



Action in Caerau and Ely

Annual Report 2022 - 2023





Action in Caerau and Ely

“Our Ambitions For Our Community
Through Our Own Efforts”

Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Contents

1. **Message from the Chair** p4
2. **About ACE** p6
Our vision and values.
3. **Investing in Volunteers** p8
4. **Ely and Caerau Community Plan** p10
5. **Community Support** p11
ACE Advice & Support.
Your Local Pantry.
Café Barr.
ACE Benthylg.
Repair Café.
ACE Community Shop.
Lived Experiences.
Grand Avenues.
6. **'I've got a sense of purpose'
- Scott's story** p14
7. **Health and wellbeing** p16
Yourspace Wellbeing Support.
Diana Garden Project.
ACE Compassionate Communities.
ACE Cares.
8. **ACE places** p18
Grow Well at the
Dusty Forge Community Garden.
The Dusty Shed.
CAER Heritage.
9. **'A life's for living and getting outside'
- Steve's story** p21
10. **ACE Volunteers** p22
11. **Arts and Heritage** p24
ACE Arts story - Looking forward to Mondays.
ACE Arts.
ACE Consult.
Together for Trowbridge and St. Mellons.
12. **Children, Young People
and Families** p26
ACE Youth.
Curiosity.
13. **'I love seeing people progress'
- Charlene's story** p27
14. **Training and Employment** p28
ACE Training.
Shape Your Future.
15. **The ACE Way
- community development training
and mentoring** p29
16. **Trustees/Volunteers/Staff** p31
17. **Finance Report** p33
18. **Our Funders and Partners** p34

1.

Message from the Chair

Yet again, ACE has managed to cope with even greater challenges from the global economic turmoil and the effects of the pandemic. The main focus for this year has been consolidation, with only a few new projects. In March 2023, the funding for two big projects came to an end, so planning was put in place for replacement funding income. Our staff numbers have remained stable, with many working on more than one project during their working week.

The pressures on balancing the books have been intensified by the rise in energy bills, especially as businesses weren't covered by the same energy cap and assistance schemes as residential users. With this in mind, Sam Froud-Powell and Hazel Cryer were tasked with looking for core funding part-time.

On the surface the staff are coping well, but like swans they are working frantically behind the scenes to keep to budgets and investigate new funding opportunities. ACE's reputation among previous and existing partners has resulted in invitations to apply for project funding, which has saved a lot of time and effort.

Our dedicated community support team received funding from sources including Welsh Government, Cardiff Council and a private donor to issue over 2,700 fuel vouchers to help those who were impacted

most from soaring energy bills. The demand for membership of the Pantry, and use of Café Barr and the community shop has again massively increased. In the case of the Pantry, new sources of food donations have had to be found to meet demand as the supplies to FareShare have decreased.

The dedicated team of ACE volunteers have achieved Green Flag status for the gardens around the Dusty in partnership with Grow Cardiff, and an Investing in Volunteers award, which is nationally recognised. The staff and volunteers together make an amazing team, without which ACE couldn't have achieved what it has so far or continue to do so.

At the beginning of 2023, co-director Dave Horton gave notice that he was standing down to concentrate on developing the ACE Way training project. In April, Michelle Powell became Director, with Sam and Hazel appointed as full time Operational Development Managers. This has led to a reorganisation of some other roles, and maximised use of resources.

Who knows what the future will bring to challenge the ACE team, but I have every confidence that together we will find a way to succeed in supporting our community.

*Marian Dixey,
Chair of Trustees, September 2023.*



About ACE

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'.

Our Values

At ACE we believe:

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

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

In 2023 we have conducted an Operational Plan review, streamlined our work and re-structured our teams. The Operational Plan review will inform our new Strategic Plan 2023-26 which will be completed in October 23.



At ACE, the way we work is just as important as the things we do. Watch our new video 'The ACE Way' to get a feel for how we work with and alongside people in our community.





Resilient



3.



Investing in Volunteers

A BIG thank you to all ACE volunteers and staff who helped us achieve the 'Investing in volunteers' award!



ACE – Action in Caerau & Ely is proud to be an Investing in Volunteers (IiV) achiever, having been awarded the quality mark/standard in 2023 for the first time.

Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations involving volunteers. It shows that ACE values our volunteers and demonstrates our commitment to volunteering within the organisation.

Investing in Volunteers aims to improve the quality of the volunteering experience for

everyone and demonstrates that organisations value the enormous contribution made by their volunteers. ACE was assessed against six quality areas and proved to excel in all aspects of working with its volunteers.

20 volunteers were interviewed (out of 68 when assessed, not including trustees). They also interviewed staff members and Mel Witherden, the chair of trustees at the time. He said:

"Volunteers and local people are in the driving seat for development, they are integral to the organisation and will always be part of the decision making."

Volunteers bring so many skills, so much experience, and they have so many ideas. Many volunteers have experienced inequality and have a passion

to support people in their community; bringing that into the organisation is invaluable. We would not be ACE without the volunteers.

All volunteers can access training that is relevant to their role or their personal development goals.

Volunteers bring so much to ACE, they share their life experiences and support and learn from each other, we learn from them too, and volunteers really represent the community spirit in which we work."

For the future, ACE is committed to further build our volunteering programme. We are currently looking at our core principles and how we can maintain these, ensuring community and volunteering remains key to the organisation.

Six Quality Areas:

Vision for volunteering:

Volunteering is embedded within the overall vision, values, culture and aims of the organisation and its impact is recognised and communicated. Organisations understand why they involve volunteers.

Planning for volunteers:

People, policies and procedures have been put in place to ensure volunteering is well-managed.

Volunteer inclusion:

There is a positive approach to inclusion, equity and diversity and a proactive approach to making volunteering accessible.

Recruiting and welcoming volunteers:

It is easy for people to find out about opportunities, explore whether they are right for them, and get involved.

Supporting volunteers:

Volunteers feel supported at all times, that they are a part of the organisation and that their contribution makes a difference.

Valuing and developing volunteers:

Volunteers are valued and there are opportunities for volunteers to develop and grow through their experience.



'I have made friends with people who I would not have met before volunteering.'

'I love it so much I have told other people who struggle to come and access support and volunteer.'

'The organisation is so supportive of volunteers. I see greatness from volunteers daily.'

'ACE helps us see the impact we are having in a community with very little, it helps families and people in the community to connect. ACE has really built up my confidence – it's amazing.'

'Staff see me each time I volunteer and help me feel I make a difference.'



Read the full report online:

<https://www.aceplace.org/ace-achievement-of-investing-in-volunteers-award/>

4.

Ely and Caerau Community Plan



We are gathering together the views of people of all ages across the whole of Ely and Caerau. We want to explore together what we can do to strengthen our community and help each other out. We're asking:

- What do we have?
- What do we need?
- What do we want to change?

Some things we can change ourselves, working together across our community. For other things, we will need support from those who have the resources to make change. We'll

use the information we gather to make a community plan for Ely and Caerau, working together with Cardiff Council and the Public Services Board to agree a plan with defined budgets and timescales. We aim to do this by March 2024.

This work is with the support of the Welsh Government, Cardiff Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, who are funding our new Community Engagement Team. It's a chance for all of us living in Ely and Caerau to raise our voices in an organised way, to share our

ideas and come together to bring positive change. ACE does this all the time - listening to our communities and working together to bring change. There's a lot we can do when we join together our strengths, skills, experiences and resources.



We want as many people as possible to share their ideas and contribute to this community plan, so please get in touch at communityplan@aceplace.org to have your say, or share your views in our [online survey here](#).



There are a lot of people involved in this work! To find out how the Community Steering Group, the Public Service Board Working Group and the Ministerial Reference Group are working together to co-create the community plan with residents, [read more on our blog](#).



Follow us on

Facebook@ECCCommunityplan



Instagram@actionincaerauandely

to find out about events, groups and chats in your area and join in.

5.



Eich siop fwyd gymunedol leol
Your local community food store



Community Support

Check out our new **Community Support website**
for more info, videos and stories:
<https://www.ace-communitysupport.com/>



ACE Advice and Support

ACE Community Support is a service that helps people in financial crisis to access foodbank vouchers, fuel support and help to manage debt and receive benefit support.

We have increased household income in the community by £136,756 supporting 2312 households with fuel vouchers, grants and unclaimed benefits. We offer specialist support to parents of children with additional needs and host two monthly Legal Clinics offering free legal advice for those experiencing issues around Children's Law and Financial Safeguarding.

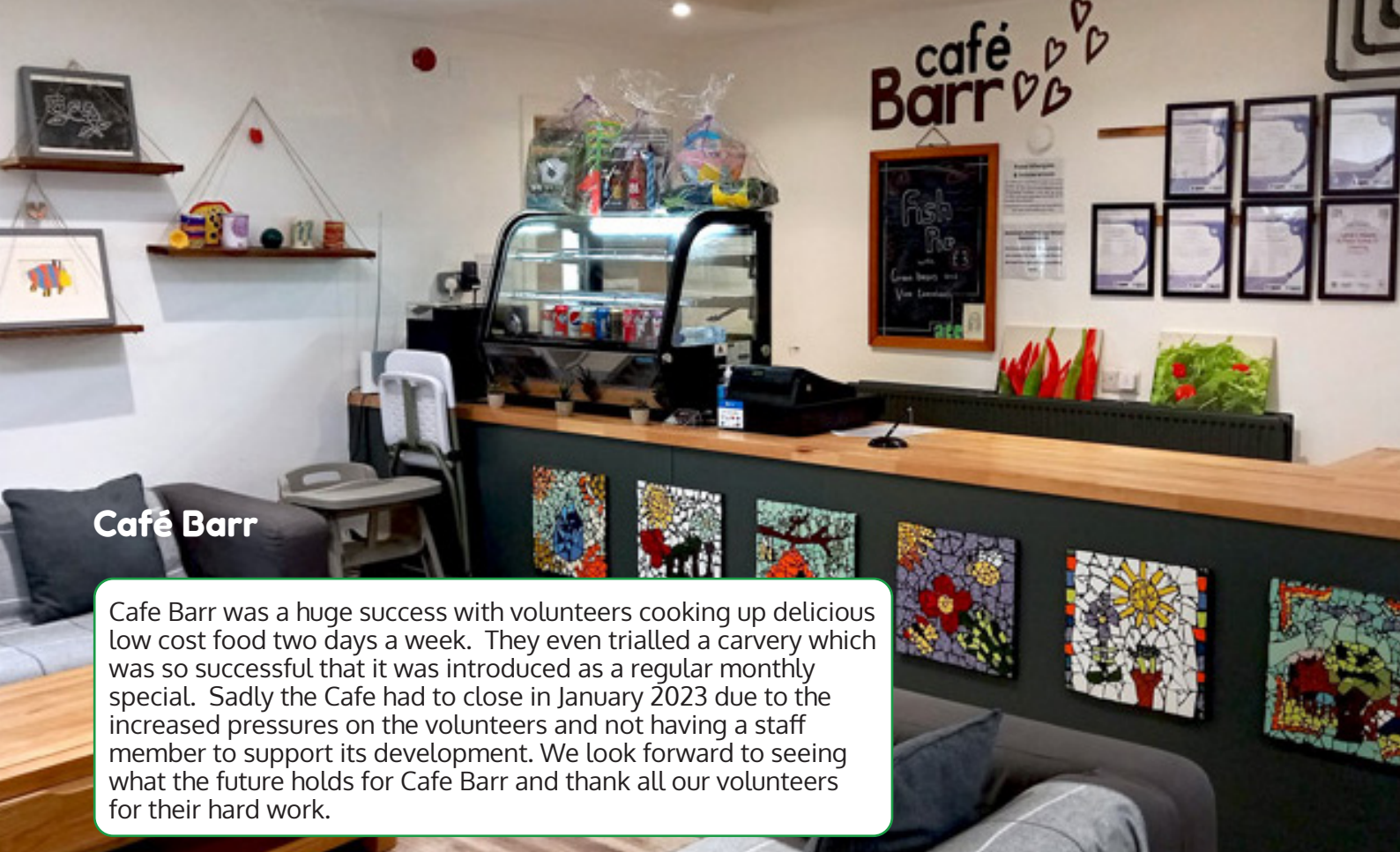
"I can't thank you enough for all you have done, I couldn't have done this by myself, it was so stressful."

Your Local Pantry

The Pantry is in more demand than ever due to the increase in food and fuel costs, with 167 members. We receive visits from over 150 households every week who have come to rely on the service. Members pay £5 for a choice of £15-£20 worth of food. We also offer low cost cleaning items and toiletries.

At the pantry we care for our members like family, offering support, choice and friendship. We offer an experience that allows us to not only give practical support but to offer a listening ear with no judgement. Our pantry is a safe space for all to come and feel welcome.

"Very friendly people here, the food top's up my cupboard for the week, I look forward to my weekly visit for a chat"



Café Barr

Café Barr was a huge success with volunteers cooking up delicious low cost food two days a week. They even trialled a carvery which was so successful that it was introduced as a regular monthly special. Sadly the Cafe had to close in January 2023 due to the increased pressures on the volunteers and not having a staff member to support its development. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for Café Barr and thank all our volunteers for their hard work.

ACE Benthgy

ACE Benthgy is our Library of Things where our community can borrow items at low cost. We've diversified to include different activities around repair, reuse, recycle and tackling climate change. We have a total of 258 items available to hire with more items added daily. There are 614 members with 313 subscribed members, with 275 'borrows' over the year. We have begun to transform a disused parcel of land into a peace garden in collaboration with local schools and HMPPS. ACE Benthgy is also working with the Cardiff Curriculum team to aid in the creation and development of the new school curriculum based around the Welsh Government's circular economy.



Repair Café

Our busy Dusty repair cafe has been running on the 4th Saturday each month for the last 4 years. Since we started in 2019, our team of eight volunteer 'fixers' have checked 479 items, with 3 out of 4 items being successfully repaired. Our volunteer hosts provide a warm and friendly welcome and all repairs are free, including bikes, electrical items, IT equipment, toys, ceramics and textiles. As well as saving money and helping the environment, customers can learn how to do simple repairs while watching our 'fixers' repair their items.

"Fantastic! Thank you - you brought Teddy the Bear back to life."

"A thoroughly excellent service - quick and I learnt something."



ACE Community Shop

The community shop has been as busy as ever in light of the Cost of Living crisis. It has seen a huge increase in numbers and growing demand particularly for childrens clothes.

The volunteers have worked so hard to provide vital support to those who need it and ensure that stock is rotated and redistributed back into the community to those who need it.

October 2023: The community shop is temporarily closed to allow for a refit, and will reopen in early November to provide a wider range of support as part of ACE's growing projects to promote sustainable living and save people money during the cost of living crisis.

"I can't keep replacing the clothes they have outgrown, they are growing so fast. This place is a godsend and I know I can bring in their outgrown clothes too so I don't feel so bad, its like a swap shop."

Lived Experiences

In partnership with The Bevan Foundation, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, we contributed to many discussions within the Senedd. Through monthly focus groups we developed an evidence base capturing peoples lived experiences of poverty. This was a really powerful piece of work and contributed to policy change regarding Cost of Living Support.

We were also funded through the Welsh Government to hear from parents of children under 6, parents of children with additional learning needs and a group of young people from the ACE Youth Council. We submitted our findings to the Welsh Government to help them in rewriting the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales.

"I'm only 14 but why can't I work part time? It would help take the pressure off my mum and dad, I won't need to ask them for money all the time if I earned my own."



You can watch our video, **ACE Lived Experiences project with the Bevan Foundation** - here.



Grand Avenues

The Grand Avenues project is a partnership between His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, ACE and St Vincent De Paul (SVP). The project works with men on probation, ensuring the men have access to income, health support and community interventions. The men feel better connected with the community which reduces the likelihood of reoffending.

The project is gaining momentum and between 2022-2023, 38 men were supported to claim a total of £51,568 in benefits, supported into work and able to access vital GP support on release from prison.

"Doing my probation in the community means I am not seeing the same people I used to get into trouble with. There is so much help here. I don't want to go back into that life."

6.



‘I’ve got a sense of purpose’ – Scott’s story

Before I was with ACE I was using every day. I was living in a flat for a few months, but I still felt homeless. My lifestyle was chaos. I would get on the bus with a sleeping bag and I would go begging all day down town for money for valium, crack and heroin. But obviously, the lifestyle that goes with that is really, really hectic, dangerous, unhealthy. And it affects your mental health a lot as well.

I did have one thing in my head that ended up getting me out in the end. My son’s 18th birthday was coming up in a couple of years, and I wanted to get clean to see him. My parental responsibility was removed from me when he was 12. So yeah, I was in a really, really bad situation before I started engaging with ACE. When I spoke to my Pobl worker about the negative feelings that I was feeling, she said right, let’s get you doing something. She asked

me what my interests were. I said history, and stuff outdoors, and she said right, well I know that CAER Heritage Centre are doing stuff at the hillfort.

So I started volunteering with the Love our Hillfort group, and while I was there, I was trying to clean myself up a bit, drastically reduced the amount of drugs I was using, and part of that was because I had something to do during the day. And I started making friends within the group.

And then another one of my interests was art. Pobl told me about the art group at the Dusty. I started making friends there. And I started seeing that I didn't have to live my life the way it was. I had a reason to get up in the morning, some kind of direction and not go and do what I was doing to block everything out. When you're doing art it's good, there's nothing else to think about apart from making something nice. Then I started going to Diana gardens. So that was like three days out of my week that I had something positive to do, and I started making friends at all three groups.

I managed to stop using, I was just still on the methadone. I was doing it by myself. I started looking after myself a lot more because I was around other people who respected themselves. And that gave me more self respect, because I wasn't hanging around with people that hadn't showered for weeks and weeks and just didn't care. So there was a positive influence on me.

This was in the lockdown period and I was using the pantry, so I started eating better. I was really really underweight, so getting a balanced diet had a massive effect on me. The basics have to come first, so, go to bed at a decent time, sleep, wake up, have a shower, have something to eat and that. I mean, I hadn't been doing those things for such a long time. Sometimes I didn't talk to anybody for days. So like, having the thing with ACE, you know, where people want to talk

to you and they want to help you and they're interested, and some of the people like the volunteers had gone through similar things as well. That was absolutely amazing that was, like. It was like stepping into a different world, and it was one that I was really, really happy to be in.

I was at Diana Gardens when I met Christian who introduced me to SVP, where I work now. So if it wasn't for the work I was doing with ACE, potentially I wouldn't be working here now. He told me that I could use my lived experience to perhaps get a job working alongside probation and that just blew my mind. I realised that even though what happened was bad, I could use it for good, and help other people. So I started volunteering at the Grand Avenues project at SVP in January or February and started studying at the careers office too. I had a job by August.

I'm loving [the peer mentoring role at SVP], I'm really enjoying it. I really like helping people. It's something new every day. I get to help people that are in the situation I used to be in. And that gives you a really good feeling inside that does, yeah. They've been very, very supportive, you know, making me employable and improving social skills, and getting involved with different activities and that.

The big change has been having a sense of purpose. Like when I was volunteering with the Dusty, even though I had something to do, I had no purpose or direction. So when I started coming here to SVP, I had a direction to go for

the job, and a purpose, which is helping people who were in the same situation I was all those years.

I'm still engaging with the Dusty Forge, I've been volunteering with ACE Youth and the men's club, Forge Masters. Hannah Bees encouraged me to do the Youth and Community Course, she said go for it, you know, and it's like a university accreditation. And, wow, I've never done anything like that before. Like, you know, I failed all my exams, all the ones I went to like, anyway, so yeah, what an opportunity. It's amazing.

I got off the methadone and the diazepam. Getting my medication changed was a big thing. My mental health is so much better, because obviously I've got these other things going on. I'm looking after my physical health. I've got a sense of purpose, I've got good direction, I've got support all around me. So if I do ever need support, then I know I can just call one of my colleagues in and say, look, this is going on, I need a bit of support with this.

I'm working, I'm healthier. I go to the gym. I've been eating better. My mood has been better. Yeah, things have just changed dramatically for me. I've applied for a job working for HMPPS as a substance misuse officer with young people on probation. And I want to start driving, and do all the things that people do, go on holidays and that. I would never have considered that before.

7.

Health and Wellbeing

Yourspace Wellbeing Support

South West Cardiff

Yourspace South West provides 1:1 wellbeing support and develops new community-led wellbeing activities across South West Cardiff. Referrals are seen promptly and wellbeing connectors offer a range of signposting options with an engaging person-centred approach. Our team supported 508 people to improve their wellbeing in April '22 - March '23.

Our development workers have been adept at developing a range of activities to meet needs, including wellbeing courses, outings and sewing groups. Our experienced team continues to provide a service that is tailored to the individual, supporting them to improve their self confidence and widen their social networks, with 83% of participants showing an improvement in wellbeing.

North Cardiff

Yourspace North Cardiff is a new pilot project, started in January 2023. It provides 1:1 wellbeing support and develops new community-led wellbeing activities across North Cardiff. The service was commissioned by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and works in close partnership with Cardiff North Primary Care Cluster.

The team have been getting to know the range of organisations working in the Cluster, mapping current provision and identifying opportunities for working together. Many services and groups have been engaged, particularly organisations relevant for people of different ages, ethnicity, religion and those with particular health, mental health or mobility needs.

"Can I just say that the lovely lady has been so helpful (within my unfortunate situation) she is so understanding and I am so very grateful for her help."

Diana Garden Project

"I think there's been quite a few changes as a result of getting involved in Diana garden – the fulfilment, the working with other people, I found that really valuable. I really look forward to my Tuesdays here. I wake up in the morning, and I'm happy about coming here. The happiness factor is really big."

– Steve Lyons

 [Read his story on page 21](#)



In the last year, the Diana Garden project has received funding to carry on its weekly volunteer sessions as well as employ a second staff member. The project has grown a diverse group of volunteers as well as started working with HM Prison and Probation service which made a massive difference for the improvement of the garden.

We ran weekly gardening sessions, engaging the local community in gardening and social activities. We have engaged HM Prison and Probation service in green activities and improvement of the space. We ran a couple of events for families where we shared our gardening and wildlife knowledge.

ACE Compassionate Communities

We aim to enhance support and compassion for people experiencing isolation, loneliness or disconnection from the community due to illness, caring responsibilities, approaching end of life and/or bereavement. We spoke with 63 people this year. Funded by Macmillan, the Welsh Government and supported by the Compassionate Cymru Movement, working across South West Cardiff.

This year, we gave out 125 Wellbeing boxes and volunteers provided 5 'back home' boxes to people in End of Life care and their carers. We have facilitated 27 Griefspace peer support sessions. 125 Kindness cards were made by local children and adults, and 10 volunteers made hundreds of crochet gifts. ACE remains part of the Compassionate Cymru Steering group.

"Thanks so much, this is just so lovely. I can't believe this is just for me, it's just so special." – Recipient of a Wellbeing Box

ACE Cares

In July 2022 we partnered with Cwmpas on a two-year project to test out and learn from different approaches to community-led care. Our local communities and partners have been exploring how we can foster and strengthen a caring community in Ely and Caerau, looking at existing local assets and the role of service-providers and decision-makers.

We helped establish a group for local carers, who are building a wider support network and supporting each other, and secured funding for short break activities. Events have brought together local people, community groups and services to share knowledge and ideas. We have established a network of local 'Changemakers' who will help shape the delivery of the project.

8.

ACE Places

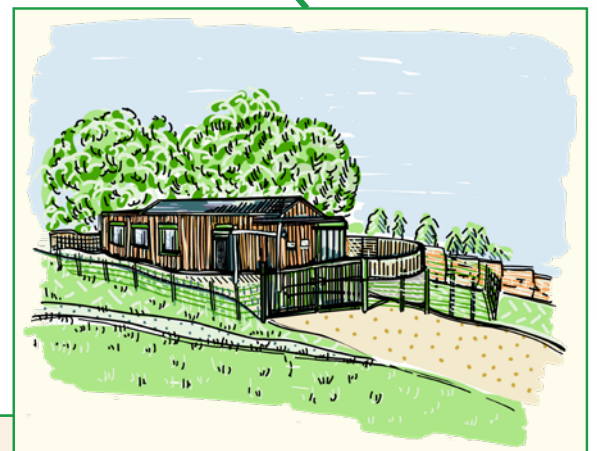
Diana Gardens:

- Diana Garden project



Our Place: Dusty Forge:

- Advice drop-in
- Crisis Support
- Pantry
- Café Barr
- Community Shop
- ACE Training
- ACE Arts
- Grief Space
- Retreat social group
- Knit and Natter
- Wellbeing coffee mornings
- Crochet club
- Benthyc - Library of Things
- Repair Cafe
- Grow Well - community garden
- The Dusty Shed



CAER Heritage Centre:

- Carers Club
- Love Our Hillfort group
- Hidden Hillfort gardening group
- Umbrella - neurodiversity support group for parents
- Community Learning

Grow Well at The Dusty Forge Community Garden

*"I feel wanted, it brings you out of yourself."
"I use it as a break in my work routine,
to allow a mental break. I can take the
positives back with me afterwards."*

One of the 3 gardens that offers therapeutic community gardens sessions led by staff from Grow Cardiff in partnership with ACE and the Cardiff SW Primary Care Cluster is the hidden gem behind the Dusty Forge. Every Monday, a team of volunteers meet for a cuppa and some nature-based care: looking after the garden, our wildlife and most importantly each other. Many have never grown a plant before, but we learn together and share skills in many ways; recipes, crafting, DIY and a listening ear. You can be referred by your health care professional or staff at ACE, but self-referrals are also welcome.

More info: growwell@growcardiff.org



The Dusty Shed

The Dusty Shed is an independent charity, run by its members, with a mission to combat the issue of loneliness and social isolation among our community's older residents.

In our ongoing commitment to safety and well-being, several of our members completed training in First Aid and Mental Health Awareness. Furthermore, we enhanced outdoor security of our premises by installing a sliding door and an additional lockable door at the rear.



ACE's open day showcased our work to our local community. Alongside community projects, we aid ACE's Repair Café, Library of Things, and undertake minor maintenance tasks at the Dusty Forge.



CAER Heritage

The CAER Heritage Hidden Hillfort project, successfully completed this year, has sought to put Caerau and Ely's incredible history at the heart of community regeneration efforts. Our partnership with Cardiff University has seen: the establishment of CAER Heritage and Learning Centre, installation of footpath improvements and interpretation at Caerau Hillfort, new funded routes to university for young people, and community involvement in archaeological research that has helped us tell a different story about our home.

Amongst many other highlights, this year saw the fabulous CAER Love our Hillfort group and other volunteers create a stunning tapestry and nurture the heritage centre garden to its current glory!

Our second community archaeology excavation at

Trelai Park excavated the first known house in Cardiff dating to the Bronze Age almost 4,000 years ago. There were incredible finds from an Air Raid Patrol badge dropped during the Second World War to flint arrowheads from the early Bronze Age. The dig had over 1000 visitors with 257 local volunteers participating and 159 school pupils from 5 local schools. Importantly, the dig also generated significant and very positive media coverage for our communities and was reported widely in Wales, the UK and internationally. It will also feature in Channel 4's Digging for Britain TV programme. An incredibly rare Bronze Age pot discovered during the 2022 community dig has been lovingly reconstructed and has gone on display to the community at the CAER Centre. Over 70 volunteers have been involved in finds cleaning, sieving and post-dig analysis and activities at the

CAER Centre over the summer of 2023.

Following a series of co-creation working groups with local people the CAER Centre is entering a new phase as a learning hub. Cardiff University's out-going Vice Chancellor, Prof Colin Riordan, visited the CAER Centre in July 2023 and has committed significant sustainability funding to the project and Centre, initially for one year but with a view to sustaining this for three years. This funding will create two new full time posts along with a small annual project budget (a CAER Centre development officer employed by ACE and a Community Partnership Manager employed by Cardiff University) who will staff the CAER Centre from later this autumn and develop partnerships, funding bids, volunteer and learning activities.

"There is something lovely about relaxing into the heritage work with other people, which I didn't get from my work relationships. The sense of community as well as the history of the area are both important, and you can't separate one from the other."



9.

‘A life’s for living and getting outside’ – Steve’s story

I’m 70 years old now. Early last year I retired from a job I’d been doing for 35 years, supporting people around drug and alcohol issues. I take my dog for a walk, I enjoy walking. But the one thing I really missed, since my wife is working full time, is contact with other people. So that drove me to look for opportunities. And luckily enough ACE needed volunteers, so I applied for that. I had a keen interest in gardening – I’ve always enjoyed growing my own vegetables. I would call myself an ever-learning volunteer.

I think there’s been quite a few changes as a result of getting involved in Diana garden - the fulfilment, the working with other people, I found that really valuable. I really look forward to my Tuesdays here. I wake up in the morning, and I’m happy about coming here. The happiness factor is really big.

It’s easy to drift down when you’re retired. You tend to think – I’ll just put my feet up, watch a bit more television rather

than get out and about and do a bit. I feel really fulfilled about the continued learning, which I think life’s all about. Diana garden, definitely, lets me enjoy that. What we can’t emphasise enough is the happiness it brings people when you’re out in the fresh air. The conversations you have with comrades in work, it’s just really nice. And I think I’m happier for it, I’m fitter for it. I mean, I’m constantly learning here, which is great for my mind, because my memory is not as great as what it used to be.

There’s also team camaraderie, how we can raise each other’s self-esteem by being actively involved together and doing gardening, and that brings me a lot of pleasure as well. One of the greatest things I’ve seen is Vaida’s enthusiasm. I’ve never seen anybody so enthusiastic about seeing a ladybird, or a butterfly we haven’t seen before and I think that just generates so much within the group as well. And that’s the kind of vibe that’s in the garden. So I’d be ever thankful for Vaida for creating

that. And I would like to see even more opportunities to work in the garden to spend more time here as well. One day a week is difficult.

There have been changes for people that live in the local community, a hundred percent. I’ve seen people coming in on the open days and you see the looks on the children’s faces and the parents... it has been really, really nice. There’s lots of opportunities here within ACE to get involved in what I see as very worthwhile projects that they provide. I think it’s doing a massive service for people in Ely and Cardiff. May long it roll on.

Diana garden has given me a purpose, keeping my mind active and focused. You know, it helps with so much, the camaraderie is a massive one for me and I just love it. It’s just really good.

In September 2023, Steve started a new paid role with ACE as Diana Garden Development Worker.



ACE has 74 volunteers, spread across 14 different areas of work at the Dusty Forge, CAER Heritage Centre and Diana Gardens. Five are lead volunteers, giving extra support to staff. ALL our volunteers are AMAZING! They are dedicated, supportive, passionate and determined to help improve the lives of people living in Caerau & Ely.

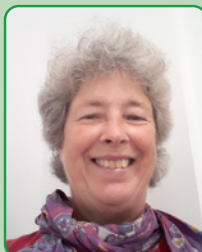
Volunteer Qualifications:

Volunteers have gained numerous qualifications to develop and improve their skills and to help support the community more effectively. These include: food hygiene, safeguarding, first aid and mental health first aid, equality & diversity, self-awareness & personal development, team-working, communication skills, GDPR, managing conflict, dementia training, suicide awareness, manual handling and health and safety.

Volunteer Events:

We held another fabulous thank you and awards ceremony for the volunteers this year, recognising their contributions and achievements and the impact and difference they have made. This, along with the Christmas social event, was a great way to get staff and volunteers together from projects across the Dusty Forge, the CAER heritage centre and Diana Gardens to celebrate.

Our current Lead volunteers are:



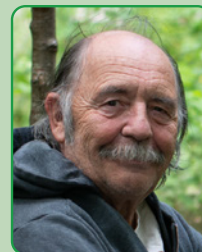
Frankie Curtis:
CAER Gardening



Penny Smith:
Repair Café



Diane Katy:
Retreat



Steve Lyons:
Diana Gardens



Kathy Wolfe:
Walking Group

THANK YOU to all our volunteers for another year of incredible commitment, compassion and selfless hard work.

📖 ACE also achieved the 'Investing in Volunteers' award status this year - see page 8 to find out more!

If you are interested in joining as a volunteer, please see our current volunteer opportunities:
<https://www.aceplace.org/volunteer-opportunities/>



ACE offers small pots of funding via the ACE Volunteer Fund to local community projects run by volunteers. In the last year funding was awarded to:

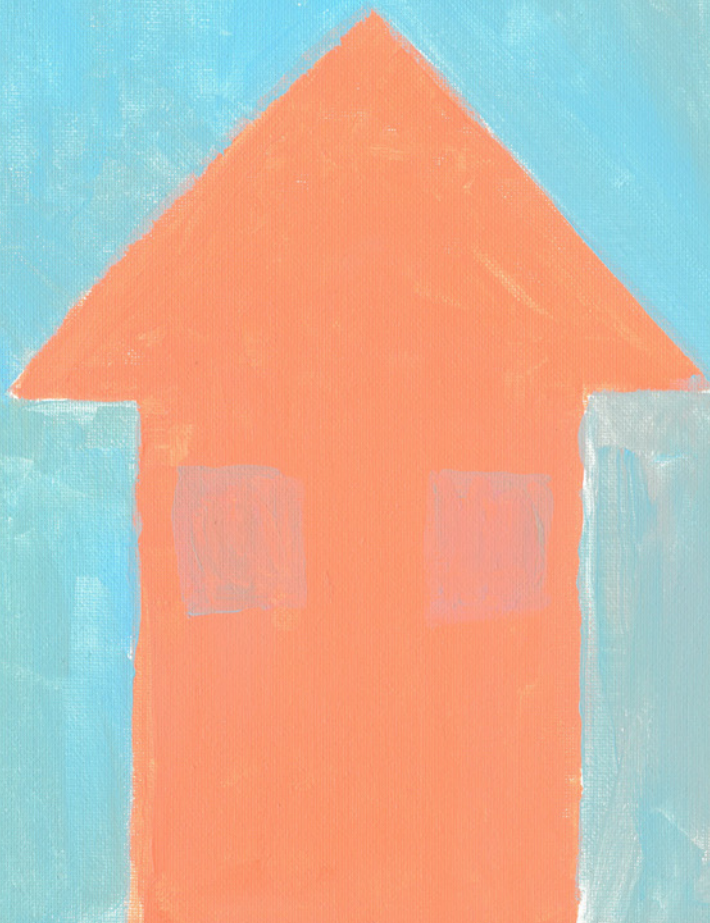
ACE is eager to share resources where possible, to support local initiatives and build community.

- Reflect Community Church
- Cardiff Imperial Redcoats
- Ely & Caerau Litter Pickers
- 10th Ely Rainbows
- Caerau, Ely Mini & Juniors Rugby

See what groups have spent their funds on.



Vibrant



11.

Arts and Heritage

*'I have a very big imagination and that's what I realise when I look at what I've made!'
(‘Young Arts for Change’ participant)*

ACE Arts story - Looking forward to Mondays

I was volunteering here with a project and then it stopped, so I thought, what do I do? And my relative said 'come to art' and I said 'but I can't draw', she said 'it's not even about the drawing, we do different things, we try different techniques'. I thought I'd give it a try, and then I came and I haven't stopped coming! I'm quite new, I've only been coming about two months, I'm still learning how to draw and how to trace things, doing the printing. I look forward to it now on the Mondays, I've got the long weekend home with the kids and then I'm like 'Ah, Monday's art'.

I used to hate Mondays. I got to the point where I didn't leave the house for 4 years, so coming back again was a struggle. Once I'm home, I don't want to go back out,

so every Monday was a struggle to come in. But then I started looking forward to my Mondays, coming in for art, asking Nic what we're doing. They're really nice people, you know, you can just be yourself. From 8 weeks ago to now, there's a massive change, I actually want to be here rather than just thinking I can't be bothered, I won't go in.

It's given me motivation to get up. Because I've started my week off good, I'm like yeah ok, I've got this now! And then Wednesday I volunteer for the pantry project, so it's just a good start to the week. Most people try to do it at the end of the week but we need it at the beginning of the week. I'd say that's the most significant change for me, looking forward to Mondays, and that's only because of art,

otherwise I wouldn't have had that.

The sessions are run awesome, I can't praise them enough. Relaxed, comfortable, you're not pressured, if you don't understand something they've got all the time in the world to explain it to you and show you. They're amazing. Really good. They've asked us what we want to display at the exhibition, quite a lot of asking what we want. I didn't go to Porth but I went to the Millennium Centre and we made some of the flowers for the display. There's quite a few places they will be showing the art. It was a nice day, because we got to help, some people painted the gorilla and I sat down and made the flowers, which was quite relaxing. It was good.



ACE Arts

ACE Arts continues to thrive! Our 'Explore Collective' project is funded by Arts Council Wales 'Connect & Flourish' fund. It's a partnership between ACE, Valley's Kids Porth, Wales Millennium Centre, Straeon Research and Disability Arts Cymru, working with artists Nic Parsons, Becci Booker, a photographer Suzie Larke, and a poet Rachel Carney. This year we

have engaged with over 40 regular participants across both sites and offered art activities to hundreds of community members at events.

We also received funding from Arts Council Wales to offer a program of 'Young Arts for Change' workshops at Fitzalan High School and the Dusty Forge.

'It's just like a friendly family to me. I was never given the chance and I never had people around me who wanted to show me, now I've got people who take the time to show me and teach me. Nobody ever took the time to work with me or do anything with me. Now I'm learning things which is making me feel better.'

ACE Consult

ACE is providing support to the 'Together for Trowbridge and St. Mellons' project through hosting employment of staff, mentoring and advice.



Together for Trowbridge and St. Mellons (T4TSM)

Together for Trowbridge and St. Mellons (T4TSM) is one of 13 Invest Local Programmes in Wales funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. This year we have supported the formation of a new charity known locally as Hope St Mellons and provided core funding allowing them to increase their staff team, take on the management of The Beacon Centre and develop their projects. We have worked with East Cardiff School of Performing Arts to provide accessible, affordable and high quality performance training for children, youth and young adults. We are supporting Trowbridge Pantry to develop their governance and sustainability.



12.

Children, Young People and Families

ACE Youth

ACE Youth provided 521 young people with a safe space to feel supported, have their voices heard and gain new experiences and opportunities. The youth club was held at Caer Heritage Centre three evenings a week in partnership with Curiosity Club, with over 60 young people attending each evening. Ace Youth Council make all the decisions for the youth club.

Exciting trips included Drayton Manor (40), ice skating (60), and workshops with Technquest (50). Young people also engaged in community events such as Youth Funday, Dusty Christmas Fayre, North Ely Christmas Dinner event and fayre, and Cardiff Youth Council. Cardiff Youth Service funded ACE Youth from April 2022 - March 2023.

"I enjoyed applying for funding. It was so rewarding, although the workshops were hard work. I can't wait to volunteer with ACE when I am sixteen."

Curiosity

Curiosity was a youth-led project, funded by Children in Need, that explored local history and heritage while building skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). In its third year, 146 young people engaged in after school sessions in primary schools and youth clubs. Interactive sessions and educational trips ranged from learning traditional weaving techniques to using archaeological isotopic evidence to understand past diets. Funding for Curiosity ended in May '23, but we will build on the partnerships and learning gained through this innovative project as we grow our programme of community learning at the CAER centre.

"I have noticed changes within the children - they are more engaged and are more confident to ask questions. I think this is due to the university staff making the Curiosity Club so interesting. Curiosity Club is an adventure into history and science!"
- Mrs Rice, Windsor Clive Primary School

13.

‘I love seeing people progress’ – Charlene’s story

I had an established beauty business, The Beauty House. Nic had joined me as a business partner and slowly we were plodding along towards future targets we wanted to achieve. Getting there, but slowly.

I met Donna and heard how Shape your Future can help people progress in their careers. Since getting involved with Shape your Future, the massive change has been the training opportunities. I’d started the training academy and I knew it would be slow to take off, because it does cost a lot of money for people to access, and with the area we are in as well, but it was something that I wanted to do. With Donna’s help, the training side of the business has been able to take off a lot faster than I expected as well as offering opportunities to people in the community. So that is the biggest change, is the funding for people to access the training.

Shape your Future funds the rooms that we use for training,

often at the Hub. All of the trainees get the kit, resources and training fully funded, so straight away when they leave the course they are able to start making money. There’s no obstacles in their way because they’ve got their qualifications already, they’ve got all the resources they need to go out and start working straight away. Personally, there have been a lot of courses in the past that I’ve not been able to do because it’s a worry to think how much have you got to make back to cover the cost of what you’ve spent on the kit. But these trainees are able to make a profit straight away and then replenish and carry on, or even reinvest in more courses and gradually build up their portfolio of the services they are able to offer their clients.

It was definitely a dream of mine to be able to teach. I’ve done beauty for so long and I do enjoy it, I love every second, but I do get so much reward from teaching it as well. It just

naturally comes, I think you don’t realise how much you know about a subject until you’re teaching it.

I love seeing people progress - I know a lot of other girls who are doing nails and want to do more. But the main goal for me now would be for Nic who’s working here with me to progress in the salon. I can train her to deliver more services so in turn she can take on more clients, and the more clients she takes on the more it frees me up to do teaching. So it is like a cycle, the more I can progress the more Nic can progress too, and move up as well.

Eventually the dream would be to teach full time, and Nic to run the beauty house full time and maybe even join me in teaching. And the students we are teaching might even be able to step up and offer more... so it’s a constant cycle of people being able to move up the ladder and progress further in their career.

Update Sept 2023: The Beauty House now has a designated training room every Monday and Tuesday at a separate location and Charlene is the local training provider for Cardiff Council. Some who have accessed free training through the scheme are now doing so well with their business they are able to pay privately for next level training. Nic now offers all the services at the salon and is preparing to train too.

14.

Training and Employment



ACE Training

"Amazing teacher, couldn't fault her, fantastic job!"

ACE Training is our locally based training enterprise and CITB ITC (Internet Test Centre). We offer a variety of training packages for the Level 1 Health and Safety in a Construction Environment qualification along with the Health, Safety and Environment (HS&E) online test. This enables participants to gain a CSCS card therefore allowing them to work on construction sites across the UK.

Between April 2022 and March 2023 we delivered training to 209 learners, in partnership with 14 employment support organisations, 1 school, 9 businesses and 16 individuals. Our ITC had 288 online Health, Safety and Environment test bookings.

Shape Your Future



Shape your Future provides flexible 1:1 support and mentoring, offering employment advancement for people living in Ely and Caerau, making a key contribution to tackling in-work poverty. It offers bespoke training opportunities and financial support, enabling individuals to progress into better paid, more fulfilling employment.

Since April 2023, to date 58 individuals have been supported to explore their interests and identify and improve their skills. The diverse support includes: support with application process, CV's, interview techniques, training (incl. CSCS), work clothing/uniform, equipment for bespoke training, and digital support. We have also developed and set up courses in response to need. Read Charlene's Story on page 27!

"With Donna's help, the training side of the business has been able to take off a lot faster than I expected as well as offering opportunities to people in the community."
- Charlene, The Beauty House



15.

The ACE Way

community development
training and mentoring

Building skills for community work

It's a tough time to be working for change in communities, with the recent challenges of Covid and now the cost of living crisis, alongside increasing competition for funding and constant expectations that small charities and organisations will do more with less.

At ACE we have over 12 years' experience at the heart of

our community, building participation and promoting wellbeing. We know the theories, but we also understand the challenges of putting them into practice. We have experience in making it work!

Building on this expertise we are delighted to offer training and mentoring to organisations across Wales through our 'ACE



Way' programme, helping them develop the skills and knowledge to sustain work in their own communities.

The ACE Way training

'The ACE Way training has been an invaluable resource for our team. The mini workshops were great at focusing our attention on how we might apply the learning to our own projects. It's set us off on our own journey of community asset development!' – Tina Taylor, Early Years Integration Team Coordinator, Carmarthenshire County Council

Using a mix of case studies and stories from our work, community development theory, and practical workshop activities, we help participants explore approaches and challenges together. See more on what the training covers on our website:



The ACE Way training is aimed at people who work in community organisations, local authorities, housing associations and other third and public sector organisations. We can adjust the content to fit specific circumstances and interests. Training can be delivered over one or two days, online or in person. Please contact us to discuss and to make a group booking.

The ACE Way Mentoring

We are also offering mentoring services to organisations in Wales, helping them make practical plans to move forward with their ambitions. See the ACE Way website for more information.

Anyone interested in exploring the ACE Way training and mentoring options, or in making a booking, can contact Dave Horton to discuss: Dave Horton, ACE Learning and Training Director
Email: aceway@aceplace.org
Phone: 029 20003132



Communities



ACE Trustees

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

Dave King (Treasurer) is a qualified accountant and experienced treasurer,

Mel Witherden is a retired third sector/charity consultant.

Anne O'Regan lives in Caerau. She is an active local volunteer.

Oonagh Scott grew up in Ely. She is a successful business woman.

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

Chris Lannen is a qualified Financial Advisor.

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.

Natasha Hayes lives in Caerau. She is an active volunteer.

We would like to thank Martin Hlland, Dr. Dave Wyatt and Penny Smith who stood down from the ACE board of trustees in the last year.

ACE Volunteers

Apr 2022 – Mar 2023

Afia Ali
Alex Withey
Alexis Gale
Alice Clarke
Amanda Ward
Andrew William
Way
Anne O'Regan
Arthur Brown
Auriol Miller
Ayodya Hallaluwa
Arrachchige
Carol Coyle
Caroline Holroyd
Catherine Naamani
Chez Allen
Chris Lannen
Christina Dunn
Clive Ward
Crissie Mitchell

Dale Richards
Dave King
David J
Delyth Hoyle
Derek Cleaver
Diane Katy
Donna Harwood
Doug Smith
Doug Stowell
Elaine Harris
Esther (Lai Yee)
Wong
Eva Elliot
Fay Bowring
Frances McCarthy
Frankie Curtis
Gareth Brough
Gareth Howells
Gareth Rowe
Gemma Carleton

Gillian Pugh
Harry Llewellyn
Hayley George
Helen Hunt
Helen McCarthy
Hywel Squires
Irene Jones
Jacquie Young
Jade Baurley
James Roach
Jamie Hayes
Janice Refalo
Jeff Clarke
Johanne McGuigan
John Roche
Jolene Welch
Julie Chancellor
Kareem Othman
Karl Hayes
Kathryn Leighfield

Kathy Wolfe
Kerry Pace
Kyle Bebb
Leyton Smith
Marcia Richards
Margaret Leighfield
Mari Dunphy
Marian Dixey
Mary Cleaton
Matthew Cunnah
Mel Witherden
Michael Hack
Michaela Ward
Mike Kelly
Morgan Palmer
Natasha Hayes
Oonagh Scott
Pat Stowell
Patrick Barry
Penny Smith

Philip (Kai Shing) Ling
Rob Jones
Rosie Cadwaladr
Evans
Saja Ahmed
Sally Owens
Sarah Lyons
Sarah Whitfield
Scott Bees
Scott Morgan
Sheree Richards
Sian Davies
Stella Andrews
Stephen Lyons
Suzanne Bowring
Suzanne McEwan
Tania Clarke
Tracy Olsen
Victoria Misell
Wai Keung Tang

ACE Staff

Apr 2022 – Mar 2023

Core

Michelle Powell

ACE Director

Dave Horton

ACE Learning and Training
Director

Hazel Cryer

Operational and Development
Manager - Health Portfolio

Sam Froud-Powell

Operational and Development
Manager - Community Support
Portfolio

Julie Evans

ACE Senior Administrator

Hasan Roap

ACE Finance Officer

Helen Bull

Volunteer Development Officer

Fiona McCormick

Training Development Officer

George Keane

Communications and Web
Content Officer / Dusty
Shed Officer / ACE Cares
Communication Officer

Dale Ovenstone

Estates Officer

Sharon McGrath

ACE Receptionist

Maria Ross

Assistant Administrator

Arts

Nicola Parsons

Community Arts Coordinator

Becci Booker

Arts Development Officer

Health

Taela-Mae Davies

Yourspace Project Coordinator

Janine Campbell

Community Health Development
Worker

Danielle Afferion

Young People's Wellbeing
Connector / Wellbeing Connector

Hannah Bees

Young People's Wellbeing
Connector / Wellbeing Connector

Lynette Hartman

Wellbeing Connector

Sabrina Driscoll

Wellbeing Connector

Sophia Farrugia

Wellbeing Connector

Rachel Hart

ACE Cares Development Officer

Community Plan

Becky Matyus

Community Engagement
Coordinator / Grand Avenues
MSC Officer

Catherine Boulton

Community Engagement Worker

Hywel Squires

Community Engagement Worker

Community Development

Sarah Griffiths

Together for Trowbridge and St
Mellons Development Officer

Community Support

Mags Lyons

Project Coordinator

Nerys Sheehan

Project Coordinator / Grand
Avenues Coordinator

Stacie Leek

Community Support Officer

Jamie Hallett

Community Support Assistant

Sarah Whitfield

Pantry Assistant Development
Worker

Steve Lyons

Diana Garden Development
Worker

Vaida Barzdiate

Diana Garden Development
Worker

Ruth Mumford

Benthyg Development Officer

Thanks to the former ACE Staff who have moved on in the last year:

Anna-Elyse Young

Becki Miller

Charlotte McCarthy

Charlie Jones

Donna Hurley

Harriet Cleal

James Thomas

Jumah Mpakulah

Rosie Freeman

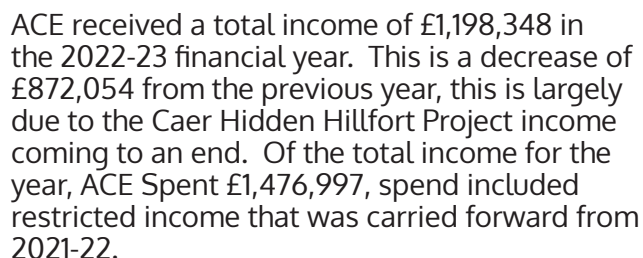
Samirah Phillips

Scott Bees

Sheila Littleboy



Finance Report



The income received in 2022-23 was spread across 43 projects, which is greater than that of the previous year, despite our income in this year being significantly lower.

Over our last 11 years of operation ACE has added over £11 million to the local economy across Cardiff West. From 2018 - 2023, income generated through direct ACE activities such as social enterprise, grant applications, contracts, fundraising, donations and legacies totals approximately £5.4 million.



18. Our 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

✂ @elycaerau_ACE

