worker, a Part Time Administrator, and an Advice Worker(Through the Díon Committee). The Project is managed by a voluntary Management Committee to whom paid staff are accountable. The Management Committee are elected at the Annual General Meeting or co-opted during the year by existing committee members.

What we do

The Irish in Greenwich Projects primary functions :

- Promoting greater awareness of Irish Culture through education and organising and participating in social and cultural activities
- Ensuring statutory services incorporate an Irish dimension to services and service plans through lobbying and improved consultation
- Developing new resources and co-ordinating existing resources to meet identified needs through research of the Irish community in Greenwich.
- Providing and developing culturally appropriate services including advice , information, advocacy, legal representation and outreach.
- Providing developmental support to affiliate organisations

How We Work

The Project's work is guided by its core mission statement and aims and objectives as set out in its constitution. All staff, management committee members and volunteers work in accordance with Project guidelines and procedures. Service users are encouraged to make suggestions and use the complaints procedure if they are unhappy with any aspect of the Project's service. Active participation in decision making is encouraged in our membership. An emphasis on partnership extending to the Irish Bookfair and Federation of Irish Societies, affiliate groups, the Council and Irish Government is much valued. Central to the Projects ethos is a commitment to promoting equal opportunities, equal access to services and a more open and accountable local democratic process.

Quality Assurance

The Project recognise the importance of Quality and seek its implementation in all areas. The Project is piloting PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisation) primarily to improve level of service to our users, efficiency and accountability.

Location & Facilities

Located at 144 Greenwich High Road. 1 min walk from Greenwich BR
15min - Woolwich BR - 20 min Charing Cross - on bus route's 177, 180, 190. Photocopier, large selection of books and academic resources

Staff

Breffni O'Rourke
Development&Co-ordinator

Clare Keeley
Support & Admin.

Tom Devine
Advice & Advocacy
**Management
Committee**

Maria Maguire
Chair

Patrick Burns
Treasurer

Steve Brennan
Secretary

Bernadette Kearney
Education Officer

Cal O'Herlihy
Quality Assurance

Jimmy Doyle
Public Relations

Teresa Walsh
Culture & Millennium

Máire Ní Threasaigh
Staff Supervisor

Alison Saunders
(Resigned August 1998)

Jim Gaughan
(Resigned August 1998)

Volunteers

Special thanks to solicitors who contribute free time to running the legal surgery. Jacqui Dalton, Eislén Taylor, Seán Ó Floinn and Rosie Brennan for contribution to the Project. To all members and supporters of the Project.

Our Environment

The London Borough of Greenwich covers an area of 18.4 Square miles stretching from Deptford to Thamesmead, along the south bank of the river Thames, from Woolwich in the North to New Eltham in the South. The Borough has a resident population of 207,550 (1991, Census). Greenwich is a racially diverse Borough. In the 1991 census 5,759 people identified themselves as Irish born. The Commission for Racial Equality's recent 'Discrimination and the Irish Community' report recommends a correction factor of x3 as a more accurate measurement. This would make the Irish population in the Borough 16,737 i.e. 8.4% of the total population, the largest ethnic group in Greenwich.

The age profile of the Irish born community in Greenwich differs from the host community and other ethnic minorities. Near 79% of the Irish population are over 29 compared to a Borough average of 56%. The Irish born pensioner population represent 22% (1273) compared to the next biggest group (Other Asian) at 5.12%. 14% of Irish headed households consist of a lone pensioner - four times higher than the next biggest ethnic group (Black Caribbean) at 2.8%.



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Our Finances Summary

Despite our funding remaining at the same level as the previous year we have continued to maintain existing services and develop new projects. This was due in large part to the efforts of our CDW who accessed new sources of funding for specific projects. We are carrying a small surplus to the 98/99 financial year. We intend to hold these funds to a reserve account in order to ensure or financial health if future funding becomes more uncertain. We have been advised that the rent cut in 98/99 will be restored and this will help our balance sheet. New funding pressures in the forthcoming year will require vigilance to ensure our resources match our activities. We are grateful to the Council and the Irish Government for their continued support. We have also benefited from our involvement with the Irish Book Fair in that successful joint events have contributed to a healthier financial position.

Our Finances

Income & Expenditure 1997/98

INCOME	
Grant Aid (P&R)	28,937.47
Grant Aid (Education)	2,915.00
Trusts	1,883.69
Other Income	<u>1,618.39</u>
Total	35,354.55
EXPENDITURE	
Salaries	18,504.47
Rent	4,800.00
Printing, Postage & Stationary	2,248.03
Training & Library	736.61
Equipment & Insurance	1,719.01
Telephone	959.39
Bank Charges	33.11
Grant Aid	614.00
Cultural Events	776.23
Travel	220.65
Sundries & Refreshments	137.92
Maintenance	65.23
Music classes	<u>500.00</u>
Total	<u>31,314.65</u>
Surplus(deficit)	4,039.90

Our Advice & Advocacy Service

The advice service has been in operation since 1994 and has recently succeeded in getting continued funding from the Irish Government - Dion Committee.

People can see the advice worker by appointment, telephone, or write for advice. There is an outreach advice service for the housebound or those in hospital. The advice worker can advocate for clients for instance with the council or the DSS and at Tribunals. Casework may be long term involving writing letters and making telephone calls over a period of months.

Case Study - Mrs A. was suffering from a noisy neighbour and wanted to move house. She complained to the council without much success, and came to the advice service in desperation. First of all the advice worker got onto her housing officer to make sure that Mrs A.'s complaints were being taken seriously. The housing officer gave Mrs A. a diary sheet to fill in so that she could record when the noise happened. The advice worker then made sure that the Environmental Health Department were aware of the problem, so that they could be called out to measure the noise when it happened. The advice worker got Mrs A.'s original rehousing application reassessed by the council in the light of the noise nuisance and the stress it caused Mrs A. She was offered a new property on medical grounds. *The Advice service is open on Wednesdays, Thursdays Alternate Fridays - Please telephone for an appointment.*

The Future

The Irish in Greenwich Project has witnessed an increase in the areas of activities engaged in and demand for services during the last twelve months. The Project is committed to ensuring this momentum is not lost. It is anticipated that by the turn of the century the Project will be in its strongest position since inception. This is envisaged at a number of levels, from greater human and financial resources leading to greater service provision, to larger scale participation in arts and cultural activities in the Borough.

The Project is conscious of the changing demographics, age profile, origin and needs of our primary client group and users. We will continue to be responsive and evolve to meet these new challenges, particularly in development work targeting the young and elderly in the community. *"The Irish in Greenwich Project can best be described as a vibrant, professional Project which is actively seeking opportunities to enhance and expand services so that it can best meet the diverse needs of the Irish Community"*(Grants Officer London Borough of Greenwich, Monitoring Visit Report, 1/10/98)

The Project remains committed to ensuring Greenwich Council fully implement the recommendations of the Commission for Racial Equality Report 'Discrimination and the Irish Community in Britain'. Subsequent to the CRE report Greenwich Race Equality department produced a report of the same name in the *"Greenwich Context"*. Work with the council is ongoing at a policy and strategic level, particularly in Social Services, to ensure the recommendations are implemented in a meaningful and appropriate manner.



Photo : Sass Tuffin

Highlights of 1998

Successful lobbying and Community Consultation exercise resulting in first time inclusion of Irish in Greenwich Community Care plan.

Increased and more diverse funding base for Project activities

Acceptance and participation in the Quality Assurance Scheme PQASSO

Successful participation in Greenwich & Docklands International Festival & Anti-Racist Festival

Successful partnership established with Greenwich Education and local schools developing a learning resource to be launched in June 1999 for use at National Curriculum level

Greater take-up of existing advice service and development of free legal advice surgeries.

Thank you to all our funders over the last twelve month's

AGE
Concern



Greenwich Education Service



People and Services First

Grants Unit