

Stephens and George Centenary Charitable Trust

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22





Mission statement

The Stephens and George Centenary Charitable Trust puts young people at the heart of what we do. We will support them in their own ideas and passions in order to leave their own legacies within the community. This is what we at the Trust strive for on a daily basis.

The Trusts Programmes

The Dowlas Community Centre, run by the Stephens and George Centenary Charitable Trust is a hub in the local community servicing over 2500 people a week. The Charity ran a variety of community projects such as:

- Baby Book Worm Project
- Reading Support Programme
- Bursary Award Scheme for gifted young people
- Spread the Word Literature Festival run on World Book Day every year with over 4500 children in attendance
- Book Shop and second-hand book donation project
- Chess in School's Initiative
- Volunteer Programme
- Children's Counselling Programme
- Youth and Play work
- Green Flag Garden
- Adult and Children Carers Group
- Dowlas Community Centre - the Charity asset transferred the Dowlas Community Centre which is now a local hub in the community. Over 60 classes operate from the centre and 47 partnership agencies – 2500 people attended the centre weekly.

Chairperson's Missive

During what was another extremely challenging year, the Charity continued to deliver services during the initial lockdowns of 2021. Gradually as restrictions were lifted our Cafe could re-open and in May 2021 the Gym reopened fully.

Our volunteers and staff continued to perform and deliver our promised services selflessly through the first half of 2021 adhering to testing and continuing with Covid precautions. Through the Autumn and Winter things gradually returned to normal and by early 2022 the centre was once again a thriving Community Hub. All of the services, reading support, chess in schools, after school clubs, were once again back to normality.

Hopefully we can all breathe a sigh of relief and look forward to the future.

Vanessa Jones, Chair.

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POST COVID 19 PROGRAMME

The charity continued to deliver Covid services and provided assistance as the community adapted to life post Covid.

What we are now delivering:

We have revised our services to the need of the community. It is a people led approach, the charity listened and reacted to what the community needs, and we were well voiced to undertake this task.

The Trust delivered:

Across the whole of Merthyr Tydfil, the following services:

- Free of charge Food Parcels
- Free of charge Shopping Service
- Trained counsellors and volunteers
- Book delivery service as the Charity runs Merthyr Tydfil's only book shop.
- We worked in partnership with the Director of Education to support schools post covid as many children have been falling behind in learning due to home-schooling.
- A wellbeing centre was created at the Dowlais Community Centre as many people post Covid were suffering from isolation, low wellbeing, confidence and lack of socialisation.



Wellbeing Centre

Here are some images of the Trust in action:



Images of the education and wellbeing work undertaken at the Trust

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

Stephens and George Charitable Trust's run an ISO accredited volunteer programme; these volunteers support an array of activities at the Charity including:

- Reading Support
- Cafe Assistant
- Volunteer Counsellors undertaking their student placement hours
- Volunteer University students undertaking their childcare and family placement
- Gardening volunteers
- Food Poverty volunteers
- Festival volunteers
- Dowlais Community Centre Volunteers
- Young people undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering hours
- Learning Disability Group from Merthyr College supporting the café.



The Charity also has over 25 play work and youth forum volunteers, these young people range from 11 to 25 years old and support the award winning after school clubs and youth forum. The young people have a voice, not only at the centre, but feed into projects in the community. The young people all have a personal progression plan and attend courses such as Play Work, Safeguarding, Food and Hygiene, Health and Safety, STEM etc



We have also linked in with businesses such as EE and ASDA Community project and will be developing this corporate volunteering aspect of our programme during the next year.



Volunteers are a paramount part of the organisation, and we were awarded a Volunteer in Wales Grant in partnership with the Education Department of MTCBC and University of Glamorgan to develop a network of reading support volunteers in schools across Merthyr Tydfil. This project has been a great success and were filmed by the WCVA for their volunteer week.



The Charity has been showcased in two partner agency videos highlighting the best practice work of the charity volunteering. WCVA Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. The video highlighting the benefits of Investing in Volunteers can be found

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r47_WfUYoVw

Sported Wales, as Wales' largest network of local community sports groups tackling inequality for young people facing disadvantage, Sported empowers the local heroes running community sport groups to help their group survive so young people in their communities can thrive. The charity features in its 10th Birthday video showcasing partnership working and how it benefits the community. The charity were invited to speak at the events Q&A panel to talk about our experiences and learning to other Sported members.

If you or your organisation are interested in volunteering at the Charity, please contact charity1@stephensandgeorge.co.uk



AWARDS

Stephens and George Centenary Charitable Trust won three prestigious Awards during 2021. Highlighting Merthyr Tydfil in the Charitable and Educational sectors across the UK.

Queens Award for Voluntary Service

On June 2nd 2021, the charity was honoured to receive The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK. The Trust was one of 241 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award in 2021. Also received a special designation for providing impactful support during the initial lockdown of the pandemic.

Helen Hughes, Charity Coordinator: "we are thrilled to receive the award and that the organisations and volunteers have helped us have been recognised for the work they have done. Especially during the exceptionally difficult circumstances of the pandemic. Their dedication and hard work has been an inspiration to all."

Huw Lewis: "Volunteering has been the most rewarding thing that I have ever done, you feel a sense of purpose and that you are making a difference in the community, and you feel a sense of personal satisfaction."



The Charity Awards 2021 – Education and Training

Just 8 days later on June 10th at The Charity Awards 2021, totally unexpectedly, the Charity won the Education and Training category. Alongside the nine other category winners, the charity was presented with a trophy in an online ceremony broadcast live, hosted by writer, comedian and political commentator Ayesha Hazarika.

The Charity Awards 2021 shortlist had been chosen by an independent panel of expert judges, themselves all eminent figures in the charity sector. The judges score each entry against six Hallmarks of Excellence before coming together by video link, for two days of challenge and discussion to select the winners.

Helen Hughes: Charity Coordinator of Stephens and George Centenary Charitable Trust, said: *"We are so honoured and proud to win such a prestigious award and thank all the volunteers and staff who work so*

hard every day to promote training and education and give young people and people in the community better life chances”.

The Charity Awards are the longest-running and most prestigious awards scheme in the charity sector. The Charity was thrilled to have won the award for our various initiatives to tackle chronically low rates of literacy among school children in Merthyr Tydfil.



High Sheriff Award

The third award came on 17th June 2021 when the Charity had a fantastic surprise as it was awarded the High Sheriff Award from Jeffrey Edwards MBE OStJ JP, High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan for recognition of great and valuable services to the community.

Jeffrey Edwards said *“I remember the project starting off as a literary and numeracy project for young people of the area but it has now expanded to cover a multiple of services”.*

Helen Hughes, Charity Coordinator said *“Since 2012, when the Trust was established it has delivered vital educational and training services to the local community. It is wonderful to see the Trust receive these awards as recognition of its work and how the Trust responded to meet the needs of children, young people and the community during the pandemic”.*



Other awards

Helen Hughes, Charity Coordinator was also a finalist Chwarae Teg Womenspire Awards, in the category Community Champion. Charity Coordinator, Helen Hughes was also selected as a Finalist in the IOD Wales: Director of the Year Awards 2021 in the category Third and Public Sector.



CHESS INITIATIVE

The Chess initiative was reintroduced into the schools across Merthyr Tydfil. It is a flag ship programme with over 520 young people across schools in Merthyr Tydfil playing and one player, Tabitha from Cyfarthfa High School, was chosen to play chess for the Wales under 14s.



The 9 Best Benefits of Playing Chess

- Develops perspective.
- Improves memory.
- Deepens focus.
- Elevates creativity.
- Boosts planning skills.
- Increases self-awareness.
- Protects against dementia.
- Helps ADHD.



The aim of the initiative is to use chess to help develop children's thinking and learning skills. Through chess, they learn to solve problems, plan ahead, communicate effectively, learn from experience by recognising patterns, as well as gaining valuable social skills through playing and working together (and against each other of course). These skills not only help them with their work but offer them the chance to learn positive lessons for life.

Ambassador Michael Adams

Michael Adams, British Champion, is the Ambassador of the Stephens and George Charitable Trust Chess Initiative.

Background on Michael Adams:

Michael Adams is an English chess grandmaster. His highest ranking is world No. 4, achieved several times from October 2000 to October 2002. His peak Elo rating is 2761. He has achieved excellent results in World Chess Championship tournaments. Several times a World Championship Candidate, he reached the semi-finals in 1997, 1999 and 2000. At the 2004 FIDE Championship, he reached the final, narrowly losing out to Rustam Kasimdzhanov in the tie-break games. He is also a seven-time British Chess Champion.



The Chess in Schools project is run by qualified Chess tutors and the head of the service at the Charity is Russell Doddington who has been a key member of the charities educational programme and development of chess.

The initiative also supports the local authorities PRU programme and home-schooling programme as well as the charities #nophonesorcomputer Afterschool project that was awarded Best Training and Education project in the UK at The Charity Awards 2021.

It is supported by the Waterloo Foundation who endorse the positive impact on young people's development that Chess has.



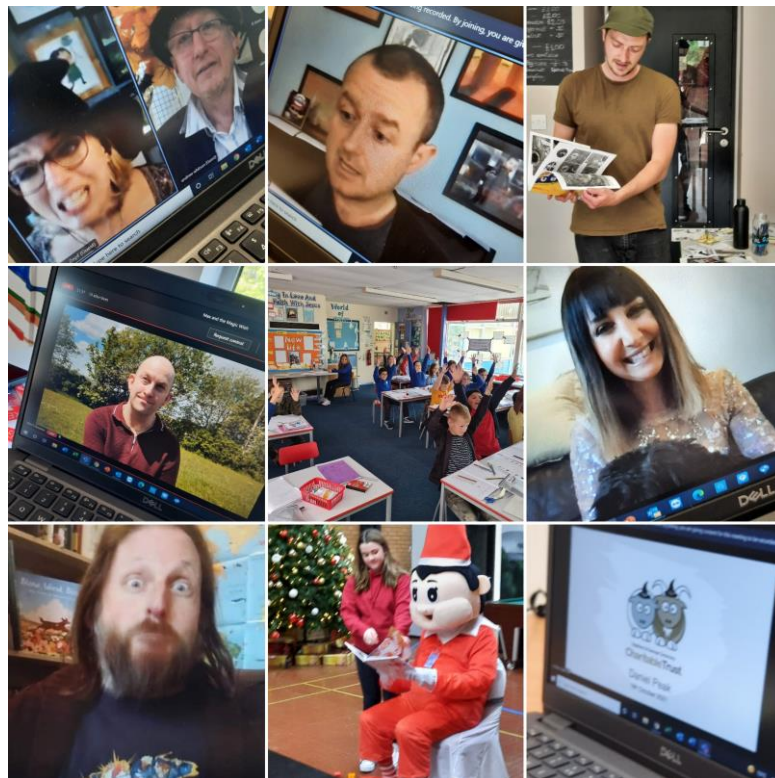
SPREAD THE WORD LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Literature Events

The Charity has run an array of Literature Events with authors and illustrators reaching out to over 8000 young people across the Borough of Merthyr Tydfil. Acclaimed screen writer Daniel Peak inspired young people with his book Little Horrors and chatted about how he became a famous writer.

Máire Zepf and Illustrator Mr Ando hosted Halloween Literature events and chatted to the young people about their book Rita wants a Witch dressing up and playing spooky games, the children all enjoyed the magic they brought.

Wildlife Conservation Day was celebrated with author Dom Conlon discussing his books Wild Wanderers to over 900 young people across schools in the Borough and over 30 questions were raised by young people to the author about animals and nature.



Hay Festival

Eight young authors of the Scarers and Carers book which won an award for Outstanding Digital Project of the year were guests of the Winter Hay Festival where they met authors Karl Nova and Nicola Davies. This is part of the Charities Educational Initiative which in 2021 won Best Training and Educational project in the UK at the Civic Society Charity Awards.

The Hay Festival of Literature and Arts is an annual Festival held in Hay-on-Wye and empowers young people through books and literature. Stephens and George Charitable Trust want to raise young people's aspirations and life changes, education is key to this.

The Scarers and Carers book is being showcased at Hay 2022 a fantastic accolade for the young people.



Spread the Word Festival

This year again the Charity hosted the Spread the word Festival online due to covid restrictions.



WORLD BOOK DAY BOOK HUNT

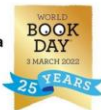


The Stephens and George Charitable Trust are delighted to bring you our World Book Day Hunt celebrating the joy of reading.

Please enjoy this free book as our gift to you.

Check out our social media

@sgdcentre
@SteveGeorge100

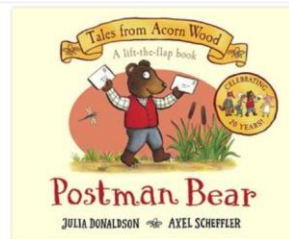


Dowlais Community Centre - run by The Stephens & George Charitable Trust

Published by Amanda Williams · 3 March ·

Here is the amazing Julia Donaldson book Postman Bear on this World Book Day 2022 morning. Enjoy this at breakfast time.

<https://youtu.be/5QSet06S3E0>



We had to share this with you this World Book Day 2022... it's the amazing Author Jeff Kinney of the Wimpy Kid books... which are SO popular and so funny! We know you love them! Here is his story and inspiration!

<https://youtu.be/wqjpdH9fCns>



World Book Day 2022.

Did you know we have a preloved children's book shop at Dowlais Community Centre? Lots of books enjoy.

There are also colourings and crafts to do... just visit us and enjoy.



The Charity is delighted to announce the date for Spread the Word Festival 2023 will be Thursday 20th April 2023 and will once again be taking place in over 28 venues in the town centre of Merthyr Tydfil with over 5000 children and young people from schools and projects across Merthyr Tydfil attending the literacy festival. In 2023 renowned children's author and poet Michael Rosen will be headlining the festival.



If you are an organisation interested in linking into the festival or sponsoring the event, please contact helen.hughes@stephensandgeorge.co.uk

BURSARY AWARD SCHEME

The Stephens and George Charitable Trust Bursary scheme awards bursaries to young people who require support to progress in their education, to go on to further education or to local small arts organisations.

There are two types of bursaries:

- A bursary to support the costs of fees in attending school, university, college etc.
- A bursary to support transport, meals, books and equipment costs.

This year we presented a Bursary to:

Mia Hampson to continue her studies in Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Equine Management, Mia is in her second year now.

The course itself covers a large variety of equestrian topics, developing specific technical professional skills and knowledge which will lead to meaningful employment. Subjects include, stable yard operations, horse health, exercising horses, fitting and evaluating horse tack/equipment, stud, business and riding.

A two-week work placement off campus and work experience on campus is needed to complete the course Assisted is need running events. BHS exams to be completed for university or work.

Here is an array of photos to students that we have presented bursaries over the years. If you know someone who would benefit from a Bursary, please contact 01685 377688 for further information



BABY BOOKWORM PROJECT

The Baby Bookworm project is a literacy programme at the Stephens and George Charitable Trust, set up to encourage early literacy and inspire a love of words.

Literacy is key to individuals being able to actively participate and confidently communicate in the language rich world in which we live. When we can communicate confidently with spoken and written language, we can engage with the world for social, academic, economic and other benefits. Literacy is crucial to the success of individuals.

Lucy Owen BBC presenter and news reader is the Ambassador of the Stephens and George Trust Programme - and is supporting the campaign that 'Every child should be read or read a book before bed'.

Early literacy includes speaking and listening skills such as taking turns, exploring sounds, sharing and collaboration, reflecting, following a story, looking at a book and mark making. These skills are best learnt in a social environment and pre-school children benefit from being in a sociable group where they can enjoy these experiences and become confident with their peers. The project aims to provide interactive, multi-sensory activities in a language-rich environment that promotes positive relationships. It supports language development and nurtures a love of language and books and prepares participants for school and beyond.





The Charity runs an array of themed events that engage and enthuse young parents, families, foster carers and the hardest to reach in the community.



The Project has a significant impact on early years learning with Head Teachers stating that children who participate in the project have a head start in schools.

The Charity are now on the panel for the Strategic Development of Literacy in partnership with MTCBC.

THE BOOK SHOP AND BOOK DONATION SCHEME

The Trust's aim is to raise literacy standards in Merthyr Tydfil and to make books accessible to all. We are members of the Booksellers Association and throughout the year the trust continues to expand and adapt our Author School Tours to primary and secondary schools with award winning writers, poets and local authors.



Helen Hughes the Charity Coordinator states:

“The positive impact these shops have on both the communities they serve and on literature as an art form is one that should not be lost. Local bookshops often become cornerstones within communities, providing a refuge for many and a welcoming space for all those who enjoy engaging with literature”.

The Trust organises The UK's largest educational Easter Book Hunt annually books are distributed across Merthyr Tydfil on benches, parks and trees free of charge to be found by the children, to read.

The second hand and new book shop is the only independent book shop in Merthyr Tydfil.



The Charity has thousands of books donated annually, which we either utilise in the children's and adult's bookshop or sell on sites such as We Buy Books and Ziffit etc.

If you have books you would like to donate to the charity old or new, please contact the Charity on 01685 377688.

Books are an integral part of a child's development and here at the Charity we are campaigning that every child in Wales has books at home - we have created a separate magical children's bookshop where children can borrow a book or swap a book that is open 6 days a week.

DOWLAIS COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Dowlais Community Centre was asset transferred to the Trust in 2016 and it has been able to grow over the past years and developing initiatives and programmes that fit within the ethos of the charity.



The Community Centre is a hub in the local community with an array of classes, tutors and partnership agencies who use the building every day of the week. Agencies including:

- Carers Association
- MIND
- Pupil Referral Unit
- Home Schooling
- Dance
- Cheerleading
- Archery
- Boxing Gym
- Football
- Ballroom dancing
- Merthyr College
- VAMT

This community hub benefits the area in more ways than just providing services - it helps build a resilient community, provides better and more integrated services alongside the opportunity to continually transform existing and unused buildings. All these benefits can provide a focus for community-led regeneration, supporting the community for generations to come.

The Trust is striving every day to be a sustainable facility and these improvements will enable us to achieve this. At the centre we run:

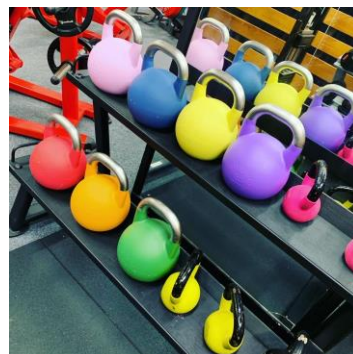
- A gym with over 300 members
- Community Cafe
- Book shop and second-hand book shop
- Wellbeing centre
- Green Flag Award winning community gardens
- Counselling service
- No phones and computer Afterschool clubs
- Youth Forum
- Volunteering programme
- Baby Bookworm

The Charity was awarded this year a grant from ICF and Be Active Fund and VAWDASV funds to continue the refurbishment of the Dowlas Community Centre to:

- Purchase new sports equipment
- Create a wellbeing centre
- Refurbish the floor in the main hall
- Improve the Counselling rooms /facilities

These facilities, support Mental Health, wellbeing and combat isolation as more people will be able to access and participate in the increased activities at the Dowlas Community Centre.

The continued improvement of the centre is having a lasting impact on people in the community and will leave a legacy for future generations.





Green Flag Award

The Charity this year was awarded its 5th Green Flag Award for its 5-acre green space at the Dowlas Community Centre.

The Green Flag Award programme is delivered in Wales by environmental charity Keep Wales Tidy, with support from Welsh Government. Independent green space experts volunteered their time in early autumn to judge applicant sites against eight strict criteria, including biodiversity, cleanliness, environmental management and community involvement.

The space is developing year on year and has an orchard of fruit trees as well as a wildflower meadow.



The project fits into the Trust's ethos of raising young peoples' aspirations and life chances for future generations to come and we are developing a Forest School and outdoor educational learning centre which will open late 2022. This will see the construction of two outdoor hubs.



Green space is so beneficial, it provides health benefits across the population. It encourages exercise, provide spaces for socialising, and decreases noise and air pollution.

The charity has recently employed a part time gardener to support the gardening volunteers, garden development and development of new Welsh variety plants and trees.

The Railway Café

The Railway Cafe is named after the Dowlais Railway which is where the cafe is located.

The Charity runs a community cafe run by young people in the community. The cafe is open six days a week and has an SLA agreement with Merthyr College who support the cafe two days a week. The cafe is situated at the Dowlas Community centre and overlooks the gardens.



The cafe fits into the educational and literature ethos of the Charity as it operates themed events such as Alice in Wonderland Afternoon Teas, Santa Story time.

The community cafe also supports the Charities educational initiatives to support families and children with educational cooking classes.



The community cafe is more than just a cafe it is supported by an array of volunteers referred in from VAMT, Social Services, the local college, individual placements with probation, young people undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Award. The Charity is every day pushing forward for sustainability and the cafe is an essential part of this financial goal.

The Café hosts local groups such as

- Church groups
- MIND
- Carers
- Adult Education
- Play courses and youth courses
- Research
- Youth Forum
- Men's Support Group

The Cafe supports the sustainability of the Charity and training and development aspect of the organisation as people volunteering must pass a Level 2 in Food and Hygiene and have the opportunity to learn cake making skills.





Operating alongside the cafe is home-shopping programme for families affected by Covid and a food pantry/bank for people in the community affected by deprivation. The Charity through the gardening programme, cooking programme and forest school is working as an enabler to create a sustainable community for future generations to come.

ERASMUS +

The Erasmus+ programme works to provide organisations with the opportunity to experience a global education. There are currently over 5,000 higher institutions participating in the Erasmus+ Program across the 37 countries.

The Charity is running in partnership with six countries its third Erasmus+ Project – ‘Keeping Traditions Alive’.

The aims and objectives of the project are: 1) to pass traditional craft skills from older people with skills and knowledge to young people; 2) to teach the young people on the principles and practical steps to setting up a social enterprise; 3) to support them to use the craft skills and social enterprise knowledge to make and market craft goods.

The project team have visited Wales (virtually) learning about traditional Welsh crafts of Cooking and Storytelling over a week of training. Visited Slovenia in June and in July three of the team visited Serbia as part of the Erasmus+ programme. Participants from all partner countries had the opportunity to share their project journey and learn traditional crafts and the basics of social enterprise.



The experience will further the personal development of young people participating and enlighten them to opportunities available through European co-operation. The charity transfers the knowledge of these experiences through the Afterschool Club, Baby Bookworm project and in-house training programme for volunteers.

More information can be found at <https://craftyourownbusiness.com/>

ACTIVE INCLUSION

The Trust ran an Active Inclusion project for people over the age of 25. The fund is managed by the WCVA and supported by funding via ESF. Active Inclusion projects aim to support people with multiple and complex barriers to participation, in addressing these underlying issues and moving them closer to, or into the labour market.

The Charity was awarded funding for an Active Inclusion 25+ year old project from the WCVA.

The project has had a positive impact on the people who have engaged with the project through volunteering opportunities, employment opportunities and further learning.

The participants undertook Level 2 Food Hygiene and First Aid courses etc run by Adult Learning Wales. They also participated on work related certificates through IHASCO an online training course. The project

achieved many positive outcomes with participants. The participants engaged in the project gained confidence, social awareness, social skills and become more prepared for the job market making them economically active.



CHILDREN'S COUNSELLING SERVICE

Stephens and George Counselling Service provides a Counselling Service too young people aged between 8 -24 years.

Between the dates 1st March and October 28th, the service supported 72 Young People and Families.

We delivered: 366 Sessions.

This is based on 12 hours per week initially, 11 sessions to patients, and approx. one hour per week admin.

Due to demand and waiting list, we employed a second therapist, she started with us in August. This is aiding us in decreasing the wait for access into the service.

We have continued to grow our reputation, both with referrers and within the community.

To monitor change, and evaluate the service we use YP Core Questionnaire (<https://www.coresystemtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/YP-CORE.pdf>)

The questionnaire measures between 0-40, with positive wellbeing attributed to the lower end of this scale. The average start score was: 31 The average end score was: 8 All clients reviewed reported positive changes.

The most referred issues were:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Self-Worth
- Family

Many of the young people we have supported have received CAMHS support, or school counselling, but needed additional support. We have been flexible in being able to provide both remote (via telephone or zoom) and face to face sessions.

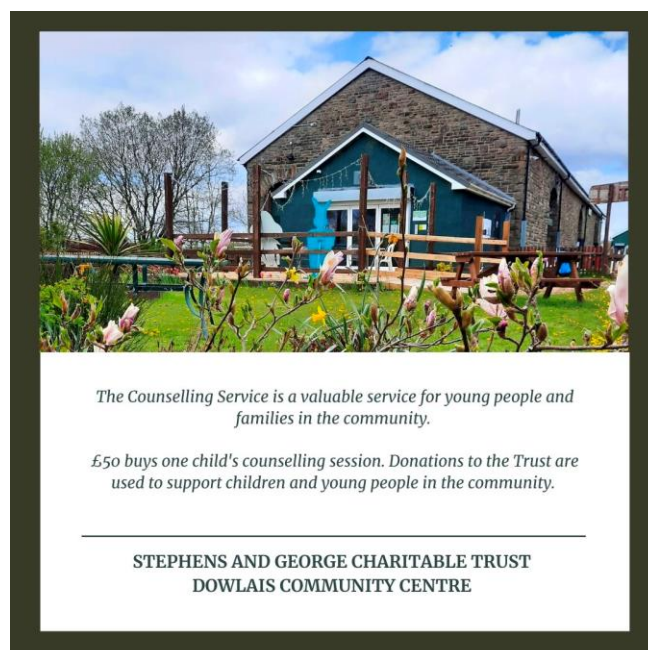
Many of the young people attending have been able to link into the benefits at the centre such as

- Volunteering
- Call of the Wild wellbeing weekend
- The gym and fitness classes
- After School clubs
- Youth Forum

The Trust has been able to offer further support such as attending a school visit with Mum to look at intervention and support.

The benefits of having the counselling programme based at the Dowlais Community Centre is that we can have a multi-disciplinary approach and use holistic, environmental interventions. The centre also has an award-winning play and youth work programme as well as a sports facility and boxing gym that young people and families can link into free of charge.

The centre is open 6 days a week 9-8, this means that families and young people can access the centre after 5pm when many other third sector and support organisations are closed. Which supports the best practice of this project with the partnership of the Primary Care Cluster.



A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF STEPHENS AND GEORGE CHARITABLE TRUST IN PICTURES



AWARDS

Queen award for Voluntary Service - with Special Recognition Covid 19



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The Charity Awards 2021: Winner : Best Education and Training Programme in UK



High Sheriff Award 2021



GREEN FLAG AWARD – COMMUNITY GARDEN



BRONZE AWARD SMALL WORKPLACE HEALTH AWARD



INVESTORS IN VOLUNTEERS



SMALL WORKPLACE HEALTH AWARD - BRONZE



DISABILITY CONFIDENT COMMITTED





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