ace
Action in Caerau & Ely
Gweithredu yng Nghaerau a Threlái

Action in Caerau and Ely



Annual Report 2025 - 2026









Our Ambitions, For Our Community, Through Our Own Efforts.



Contents

1. Message from the Chair p4
2. About ACE p6
3. ACE Places p8
4. ACE Partnerships p10
5. CAER Big Dig p12
6. CAER Heritage & Learning Centre p13
7. The Dusty Food Warrior p14
8. Community Support p16
   - Advice and Support
   - Community Meals
   - Restore
   - Good Food Hub
   - ACE Benthyg
   - Repair Café
   - Grand Avenues
9. Together for Trowbridge & St Mellons p19
10. Dusty Shed p19
11. Bereavement Support p19
12. YourSpace Wellbeing Support p20
13. Healing with others - out of shadows p21
14. Diana Garden p22
15. Dydd Gŵyl Dewi - St David's Day Parade and Party p23
16. ACE Volunteering p24
17. Shape Your Future p26
18. The ACE Way p28
19. Journey of a Trustee p29
20. Our Impact in Numbers p30
21. ACE Trustees, Volunteers & Staff p32
22. Financial Report p34
23. Funders and Partners p35

Photos: Natasha Hirst, Vivian Thomas and ACE staff.



Message from the Chair

ACE continues to make a difference to the people of Ely and Caerau, and across Cardiff, in partnership with a number of different organisations. As with many charities, funding has been difficult to obtain, yet we have maintained a multitude of projects.

Volunteers remain an integral part of ACE activities, and are supported by a dedicated Volunteer Development Officer, who circulates regular newsletters with information and training opportunities. This year, ACE has also worked with Cardiff Third Sector Council (C3SC) to support volunteering across the wider community. A number of volunteers have been involved in the development of a wonderful Peace Garden, which was formally opened by Caroline Barr's daughter, Emily, at the celebration event of our 10 years at the Dusty Forge in July. It is a place for relaxation and reflection.

The Good Food Hub and Good Food cooking sessions have helped attendees develop new cooking skills, and make use of healthy, seasonal ingredients. Some of these have been grown at the CAER Centre and in Diana Garden. Our free community meals from FoodCycle, the Tuesday and Wednesday Lunch Clubs have thrived thanks to many volunteers. Extra funding has allowed chilled and frozen cooked meals to be prepared for community members, available from our newly reopened Re-Store Community Shop.

This year we had our first St David's Day party. 150 people celebrated in a parade from Caerau Lane to the Dusty Forge, waving banners made with local schools and volunteers. The party was a great success, with traditional Welsh food, a local choir and a twmpath with live music.

The annual CAER Heritage Community Dig in June had over 1,600 visitors to the site in Trelai Park, including 162 pupils from local schools. Many of the finds from this and previous digs are on display at the CAER Heritage and Learning Centre, which welcomes many schools each year. Our CAER team also hosts a large range of community events and groups.

The YourSpace team has worked with almost 500 people this year. Our Wellbeing Connectors offer personalised support to help people improve their health and wellbeing and our Community Development team supports and delivers a range of social groups, activities, trips and peer support groups.

We're delighted to welcome back our Director, Michelle, who has been absent for a number of months due to ill health. The ACE staff team have seamlessly stepped up to cover her absence. They are a dedicated and brilliant team, and the board shares our respect and thanks.

Our ACE family, which includes our volunteers, trustees, staff and partner organisations, have all worked together to strengthen the community, and helped many people improve their lives. Thank you to all for your continued support.

Marian Dixey, ACE Chair.











About ACE

ACE – Action in Caerau and Ely – is a community development organisation in West Cardiff. We help people to develop skills, resilience and wellbeing, and take an active role in their community.

We work with our communities to co-create community spaces, projects and services, bringing people and resources together to make positive and sustainable change.

Each year we support over 2,500 people across 25+ projects and services, from crisis support to long-term wellbeing, heritage, environment, food, and volunteering projects.



Our Vision

To create 'vibrant, equal and resilient communities for all, where people find fulfilment in themselves, each other, and the place where they live'.



We Believe

- Local people know their community best.
- Everyone's contribution should be valued equally.
- Everyone has something unique to contribute.
- Poverty should not be accepted as a fact of life.
- Social injustice should be challenged and changed.



How We Work

We work with communities to achieve lasting positive change for an equal and just Cardiff by:

- Mobilising local people behind a shared vision.
- Co-producing projects and services that make use of assets and meet needs.
- Driving positive social change, making our communities fairer and more inclusive.
- Securing income and maximising community assets for sustainability and community resilience.
- Working closely with private, public and third sector organisations to secure the benefits of their resources for our communities.

Our Theory of Change

Need

We tackle poverty, disadvantage and related complex needs on all fronts using a fully integrated approach.

Solutions

Co-produced initiatives build confidence, skills, capacity and resilience, improving mental health and promoting supportive social networks.

Outcomes

Local people report a range of outcomes including improved wellbeing, securing employment, completing training, stronger social networks and greater aspirations.

Impact

Local people who have developed confidence, skills and energy contribute these to collective approaches to community development.




CAER HERITAGE
ELY AND CAERAU
POSTCODE GARDENER
EVENT
13:00PM - 15:30PM
PLUS REFRESHMENTS:
GREGGS, CAKES, TEA + COFFEE
THIS WAY !!!















ACE Places

We run two community centres and four wildlife gardens. These vibrant and welcoming spaces host a range of activities, groups, community meals and support services.

Our Place: Dusty Forge

460 Cowbridge Rd West, Ely, Cardiff CF5 5BZ



A place for friendships, help and support

At the heart of the building sits our 'community living room', a friendly, flexible space, with the buzz of folk getting to know each other and hatching new plans over a cuppa.

At the Dusty Forge you will find:

- Advice and help with food, fuel and benefits
- Support for your wellbeing with YourSpace
- Community meals three times a week
- Wellbeing and social groups
- ACE Benthyg library of things
- A monthly Repair Café
- Community fridge and essentials shop
- Support with work and training
- Our tranquil Peace Garden
- Activities including gardening, art, woodworking, crochet, Tai Chi and more...

Other regular groups, including Flying Start, Brownies and Guides.









CAER Heritage Centre

Church Rd, Caerau, Cardiff CF5 5LQ

A hub for heritage activity and community learning

The Caerau and Ely Rediscovering (CAER) Heritage Project is a collaboration between ACE, Cardiff University, and the local community. Everyone is welcome to get involved in heritage activities, including:

- archaeological excavations
- historical research
- artefact analysis
- exhibitions and art
- heritage trails
- experimental archaeology
- visits from schools

The CAER centre hosts accredited adult learning courses on a wide range of topics, from child development to creative writing and criminology to bookkeeping.

Regular activities include:

- Love our Hillfort heritage group
- CAER Gardening group
- Flying Start stay and play
- Good Food Club cooking courses



Diana Garden

Hiles Rd, Ely, Cardiff CF5 4JB

A woodland oasis where we grow together

Diana Garden is a remarkable example of how local people can revive and re-imagine public space. Once a derelict playground, the garden has been transformed into a thriving, green community hub - where people of all ages grow food, learn new skills, and connect with nature and one another.

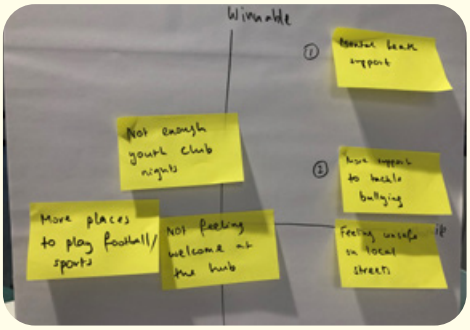
Diana Garden is a hub where you can:

- Learn new skills through hands-on experience
- Support your wellbeing with therapeutic outdoor activity
- Make genuine connections with your neighbours
- Contribute to something meaningful in your local area

Please check at the Dusty Forge for up-to-date opening times for Diana Garden.

ACE Partnerships

From Voices to Action: Co-creating solutions with children and parents in Ely and Caerau





"Getting people all together is a power in itself."

Camau Bach/ The Better Project

"I feel like we've led on decisions...like power has been shared."

ACE has worked closely with 6 primary schools, a high school and the Ely and Caerau Children's Centre to ensure that local families' voices are heard and acted on in the Learning Partnership Board. Working with school councils, eco-committees, youth clubs and parents and carers, we helped people to agree on some key issues that concerned them most, and make plans to create positive change in each area. The key issues included:

- Litter and the safety of our parks and streets
- Safety concerns around traffic on the school run
- A lack of safe places for young people to socialise

The groups worked together to plan responses to these issues, regularly coming together and sending representatives to present updates to the Learning Partnership Board. Together, they have:

- Organised and run 2 litter picks (with 23 children at Ely Rec and 20 at Trelai Park)
- Organised and run 2 fun days (with 200 people at the Dusty Forge and 340 people at Trelai Park)
- Developed a campaign and are working with Cardiff Council's Active Travel team to tackle dangerous parking and driving around Hywel Dda and Windsor Clive primary schools
- Created a short film to encourage drivers to think more about children's safety
- Planned a workshop with staff from Ely and Caerau Hub to establish better relationships and mutual respect between adults and young people, to make the hub more welcoming and accessible for young people.

Participants said:

"I feel like we've led on decisions... like power has been shared."

"Getting people all together is a power in itself."

"Different ideas from lots of different people is a strength."

Save the Children said:

"The clearest signs of empowerment were children becoming more confident as the session progressed, offering practical ideas, discussing contact with decision-makers, and being asked for advice about how adults could listen better and support change."

This work has involved fantastic partnership working to support local people to achieve their aims, from organisations including: Community Focused Schools, Save the Children, ACE, Cardiff Citizens, Ely and Caerau Learning Partnership Board, Keep Wales Tidy, Flying Start, Cardiff Foodbank, local PCSOs, and teams within Cardiff Council including Cardiff Youth Service, Parks, Active Travel, Love Where You Live, Local Action, Community Safety, Waste and Street Cleansing and Ely and Caerau Hub. And huge thanks to all the schools involved: Trelai, Pencaerau, Millbank, Herbert Thompson, Windsor Clive, and Hywel Dda Primary Schools, Cardiff West Community High School and Ely and Caerau Children's Centre.

Thanks to Legal and General and the Welsh Government for funding this work.

Nature-based play with early years and young families



ACE has been working with Ely and Caerau Children's Centre to deliver Dan y Coed play activities in nature with children aged 0-5 and their families, supported by Save the Children. These activities continued through 2025-26, across Diana Garden, the peace garden, the children's centre and some local schools, with 248 family attendances this year. Seventeen staff from six different organisations have taken part in the Forest School Level 1 and Outdoor Food Safety training. Parents and carers have particularly valued having free, relaxed and accessible opportunities for outdoor play within their local community.

In 2026, ACE has been working together with our partners to explore the idea of expanding early years nature-based play across Cardiff. We worked with young children and their parents in toddler groups in Tremorfa, St. Mellons, Grangetown, Ely and Caerau to gather ideas and create plans. If Save the Children is successful in securing funding, ACE will play a lead role in developing this work across all four neighbourhoods.

Postcode Gardener Project and Green Spaces Network

The Postcode Gardener project was funded by Friends of the Earth and the Co-operative Bank throughout 2025 and 2026. In less than two years, our Postcode Gardener, Rob Fuller, has worked with 350 local people across 30 groups to plant more than 3000 plants all across Ely and Caerau. This project has successfully greened 65 sites across our community.

From fruit trees in the park on Church Road to sunflowers in the Peace Garden at the Dusty Forge. From wildflowers outside the St. Francis Centre and CAER Heritage centre, to lavender and thyme outside a block of flats off Caerau Lane. People at the Forge Care home, the Beyond Differences disability peer support group, students at Cardiff West High School and toddlers and parents at a Flying Start group have all played their part in making our community greener, helping pollinating insects and wildlife and bringing more beauty to our streets and parks.

We have developed a local Green Spaces Network, bringing together volunteers and workers at Community Garden projects across Ely and Caerau with people invested in parks, litter picking and caring for nature. The group meets 4 times a year to support everyone's projects and efforts. We look for ways to work together to care for nature, grow food and protect our green spaces. The Green Spaces Network has hosted a film night about the climate crisis and a carnival of workshops around sustainability and looking after the environment.

As we look ahead to what's next for our work across green spaces and community gardens in our area, please get in touch if you would like to get involved!



"To see the enthusiasm of the children planting the trees, it was amazing, and getting the adults involved too." - Janice

"It was so lovely, it was quite therapeutic. I felt satisfied, felt like I'd achieved something, planting the bulbs with Rob." - Tracey



CAER Big Dig

Our annual archaeological dig in Trelai Park has unearthed more clues about the lives of the Bronze Age and Roman people who lived there thousands of years ago.

The CAER Heritage Project is now in its fifth year of work at Trelai Park, and the incredible finds just keep coming.

Previous digs have uncovered a well-preserved Bronze Age settlement, and the dig has also revealed activity in Trelai Park from the Roman period – with objects like pottery being left there, indicating it could have been a shrine or held some special importance.

Dr. Oliver Davis, CAER Heritage Project director, said: "This year, we've made the trench a lot bigger to look more closely at the remains of the roundhouse and adjacent buildings. The floor surface that people walked on in the Bronze Age still survives and is extremely well-preserved. We can tell so much about how they lived their lives from this.

"Last year we got the first glimpses that after the Bronze Age, this area became significant in the Roman period. We know there was an important Roman person living close by due to our proximity to the Roman Villa. We can now see that this was a place where people left offerings during Roman times. We think there may have been some kind of religious focus on the site, 1,500 years after people left this place."

Helen McCarthy, 62, has been volunteering with the CAER Project for more than a decade. She said it was exciting to be back at the dig.

"It's about seeing old friends and exploring the archaeology that's on our doorstep. It's incredible to know people have been active on this site for 6,000 years. This site tells a story and it's important to know. I can't believe my luck that I'm local and I've got this opportunity to be involved in it. It's the best project you could have."

During the dig we had 12 visits from 6 schools and 4 local community groups to the excavation site to see the work of an incredible 574 dedicated volunteers, who logged approximately 4,000 volunteer hours this year.

The open day at the dig on 27 June attracted over 500 visitors for tours of the excavations and to engage with project partners ranging from food stalls and circus games to heritage themed activities and information about local services. The event provided a fantastic opportunity for the wider community to get involved and experience archaeology first-hand.



Photos: Vivian Thomas





In 2025–26, the CAER Heritage and Learning Centre continued to flourish as a hub of learning, heritage and community activity, providing a wide range of opportunities for local people of all ages.

CAER Heritage and Learning Centre

We continued to work closely with Cardiff University and other partners to deliver adult learning courses, specialist workshops, community events and opportunities for schools and families to engage with the fascinating heritage of the local area.





Adult learning courses delivered during 2025–26 included Criminology, Health and Social Care, Child Development, Paediatric First Aid, Excel and Bookkeeping, providing local people with opportunities to develop new skills, gain knowledge and support their personal and professional development.

In partnership with Cardiff University, the Centre also hosted a series of summer workshops, including an Animal Bone Workshop, Digital Data Workshop and Community Archaeologist Specialist Training (CAST) Workshop, providing participants with opportunities to explore different aspects of archaeology, heritage and digital learning. A Dementia Workshop was also hosted at the Centre, supporting community learning and wellbeing.

The Centre continued to provide a programme of community events throughout the year, bringing local people together and creating opportunities for families and residents to enjoy activities at the Centre and explore the local heritage. Events included an Easter Egg Hunt, a Literacy Trust book event, the CAER Festival 2025 end-of-summer event and a Halloween Ghost Walk to the Hillfort. The year also ended with a Volunteer Christmas Celebration, recognising and celebrating the valuable contribution made by the Centre's dedicated volunteers.

Our ongoing partnership with Cardiff University supported the delivery of adult learning and specialist workshops. An exciting partnership with the Scottish Crannog Centre enabled the CAER team and community to take part in a wonderful exchange visit to Scotland in September 2025. This provided an opportunity to share experiences, learn from another heritage organisation and strengthen connections between community heritage projects.

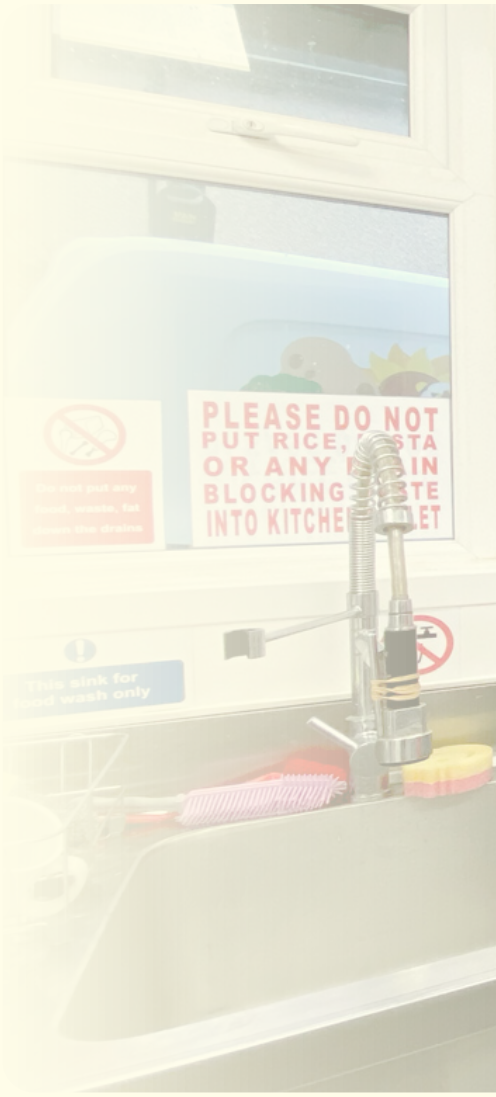
Cardiff University's Share with Schools programme runs from March to May each year. Schools are invited to spend a day at the Centre, taking part in a range of fun and engaging activities inspired by local history and heritage. The programme gives children the opportunity to explore history through hands-on experiences, including pottery activities and enjoying pizza together, creating an enjoyable and memorable learning experience outside the classroom.

Through its varied programme of adult learning, heritage workshops, school activities, community events and partnership projects, the CAER Heritage and Learning Centre has continued to provide valuable opportunities for learning, participation and community connection, while encouraging people of all ages to discover and celebrate the heritage of their local area.

Above, centre, photo: Vivian Thomas

The Dusty Food Warrior!

Sarah's story



I'm Sarah. I'm a mum of two - a six year old boy and a four year old girl. So, like everybody with young children, life is very chaotic. I first came to know of ACE and the pantry and what was going on here when I was pregnant with my son, six years ago, and I started using the pantry when it was open. I used to come every week and pay my five pounds and get my shopping from there. And it was a help, because I was caring for my dad at the time, full time.

Caroline Barr [who helped set up the pantry, and sadly passed away in 2021] noticed that I used to kind of just cherry pick all the little weird things that no one else wanted and she used to ask me what I would do with them. I explained that I like to use pulses and things like that. We started chatting, and she said she wanted to set up meals for the community fridge. I explained that I had a background in cooking and I sort of made a promise to her that once the kids were settled in nursery, I'd come and help her out. And, you know, events happened, so that unfortunately never transpired. But as a result, I started volunteering for FoodCycle. I came into the first session, got shown around the kitchen, and carried on from there. I've been doing that for, well, it'll be three years this year.

Every week I would come in on a Monday, and there was that little picture of Caroline in the kitchen, and I would look at it, and I would think, 'right, okay, the pantry shut down, the cafe shut down'. And it bothered me, because I knew what she wanted to do, and it was sort of still in the back of my head, and I was looking at the Fareshare delivery every week, and we had all these catering packs, and there was food out the back that wasn't being used. And it was a bug that just wouldn't come out of my head. Lots of our guests that come to FoodCycle tend to be a little bit older. So some of them had said that it was a little bit hard, sometimes, especially in colder months, to come out late at night, because we don't start serving until half six. So it would be quite nice if there was a lunch or something like that.

So we kind of said to FoodCycle, 'look, we've got extra food. Would you be willing to do a lunch on another day, if we could get some volunteers together?' They weren't able to, so I came in and had a chat with Sam and said, 'Well, would you be willing to do it under ACE?' Diane, who's a fellow FoodCycle volunteer, she got on board as well, and the three of us kind of set up the lunch on a Tuesday, which we've been doing for about a year and a half now.

Now I'm not volunteering. I was approached this year about a job that was going up through the probation service. They wanted somebody to basically take over the breakfast service they were doing and look at the possibility of extending it into a lunch service on the same day. So I came in and I interviewed for the role and got that, so I've been doing that now since December.

Before all this happened - things were hard. I'd been a carer for 10 plus years, you know? I've been an unofficial carer for my father since I was 13, really, since my mum passed away. It had been probably 15 years since I'd been in full time work. Through lockdown I'd gotten used to not being around people so much... but I'm definitely a talker, and I like to be around people. I think you're sort of sat there, stagnant to an extent, thinking, you know,



you're not doing a job anymore. You know, you can kind of almost feel the brain cells leaking out of your ears.

I think it's definitely given me the realization that I could still function in a working environment, that I did still have something to offer. And you know, that I might not have the greatest skill set in the world, but the skills that I have were useful to something. I think, being able to use it for something that helps the community for the greater good, it gives you a sense of purpose and a sense of wellbeing. It gave me the confidence to say, right, I can go back. I've gone back to college as a result, to do the Cookery diploma. That'll be finished in June. I do that on a Monday and a Friday, and I'm here Tuesday and Wednesday, and now soon to be Thursday, yeah, to put some meals in the community fridge. So I've gone full circle back to the promise that I made to Caroline to put meals in the community fridge.

I think the relationship with Caroline was important because I'd never really thought about volunteering before I met her, and it wasn't really something that occurred to me, and then we started chatting. I think what she wanted to do, it resonated with me, and it made me realize, you know, you can be helpful within your community.

I've lived here for probably over 20 years, so it's nice to kind of feel a part of it, because I think as a carer it can be quite lonely, and you do feel quite isolated sometimes. I think that disconnect from your community is something that can settle in, especially when you do it for a long period of time. So I think now what I'm doing, I feel a lot more connected to the area, especially as a mum now. I've got kids in a local school so, you know, I want the area to improve. I want there to be options. I walk down the street now and I say hello to lots of people.

If I was to tell others about Dusty Forge I would say that it's a lovely, warm community space and come and use it, because we're very lucky to have something like this in an area that is seen as, you know, deprived by other people. When you've got something in your community, use it or you lose it!

I'll call my story 'Sarah, the pulse queen, and Dusty food warrior'. Yeah, I think I've turned into a bit of a food warrior.

Community Support

ACE Advice and Support

Our Cost of Living Support sessions have grown. People can get help with benefits, energy bills, appliance grants, debt referrals, food and fuel vouchers and Blue Badge applications. We now run four Cost of Living sessions every week, three at the Dusty Forge and one at the CAER Heritage Centre. We changed the name from 'crisis hour' when community members told us it carried a stigma that made it harder to walk through the door.

We also run a fortnightly advice drop-in and outreach clinics in local GP surgeries at Llandaff, Taff Riverside and now Woodlands Medical Practice.

Our Hafan project, which places specialist energy advice alongside our YourSpace social prescribing service and local GPs, secured two further years of funding from Wales and West Utilities. Our energy outreach work continues with Energy Redress and Citizens Advice, and our Priority Services Register partnership with Care and Repair has been extended.

Overall, ACE has supported 305 households through drop in and casework service. This resulted in a total of £1,127,787 in additional income being received by community members.

"My son is able to take me out more, for days out without worrying about parking."
A community member, after a successful Blue Badge application

Community meals at Cafe Barr

Cafe Barr continues to be the warm heart of the Dusty Forge, where anyone can drop in and eat well for free in good company. Volunteers cook community meals throughout the week: a Monday evening three-course meal with FoodCycle, and lunch clubs on Tuesday and Wednesday, all open to everyone.

In December we appointed Sarah Standring as our community cafe lead, funded through the Grand Avenues partnership. Sarah already led our Monday and Tuesday volunteer teams and has a real gift for turning surplus food into healthy, delicious meals. She also cooks meals for distribution through the Restore Community Shop. Volunteers continue to build cooking skills and gain accredited qualifications.

Restore

Our community shop at the Dusty Forge is now supported by our Health team. We have reinvented the space with staff and volunteers, which reopened in July with a new look and a new offer.
The shop now opens on Thursdays from 11am to 1pm, run by volunteers, with free donated essentials alongside low-cost ready meals cooked by Sarah and our volunteers, and continued access to our community fridge and pet food bank. We aim to open twice a week through the winter, offering dried and tinned goods and frozen meals.
We have registered with Neighbourly to collect supermarket surplus. Since September, we have been receiving regular deliveries from the Cwtch Mawr Multibank, bringing household essentials, clothing, baby items and cleaning products to people through the shop and through referrals from local schools.

Looking ahead
The Greggs Foundation has confirmed a further £20,000 of Community Action Fund support, which will sustain both the community shop and our food club work into the coming year. We are also developing new co-created courses in planet-friendly cooking and working with partners to bring the Good Food Club approach to new audiences including children and young people.





Good Food Hub

Our Good Food Hub brings together everything we do around food, nutrition and health, from cooking courses, community garden events and family activities to meals and produce through the Cafe Barr and Restore community shop.

Good Food Club
Our Good Food Club, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, ran fortnightly at the CAER Heritage Centre, attracting strong attendance throughout the year. Led by our community food practitioner Caroline Holroyd, the club delivered 25 sessions, engaging 41 adults across 264 attendances, with 26 children joining our family events. Sessions focused on healthy, planet-friendly eating, seasonal produce and making the most of surplus ingredients. Through hands-on cooking, members gained confidence in preparing nutritious, affordable meals and making healthier choices for themselves and their families.

"I feel happier and more informed about healthy eating, which I try and put into practice."

The connections made through cooking together were key - every member who completed the final evaluation, said they had made new friendships through the club, with several saying it gave them a reason to get out of the house. The club also created new volunteer opportunities and brought together a strong network of local partners and producers, including Grow Cardiff, 4Winds, FoodCycle, UpFront Gardens, Absorb Health, Barnardo's, Cardiff Salad Garden, Ely and Caerau Children's Centre and NHS dietitians.

"I've gone from isolated, doing nothing, to being at the centre, heart and soul of this club."

Good Food Engagement Sessions
Our monthly Good Food Engagement sessions, funded by Hubbub, gave people another route into healthy, affordable and sustainable eating. Participants learned practical ways to reduce food waste, make the most of ingredients and prepare nutritious meals on a budget. Evaluations were very positive and the sessions strengthened the connection with our YourSpace Wellbeing team.

A bigger, better community kitchen at the Dusty Forge
A £12,600 grant from Cardiff Council's Emergency Food Aid Grant helped us transform what our kitchen at the Dusty Forge can do. New labour-saving equipment and a blast chiller mean our volunteer cooking teams can now safely cook, chill and freeze meals in quantity. Those meals are packed and distributed through our community fridge and the Restore community shop, with community support and health colleagues helping identify the people who would most benefit.

The grant also funded our freelance community cook, Sarah Standring, to lead additional cooking sessions, making the very best use of the surplus food we receive from FareShare Cymru. At its fullest this year we were cooking or distributing food four days out of five.





Our library of things took a big step forward this year with the arrival of Benthyg Lockers. These were installed over the spring, in our reception area at the Dusty Forge. Members can now reserve an item online, receive a code and collect it from the locker, five days a week. We launched the lockers at a community event in July with Benthyg Cymru.

Behind the scenes, our Estates Officer Dale Ovenstone has kept the collection safe, maintained and PAT tested. We have been working with colleagues from Benthyg Cymru to review and reorganise our whole inventory. We are also contributing to a plan for a shared delivery van for libraries of things across Cardiff and the Vale.

Over the year, membership has grown to 743 and our members borrowed items 244 times, saving money and helping the environment.

Get your free membership and browse and reserve online at ace.benthyg.cymru.

Repair Cafe

For seven years our Dusty Repair Cafe has popped up on the fourth Saturday of every month, and it shows no sign of slowing down. Our dedicated team of volunteer fixers give their skills free of charge, tackling everything from small electrical items and garden equipment to bikes, scooters, IT problems, textiles and much-loved family possessions that shops would simply write off.

Every item mended is one less item in landfill and one less thing a household has to replace. The Repair Cafe is part of the Repair Cafe Wales network, and in October our fixers joined others from across Wales to mark International Repair Day at the National Museum in Cardiff. Over the last seven years, our Repair Cafe has checked out over 800 items and successfully mended three-quarters of them.

Grand Avenues

Grand Avenues is our partnership with HM Prison and Probation Service, where people on probation are supervised in local community hubs by a dedicated team of probation practitioners, with wraparound support around finance, training, employment and health.

This year, HMPPS funded the refurbishment of a former IT room at the Dusty Forge, painted and improved by volunteers from a local business. This enables the main hall to become a more informal hub for the wellbeing and engagement activities at the heart of the project.

In March we welcomed David Lammy (then Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Secretary) to the Dusty Forge, where he met men on probation and heard directly about their experience of the project.

A new £5,000 grant from the Weavers' Company Benevolent Fund will fund an employment and skills pilot for men furthest from the labour market, working with Shape Your Future and Cardiff Council's Into Work Service to build confidence, core skills and recognised qualifications.

Together for Trowbridge & St Mellons

Together for Trowbridge and St. Mellons (T4TSM) is one of 13 Invest Local Programmes in Wales supported by Building Communities Trust, with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. It is a 10-year programme that builds on the strengths, skills and talents in the community to create positive and long-lasting change. ACE acts as grant-holder for a steering group of local residents and representatives from community-based organisations, who lead on the delivery of the programme.

During 2025-26 the steering group has supported 8 local community organisations with over £78,000 of grants, to provide local activities including trips, community meals and events, arts and creative activities, conversation activities, disability support, a community choir, a boxing club and a Christmas toy shop for local families. The investment has also helped develop and sustain a local



community organisation, so that it can deliver services and activities and host smaller groups. It has paid for community development time in Trowbridge to grow activity and support new groups

Dusty Shed

The Dusty Shed is an independent charity supported by ACE at the Dusty Forge. It continues to offer a welcoming space at the Dusty Forge where people, particularly but not only men aged 50 and over, can share skills, make things together and find good company. Weekly woodworking and social sessions have continued through the year, and members welcomed visitors to a Shed open day during Volunteers' Week in June.

This autumn the Shed launched a new series of health and wellbeing talks for older people, with talks planned on vaccinations, wills, probate and inheritance tax. The Shed welcomes new members; you can find out more at www.thedustyshed.org.uk.



Bereavement Support

ACE leads on a partnership project, funded by Welsh Government, to enhance bereavement support in Cardiff for people from ethnic minority communities and those with a learning disability, both groups that are less likely to access existing support. Our partners at Community Care and Wellbeing Service provide bereavement counselling, courses and support groups which are sensitive to people's culture and faith and available in a range of languages. Our partners Cardiff People First have been active in setting up peer support groups and activities for people with a learning disability.

In 2025-26 Cardiff People First delivered a range of peer support and 'memories' events, all developed by and with local people with a learning disability; a total of 12 activities, with 33 people taking part. Community Care and Wellbeing Service provided bereavement counselling for 59 people and ran 7 bereavement and mental health workshops, working with local faith centres and community organisations. Over 230 people attended courses, from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds including Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sudanese, Egyptian, Moroccan, Somali, Syrian and White Welsh.

YourSpace Wellbeing Support



YourSpace is a social prescribing and community development service, commissioned by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and working closely with local GP's and other health services. Wellbeing Connectors offer personalised support to help people improve their health and wellbeing, identifying personal goals and needs and working together to take steps to improve their wellbeing.

The support offered depends on what matters most to the individual. Some people are supported to access help with a specific issue that is affecting their wellbeing. This can include help to find the right advice agency or service, help to address any barriers to accessing that service, and ongoing support as they move towards getting the issue resolved.

Others work with their connector to increase their social connections or to get involved in volunteering, working together to resolve barriers such as anxiety about leaving the house, transport or mobility issues, or finding ways to connect when they are unable to leave the house due to illness or disability.

Our team of Community Health Development Workers work with local communities, partner organisations and people accessing the service to design and deliver new activities and volunteering opportunities. This allows us to create 'bespoke' opportunities for people when other options are not suitable or of interest, as well as being able to fill gaps in provision.

The service works in three 'Cluster' areas, named 'Cardiff South West', 'Cardiff West' and 'Cardiff North', which covers approximately half of the city. Overall we worked with 484 people during 2025-26, with 77% of those surveyed showing an improvement to their wellbeing as measured by the 'SWEMWBS' mental wellbeing scale. Activities delivered this year across the three areas have included walking groups, bereavement peer support, menopause support, day trips, wellbeing workshops, historical talks and visits, and a range of social groups and activities.

"You make me feel like going outside is not impossible, even though I am really struggling with my anxiety."

"I feel relieved and I know what to do now. I'm so happy that there are services like this! I would have never known if my GP had not referred me. Thank you."

"This is such a marvellous service. I am coping so much better with things and I feel so much more confident with myself. I feel very supported which also helped a lot with building the confidence to meet people and friends in community because I was so scared and anxious at the start."

Healing with others - out of shadows



For years, my world was defined by walls. In a deeply controlled marriage, I was forbidden from speaking to family or having any friends. Four years ago, I escaped, but the psychological chains remained. The paralysing fear of running into my ex-husband trapped me inside. My mind shut down, my lupus flared violently, and I became entirely bedridden. Isolated, financially strained, and watching my son finish his GCSEs, I truly believed I was going to die.

Then, Cardiff Mind referred me to Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE). A Wellbeing Connector named Susan called me, and over the next 18 months, she guided me through a gentle, patient process of healing. She never pushed, simply asking, “When you’re okay, shall we go out today?”

Slowly, the world opened up. Susan’s ‘Menogals’ group gave me a safe space to share menopausal symptoms and nutrition tips with other women. It became my reason to step outside. Later, despite battling severe depression, I joined an ACE art exhibition. This spark led me to the Llandaff North wellbeing group, where I began creating vinyl art with Sam. As others joined, I found myself teaching them and planning future projects. The woman who once couldn’t leave her bed had become a volunteer.

Eventually I started to grow out of fear by stepping into the outside world. Susan was an amazing support, and this community has become a cushion for my future. I no longer fear falling because I know they are there to catch me. At ACE, with kindness as their virtue, there is no judgment; it is okay to be unwell, to say no, and to take your time. I once thought my life was over, but here, I can finally grow.

Diana Garden





Diana Garden has had its most ambitious year yet. Weekly volunteer gardening sessions have continued to maintain the beds, grow fruit and vegetables for the community fridge and the cafe, and, just as importantly, give people a reason to be outside with others.

A £15,000 grant from the National Lottery's Egin Sustainable Steps Fund allowed us to tackle the challenges we had identified in our action plan. The most significant of these is now solved: an off-grid solar power system is being installed, bringing electricity to the garden for the first time and opening up what the space can host.

The garden's events have gone from strength to strength. A harvest festival brought people together around the fire to share food and stories. Volunteers marked Volunteers' Week with a rose planting celebration. Our Climate Carnival in August welcomed around 150 people of all ages, including many first-time visitors, for nature-themed arts and crafts, sustainable cooking, RSPB biodiversity hunts, storytelling, growing activities and tool-making from waste materials, with Cardiff Council's neighbourhood team on hand to talk with residents. The garden has also become a regular home for Dan y Coed, our early years nature play programme with Ely and Caerau Children's Centre, with sessions running through the summer for children under five and their families.

In September, volunteers and Grow Cardiff led a BioBlitz across all our gardens to establish a baseline of the wildlife we share the space with. Volunteers are now co-designing a 'tiny forest' and outdoor play proposal, and we have been awarded funding for our ACE GreenSpaces project, an 18-month biodiversity initiative connecting all four of our community gardens, in partnership with Grow Cardiff.



Dydd Gwyl Dewi –



St David's Day Parade and Party





St David's Day was a true celebration in Ely and Caerau this year - we had a party! Local people came together on Saturday 28th February to start a new tradition in the area that reflects our thriving local culture.

We are grateful for the Welsh Government's St David's Day Fund, which allowed us to run these events.

In the two weeks leading up to the big day, the community worked hard preparing for the parade. Ysgol Nant Caerau, Ysgol Coed y Gof and CAER Love Our Hillfort group created glorious masks and banners with local artist Nic Parsons.

On the day, 150 people celebrated our shared Welsh identity in a parade from Caerau Lane to the Dusty Forge. Thanks to Cardiff Council traffic management department, we were able to safely march down Cowbridge Road West sharing our pride and joy with local residents. The beautiful banners and lively music from Thee Roxy Stars Marching Band set the perfect atmosphere for an excellent day.

> "The parade was the best bit. I turned up, someone gave me a banner to carry and my daughter carried it with me."

On arrival at the Dusty Forge we were welcomed by Caroline Holroyd and her fantastic team of volunteers from the Good Food Club. A feast of cawl, pwdin Eryri (Snowdon pudding), bara brith and savoury Welsh cakes was shared, a delicious blend of tradition with innovative Welsh ingredients.

With our stomachs satisfied, everyone gathered in the big hall and marvelled at the performance by Sing Aloud Caerau Community Choir, led by Sophie Dicks. The choir excelled in learning a Welsh-language pop song before the audience then joined in to sing well-known Welsh folk songs. Gwenno Dafydd encouraged young and old to blast out Calon Lân, Sosban Fach and many more.

The party came to a close with one hoot of a twmpath (traditional Welsh social dancing). All generations joined hands for a lively dance with the fantastic energy of Cats Claws Ceilidh band playing their tunes.

> "Twmpath band was full of fun, getting young and old dancing together."

Our wholehearted celebration of Welsh culture in Ely and Caerau in 2026 will hopefully be a launch-pad for an even better event on St David's Day 2027. Cymru am byth!

> "It was a lovely community event - we need more things like that. Hopefully it will grow and become an annual event."



ACE Volunteering



ACE has 74 volunteers across 17 different projects at the Dusty Forge, CAER Heritage Centre, Diana Garden and the YourSpace Team in Cardiff North, West and South West. Our volunteers are dedicated, supportive, passionate and determined to help improve the lives of people living in Caerau, Ely and Cardiff.

ACE would like to say THANK YOU to all our volunteers for another year of incredible commitment, compassion and hard work. We currently have seven Lead volunteers who provide extra support in running particular projects, and eight volunteer Trustees on our board who are responsible for governance and supporting staff.

This year the volunteers and Project Leads have grown their projects and started new groups. ACE has shown appreciation during Volunteers' Week, where all volunteers were invited to a series of celebration events and all received a personalised award and gifts that were homemade with love. Volunteers were also invited to a Winter Celebration event, combined with our AGM.

"Volunteering with ACE means working together either with the community members or professionals in the area; it builds a good bond in order to develop and produce projects/events that people in the area want/need (true co-production)."
- ACE volunteer

This year, ACE has continued to focus on each volunteer's journey, making sure each volunteer is on the right path for them. With support from the Volunteer Development Officer and Project Leads, ACE can then ensure the best volunteering opportunities and experiences.







Strategic Volunteering Project (Oct 25-March 27)

ACE has been working in partnership with C3SC on a 'Strategic Volunteering Project' funded by WCVA. ACE's Volunteer Development Officer has been:

- holding 1:1 mentoring sessions for 6 projects and groups across Ely and Caerau
- coordinating the first Ely and Caerau Community Volunteering Awards
- building a stronger relationship between C3SC and the community
- sharing knowledge and resources through local network meetings

"Working with ACE has meant being a lot more hands on with the community, and volunteering with a local group, it all goes hand in hand. Being in close contact with ACE's Volunteer Development Officer has meant it's easier to communicate, and seek support. Having 1:1 meetings and goal setting has been really helpful, I love working towards targets. Linking this up with C3SC has been really useful and come the new year I will have a lot more resources at my disposal. I found the Mental Health First Aid training which I attended has been beneficial both personally, in work and with working with young girls."
Megan O'Brien, Brownie Leader (1:1 mentoring support)













Shape Your Future

Shape Your Future provides flexible one-to-one mentoring and small bursaries to help residents overcome the barriers that stand between them and better work. Delivered in partnership with Cardiff Council's Into Work Service, HM Prison and Probation Service and the Department for Work and Pensions, it tackles in-work poverty in Ely and Caerau by funding the training, qualifications, equipment and costs that unlock better-paid, more flexible and more meaningful work.

In 2025-26 the project distributed 116 bursaries, totalling just under £40,000. 86% of participants report that they have increased their income through work, and 92% report improved wellbeing as a result of their involvement.

Almost a quarter of participants face health or disability barriers alongside financial ones, and for many the impact of a relatively small, well-timed award has been life-changing.

Donna Hurley, who works for Cardiff Council's Into Work Services, continues in the linchpin role at the heart of the project, based at the Dusty Forge each Wednesday. This year, Shape Your Future has also begun working more closely with Grand Avenues on a new employment and skills pilot for men on probation, who are furthest from the labour market.

We are enormously grateful to the donors who make this work possible and who have committed a further £50,000 a year for the next two years, giving the project the stability to plan ahead.

Progression in a career in construction – Sophie's journey with Shape Your Future

Sophie, a construction worker based on the New Velindre development site, expressed a clear ambition to progress within the construction sector by obtaining her Traffic Marshal/Banksman licence. Having maintained stable employment in construction for over a year, she demonstrated strong motivation and readiness to upskill. Through tailored mentoring and coordinated support, Sophie successfully completed the required NPORS qualification and advanced into a higher-paid, sustainable role with her existing employer.

First meeting
Sophie had an appointment with Donna at the Ely and Caerau Community Hub. She outlined her interest in gaining her Traffic Marshal qualification to support her career progression.
A plan was established to identify suitable training providers and confirm available course dates. Funding for the qualification was approved through the Shape Your Future programme. This initial engagement set a clear foundation for Sophie's upskilling journey.

Training Research and Preparation
To ensure Sophie received the correct and industry-recognised accreditation, research was undertaken into available providers and qualification types:

- Sophie arranged to confirm suitable dates with her employer before booking.
- ARC Training was identified as a provider offering the correct NPORS Banksman/Traffic Marshal course.
- This ensured that the final qualification would meet employer requirements and directly support Sophie's progression.

Training Arrangement and Ongoing Communication
Sophie was formally booked onto the NPORS Traffic Marshal/Banksman course. All relevant documentation and instructions were shared with her as soon as they became available.
Throughout the process:



- Regular communication was maintained with Sophie to keep her informed and confident in the process.
- Updates regarding training logistics were passed on promptly.
- Support remained available to ensure she could fully complete the course without barriers.
- This consistent engagement ensured Sophie felt well-supported at each stage of her progression journey.

Outcome
Sophie successfully completed the NPORS Traffic Marshal/Banksman training. As a result:

- She transitioned into a Traffic Marshal/Banksman role with her current construction employer.
- Her new position increased earnings and improved long-term job sustainability.
- The combination of Sophie's motivation, accurate training guidance, and personalised mentoring contributed to a strong and positive employment outcome.

Congratulations to Sophie!











The ACE Way



Community Development Training and Mentoring, Networking and Influencing
ACE believes in the power of working with other communities to increase our collective impact. We continue to share what we've learnt from 15 years at the heart of Ely and Caerau and to mobilise community organisations across Cardiff (and further afield) to build collaborations and influence policy.

Highlights from this year include:

- Training and mentoring: Supporting several community organisations in Cardiff, Bridgend and Newport with business planning, governance, strategic planning, financial management and more.
- Cardiff CAN (Community Anchor Network): With C3SC, ACE co-facilitates this network of 15 community organisations. Together, members bring over £8.7 million into local communities, manage 14 buildings, employ over 200 people, work with 650 volunteers and support over 30,000 people annually. This year the group has been developing shared research demonstrating collective impact. We have negotiated positive changes to Cardiff Council's Regeneration Strategy, and have represented our shared interests at the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board conference.
- Local Development Planning and Place Planning: ACE is collaborating with Cardiff University and partners to explore opportunities for communities to be more involved in neighbourhood and place planning.

'The mentoring support through ACE has been invaluable. Having someone with Dave Horton's depth of experience able to dedicate focused time to exploring a real variety of organisational matters and challenges as they arise has been great. Our meetings have provided a valuable space for strategic reflection helping us shape clearer, more resilient ways of working. The outcome has been strengthened decision-making, confidence, and clarity across the team.'
- Charlotte Brown, Grange Pavilion.

'Cardiff CAN has provided so much support and learning for us. The relationships we've developed with like-minded individuals and organisations have been a source of encouragement, peer-support and resource and learning sharing. CAN has enabled us to be heard and to influence change at a city-wide level by working together and pooling our strength to address the challenges our communities and organisations face. As an organisation we feel less isolated and more effective.'
- Helen Griffiths, Hope St Mellons.

To find out how ACE can support your aspirations for your community, email aceway@aceplace.org or visit www.aceplace.org/the-ace-way.





Journey of a Trustee

Leyton's story

This is a journey I never thought I would end up on. After a family tragedy, I found myself totally lost. My GP mentioned social prescribing and groups to get involved in. At this time, being a volunteer was not even on the radar for me.

I was pointed in the direction of the Dusty Forge. I was very depressed at this time and my anxiety was through the roof, but I did my best to attend. I spent many attempts sitting in the bus stop opposite ACE, trying to build up the courage to go in. One day I finally got through the door, and I met our wonderful Caroline Barr, who helped me feel at ease. We had a little look around the Dusty Forge to see what was there for me to do or to get involved in.

After a few more visits, I was asked if I would like to go on a trip to the Royal Mint. I did find it difficult to actually get on the coach, especially full of people I didn't know, but I enjoyed the trip. This seemed to be a big turning point for me. I spent more time at ACE and had many chats with Hazel about how I was doing but also about the community and what is needed, and how ACE could maybe help.

In November 2019 I was invited to the ACE AGM. I sat next to Gloria Yates, a familiar face in the community, not knowing she was a board member at ACE. After chatting, Gloria said 'you should apply to join the ACE board'. As we left, Gloria told the Chair, 'Leyton wants to join the board of trustees!' I bet my face was a picture! I agreed to turn up at the next meeting. Having met with other board members, I thought I could add a little bit. I was still struggling with everyday life and challenges, but in April 2020 I became a trustee.

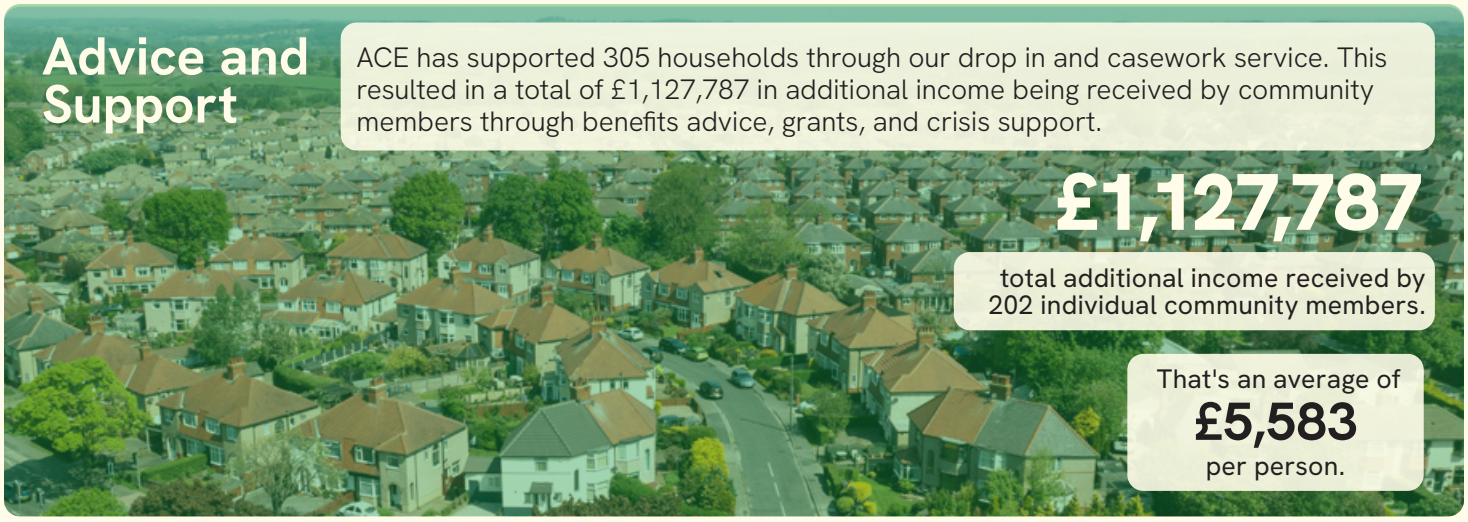
Being a trustee has been a major part of my later life. It gives me a spring in my step and I feel like giving back is a natural thing to do. Everybody has something to give. Now I have been an active volunteer and trustee for over 6 years. Hopefully I am helping a little. Giving back as a volunteer can be so rewarding and to do something for others and be appreciated is payment enough. I have had some wobbles along the way, when I needed some guidance. I have been supported by all the ACE team in abundance but especially by Taela, who I now call my friend.

So my journey started going down a wrong road due to a family tragedy but I like to think I have ended up going down a good road, for the community but most of all myself, and I am very proud to say so.

Impact in Numbers

Behind every number on these pages is a person in our community. We have brought this year's figures together because they show what we have achieved through working together with residents, volunteers, partners, and funders.

Advice and Support



ACE has supported 305 households through our drop in and casework service. This resulted in a total of £1,127,787 in additional income being received by community members through benefits advice, grants, and crisis support.

£1,127,787

total additional income received by 202 individual community members.

That's an average of **£5,583** per person.

CAER Heritage

1,600 people



1,600 people came to the archaeological dig in Trelai Park last summer. 574 volunteers got their hands dirty at the dig, giving around 4,000 hours between them and helping discover our unique heritage.

543 visitors to our Big Dig Open Day in June.
162 pupils from 6 local schools visited the project.

55 learners achieved a Level 3 qualification.
201 families took part across the summer programme, workshops and seasonal events.

YourSpace Wellbeing Service



484 people

484 people accessed 1:1 support to improve their wellbeing.

YourSpace Community Development

308 people

The community development team have supported the development of 15 new groups and activities this year, with 308 people attending.

Bereavement Support

ACE leads on a partnership project, funded by Welsh Government, to enhance bereavement support in Cardiff for people from ethnic minority communities and those with a learning disability.

59 people

The project provided bereavement counselling for 59 people.

33 local residents

with a learning disability took part in peer support activities.

230 people from a range of diverse cultural backgrounds

attended 7 bereavement and mental health workshops.

Shape Your Future



116 bursaries awarded

supporting people to overcome barriers, moving forward in work.

100 people
increased income through work progression or self-employment.

70 people
gained a qualification through bursary support.

41 people
supported to start their own business.

ACE Volunteers



74 regular volunteers

who worked across 17 projects, which had 7 Lead Volunteers.

Volunteering Awards

56 people attended the first Ely and Caerau Volunteering Awards on 17 September. 25 people and groups were nominated and 6 won an award.

Supporting other groups

Through the WCVA strategic grant we supported 7 local groups, one of which became a registered charity in its own right.

Accredited training

10 volunteers completed Mental Health First Aid and 5 gained Level 2 Food Safety for the community shop.

ACE Benthyg

244

Number of times items borrowed in 2025 - 2026

We've increased the number of members. ACE Benthyg members save money while helping the environment.



743 Active Memberships

Community food work



94 Community Members

94 community members attended 33 sessions, improving cooking skills, confidence and learning about healthy, planet-friendly food.

3 Three weekly community meals and pre-cooked meals available at low-cost in the Restore shop.

100 Providing healthy, delicious food and social connection to 100 people each week.

Green spaces

65 Greener spaces

65 sites greened across Ely and Caerau through the Postcode Gardener project.

ACE Trustees

(October 26)

Marian Dixey (Chair) lives in Fairwater. She is an active volunteer.

Mel Witherden is a retired third sector/ charity consultant.

James Roach lives in Ely. He is an active volunteer and contributes finance skills.

Leyton Smith lives in Caerau. He is an active volunteer on ACE community health projects.

Eva Elliot is an Honorary Research Fellow at Cardiff University School of Social Sciences.

Janice Refalo lives in Caerau. She is an active local volunteer.

Carol Owen has 30 years of experience as a senior public health professional with the NHS.

Jessica Davies grew up in Ely and Caerau and is an active volunteer.

We would like to thank Chris Lannen, Omobonike Atobatele, and Oonagh Scott who stepped down from the ACE board of trustees in the last year.

ACE Volunteers

Project Volunteer
Ann Thomas
Afia Ali (Poppy)
Alice Clarke
Andrew Way
Auriol Miller
Blanca Lidea Castro Salas
Caroline Simmonds
Catherine Naamani
Christina Mitchell
Darren George
Deepa Mulagala
Doris Lau
Em Collins
Euryn Davies
Glyn Everett
Gillian Pugh
Helen McCarthy
Irene Jones
James Ford
Jeff Clarke
Jago Forge
Jocelyn Palmer
Josh Buckley
Kyle Thomas
Khalid Thomas
Kerry Williams
Maggie Vasquez
Maria Ross
Mary Cleaton
Mary Hibbs
Mary Ng
Matthew Cunnah
Nigel Dumot
Patrick Barry
Pax Bailey
Peter Nahimara
Rhianedd Collins
Rhian Phillips
Richard Williams
Soph Adams
Sian Davies
Stacey Chester
Sue and John Ilnay
Suzanne McEwan
Tania Clarke
Tony Bratcher
Theresa Mugliston
Victoria Misell
Wai Keung Tang

Student Volunteers
Dan Queally
Hannah Huxley
Jay Lloyd-Evans
Joseph Daniel
Kwan Yw Chow, Tony
Sirui Li
Sophie Bell

Lead Volunteers
Cathy Elder
Charlotte Ross
Dave Wyatt
Diane Matheson
Frankie Curtis
Kathleen Wolfe
Penny Smith
Sarah Standring

Trustees
Carol Owen
Eva Elliot
James Roach
Janice Refalo
Jessica Davies
Leyton Smith
Marian Dixey
Mel Witherden

Many thanks to previous volunteers who supported us in 2025-2026
Angelica Cresswell
Anwen John
Billy (William) Lewis Mears
Christina Dunn
Danny Westcott
Dave Holifield
Diane Katy
Doug Smith
Dylan Bond
Gareth Howells
Gemma Carleton
Hannah Huxley
Helen Hunt
Jack Wyatt
Jessica Rudd
John Naylor
Laura Simpson
Liubov Yurtsuniak
Nadia Aslam
Omobonike Atobatele
Oonagh Scott
Owen Evans
Penny Owens
Robert White
Scott Bees
Scott Morgan
Sabar Afrasiabi
Zahra Jelveh

Community members volunteering on the CAER Big Dig
Anna Maria
Anthony Morgan
Avelin Jennifer
Callum Howells
Callum Wilson
Candida Moss
Catherine Richards
Charly Waith
Deb Cuddihy
Deb Smith
Eddie Hatherall
Ellen Perry
Graham Larsen
Genny Temple
Heather Royle
Helena Green
Helen Yearsley
Holly Dickens
Jake Wilkinson
Kate Mullins
Kelsey Rae Cross
Kevin Bush
Kieran Coates
Kim Iannucci
Lloyd Griffiths
Lucy Bourne
Michael Cordner
Paul White
Phil Jones
Raymond Smith
Rebecca Jones
Richard Benson
Sashika Clarke
Sian Jefferson
Spencer Grennan
Theo Hurd

ACE Staff List

Core

Michelle Powell
ACE Director
Dave Horton
ACE Learning and Training Director
Hazel Cryer
Operational Development Manager – Health Portfolio
Sam Froud-Powell
Operational Development Manager – Community Support Portfolio
Julie Evans
HR and Admin Coordinator
Hasan Roap
ACE Finance Officer
George Keane
Communications and Web Content Officer / Dusty Shed Officer
Taela-Mae Davies
Volunteer Development Officer
Becky Matyus
ACE Partnerships Coordinator
Dale Ovenstone
Estates Officer
Sharon McGrath
ACE Receptionist
Julie McDowell
ACE Receptionist
Maria Ross
Assistant Administrator

Health

Ann Bailey
Community Health Development Worker
Clare Westcott
Wellbeing Connector
Danielle Afferion
Young People's Wellbeing Connector / Wellbeing Connector
Ginny Brink
Wellbeing Connector
Louise Gray
Service Coordinator Community Development
Mags Lyons
Service Coordinator Wellbeing Support
Marged Ioan
Community Health Development Worker / Wellbeing Connector
Mildred Foster
Community Health Development Worker
Rob Jones
YourSpace Monitoring and Administration Assistant
Sabrina Driscoll
Wellbeing Connector
Sam Deere
Community Health Development Worker
Sophia Farrugia
Wellbeing Connector
Stuart Williams
Wellbeing Connector
Susan Beese
Wellbeing Connector

Community Support

Nerys Sheehan
Community Support Coordinator / Grand Avenues Coordinator
Stacie Leek
Hafan Project Development Officer
Megan O'Brien
Community Support Admin Assistant

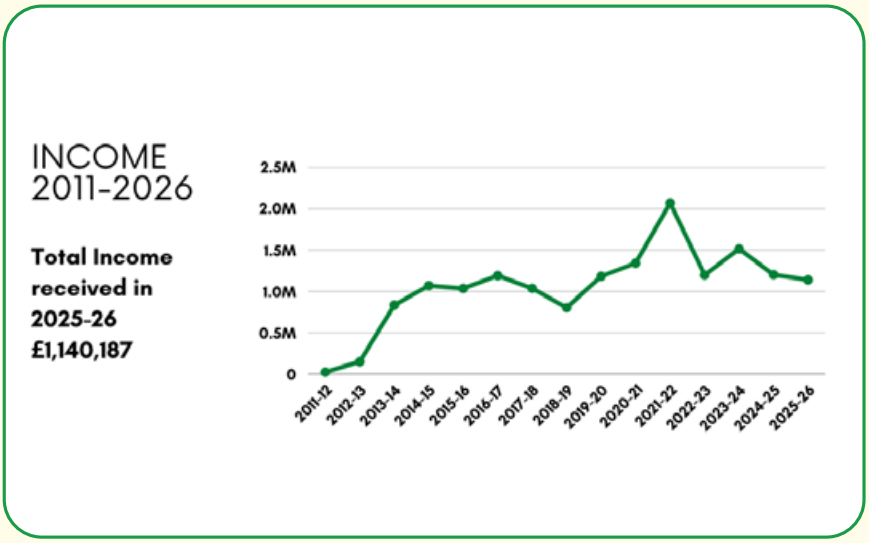
Heritage and Learning

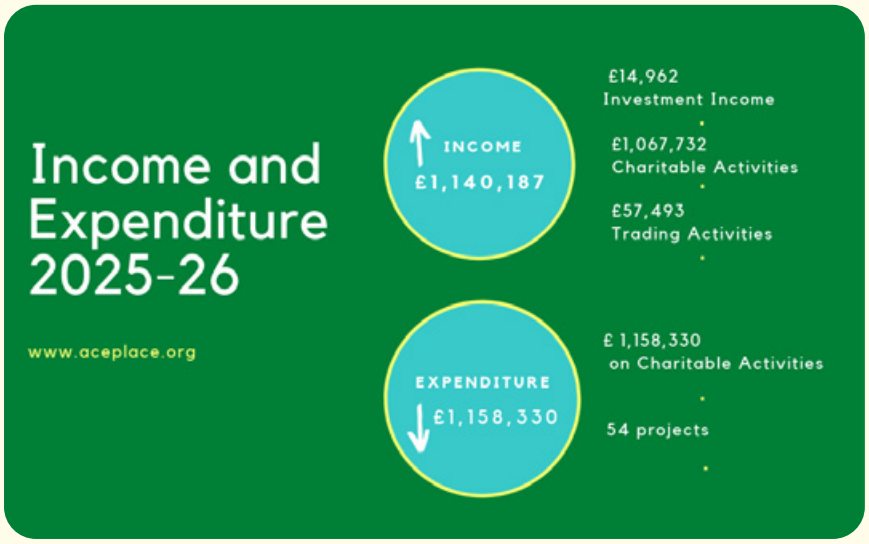
Lois Atkinson
CAER Centre Development Officer

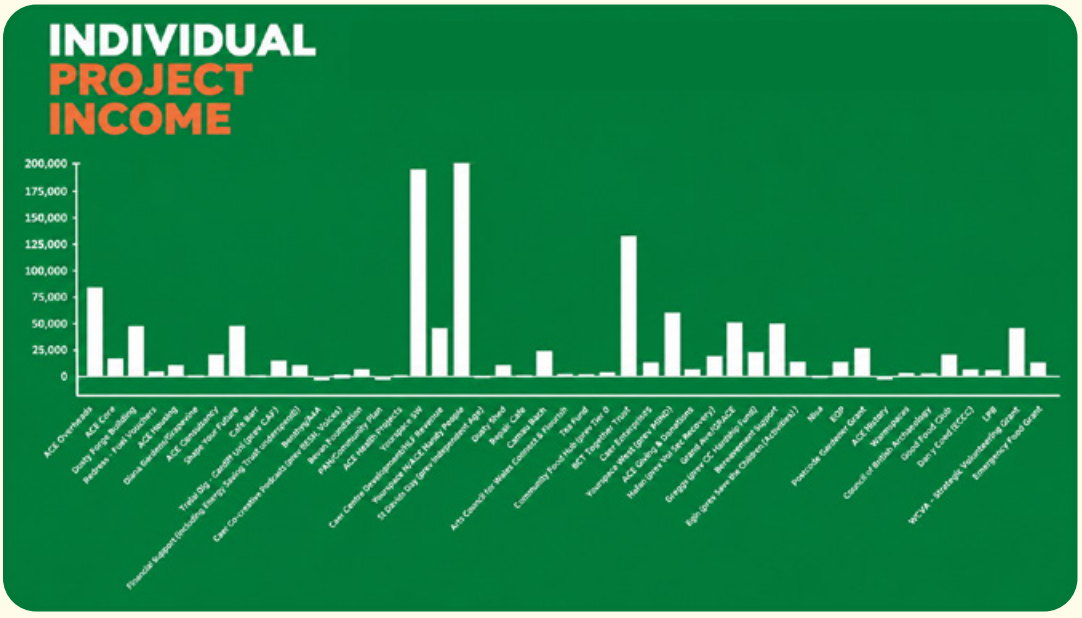
Thanks to the former ACE Staff who have moved on in the last year:
Rob Fuller
Scott Bees
Steve Lyons
Suki Shinto



Financial Report







ACE received total income of £1,140,187 in the 2025-26 financial year. Income was generated primarily through charitable activities (£1,067,732), supported by £57,493 of self-generated trading income through social enterprise, rental, consultancy and training activities, and £21,119 in donations and investment income. Total expenditure for the year was £1,158,330, spent directly on charitable activities. Funding during 2025 - 26 supported 54 projects, maintaining a similar level of delivery to the previous year.

Over the last 15 years, ACE has contributed more than £15 million to the local economy. From 2018 - 26, income generated through direct ACE activities - including social enterprise, grant funding, contracts, fundraising, donations and legacies - totals approximately £10.5 million.

Funders and Partners

ACE Funders

























































ACE Partners



























ace

Action in Caerau & Ely

Gweithredu yng Nghaerau a Threlái

Action in Caerau and Ely

Our Place: Dusty Forge
460 Cowbridge Rd West, Ely
Cardiff CF5 5BZ
Tel: 029 2000 3132

info@aceplace.org
www.aceplace.org
ACE - Action in Caerau and Ely
actionincaerauandely

Registered in Wales and England No.7623914.
Registered Charity No. 1150422