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Interview with Ben Sudell



Wave trustee Ingrid Skinner talks to Wave's new Development Director

How did you first get involved with Wave?

I've been involved with Wave for 5 or 6 years now as a volunteer, initially as a member of Wave club and more recently as a trustee of Wave Café.

What made you take on this job?

It came at a really good time for me – I'd just moved on from a teaching job in a special school and was looking for a new challenge outside of the classroom. As a trustee, I already felt I had quite a lot of ideas and excitement about Wave and so it was a brilliant chance to take on a more active role with Wave.

Why are you so excited about Wave Café?

I really think that we are creating something unique. Anyone who has been a part of Wave events knows the special atmosphere that real inclusivity and acceptance can create. It's always amazing to see all sorts of people relax and smile as they get used to an environment that celebrates and encourages difference!

Can you tell us a little bit about Wave Café's plans for this year?

I'm really pleased that we are going to be running weekly arts events from September 13th – I think they gives us a great opportunity to expand our offering, share our message to a wider audience and let more people see what a future Wave Café might look and feel like.

Although the 'Café' in our name often makes people firstly think of a place that sells coffee, I think arts and creative activity have always been a big part of how we have brought different people together. Something about sitting down and creating something really puts people at ease. I think art is also a good representation of the Wave ethos – there is no 'right' way to do it and things that are different, unusual or unexpected often improve rather than detract!

What is your vision for the Café?

As we search for a more permanent shared or owned venue to operate from, I'd love to see us raising our profile in the community. We have a strong community of followers and supporters, but I'd like us to get to a place where everyone in Muswell Hill knows who we are and what we are about. After we have grown the frequency of our offering, starting with our weekly workshops, I can imagine us expanding to provide an all-day inclusive space with community lunches, daytime classes and groups, opportunities for work and training for those with learning disabilities, exhibition and outdoor space and exciting one-off events, all as part of a full day of 'Wave Café'.

Wave Café Arts Workshops start on Thursday 13th September and run weekly through the autumn. Visit our website to see the fantastic programme of events and local artists. We'd love to see you at one of them soon!

<https://www.wavecafe.org/whats-on>