



COMMUNITY



Royal Borough of Greenwich

Greenwich Community Development Agency (GCDA)

What is the GCDA?

The Greenwich Community Development Agency (GCDA) is a charitable co-operative, originally established as an enterprise agency in 1982. The GCDA has since moved into delivering projects relating to food and poverty. With the aim of “supporting communities to be healthy and sustainable”, the GCDA focuses on areas relating to food, health, and enterprise.

In 2007, GCDA became an accredited OCN training provider, delivering training on sustainable food to participants across London. Between 2007-2009, the GCDA provided this training to over 5,000 people. GCDA also runs cafes and community hubs on a contractual/subsidised basis and provides specialist catering and food business support across England.

Current projects include:

- Good Food in Greenwich - a network of local stakeholders interested in creating sustainable and healthy food systems, responsible for leading Greenwich's 2016 SFC application
- Made in Greenwich – shop stocking locally made and exclusive goods
- Adult education courses –includes culinary skills, and business start-up courses
- A Taste of Health – free cookery courses
- Weekly fruit and veg stalls at Children's Centres and the community centre

GCDA CEO Claire Pritchard believes that this diverse portfolio is a contributing factor to GCDA's longevity and stability. She also highlighted GCDA's history of tapping into the passions and skills of its staff members, thereby shaping the GCDA around the interests of its team. It's been a successful approach; “No one has left the office in 5 years!” Having a stable team and a diverse array of projects has helped GCDA adapt to the changing landscapes and remain viable.

What does the GCDA aim to achieve?

In order to achieve its aim of creating and supporting sustainable communities, GCDA has the following objectives:

1. To encourage local communities to develop enterprises
2. To provide training programmes (courses), especially relating to enterprise, health and the environment
3. To create community hubs that represent community-based and co-operative responses to community needs
4. To promote healthy lifestyles to the whole population, particularly those experiencing health inequalities

How does it work?

GCDA delivers a range of projects across Greenwich and the wider area, including Woolwich and Lewisham. Each project has its own objectives, and many are commissioned by local authorities or other charitable trusts. On the GCDA website, projects are grouped into three categories: 'Enterprise', 'Training', and 'Health'. Additionally, there is a list of 'Venues'. There is some overlap. For example, Greenwich Kitchen is both an Enterprise project and a Venue; the GCDA use the Kitchen to run training courses, and also rent the space out to food enterprises.

The most strategically important project from a food systems point of view is Good Food in Greenwich; this is also, helpfully, the best documented project. Good Food in Greenwich is a network that "supports the development of a local healthy and sustainable food environment". It originally had a structure based on several subgroups, each of which had their own action plan. However, as of 2017 the sub-group structure was considered unnecessary and only one sub-group, focusing on poverty, now operates.

How is it set up?

GCDA is a not for profit company, run as a co-operative and governed by its members. Members pay an annual fee to join. They are responsible for governance of the GCDA, participate in the AGMs, and voting on the rules of the organisation. Members get discounts on GCDA training, volunteering opportunities, and access to a members-only area of the website. As of 2019, GCDA has 114 members, up from 101 in 2018.

The GCDA CEO is Claire Pritchard, who is also Chair of London Food Board and leads the Good Food in Greenwich steering group. The GCDA has 5 Directors. The GCDA employs 38 staff, most of whom are based at the two main business/community hubs in Greenwich and Woolwich. On the Companies House database, Claire Pritchard is listed as a Director of an organisation called "Greenwich Community Food Coop Ltd", which was incorporated in 2002 and dissolved in 2017.

There are two further companies listed on Companies House: Greenwich Co-Operative Development Agency Limited (no further information given); and Greenwich Co-Operative Development Agency Ltd (incorporated 1982, dissolved 2014). Neither of these are linked to Claire Pritchard. There is also no record of individual projects such as Greenwich Kitchen or Made in Greenwich being listed independently on Companies House.

However, the Financial Conduct Authority does have current details about GCDA. Documents available via the Financial Conduct Authority include annual return and account records, although no details about staff or governance are listed.

How is the GCDA funded?

Since 2010, the GCDA has made a conscious effort to move away from grant funding. In an interview, CEO Claire Pritchard explained:

“We raise funds through our business; 49 percent is running our own restaurants and consultancy. We’ve won private contracts with the council, two to public health, two under economic training. It’s a very competitive process.”

For instance:

- the holiday meal for children service is delivered by GCDA and funded by RBG111
- GCDA’s food business training courses have been funded by Croydon Council¹¹², RBG113, and BowArts.
- Greenwich Cookery Clubs have been funded by RBG115
- The Learning to Nordic Walk for Health 4-week course was funded by Lewisham Council

However, GCDA does receive grant funding for specific projects. For example:

- Co-op Loan Fund and Big Issue Invest provided the funding for GCDA to set up new kitchens/cafes in Newham and Thameshead.
- Fitting the Made in Greenwich shop was sponsored by Ikea.
- In 2018 GCDA received £213,125 grant funding from RBG, and a further £134,632 from Public Health Greenwich; this is listed separately to GCDA’s incoming fees.

Additionally, the GCDA generates income from a number of enterprise activities, including:

- PLENTY – range of frozen ready meals
- Lock Side Kitchen – training and production space at Royal Albert Wharf
- Henri’s Café – subsidised café at Bracton Centre

The GCDA and co-operative working

The GCDA is “a flagship partner” of Good Food Lewisham (GFL), and provides office space to host the GFL co-ordinator.¹²⁴ The contact telephone number and postal address is the same for both organisations, and the contact email for Good Food Lewisham is an @gcda.org.uk address. Other partners in the GFL network include Public Health Lewisham and Lewisham Homes. This partnership is responsible for one of GCDA’s largest projects, Be Inspired Lewisham. This project delivers training and mentoring schemes, healthy walks, and cookery clubs.

In a recent webinar, GCDA was named the lead body for the London Food Alliance, which includes Fare Share, City Harvest, and the Felix Project. This alliance is leading Greenwich’s response to Covid. There is no mention of GCDA’s involvement in any announcements about the London Food Alliance, and the London Food Alliance is not mentioned on the GCDA website. However, links between this response work and GCDA are included in other recent news stories, though not under the name ‘London Food Alliance’.

The CCIN website lists GCDA’s ‘Holiday Hunger;’ project as an example of co-operative working. The project, which is funded by Royal Borough Greenwich and branded by them as ‘Summer Feast’, is delivered through Good Food in Greenwich.

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