

£1.8 million investment is ‘just the start’ for community-owned Creative Youth Hub in Barking



Young people in Barking and Dagenham will shape a new community-led and owned creative hub as the Blagrove Trust, Barking & Dagenham Giving, and Good Ancestor Movement announce today (29th July 2026) an initial £1.8 million capital investment, plus more to be fundraised, to develop a base for youth creativity and enterprise.

The Blagrove Trust has committed £1 million in capital funding, with BD Giving committing £800,000, while Good Ancestor Movement has pledged to raise up to £1 million further from its network.

The investment marks a significant milestone in BD Giving's **Spaces+Places** programme, an 18-month community-led exploration into what community assets the borough needs most. It also reflects Blagrove's new strategy, **Leading with Hope**, which commits long-term place-based investment to youth-led change across three areas, and Good Ancestor Movement's commitment to wealth being held in communities in perpetuity, for the benefit of future generations.

The site of the Hub is yet to be identified but the focus is currently on Barking where residents identified a gap in flexible space for young changemakers, aged 16– 30 years.

Bhav Ghedia, Neighbourhood Steward:

We started with over 25 ideas which we debated, refined and in some cases set aside. It wasn't always easy. It took time, we had to be patient, we had to compromise. But our conversations always came back to young people.

We challenged stereotypes and started thinking more along the lines of 'What if they had somewhere to go; somewhere to connect and create.' Now that vision is becoming a reality."

BD Giving is a community-led funder and social investor that creates opportunities for local people to make decisions about how money is spent in Barking and Dagenham

Géraud de Ville de Goyet, Chief Executive at Barking & Dagenham Giving, said:

"Our partnership with Blaggrave Trust and Good Ancestor Movement reflects a shared belief that creating opportunities for young people requires more than programmes and grants. It also requires places and spaces where connections happen, ideas can develop and communities can build power together."

This long-term partnership will make Barking a magnet for local young changemakers."

Unlike many youth initiatives that rely on short-term funding, the partners are investing in a permanent community asset that can support generations of young people and act as a connector of other youth spaces and organisations in the borough.

The approach reflects Blaggrave's commitment to long-term, place-based investment that builds community wealth, empowers local people and creates lasting infrastructure for young changemakers and Good Ancestor Movement's approach to unlocking high-net-wealth individuals' resources to build an economy that works for people and the planet.

Together the partners will set up a steering group of majority young people with experience of, or, who are challenging deep-rooted inequality. In time the ownership of the asset will transition to a democratic structure, creating one of the UK's most ambitious examples of youth-led, community-owned infrastructure.

A central part of The Blaggrave Trust's strategy is making bold, long-term investments in places where community power can grow. Barking and Dagenham was selected as one of the Trust's priority places because of its strong local leadership, young population, established culture of resident participation

and the opportunity to build community-owned assets that will benefit future generations.

The funders have also committed to a long-term, place-based partnership, with Blaggrave planning to recruit locally and work from a shared space with BD Giving in the borough.

The Blaggrave Trust Chief Executive Eli Manderson Evans said:

"Leading with Hope is about backing young people and communities to shape their own futures. We chose Barking and Dagenham because young people here are already leading change and because the foundations for community-led decision making are already laid through the great work at Barking & Dagenham Giving.

We know young changemakers need permanent places, not just programmes. This investment is about creating infrastructure that young people can shape, use and eventually own – building community power, creativity and opportunity for generations to come."

The Good Ancestor Movement is dedicated to supporting people and organisations with access to substantial financial wealth in values-aligned wealth stewardship and radical redistribution.

Kiki Mager, Director of Resource Mobilisation at Good Ancestor Movement said:

"This partnership is about wealth, land and decision-making power being held in communities for the long term. At Good Ancestor Movement we believe that when philanthropy shifts from funding short-term projects to resourcing community ownership and collective power, we can build an economy where everyone can thrive together."

Further details about the hub, opportunities for young people to shape its development and community engagement activity will be announced over the coming months.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The youth-led creative hub forms part of Barking & Dagenham Giving's Spaces + Places programme involving 20 local people. Together they identified two priorities; a borough-wide Movement Festival to improve health and wellbeing, and a youth-led creative hub where young people can create, collaborate, and lead.
- The partnership includes £1 million of capital investment from The Blaggrave Trust and £800,000 from Barking & Dagenham Giving, and fundraising commitment from Good Ancestor Movement, alongside joint funding for staffing, community engagement and building operating costs.
- The hub will be designed and governed with young people through participatory and democratic decision-making structures. It is intended to become an example of how communities, young people and funders can work together to create community assets that build local pride and community wealth by shifting decision making into the hands of local people.
- We'll be inviting people to apply to join the steering group in due course and we'll make sure it's made up of majority of young people, aged 16–30.

About the Blaggrave Trust

The Blaggrave Trust is a charitable funder whose mission is to empower young people who face deep-rooted inequality to lead lasting change, by investing in their leadership, their communities, and in spaces where their ideas can thrive for generations to come.

www.blagravetrust.org

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About Barking & Dagenham Giving

BD Giving is a community-led funder and social investor that creates opportunities for local people to make decisions about how money is spent in Barking and Dagenham.

Using proven participatory methods, BD Giving put money into the hands of the people who know Barking and Dagenham best to decide where it goes and how

it's used. It's bigger than funding. It's about changing how money works in communities, and who it works for.

www.bdgiving.org.uk

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About Good Ancestor Movement

Good Ancestor Movement exists to help shift how wealth and power move in society by supporting individuals and organisations in liberating their resources toward just futures that are distributive by design, in service of people and planet, and marked by the economic sovereignty of communities and abundantly thriving local economies.

www.goodancestormovement.com

[LinkedIn](#)