

# Islington Council Elections

22nd May 2014



## A **manifesto** from voluntary and community organisations in Islington

### Introduction

Islington voluntary and community organisations make a huge contribution to the borough. We organise and support communities, provide services, employ local people, bring in funds and other support and engage residents in volunteering and community action. At a time when statutory services are being cut and people are under increasing pressure due to welfare reform and increases in the cost of living it is vital that local voluntary and community organisations are supported and sustained.

On May 22nd Islington's voters will go to the polls to elect a new Council. The sector believes that it is important that whoever leads the Council after the election strengthens the relationship with local voluntary and community organisations and provides support that will nurture and sustain a flourishing and dynamic local voluntary and community sector.

We therefore seek a commitment from all political parties to:

Building a strong **partnership** with the sector by supporting and actively working with the Community Network, and the networks and groups that form it, to tackle poverty and inequality and build a community which includes the most vulnerable, challenges stereotypes of people who are marginalised, and works together to attract and make the best use of available resources.

An active role for the sector in all stages of **commissioning** services including consultation about needs, priorities and service design; and procurement processes that support involvement by local organisations and value the knowledge and relationships that we bring to service provision.

Providing **financial support** to ensure the sustainability of community organisations which support the most vulnerable members of the community and provide good value for money; and particularly to recognise the advantages of grant funding.

Continuing the Community Chest **grants** scheme and focusing this on groups serving the most disadvantaged residents, so that they can access resources for their activities.

Support the retention of **assets** that are managed and used by local organisations by continuing charitable business rate relief, ensuring affordable rents in buildings owned by the Council, facilitating asset transfer and providing grants to community hubs.

Providing support so that all Islington residents have opportunities to take part in **volunteering and community action** by working with the sector to remove barriers to participation and ensure effective brokerage arrangements.

Supporting the **infrastructure** of the sector so that organisations receive help to plan and operate effectively; generate income from enterprise, grants and contracts; and collaborate with each other, and statutory agencies, to improve the services provided to local residents.