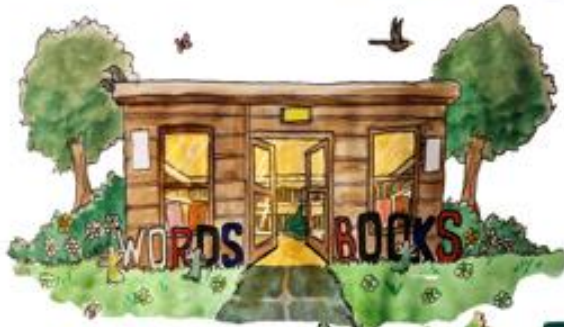




# ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23





### **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
- 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
- Alternative Education Programme
- 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 Statement**

**Vanessa Jones, Chair.**

The last two years seem a blur but when you visit Dowlais Community Centre, and see the different activities and educational projects happening in every area and room.

Community groups drinking coffee and chatting, parents and their babies and toddlers enjoying stories being crafted into real life, music coming from the gym, individual teaching sessions from TRAX!

It is all so inspiring and thrilling with the normality of it all:

Thank you to all of our staff, volunteers and participants, and of course our loyal trustees.

Vanessa Jones

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## DOWLAIS COMMUNITY CENTRE

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 it is an anchor project in the community.





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.



We also run a youth and community project from the centre #nophonesorcomputers which won Best Education and Training project in the UK 2021 at the UK Charity Awards.



### **The Railway Café**

The Railway Cafe is named after the Dowlais Railway Centre and is not only a café but a community book shop.

The cafe is open six days a week and has an SLA agreement with Merthyr College who support the cafe two days a week. It has an array of organisations using the facilities such as the Adult carers group which has now developed into the largest group in Merthyr Tydfil.



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.



## Green Flag Award

The Charity this year was awarded its 6th 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 outdoor educational centre is now open and we have two sessions a week for young people about wildlife, biodiversity, sustainability etc



## POST COVID 19 PROGRAMME

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The charity adapted to life post Covid and needs of the community.

### **What we are now delivering:**

- Free of charge shopping service run solely by volunteers.
- Wellbeing centre at the Dowlais Community Centre for those suffering from isolation, low wellbeing, confidence and lack of socialisation. We deliver music therapy, menopausal sessions, yoga etc
- We have a food bank and cooking classes in the outdoor hub that was supported by Feeding Britain, as during Covid we identified that over 60% of the client base could not cook properly.
- We work in partnership across the community delivering dept advice with Citizens Advice and Tydfil Training as well as sessions with MIND.
- Dowlais OAP group are now based at the centre which supports socialisation and helps end isolation.

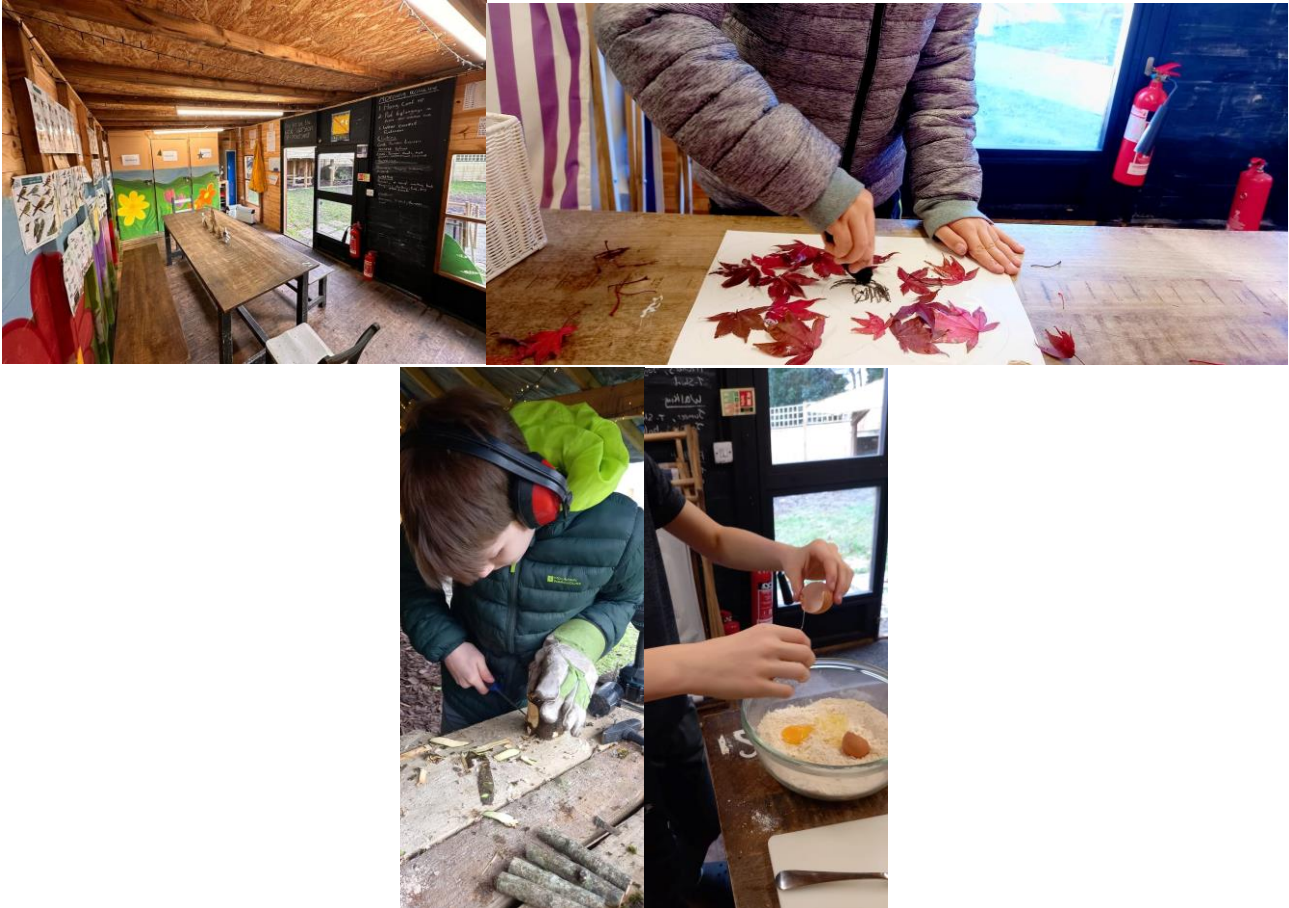
**It is a people led approach, the charity listens and reacts to what the community needs.**



## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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The Charity now operates an unregistered alternative education project with young people from primary and secondary school who do not attend mainstream school. This initiative was created due to the need of the community and the educational department of Merthyr Council.



## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

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

- Reading Support
- Café Assistant
- Volunteer Counsellors undertaking their student placement hours
- Volunteer University students undertaking their childcare and family placement
- Gardening 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 23 play-work and youth 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 in projects with the community.



We have also linked in with businesses such as EE and ASDA Community project and other businesses in the area.

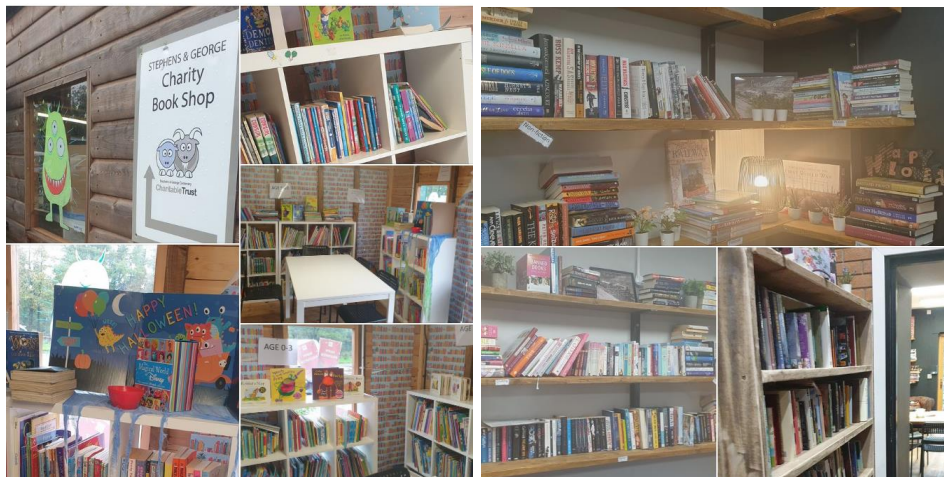


## THE BOOK SHOP AND BOOK DONATION SCHEME

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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.

The charity run a second and new book scheme and has as outside side children's book shop as well as a community café bookshop. Children are encouraged to read and when they achieve the milestone of reading six books, they receive a free book.



*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.*



## CHILDREN'S COUNSELLING SERVICE

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

The service supports 280 Young People a year.

Due to demand, we now employ three therapists.

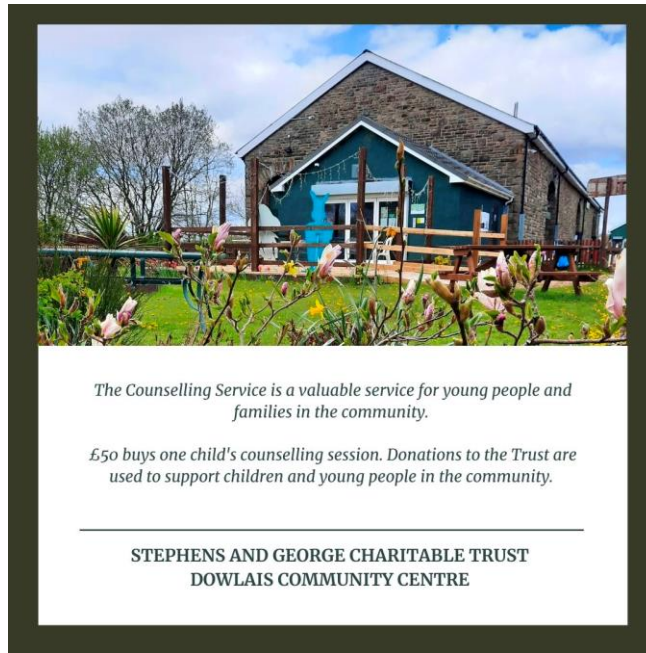
We have continued to grow our reputation, both with referrers and within the community.

The most referred issues were:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Self-Worth
- Family

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

- Volunteering
- The gym and fitness classes
- After School clubs
- Youth Forum



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## CHESS INITIATIVE

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

The Chess initiative is delivered at seventeen schools across Merthyr Tydfil and is a flagship programme with over 580 young people across schools in Merthyr Tydfil playing.



### **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 Chess in Schools project is run by two qualified Chess tutors.

### **BABY BOOKWORM PROJECT**

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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 for pre-school children.

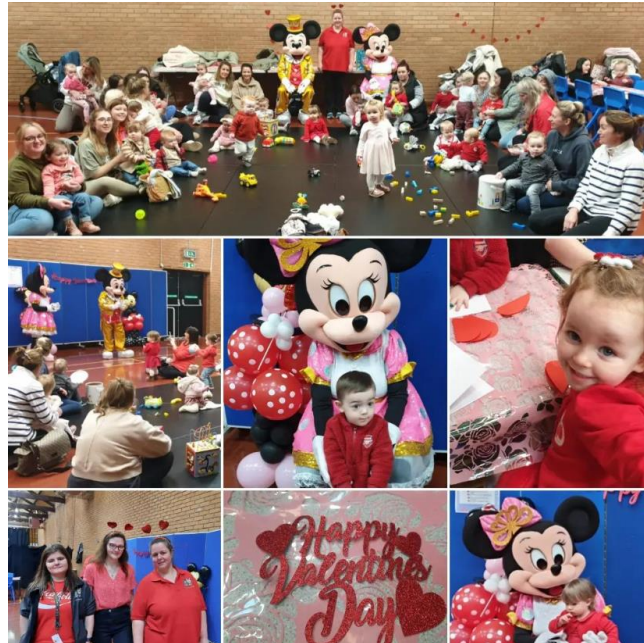
Early literacy includes speaking and listening skills such as taking turns, exploring sounds, sharing and collaboration, reflecting, following a story, looking at a book and mark making. These skills are best learnt



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.

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’.

*It supports language development and nurtures a love of language and books and prepares participants for school and beyond.*



## SPREAD THE WORD LITERATURE FESTIVAL

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### **Spread the Word Festival**

The Spread the word Festival is now a biannual event due to the scale and growth of the festival. The charity this year celebrated the written world and literature with a variety of author tours which impacted on over 10000 children as well as attending literature and educational events, and shows at Wales Millennium Centre.

### Hay Festival



Lion King at Wales Millennium Centre.



Author Tours – Ian Brown and Roy Noble



## 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.

This year Mia Holmes was awarded a Bursary from Stephens and George Charitable Trust. Mia was in her final year of an Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Equine Management. The course covers a vast selection of equestrian topics, developing specific technical professional skills and knowledge. We wish Mia well in her final year and working toward her future career.



## AWARDS

Stephens and George Centenary Charitable Trust won a number of Awards during 2022/23. Highlighting Merthyr Tydfil in the Charitable and Educational sectors across the UK.

### High Sheriff Award

The Trust was awarded a Youth and Community Award at the High Sheriff Awards March 2023.



Volunteers Charlotte Williams received the Gerald Jones MP Community Cup and Andrew Millar received the John Wallbank Mendicants Charity Shield in February 2023.



The Charity was awarded Agored Cymru status in 2022. Agored Cymru is the Welsh awarding body of choice for education and training providers in Wales. Unlike other awarding bodies, we are committed to developing talent in Wales, for Wales.



A pupil at the Alternative Education Programme wrote a book with author Jack Skriven and was awarded 'Genius Award'

This award showcased his determination and drive – as previously before attending the school he did not enjoy writing.



## ***ERASMUS + THE FINAL CHAPTER***

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The Charity visited Serbia and Slovenia, and Wales (online) as part of the Keeping Traditions Alive final programme which has been running for the last two years.

The Erasmus+ project was developed to emphasise how important traditions are in the:

- Youth and play-work

- Education of young people
- History of countries across Europe.

The project has been developed in the youth and afterschool projects at the centre where young people have participated in Welsh Cake makings, sheep walking, gardening, learning about myths and legends, as well as Welsh costume and clothes design over the ages.



## ACTIVE INCLUSION

The charity is in its final year of running a European funded Active Inclusion project. This project has retrained and reeducated over 100 people in the community





## FUNDERS

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We thank our core funders for the support to deliver a community the services they need.

Waterloo Foundation



Lloyds Bank Foundation



The Moondance Foundation



Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.





**Contact us:**

T: 01685 375331 / 377688

E: [helen.hughes@stephensandgeorge.co.uk](mailto:helen.hughes@stephensandgeorge.co.uk)

[www.stephensandgeorgecharitabletrust.org/](http://www.stephensandgeorgecharitabletrust.org/)

Facebook: @sgdcentre

Instagram: @stephensandgeorge

X: @stevegeorge100