



Reg. 1139126

For adults wanting to learn English and
volunteer tutors who want to teach it

Ninth Annual Report

1st June 2017 – 31st July 2018

Constitution

Merton Home Tutoring Service (MHTS) began in 2008. The first formal meeting of trustees was held in January 2009 and registered charity status was achieved in 2010 (1139126). MHTS is governed by a Constitution as amended on 16th February 2011.

The Board of Trustees and the Officers are appointed by the members at the Annual General Meeting. Each trustee stands down every three years but is eligible to stand for re-election by the members. The Board of Trustees meets formally at least 4 times a year and additionally has a further meeting to reflect on the effectiveness of the service we provide and set the operational strategy for the following year or years.

The Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefit from MHTS.

There are three part time members of staff.

Objectives and activities

Our objective is to advance the education of adults living in the London Borough of Merton and neighbouring boroughs who do not speak fluent English and who find it difficult to attend formal classes. To do this, we provide English language tuition in people's own homes or in community classes.

Our aims

- to encourage all learners to move towards greater integration.
- to give them the opportunity to learn English for everyday use.
- to build confidence in the use of English.
- to help them learn more about the UK, its systems, culture, customs and people.

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance, which sets out the requirements for charities to demonstrate that their objectives and activities are for public benefit.

What we do

- Recruit and assess volunteer tutors, teachers and learners.
- Train volunteers as tutors to teach everyday English one-to-one to learners in their own homes. After an appropriate time, learners are encouraged to progress onto our informal Stepping Stones classes, formal college classes, further training, or to begin the process of applying for work - voluntary or paid – and to take part in community activities.

- Provide weekly Stepping Stones classes in English at a number of levels, from beginners upwards. These are taught by professionally qualified volunteer teachers.
- Hold a weekly conversation group, Time to Talk, run by volunteer tutors, teachers and trustees, to give home or class learners a further opportunity to practise speaking English, meet others and learn new skills.

Our base

We have an office at the Wimbledon Guild for Social Welfare at 30/32 Worple Road, Wimbledon, SW19 4EF and we work in the London Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth.

Who we are

Trustees who served during the period from 1 June 2017 to 31 July 2018 were:

Dr Ruth Dawson (Chair)

Anne Worlledge (Treasurer)

Sheila Stirrat (Secretary)

Sarah Freeman

Sheila Gent

Rozina Kader

Cathy Newbury (co-opted from 18.04.18)

Ian Petherbridge

Pauline Rozario (co-opted from 08.01.18)

Ann Stephenson

Pam Treanor (Secretary and trustee until 04.11.17)

The Events Committee includes Ruth Dawson, Libby Asher, Mukhtar Babar, Sheila Gent, Elizabeth Kennedy, Sheila Stirrat and Cate Ware.

The Funding Committee, chaired by Ann Stephenson, includes Ruth Dawson, Sheila Gent, Sheila Stirrat and Anne Worlledge. This will now be chaired by Mary Moody.

Staff 2017-2018

All staff are part time, and work during school term time. Sophie Johnstone is the Home Tutor Co-ordinator; Juliana Wong, the Stepping Stones Co-ordinator and the Administrator is Nicola Kennedy.

Learners and Volunteers

During the 14 months, volunteers gave over 8,500 hours to help us.

46 home tutors helped 53 home learners.

80 learners attended 8 Stepping Stones classes, taught by 7 class teachers.

What we achieved

Awards

We were delighted that our hard work was recognised with a Silver Award for the Volunteer Involving Organisation of the Year 2018 from Merton Voluntary Services Council.



Home Tutoring

Sophie Johnstone runs the Home Tutoring, organising the assessments of learners and recruitment of volunteer tutors with flair, empathy and efficiency. She supports and guides the tutors, giving them the benefit of her years of ESOL experience in Further Education.

As well as providing practical English lessons, our tutors often help their learners in ways that go well beyond the one-hour of teaching each week, taking them out and about and introducing them to English customs. Tutors often become friends with their learners and the experience is a rewarding one for them both.

During 2017-2018 we were asked to provide up to 8 hours of English language teaching a week for a newly arrived Syrian family. This was part of A Community Sponsorship of Refugees programme, organised by the Salvation Army, who organised facilities and services to help the family of 5 resettle in the area. They received home tutoring from MHTS and joined 3-4 of our classes for two terms. When they arrived, they needed interpreters, now their speaking skills are assessed as Established Entry Level 1 E and the husband has started working.

Learners are consulted annually in a Questionnaire and the Home Tutors report progress via a Termly Online Survey.



Wandsworth Project April 2017 – March 2018

We received a grant from Team London to recruit 10 extra volunteers to expand our home tutoring work into Wandsworth. Recruiting volunteers in Wandsworth was very productive and 24 new volunteers joined us. The local libraries were a particularly fruitful recruitment ground and we were able to help 17 new home learners in the area.

We also developed some new links and strengthened existing ones with organisations in Wandsworth, e.g. Wandsworth Children's Centres, Katherine Low Settlement, Love2Learn, a convent in Wandsworth and CARAS. This allowed us to take new referrals and to work with other organisations to help learners progress and have other needs met, e.g. moving onto a local ESOL class or receiving advocacy advice.

The grant enabled learners to make excellent progress in improving life opportunities, such as getting more paid work, joining an ESOL class, being more able to talk to their doctor/teacher/neighbour and developing confidence in English. Learners and tutors went on trips to Richmond Park, Open House London, for a coffee in the local area and were able to take part in a church service in English.

Our organisation was able to grow, both in numbers of volunteers and the support we could offer them. It meant that new volunteers had a positive experience and would recommend us to friends and family.

Tutor Training and Support

Two Tutor Training courses, organised by Sophie Johnstone, were held during the period over three evenings and three Saturdays. The chief trainer is Susie Abel and with her wealth of experience in ESOL training, we are fortunate to have her. The course includes a session on Mandarin, run by Juliana Wong, a dramatic example of just how challenging it is to learn a new language completely different to your own. Other trainers include Libby Asher and Ruth Dawson.

During the year there were several tutor update evenings, also run by Sophie for tutors to meet and exchange ideas. Training sessions, such as “A Teacher’s Toolkit”, “Selecting and Adapting Materials” and “Making a Lesson More User-Friendly”, were run by Jenny Roden of NATECLA (National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults).

Each Home Tutor is assigned a Group leader from our Review Group, who keeps in contact with him or her and gives extra support if needed. The Review Group this year included Deirdre Gooderson, Barbara Harris, Olivia Ford, Pam Treanor, Sheila Gent and Sophie Johnstone. We have recruited two new members and will be extending and strengthening this group in the coming year.

Stepping Stones classes

In 2017-18, we ran 8 classes attended by up to 80 learners at different English language levels (from ESOL Pre-entry Level up to Entry Level 3). These included a specialist literacy class for those who have had no formal education and the Jo Cox class, which addresses the language needs of mothers with young children about to start nursery. The classes were held at Children’s Centres in Mitcham and Morden, such as Ivy Gardens, Church Road and Newminster; at St. Mark’s Family Centre and at St. Mark’s Church Hall. Crèche places were provided for all classes.

Juliana Wong is the Stepping Stones Co-ordinator who assesses all class learners before placing them in a suitable class, organises teachers, class locations and crèches. She was for many years an ESOL teacher in Further Education and carries out her work with personal commitment, warmth and enthusiasm.

We teach practical English that people can use every day to talk to the families, friends, to travel, shop, talk to doctors and to their children’s teachers. Learners are encouraged to ask questions about any issues or topics, which are then discussed in class. Class tests are carried out each term to check progress and the Termly Online Survey was completed to consult on the progress of class learners in other matters.

As a result of their hard work, learners gain confidence – some have gone on to college, started work or progressed onto one of our own higher level ESOL classes. All who attended regularly are able to interact socially more effectively.

The Stepping Stones programme is heavily reliant on the commitment and enthusiasm of the class teachers. We are extremely fortunate to have professionally qualified ESOL teachers who teach our classes as volunteers - Catherine Abley, Anita Conradi, Margaret Donaldson, Tanya Fairhurst, Deirdre Gooderson, Paul Hockley and Sheila Stirrat. Juliana and Sophie also help to run and teach the Literacy Class and Jo Cox class respectively.



Trips

During the year, learners organised trips to the Victoria and Albert Museum, Garson's Farm in Surrey, Deen City Farm and Morden Hall Park.

Teachers' Meetings

Teachers' meetings took place each term at various venues.

This July, for the first time, a meeting of tutors, trustees and the Stepping Stones Co-ordinator was held to discuss a range of issues, including evaluation and testing procedures for the coming years' classes. It was agreed there should be a follow-up meeting to check progress in the autumn term.

Time To Talk

Time to Talk is our drop-in conversation group held at St. Mark's Family Centre, run by volunteer teachers, tutors and trustees - Liz Kennedy, Rozina Kader, Ruth Dawson, Sheila Stirrat and Anne Worlledge. Between 8-14 people attended each week. It is an opportunity for learners to practise speaking English in informal surroundings. Everyone is encouraged to suggest topics and share experiences and skills, which range from cake decorating, flower arranging and jewellery-making, to patchwork and paper flowers. We ran

sessions on story telling, English customs, such as Hallowe'en and made pancakes for Shrove Tuesday. Time to Talk learners also ran a community fundraising event.

During the year there were invited speakers such as a local GP, Dr Mohan Sekeram who gave advice on how to get the most out of your consultation and answered questions; Nick Linney from Wimbledon Guild on how and where to volunteer and Jayne Stewart, whose dancercise sessions have become a popular termly fixture.



Funding

Against a background of severe local authority cuts and ever more competition when applying for funds, we found ourselves almost “standing at the cliff edge”, as one of our potential funders put it.

Our Big Lottery Funding finished at the end of May 2018. Many applications to selected funding organisations were submitted in the year prior to the ending of the grant and we were finally fortunate to receive funding for up to 50% of our running costs from Henry Smith Charity which began at the beginning of June 2018 and continues, on a sliding scale, for 3 years. This was augmented by funding from Santander Bank, Wimbledon, for tutor training and Awards for All for funding towards home tutoring and our conversation group.

Results from several other applications are outstanding and we continue to seek out and apply to relevant fund givers. We are also being encouraged to apply again to the Big Lottery, early next year.

Fundraising Events

Libby Asher's Songs on Wheels singers ran a very successful evening for us with a medley of Songs from Stage and Screen at Wimbledon Village Hall in November. The audience was encouraged to join in and participated

enthusiastically. The group kindly donated all proceeds of the evening to MHTS. The evening raised just under £1,700. Thank you, Songs on Wheels!

The Team London staff offered us the opportunity to apply for a London Marathon place. Tim Gray, an MHTS supporter, ran for us and with joint fundraising from Tim and MHTS supporters we raised over £2,600. Thank you to Tim!

The Time to Talk group organised an International Afternoon Tea for families, friends and guests at St. Mark's Family Centre in Mitcham in the spring. Everyone from the group made a national dish, sweet or savoury, to go with a cup of tea. There was henna painting, paper flower making and one of the group, a professionally trained flautist, provided the live music. It was attended by the Wimbledon MP, Stephen Hammond, and his wife, Sally, who stayed and chatted with guests and drew the raffle. It was a very enjoyable afternoon raising over £200. A similar event is planned for next year.



Other initiatives

MHTS Website

This year we completed our new website (www.mhts.org.uk) We would like to thank Mohammed Shamsudoha, college IT lecturer and husband of trustee, Rozina Kader, for his help in getting this project off the ground, to everyone who helped with the content and images and to Pippa Stanton of Me and You Create who calmly and efficiently dealt with all our queries and produced the final, user-friendly, eye-catching design which everyone was delighted with. The website will be updated to include recent events, achievements and general information.

Get Up and Go

A new initiative this year was Get Up and Go, aimed at home learners, who may not have the confidence to go out and meet others in an English speaking environment. Initially run by the Home Tutor Co-ordinator, with input from several learners, this small group met in the spring and summer term at a local library and coffee shop for a chat and children's playtime.

Story Collection: Our Stories. Our Lives.

The Story Competition is now entering its 3rd year. This year it has evolved into a Story Collection, attracting a record 30 entries. Learners of all abilities wrote stories on topics such as Festivals, Days Out, My Family, Stories from School Days and Weddings. The stories and images have been collated into a booklet, which is not only an illustration of the ability of our learners, but also a useful teaching resource.

Readers

We have produced 21 Readers about Life in the UK, which continue to be popular with learners. This year, the General Election, Local Election and At the Post Office Readers were updated. A new Reader on Volunteering is in progress.

Outcomes and Evaluation

We collate and evaluate Learner Outcomes each term in our Online Survey. This ensures consistency of our work and evidence that learners are reaching targets. All classes are tested at the end of each term.

Data from our Survey of Home Learners at the end of the Spring Term 2018, for example, showed that 95% of learners improved their reading, writing and speaking skills; 85% improved their ability to communicate with teachers, doctors or any other English speakers and 84% improved their knowledge of British life.

This year, as required as a condition of the grant from the Big Lottery: Reaching Communities, we commissioned a formal Evaluation, "Taking Small Steps in a Safe and Supportive Environment to Achieve Big Goals". This was carried out by Dr. Olga Cara of University College London and included data up to the end of the Big Lottery funding period, May 2018.

The Evaluation praised "our flexibility and individualised approach"; our ability to supply a resource efficient service "that no national or local government or any other more formal services could match" and our success in "meeting targets set by funders and MHTS itself."

NATECLA (National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults)

We are institutional members NATECLA. Several teachers and tutors attended the national annual conference in July, as well as the local London conferences, held each term. These conferences are invaluable, updating tutors and teachers on new approaches and materials and giving them an opportunity to exchange ideas with the wider teaching community.

We would like to give particular thanks to

Our funders

- The Big Lottery: Reaching Communities, which allowed us to continue and develop our work until May 2018.
- Henry Smith Charity for providing up to 50% of our running costs for the next 3 years, on a sliding scale, ending in June 2021.
- The Big Lottery - Awards for All, who has given us funding to help with Home Tutoring and Time to Talk until June 2019.
- Santander Bank, Wimbledon, who has donated funds for our training courses and tutor updates until May 2019.
- The Wimbledon Guild for Social Welfare, which provides us with space, facilities and support for our weekly office, training sessions and meetings. They also help with DBS checks.
- LB Merton who work with us providing teaching venues and referrals
- Team London, whose grant enabled us to extend our teaching into LB Wandsworth until the end of March 2018.
- Private donors and supporters of fund-raising events.

Our partners

CARAS, the Salvation Army, St. Mark's Family Centre, St. Mark's Church, St. Mark's Group for the Welfare of Migrants and Refugees, Christian Care and Merton Asylum Welcome, all of whom refer potential learners to us and support us.

Our excellent staff and volunteer tutors, teachers, trustees, supporters and help

We couldn't survive without their good will, enthusiasm, commitment and hard work.

Our learners

They inspire us to do our best. Their achievements are our reward.