

Annual Report 2017



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Introduction

Last year saw a change at the helm of Sustainable Hackney as Philip Pearson was elected as our new Chair. We have had a positive year, as can be seen from the individual reports below.

Now that Donald Trump has officially pulled the US out of the Paris Climate Agreement, the coming year will be even more important for Sustainable Hackney and our members. Trump's climate change denial comes at a time when action to cut greenhouse gas emissions is ever more urgent: 2016 was the hottest year on record. In the Alps, glaciers have lost half their volume. And killer heat waves are expected in South Asia this summer, with devastating human impacts. Friends of the Earth say that, as the US action will imperil all our lives, they will campaign against any UK-US trade deal.

Climate change goes beyond the direct work on energy: the built environment will need to be able to cope with increased temperatures and heavy rainfall, as will the transport infrastructure, which will in turn need to avoid contributing to climate change. Food choices are linked to climate change, and in turn growing will be affected by changes to the seasons, as will biodiversity, which is closely tied in, with pollinators and pests amongst the many changing elements. Taking the circular economy approach reduces not just wasteful consumption of 'stuff', but also of energy. In all of this work, environmental education and awareness - the theme of this year's AGM - has a vital part to play.

Building on discussions at last year's AGM and the adoption of the social justice Greenprint, this has been a new area of focus and the topic is now included in our annual report.

We are pleased to have been having regular briefing meetings with Cllr Jon Burke, Cabinet member responsible for sustainability since he was appointed in October 2016.



Biodiversity

Sustainable Hackney is a member of the Hackney Biodiversity Partnership which is a group of organisations and individuals with an interest in Hackney's wildlife. They work closely with the Council to outline how the public, private and voluntary sectors will work together to deliver tangible results for biodiversity. Their regular meetings are open to everybody. <https://www.hackney.gov.uk/biodiversity>

Sustainable Hackney continues to host the web pages for Tree Musketeers, Abney Park User Group, Hackney Marsh User Group and Hackney Tree Nursery.

Tree Musketeers continue to be active in planting and caring for trees in Hackney. Sustainable Hackney congratulate them for **Community Woodland Award won at the 2017 London Tree & Woodland Awards** for the outstanding work they do maintaining Wick Woodland, next to Hackney Marshes.



Built environment & housing

We continued to work with local groups to oppose the Housing & Planning Act, which became law in May 2016. We supported Kill the Housing Bill's public meeting at the Round Chapel in January 2016 and spoke on planning aspects at the vigil outside Hackney Town Hall in April 2016. The planning aspects of the Act are just as devastating, creating even more of a free-for-all for developers:

- the Government's focus on Starter Homes returns 80% of market value for developers in comparison with 60-70% for other types of homes
- unconditional permission in principle on brownfield sites
- provision for the Government to take over Local Plans from local authorities and their communities and write them itself if not completed by March 2017 or to revise them if they don't like the content
- temporary permitted development rights for conversion of any office to residential use made permanent allows demolition of office buildings and building of new residential properties to replace them without ANY planning permission – as the Chair of the London Forum of Amenity and Civil Societies said, “an imminent deluge of unregulated development”. It does not matter if they are occupied! By April 2016, 830,000 sq m of floor space in London had been approved for conversion, including 100,000 that was fully occupied. Wholesale evictions of small businesses and loss of space for small businesses, voluntary and community groups follows. And this is where most of our jobs are – 65% of jobs in London are outside the central area and in the myriad of buildings in our high streets and back streets.

We agreed we broadly support the key policy demands set out in Hackney People's Assembly successful motion to People's Assembly national conference:

- outright opposition to the Housing and Planning Act
- an end to privatisation of public land and use of public land for private house building
- central Government housing grants to local authorities to build council housing
- empty homes to be brought back into use
- measures to prevent the rich commandeering housing for investment rather than to live in
- rent controls
- secure tenancies
- investment in construction training to alleviate skills shortages and so high standard, ultra-low energy sustainable homes are delivered
- a halt to Labour Councils selling off/transferring council housing

We opposed the Government's decision to privatise the Land Registry and the gross over-development proposed for the Bishopsgate Goodsyard.

We submitted comments on Hackney Council's draft Sustainable Development Supplementary Planning Document calling for stronger measures.



In October 2016 the Mayor of London published [‘A City for All Londoners’](#), the first document released in preparation for updating the London Plan and held an open meeting in November 2016 to consider our response. We support Just Space's [‘Towards a Community-Led Plan for London Policy directions and proposals’](#) and made many points in our response but, fundamentally, the strategic direction is business as usual and needs a total rethink so we called for the Mayor to facilitate meaningful consultation truly involving Londoners, i.e. the people who live here. ‘Growth’ and the concept of ‘good growth’ needs full discussion.

We will continue to call for the Mayor of London to make sure development is community-not corporate-led and we will raise these matters in relation to the manifesto for the 2018 local elections in Hackney. We support reorganisation of the city on the principles of the eco-city model. This involves the wise use of space in order to achieve ecologically sound urban management and has and is being applied in various cities around the world. Amongst other aspects, this would require a balance between population and job density and true mixed use of space that reduces the need to travel between localities.

We are as concerned about businesses being squeezed out of Hackney as we are about the social cleansing. Business rents and rates have risen to unaffordable levels. We have supported local business in protesting about huge rent increases in Transport for London premises, accompanying them to see Meg Hillier and local councillors and protesting about the business rate increases.

Pollution

Hackney's Air Quality Action Plan was revised and published following consultation, to which SH had responded. Measures include promoting and facilitating walking, dust

techniques, changes arising from alterations at GLA level and some additions on monitoring and review. Other boroughs' work on anti-idling has been taken into account.



Climate change

Climate Change was high on the political agenda at the end of 2015 due to the importance attached to the COP 21 (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) which took place in Paris in late November early December.

Members of Sustainable Hackney heard at a 'Green Drinks' gathering reports from CACTU (Campaign against Climate Change Trades Union Group) of the earlier Paris International TU Conference on Climate Change. Here delegates had stressed that for many in developing and especially small island nations the slogan '1.5°C to stay alive' was a grim reality but it seemed that pledges to COP 21 to reduce emissions to prevent global average temperatures of 2.0°C aiming at 1.5°C were not nearly ambitious enough. These climate pledges might slow down the rate of increase but bolder action is needed to spare millions of people from a certain future of floods, droughts famines and conditions that exacerbate conflict. It heard too that the climate jobs movement was gaining traction internationally but needed more backing.

The Green Drinks brought together activists to build a Hackney bloc on the Climate Change demonstration to demand that global leaders take urgent action to tackle climate change. The demo was promoted across the borough with leaflets and posters. Sustainable Hackney's banner was present on the demo other groups attending were Hackney North Constituency Labour Party, Hackney SWP, Hackney and Tower Hamlets Friends of the Earth, Divest Hackney, Arcola Energy and Hackney People's Assembly joined the lively Central London demo in November 2015.

The event was the largest of about 2,500 demonstrations taking place around the world ahead of a critical UN climate summit in Paris. About 50,000 people were on the route from Hyde Park to Whitehall.



Sustainable Hackney banner on The People's Climate Justice and Jobs demonstration, November 2015

The critical importance of addressing the climate crisis was, not surprisingly, missed by the Tory government. Local activists turned out again in May 2016 for the 'Going Backwards' demo to protest about the Government's selling off the Green Bank, ditching carbon-free homes and changes the climate levy.

We continue to support the Divest Hackney campaign and are signatories to the letter calling for London Borough of Hackney to fully divest their pension investments from fossil fuels.

Energy

Hackney Energy

The main achievement in 2015/16 was the commissioning of the 100kW solar power scheme at Banister House in Sept 2015.

This was a fantastic example of community energy at its best and Hackney Energy volunteers were closely involved at all stages of the project.



We responded to the government's "consultation" on the cuts to the solar Feed-in tariff in February 2016, and we were delighted when Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Opposition, referred to the Banister House project during Prime Minister's Questions when he asked about these cuts. Sadly, we had to conclude that the business model that made Banister possible was no longer viable. Even so, we are working on new ideas for community energy this year - see below.

We reconvened in February 2017 to get Hackney Energy <http://www.hackneyenergy.org.uk> up and running again. True, the Hackney Energy website, blog and tweets have been ticking over. But it was good to begin to share ideas for further campaigns in 2017.

Community solar power

New campaigns for community energy are taking shape on the Wilton Estate and at Frampton Park. It's early days, and we all acknowledge a sense of betrayal when the government cut the 'feed-in tariff' that helped to kick-start solar power schemes, making it

difficult for more community energy schemes like Banister House. The 100 kW Banister House solar farm is now generating beautiful solar energy on 16 rooftops over in Homerton. But new ideas are emerging, possibly using crowdfunding to attract the capital investment needed, and looking for local partners to purchase the power generated (electric car charging points are one option). The general mood at council level is quite helpful, with



Councillor Jon Burke, the council's cabinet member for energy, sustainability and community services, keen to see a mass solar power rollout on all Hackney owned roofs. To be frank, this will take time to get going – but we understand that the council is supportive for Hackney Energy to help with some smaller scale community energy estate based projects in the meantime.

If we are able to come up with viable projects, then council support would include sorting out the roof leases and power purchase agreements.

Energy shop

Another great idea in the making is setting up a one-stop energy advice shop in Hackney. At present, Hackney council subcontracts its energy advice service to Islington Council's Energy Advice Team. We have tried without success to find out how much Hackney council pays Islington for this service, and how many Hackney residents are using it. Ideally, we would like to persuade Hackney to set up an Energy Advice Desk at the Service Centre by the Town Hall, Mare Street, so we have our own focal point for Hackney residents.

We believe this would help to tackle the growing problem of fuel poverty in Hackney with a direct service, perhaps supported by Hackney Energy volunteers. We could also set up an energy stall in Ridley Road to find out what kinds of advice residents want.

Building a network of green energy projects in Hackney

There's a growing number of green energy projects in Hackney. So we want to help create a green energy community in Hackney, between green energy projects and citizens,

that **educates, motivates** and **inspires** Hackney citizens to get involved in or start their own community energy projects as well as support related initiatives in the borough.

HE members need more info about existing green energy projects, both technical and contacts; help with contributions to the guide; skills in copywriting for the website and creating an online map; help with event and visit organising and much more.

For starters, we've identified District Heating and community solar power schemes, such as Banister House, Ickburgh School and the Hackney Council's Service Centre. There are eco-homes with a range of great measures, like maximum loft insulation, internal wall insulation, double glazing, solar panels. Then there are initiatives at Arcola Energy and the Print House.... So please contact philip.pearson034@gmail.com at HE to support this exciting new project.

All this and more besides looks set to make the HE comeback a great year. And if you have community energy ideas, please get in touch via the website or philip.pearson034@gmail.com



Food

Hackney Food Partnership

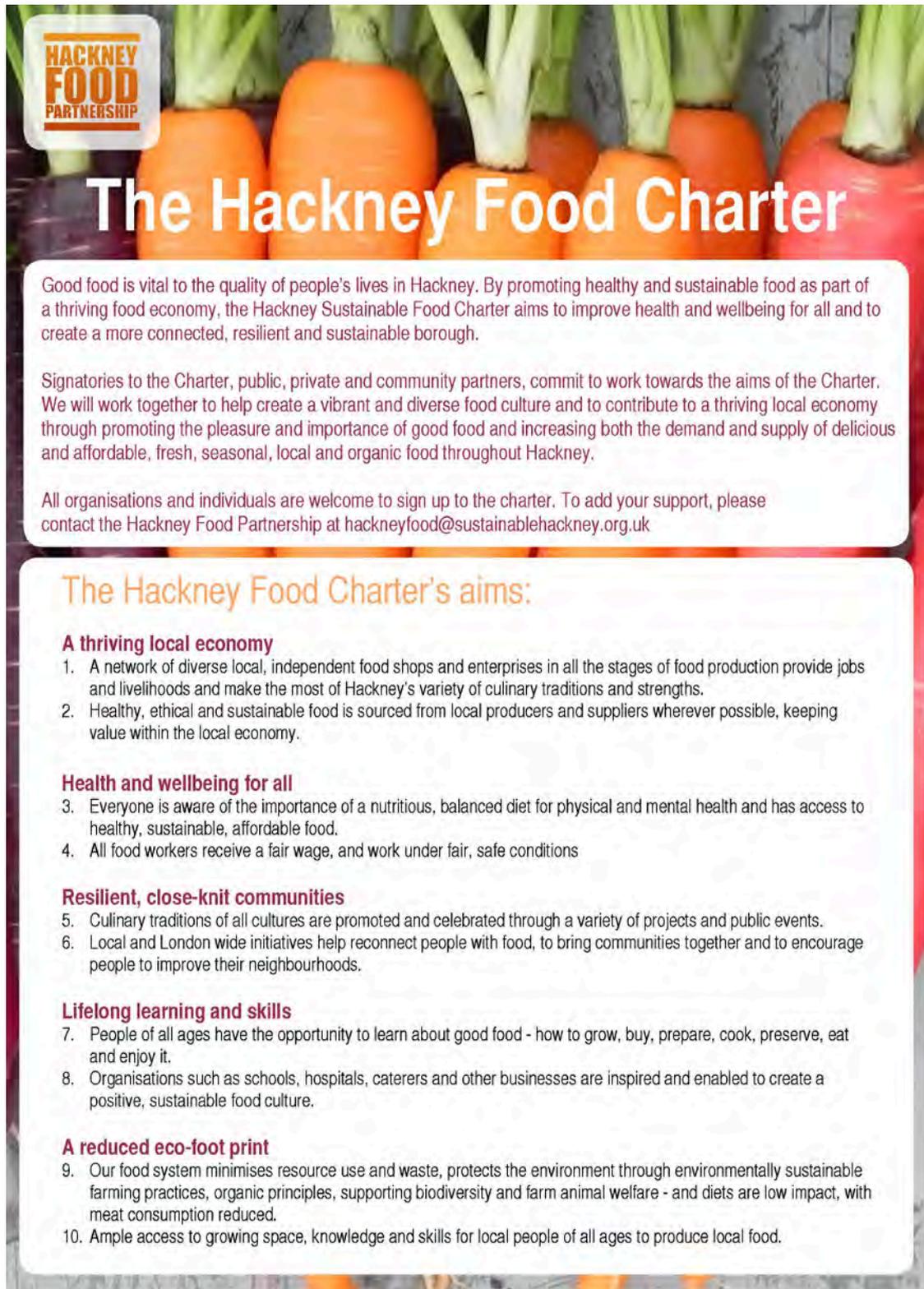
Hackney Food Partnership (HFP), operates as part of Sustainable Hackney and also as part of the national Sustainable Food Cities (SFC) network. We have carried on supporting and partnering with local groups and individuals in working towards the aims of the Hackney Food Charter, but could do with more active participants as several key people have recently had to concentrate on their own new food ventures.

Our work helping to improve the food culture in Hackney schools continues and Food for Life have put us in contact with additional enthusiastic and inspiring teachers who we hope to team up with. Unfortunately, we weren't successful with our application at the end of last year for a £30,000 Healthy Activities grant to provide support to 6 exemplar primary schools in developing their 'whole school approach to food', but are looking out for similar opportunities.

A new project will start shortly as HFP has obtained a grant of £5000 from the Sugar Smart campaign launched by the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation and Sustain. This will see us working in partnership with Hackney Council, which is providing 100% match funding as well as contributing public health practitioner time, on a range of activities to reduce sugar consumption in the borough. The joint working arrangements with the council are welcomed by HFP and will help us engage with council departments, a key HFP priority. The borough was rated just better than average in the 2016 Good Food for London report, with an overall score of 48%, and we would like to work with the council to help improve its performance.

We are pleased to be able to send a delegate to this June's annual Sustainable Food Cities conference, in Edinburgh, and are keen to learn from the work of more advanced food partnerships.

The lively @HackneyFood Twitter account, with 1,695 followers, helps promote the work of the Partnership, local food projects and businesses, and increases general awareness of food issues in our borough. www.hackneyfood.org.uk points to our webpages on the Sustainable Hackney website.



HACKNEY FOOD PARTNERSHIP

The Hackney Food Charter

Good food is vital to the quality of people's lives in Hackney. By promoting healthy and sustainable food as part of a thriving food economy, the Hackney Sustainable Food Charter aims to improve health and wellbeing for all and to create a more connected, resilient and sustainable borough.

Signatories to the Charter, public, private and community partners, commit to work towards the aims of the Charter. We will work together to help create a vibrant and diverse food culture and to contribute to a thriving local economy through promoting the pleasure and importance of good food and increasing both the demand and supply of delicious and affordable, fresh, seasonal, local and organic food throughout Hackney.

All organisations and individuals are welcome to sign up to the charter. To add your support, please contact the Hackney Food Partnership at hackneyfood@sustainablehackney.org.uk

The Hackney Food Charter's aims:

A thriving local economy

1. A network of diverse local, independent food shops and enterprises in all the stages of food production provide jobs and livelihoods and make the most of Hackney's variety of culinary traditions and strengths.
2. Healthy, ethical and sustainable food is sourced from local producers and suppliers wherever possible, keeping value within the local economy.

Health and wellbeing for all

3. Everyone is aware of the importance of a nutritious, balanced diet for physical and mental health and has access to healthy, sustainable, affordable food.
4. All food workers receive a fair wage, and work under fair, safe conditions

Resilient, close-knit communities

5. Culinary traditions of all cultures are promoted and celebrated through a variety of projects and public events.
6. Local and London wide initiatives help reconnect people with food, to bring communities together and to encourage people to improve their neighbourhoods.

Lifelong learning and skills

7. People of all ages have the opportunity to learn about good food - how to grow, buy, prepare, cook, preserve, eat and enjoy it.
8. Organisations such as schools, hospitals, caterers and other businesses are inspired and enabled to create a positive, sustainable food culture.

A reduced eco-foot print

9. Our food system minimises resource use and waste, protects the environment through environmentally sustainable farming practices, organic principles, supporting biodiversity and farm animal welfare - and diets are low impact, with meat consumption reduced.
10. Ample access to growing space, knowledge and skills for local people of all ages to produce local food.

Social justice

After the launch of work on social justice at our last AGM, we completed development of our Social Justice Greenprint, printed in full below. We have begun mapping and identifying key groups and organisations in the borough that work and campaign for policy improvement and transformation re poverty and inequality, housing, education, health and well-being, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, justice and policing.

Social Justice



The interests of people and planet are inextricably linked and environmental sustainability is unachievable without social justice at its core. The damage to the natural environment unfairly affects the poorest and most marginalised while that destruction is in turn exacerbated by the widening inequalities that are rooted in our economic system. Sustainable Hackney's approach will assert the importance of social justice and resist poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

Greenprint for Hackney

- **Reduce poverty & inequality** - Support social inclusion, regardless of age, gender, origin, ethnicity, disability, religion and sexual orientation. Support the defence of jobs, employment and trade union rights and resistance to casualization, precarious and zero hour contracts. Support campaigns for the London Living Wage. Support a just transition to greener and climate jobs. Oppose the loss of local employment from unaffordable rents and housing. Oppose the use of benefit sanctions, benefit cuts and cuts targeting minority groups.
- **Housing for all** - Support planning that serves the needs and aspirations of local people rather than investors and developers. Defend the right to secure housing and which meets social needs and affordable housing that equates to local wage levels. Oppose the reduction of council and social housing and the growth of the private rented sector. Support energy efficient standards in buildings, the use of renewable energy and reduction of fuel poverty
- **Education for all** - Defend state education with local oversight and accountability from privatisation and corporate interests. Ensure accessible, inclusive, equitable and primary, secondary and tertiary education and support lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- **Health & well-being for all** - Support opposition to and reversal of NHS privatisation. Support healthy, affordable and sustainable food options for all. Support the reduction of all forms of pollution including that from transport. Support the development of cycle facilities. Support the expansion and improvement of pedestrian areas. Defend the integrity of and access to parks and open spaces.
- **Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees** - Opposing racism, xenophobia and all forms of scapegoating. Support national and local bodies campaigning for the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in an era of growing intolerance and misinformation.
- **Justice & Policing** - Support equal access to institutions that are accountable and inclusive at every level. Support legal representation and justice for all. Support for an open transparent and accountable police service

Our work programme

- Provide support for existing local campaigns.
- Map local organisations and disseminate through our website and social media.
- Consider ways to build a network of support and practical action and create stronger links between organisations.

We take social justice to mean that every individual is of equal worth before the law; has an equal right to the essentials of a good life; and is entitled to equal opportunities, to enjoy well-being, fulfil their potential and participate in society.

We see environmental sustainability as living within environmental limits and respecting planetary boundaries, ensuring that the natural resources needed for life to flourish are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

We have been working locally to marry the twin goals of social justice and environmental sustainability and are concerned with both the present and the future and the impacts of present policies and practices on the future conditions of people and planet. We are continually developing links, supporting and working with the identified local groups and organisations to complement the aims of our social justice Greenprint. Our work is ongoing and if you are interested in getting involved please get in contact.



Transport

Strategy

Sustainable Hackney made significant contributions to the Council's transport strategy:

<http://sustainablehackney.org.uk/profiles/blogs/hackney-transport-strategy-published>

Road

There has been a commitment from the council to remove Stoke Newington's infamous gyratory system and to improve the urban motorway known as Seven Sisters Road.

The council continues to gradually remove "rat runs" throughout the borough with our support.

On a less positive note, the ambitious Middleton Road quietway scheme was watered down due to local opposition: it has become a set of speed bumps and some road narrowing.

Cycling

The council continues gradual improvements to the borough's cycling infrastructure, with a few failures (see Middleton Road above). In particular:

- ✓ The new Cycle Superhighway CS1 (Liverpool St. to Tottenham) is being constructed, although its rather unambitious backstreets route hasn't impressed many cycle campaigners who wanted a protected cycle route along the A10.

Rail

There has been some positive change to the rail network, but there is still much more we would like to see:

- ✓ 6 stations were added to the Overground network in June 2016.
- ✗ Approval for the new Crossrail 2 link seems to have been rubber-stamped in spite of opposition from local groups including Sustainable Hackney, although it's unlikely to go ahead as soon as planned due to expenditure cuts.
- ✗ No improvements have been made to the Lea Valley Line Overground services.
- ✗ Hackney's rail stations have seen no accessibility improvements.



Waste

Hackney Fixers delivered 7 electrical repair workshops in 2015-16. We started adding clothing repair to our events during the year in response to demand and now it is part of all our events. The second “Big Fix” festival of repair was held in Stoke Newington Library in Sept 2016 and attracted over 100 visitors.

We partnered with LBH Recycling team to deliver three events focussed on the growing problem of electrical waste and also received a second year of grant from LBH Community Chest. Thanks to our partners LBH Recycling Service, The Restart Project, Manor House Development Trust, Hackney Library Service, Fabrications, Traid, School of Stuff, EcoACTIVE and Hackney Bike Workshop.

In Autumn 2016 we worked with EcoActive to deliver six school workshops as part of a STEM challenge project and have continued to move to different areas around the borough popping up in Homerton and Shoreditch. In April 2017 our work featured on the BBC Radio 4 programme “Costing the Earth” which looked at the issue of whether products are designed to last.

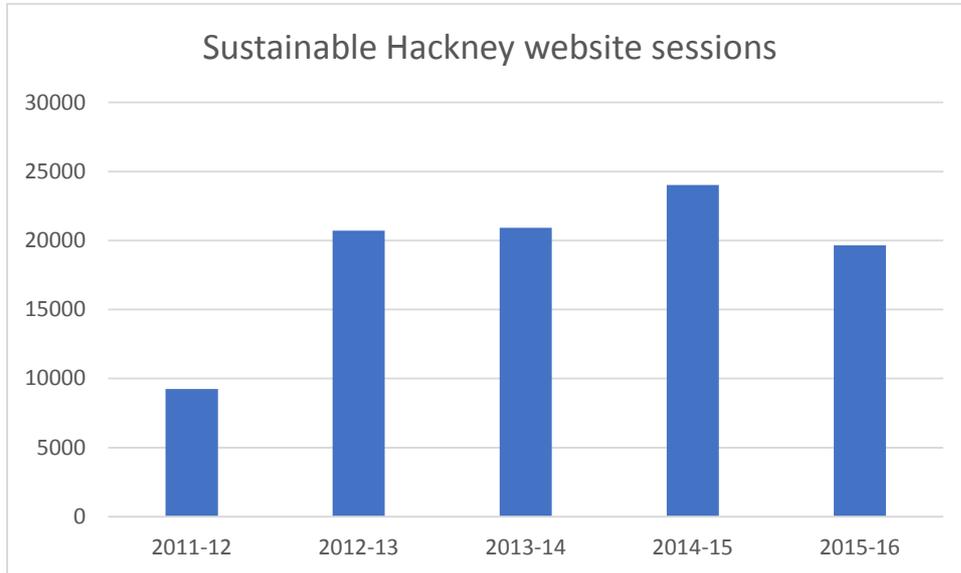


Jheni Osman from the BBC gets her child's CD player fixed!

We are now planning a series of skill-share workshops from Autumn 2017 to teach repair skills and looking forward to the third “Big Fix”. Hope to see you at one of our events soon. HackneyFixers.org.uk

Website & Social Media

The number of people signed up to our website continues to grow with 100 added in 2015-16 and another 60 since. However the number of visits to the website in 2015-16 was down from the peak of 2014-15.



Our regular newsletters reach over 1,000 people and are a great way to share news and information. We include all events that are on the website and feature news and blogs about campaigns and local projects. We want to promote the website as a resource for people to find out what is happening, network and share views and news and encourage people to use it more. There are 1000+ events, 300+ blog posts, 100+ discussions and dozens of pages on the site.

@SustainHackney

We now have 3,400 [Twitter](#) followers and 800 [Facebook](#) followers, but we could do a lot better on social media. Please let us know if you are interested in joining our communications team to help us out!

If you have not tried it yet, please do take a look now. Sign up to our website to:

- network and post your events, blogs, news and discussions
- be added to our newsletter list.