

19th May 2023

Dear Families,

Update on Ashburton Park Project: April 2023

2021 was the worst on record for teenage murders in London. There were 30 murders in total. Five happened in Croydon - more than any other borough in the capital. In light of this, Oasis were determined to take action to honour the young lives, to make the community safer, and to create positive opportunities for young people in the local community to thrive, flourish, and explore their ideas and aspirations.

In partnership with these friends and teachers, Oasis launched an appeal (the 'Legacy for Zaiyan' appeal) to create a new youth centre and wider youth provision in Ashburton Park based out of the (currently disused) Ashburton Lodge. The Lodge (a main building and annexe) was owned by Croydon Council, had fallen into disrepair, and was about to be sold at auction. Oasis' vision was to transform the building into a base from which to provide a range of support – from open access youth work and family support, to targeted work with young people at risk of exclusion and exploitation, and to support young people to remain and thrive in mainstream school. Our aim was to do this by forming strong partnerships with (other) local schools, churches and other faith groups, grassroots youth and community organisations and community members, as well as local statutory services.

This initial appeal in early 2022 very quickly raised a total of just over £24,000. Thank you for your support and donations which have been crucial in taking this vision forward. In the year that has followed, we have also secured some other pieces of funding, which we'll say more about below. The headlines of the last year are that we have:

- Worked to secure the Ashburton Lodge building; lease negotiations are now almost complete and additional funds have been raised for development/renovations.
- Designed and piloted a 'trusted adult' mentoring programme to work with young people at risk of exclusion; this has been piloted and additional funds have been raised for a multi-year programme roll-out.
- Worked in partnership with three other local organisations bringing added benefit to young people in Croydon.

Progress report

1. Ashburton Lodge

Obtaining the Lodge from Croydon Council has required a fairly long process – against the backdrop of a period of significant change and workload for the Council. However, we are now in the final stages of negotiating a lease agreement on Ashburton Lodge and expect to complete this very soon. We have spent just under £5,000 so far on lease costs (e.g., surveys). Since the original fundraising appeal, we have received further donations of £35,000, taking our current building project fund total to approx. £55,000. This money will allow us to complete the lease agreement, make the building safe, and get a small part of the building into use as a base for development.

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The longer-term development of the building and grounds will take place in phases. Looking further ahead, we are really pleased to have some funding already lined up that will allow us to do the first phase of renovations of the building and garden in due course (subject to a consultation period). We will continue to raise funds against the full renovation of the whole site.

2. Oasis 360° Mentoring

While we've been going through the process of securing Ashburton Lodge, we have moved ahead with designing and piloting some of the work that will eventually be based there. We are really pleased to report that in October 2022 we began a pilot of our new 'Oasis 360° Mentoring' programme, designed to support young people to thrive and remain in school. 360° Mentoring promises a 'trusted adult' for every young person at risk of exclusion from mainstream education – someone (a volunteer) *outside* of statutory institutions and services who cares for, loves, encourages, and believes in them. The importance and transformative potential of (even just) one trusted adult relationship has been shown time and again in research, and in our own experience working with young people. So far (as part of the pilot) we've worked with 24 young people from our four Oasis Academies in Croydon, completing a total of 250 hours of mentoring time to date. Already there is interest in the pilot from partners and Local Authorities in other cities outside of London.

Having made a successful multi-year funding bid to roll out the 360° Mentoring programme for Croydon, we are now into the next phase of development – building a network of volunteers who can be the trusted adults for all the young people who need this support. We will give each volunteer mentor the appropriate training, accreditation, and supervision that will allow them to build meaningful and valuable relationships with young people.

We had originally thought to call Ashburton Lodge 'The Zaian Centre' when it opens. However, after consultation with Zaian's family we have agreed to call it 'The 360° Centre' – to reflect the wraparound care it will offer, with the 360° mentoring approach at its heart.

3. Community Partnerships

Over the past year we have worked with three local grassroots organisations reaching young people. We have provided studio space (at Oasis Academy Coulsdon) for MainzWorld to run their music courses and mentoring work. We have also partnered with Reaching Higher – who have a well-established presence within the Croydon community – for our 360 Mentoring programme pilot. Finally, we are working with P4YE to roll out their Bright Futures Programme to support some of our students (at Oasis Academy Shirley Park) to reintegrate back into mainstream school. We hope these partnerships (and many more) will form and shape the ongoing work that will be based out of Ashburton Lodge, making the most of the opportunity the building will provide for the whole community.

Thank you again for your support.

Oasis UK

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