



Caerphilly Miners
Centre for the Community
Canolfan **Glowyr Caerffili**
ar gyfer y Gymuned

Annual Report 2019-2020



caerphillyminerscentre.org.uk

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Foreword

Although this report relates to 2019/20 we cannot ignore the impact that Covid-19 has had on the Centre's work.

Towards the end of 2019/20 we faced, as did the rest of the people of the UK, Europe and indeed most of the world, a lockdown that is unprecedented in modern times. Not since the second world war did we experience emergency measures like this designed to keep us safe.

The Miners' Centre was, of course, no exception and we had to close the building for all normal activities. Given that this extraordinary measure was completely unexpected, and unplanned for, the management of the Centre had to act with speed and in good faith.

All the excellent work to provide positive activities and learning opportunities that had characterised the Centre for several years was overshadowed by the lockdown. But we were determined not to lose them.

The trustees and management, with outstanding support from our volunteers, were determined that the Centre would not go under but would continue to offer a range of services even though it had to be by virtual means for the foreseeable future.

It is to the credit of all concerned that virtual services are being provided and the Centre is doing a lot more than just "ticking over". Much thanks must go to our volunteers who have acted throughout selflessly and with great commitment.

The Board of Trustees are looking forward to a resumption of something like normal service. However, we ask you bear with us as we relax restrictions in line with Welsh Government rules and guidance. But keeping everyone involved with us safe, will always be our priority!

We are determined that the Caerphilly Miners' Centre for the Community will remain as a key local facility that everyone can be proud of.

Jeff Cuthbert
Interim Chair of the Trustees



Annual Report 2019-2020

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Our vision

We are a group of local residents who have come together with a common aim of restoring the old Caerphilly Miners' and bringing new life to it, for the benefit of our community. We are working to create a place in our community where people want to be, can enjoy themselves and feel part of the community, can learn from each other and invest in their family's future, and can celebrate our heritage. We are building a sustainable social enterprise, which can make a positive difference to people whatever their age or circumstance.

We have taken on a much-loved building, whose heritage is vested in the efforts of 11,000 miners of the Rhymney Valley nearly 100 years ago. Their collaborative efforts led to the creation of the Caerphilly Miners Hospital. The Miners holds individual and collective memories of many community members. They or their children were born in the hospital or they worked or were treated there. It would have been a tragedy to lose this iconic building. As a community, we have an important responsibility to sustain it and retain this sense of place.

In 2019-20 we were able to further consolidate the investment in the ground floor of the building, whilst planning for growth to meet the community's ongoing needs. We regularly accommodated 72 hours of room bookings, supporting 350 visitors a week. We also generated our own activities, supporting 61 volunteers who between them contributed 7,500 hours in the period July 2019 to March 2020. Our priorities are to provide a wide range of affordable and accessible activities to as many people as possible.

One of the main attractions of our project is that it remains 'work in progress' which is reliant on our community for ongoing support and commitment. It gives us enormous pleasure when people contact us to explore what we have to offer or expressing an interest in taking up a new activity.

Our main challenges were:

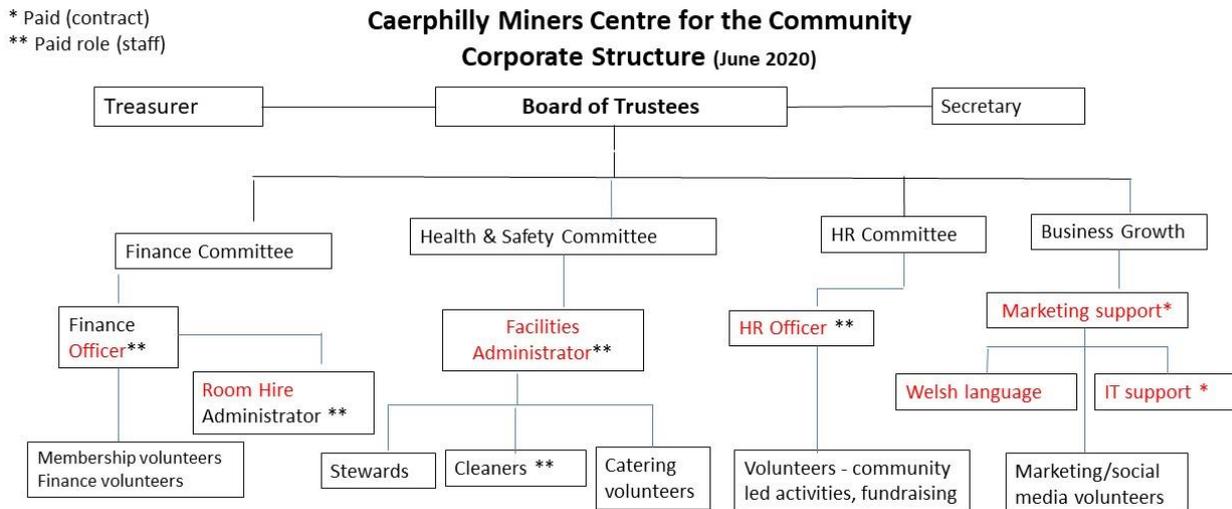
- Ensuring that 'The Miners' is a place where people of all ages want to be
- Attracting new activities and creating new projects to populate our building
- Recruiting, training, supporting and sustaining volunteers
- Creating the capacity and infrastructure to achieve our vision
- Securing resources to refurbish the remainder of the building.

As Covid-19 arrived, with the long lockdown and challenges of reopening, we have realised the importance of supporting community resilience. We need to be 'there' for the more isolated members of our community, people who have lost out in the momentous economic upheaval that Covid-19 has brought with it, and to support and give hope to people whose mental health has suffered. The pandemic has led to many changes in our volunteer base and has caused us to rethink how we deliver our services.

Governance

Since its inception, Caerphilly Miners has had to get to grips with developing an infrastructure for managing a complex and challenging project.

Trustees need an understanding of our values and business ethics, management of risk and resources, team skills and a clear vision about direction and approach. We have managed our organisation with a mixture of trustees – with hands-on experience, strategic vision and professional expertise. This has worked well for many years. Since 2017 we have worked to formalise our corporate staffing and volunteer support structures and have changed staff roles to accommodate the growing demands on our organisation. The new corporate structure is as follows (the items marked in red are new roles):



With help from Lloyds Bank Foundation Enable Plus support in 2019 we have had consultants helping us to improve our governance. An audit of trustees’ skills has enabled us to identify gaps in our capacity. Advice on the workings of our Finance Committee has enabled us to develop new terms of reference, a schedule of meetings, and reserves and investment policies and identified the need for a Finance assistant. Advice on the workings of our HR (People Management) Committee has provided terms of reference, a legal framework, a programme of activity, updated employment policies and training. Our consultants also identified the need for a more robust framework for Health and Safety. Over the past year we have succeeded in strengthening our sub-committee structure, in particular, creating effective HR and Finance Committees, and investing in our Stewards’ Team. There remain gaps in capacity in our HR Committee and the Health and Safety Committee also needs further attention. Evaluations over the years have identified reliance on a single person as a potential risk. We have worked hard over the past year to try and share the risk more evenly across the organisation. This remains work in progress at all levels of the organisation.

We also secured help from a Marketing Consultant, using Lloyds Bank Foundation grant funding. This has helped us to embrace new ways of delivering our services.

We successfully applied for two grants to enable us to employ a Volunteer Coordinator and clarify the relationship between our charitable activities (such as community events and activities, volunteer support and training) and our social enterprise activities (room hire).

Trustees 2019-2020

Name	Skills
Amy Alexander	Civil servant, working in finance (from October 2019, Treasurer)
Rob Bleach	Former Special Needs teacher
Glenda Burnett	Experience in catering, cleaning, housekeeping and hospitality management
Ryan Cullen	HR Lawyer, (Vice Chair from October 2019 – June 2020)
Jeff Cuthbert	Former Welsh Assembly Member, now Police Commissioner (stepped down as Vice Chair October 2019, Acting Chair from June 2020)
Hefin David, AM	Welsh Assembly Member, former University Lecturer (to October 2019)
Wayne David, MP (Chair)	Member of Parliament (stepped down as Chair October 2019)
Lyn Elliott	Local community member, experience of care sector and disability
Stuart Elliott	Local community member, retired building contracts project manager
Katherine Hughes, Company Secretary	Former community consultant/ town planner, governance & management, funding experience in public and voluntary sectors
Ann Lewis	Retired Head of Welsh, St Martin's Comprehensive School
Lisa Morgan	Beauty therapist (local business) (to July 2019)
Sean Robinson	IT Consultant (Chair from October 2019 – June 2020)
Rachelle Beasley	Experience of compliance and health and safety (Cooptee), stepped down November 2019 because of pressure of work
Richard Mann	Deputy Chief Executive United Welsh (Cooptee) Advice and support with building development, tendering, etc.

At the 2019 AGM we said goodbye to Trustee Hefin David, AM. Hefin was simply too busy but he remains supportive of our project. His vision, sense of strategic direction, and business acumen are very much missed,

Lisa Morgan stepped down in July 2019 because of pressure of work, she is also an active supporter of our project, continuing to help with marketing and business advice.

Sean Robinson and Ryan Cullen took up the role of Chair and Vice Chair at the 2019 AGM following the announcement by Wayne David of his decision to step down. Both worked hard to enhance the governance of Caerphilly Miners Centre over the next four months, but following changes in personal circumstances, which took up a lot more of their time than anticipated, they both decided to step down in June 2020. Jeff Cuthbert agreed to become our Acting Chair until the 2020 AGM could review our governance. Thanks are due to Wayne and Jeff, Sean and Ryan for their commitment to leading our charity.

Trustee Rob Bleach has been a steward since 2017, looking after classes on Mondays and Tuesdays, supporting new stewards, and providing practical help with building maintenance. Since he became a Trustee in 2018 he has also helped with the building development group and is an active member of the Finance and Health and Safety Committees.

Trustee Ann Lewis has responsibility for developing bilingual activity, relationships with schools and our Youth Forum. She is an active member of our HR Committee, is our Safeguarding Officer and Chair of our Welsh Group. Ann also volunteers with the Children's Craft and Film activities, teaches Welsh Conversation classes, and is a regular steward.

Glenda Burnett is responsible for food, hygiene and management issues within the café. She and Katherine Hughes have been working on the Food Hub project within the proposed kitchen on the 1st floor.

Katherine Hughes is the Company Secretary with responsibilities for governance, policy and procedures, developing and managing several of the projects, engaging with volunteers, funding applications, business development, reports and marketing. She is also a member of the steward's team, Finance and HR Committees and volunteers with the Elderberries, Chair Exercises, Children's Craft and film activities, Gardening and Music Groups.

Trustee Amy Alexander became Treasurer in October 2019. She learned to ropes quickly, but the Covid-19 Lockdown has created huge challenges for her and she has taken leave of absence since April 2020.

Committees and Sub-Groups

Finance

One of the areas of consultancy support from a Lloyds Bank Foundation's grant was to review the arrangements for our Finance Committee. Before 2019 trustees, paid staff and volunteers tried to cover a range of financial tasks - developing the budget, identifying financial risks, preparing quarterly financial reports, making payments and receiving cash on a daily basis, and keeping spreadsheets and bank reconciliation up to date. The result of the review was to set up a functioning Finance, Risk and Audit Committee comprising Trustees Jeff Cuthbert, Rob Bleach and Katherine Hughes, to employ part time paid support from a Finance Assistant, Gareth Jones and to recruit a Treasurer. Gareth Jones started work in July 2019. Amy Alexander became Treasurer in October 2019 and took the chair for the Finance Committee, replacing Jeff Cuthbert who had stood in temporarily as Chair. Our appreciation goes to Jeff for his support, Gareth Jones, Volunteer Alison Banks, for managing the spreadsheets for the centre, and Annette Thomas from Pay Connect (WCVA) for managing our payroll.

Human Resource Management

As part of its planned expansion, the Trust also set up a Human Resource Committee comprising Ann Lewis, Katherine Hughes and Cooptee Rachelle Beasley (until September 2019). With Lloyds Bank Foundation Enhance support, the Trust had consultancy support to develop terms of reference, a framework and programme of work, and a suite of policies to support employment. Ryan Cullen, a HR lawyer, was recruited to the board and became Vice Chair and Chair of the HR Committee. He was able to build on the policies our consultant had developed and create a new Employee Handbook. The trust also has also developed handbooks for Volunteers, Stewards and Keyholders. A new system of signing up to key policy documents was also generated this year and our record keeping was made significantly more robust. When resources allow we plan to recruit a HR Manager with responsibilities for our staff and volunteer teams.

Health and Safety

The Lloyds Bank Foundation support also provided us with consultancy support to develop a suite of policies covering Health and Safety. With the help of Rachelle Beasley we also trained our volunteers and staff members in health and safety policies, including manual handling, fire safety, first aid, food hygiene, health and safety awareness, and managing difficult behaviour. With Covid-19 we have added another layer of safety measures onto this. The task of managing Health and Safety on a day to day basis rests with the Stewards. When resources allow, we plan to recruit a Facilities Officer with day to day responsibility for implementing Health and Safety procedures.

Service delivery

Stewards

In 2016 we set up a group of key holders, comprising trustees, paid staff and volunteers, to organise the management of the building. Together they open and close the building, take responsibility for food hygiene, health and safety, first aid, fire safety, licensing, waste management, cleaning, repairs and equipment. They ensure that our clients and tutors have workable rooms when they arrive, the building is comfortable, refreshments are available as requested and our visitors have a warm welcome. The group meets regularly to address current issues, stewards have training, and a stewards' handbook is available and kept up to date.

In 2018-19 we were fortunate in having a team of 9 stewards, comprising Rob Bleach, Sue Burgess, Glenda Burnett, Geoff Dunn, John Hickman, Katherine Hughes, Huw Jackson, Derek Jenkins and Ann Lewis. In 2019-20 the number of stewards fell by 4 with the retirement of Glenda Burnett, John Hickman, Sue Burgess and Huw Jackson. In January 2019 Katherine Orriss, who ran the Repair Café, joined the group, but she retired in November 2019. A recruitment campaign resulted in new Stewards, including Yvonne Fiddler, Rebecca Evans and Toby Bowen, but sadly Rebecca and Toby were unable to continue and they and Derek Jenkins retired in February 2020. We continue to recruit new stewards to meet the increasing level of activity required in our centre. Without stewards we could not run the centre and we are immensely appreciative of the work that they do.

Paid staff

The Trust is reliant on a small core paid team to keep activities going within the building. At the start of the year our core team comprised Administrator, Sue Burgess, (24 hours a week), Café Supervisor, Kath Virgo, (8 hours a week) and Caretakers / Cleaners Derek Jenkins and Howard Williams (10 hours a week). In July 2019 our paid team expanded include a Finance Assistant, Gareth Jones (8 hours a week) paid through room hire revenue income, and a Volunteer Coordinator, Yasmin Morris, (16 hours a week) financed through 2 revenue grants.

As our organisation expanded, we became less able to keep the café open regularly through the week and the café lost revenue. We focused on a Saturday café, and sadly, Kath left in September 2019. We temporarily recruited a replacement for 4 hours a week, but worked for only a few weeks, leaving the centre relying on a team of 12 enthusiastic catering volunteers.

In early January Sue Burgess had a bad fall at home resulting in hospitalisation and six months of recuperation. During this time Gareth Jones covered her job for three months, culminating in a review of the job in March 2020. Sadly, Sue decided to retire in July 2020. Because of Covid-19, the Room Hire Administrator post will not be filled until the trust has adequate funds to pay for a salary.

The Volunteer Coordinator role was similarly affected by frequent and long term sickness, shielding and furloughing. We recruited Avril Owen as temporary administrator to cover this role for 6 weeks, but unfortunately could not keep her on once lockdown set in.

Volunteering

In April 2018, we circulated a questionnaire to all volunteers asking for comments on how they are managed, trained and supported. Volunteers felt engaged, appreciated and generally well-informed. They wanted a central noticeboard, more training events and social get-togethers. Sometimes, volunteers felt that they were asked to commit more than they realistically were able and ideally would like us to increase the pool of volunteers. In June 2018 at a Social Evening, we discussed these issues, circulated an updated Volunteer Handbook, and created an Action Plan.

We recognised the need to get a paid Volunteer Coordinator and successfully applied to the Provident Social Impact Fund and Caerphilly Health and Well Being Fund to recruit a Volunteer Coordinator for 16 hours a week for 12 months. It was our intention to sustain this appointment beyond the 12 months, but the post-holder was ill for 10 weeks and then shielded for the remaining 16 weeks of the project and our plans have had to be shelved.

Volunteering provides much needed capacity within our project. Without the activities of over 50 volunteers who regularly donate their time we would not be able to deliver our projects, keep the building open, or engage our community. Volunteering contributes in generating new ideas, running activities, supporting the building, fund-raising, community engagement and marketing. Without it, we would not be able to show the human face of our project or provide accessible and affordable activities.

Volunteering gives people the chance to develop their skills and career opportunities and enables us to draw on their experience, energy, and good will. We would like to thank our community, trustees, members, volunteers, participants, local businesses, our partners, and supporters - all of whom have helped to shape our project and make it vibrant. We are hugely indebted to our volunteers, who contribute over 750 hours of time every month. In the 9 months of running the project, we were able to generate 7,500 hours of volunteer time, representing over £62,000 of added benefit to our social economy.

We started with a small core of volunteers from our local community who mostly work on specific projects. We now recruit through ever wider avenues (e.g. GAVO, Wales Coop Centre, Communities for Work, Careers Wales, social media, partners etc). Volunteers are registered, trained and supported. We monitor their hours, hold regular social events, prepare monitoring reports and award Certificates of Appreciation at our AGM. We're fortunate to have such a brilliant group of volunteers. Together, we have engaged our community, given a lot of pleasure to people, added new dimensions to our project, made some important decisions and had some fun.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, make new friends, learn or do something new, and have some fun. Our volunteers are motivated individuals who are flexible and enthusiastic in making a real difference to the service CMCC can offer the community of Caerphilly. We continue to need volunteers from all walks of life and with a diverse range of skills and interests.

Over the past year, volunteers were engaged in the following activities:

- Crafts and chat workshops with people from all walks of life
- Children's crafts, the Stay and Play Group, and Lego Club
- Engaging schools / young people in the School Ambassador and Youth Forum projects

- Elderberries Social Afternoon events and Cinema Club, Whist Club and chair exercises
- Supporting bilingual organisation – Welsh translation, website, conversation classes
- Supporting fundraising, coffee mornings and the Repair Café
- Marketing and social media
- Running our community café
- Keeping our grounds clean, tidy and colourful
- Concerts and musical activities
- Admin support
- Stewarding - making the venue available for private events and community hire.

The volunteers who helped during the last year are:

Café, catering and supporting the Caerphilly Repair Café: Jenny Perkins, Juliet Lanchbury, Christina Watts, Simon Phillips, Sue Burgess, Katherine Hughes, Glenda Burnett, Louise Kenyon, Chris Shawyer, Chris Cooper, Kath Virgo, Kathy Orriss, Kate Allardyce, Sheila Hopkins, Dawn Cole, Yvonne Fidler, Chris Jasper, Jenni Jones-Annetts, Karen Masters, Susan Masters, Stephen Nash, Avril Owen, Liz Paull, Doreen Pope, Rhiannon Rees, Teresa Rees, Sean Robinson, Marion Watts, Shirley Williams.

Music group: Louise Kenyon, Jayne David, Marion Watts, Katherine Hughes, Irene Burrows, Rikki Pullen

Web-site development and social media: Belinda Snow, Sean Robinson, Ann Lewis, Katherine Hughes

Children's Crafts: Amie Morgan, Neelie Davies, Belinda Snow, Val Baynton, Louise Kenyon, Simon Phillips, Chris Cooper, Jenni Jones-Annetts, Christine Shawyer, Ann Lewis, Glenda Burnett, Katherine Hughes, Marion Watts, Natasha Gittings, Avril Owen, Liz Paull, Sheila Hopkins, Lauren James, Kairen West, Jemma West.

Elderberries: Kath Virgo, Carlos Maza, Sue Burgess, Katherine Hughes, Irene Burrows, Jenny Hibbert, Marion Watts, Gillian Jones, Rob Bleach, Rhonwen Jenkins, Sue Balch, Liz Stanford, Shirley Williams, Marjorie Gray

Gardening group: Ruth Starr, Alison Banks, Simon Phillips, Geoff Dunn, Louise Kenyon, Jean Lewis, Jenny and Philip Jenkins, Sue and Colin Balch, Yvonne Fidler, Chris O'Meara, Ann Lewis, Phil Turner, Janet Cornwall, Katherine Hughes

Welsh Group: Ann Lewis, Nia Parsons, John Lloyd, Lowri Jones, Jenni Jones-Annetts,

Stewards: Rob Bleach, Geoff Dunn, Katherine Hughes, Derek Jenkins, Ann Lewis, Kathy Orriss, Yvonne Fidler, Derek Markham.

Administration: Gillian Jones, Dawn Cole, Chris Shawyer, Liz Nicholas, Alison Banks, .

Membership and AGM

Our AGM was held in September 2019. Katherine Hughes presented the Annual Report for 2018-19 and, in the absence of a Treasurer, the Financial Report. After the meeting members and volunteers enjoyed a social get-together. The number of members of the company has been falling in recent years. This is an area for the Admin team to review when there is time and opportunity. Lockdown 2020 coincided with membership renewals and the needs to be a priority for 2020-21.

'Populating' the building

Of the six rooms we refurbished on the ground floor, we have kept 5 rooms available for community use, with a small room rented out to a beauty therapist who eventually wishes to have space on the top floor. The 5 multi-functional rooms include:

- Seminar Room, with space for 40 people, used for training and social activities, Side by Side, Elderberries, Children's Crafts, Quilting, musical events
- Cinema Room, with space for 30 people, used for film showings, classes, therapies and play
- Youth Room: created by our Youth Forum for their use and also for training
- IT suite: also used for training, film showings, children's discos
- Café with a small kitchen: open 3 mornings per week as a café and also for classes, exercise and dance, quilting, children's play group, and for social meetings.

These ground floor rooms are in use for over 100 hours a week during term-time. We work with Coleg Gwent, Community Education, Communities First, Bridges into Work, Adult Learning Wales, and private tutors to offer Welsh, digital literacy, literacy, numeracy, I-pad, jewellery, and courses for work. art, Tai Chi, line dancing, Dance 50+, French, Spanish, music therapy, yoga, and singing.

Through our own voluntary efforts we also deliver Welsh conversation, Stay and Play/Glowyr Bach, Craft and Chat Workshop, a Cinema Clubs, Elderberries, Chair Exercises, Whist Club, Children's Craft and Film events and a variety of fund-raising activities.

We have kept open throughout the year, closing only for bank holidays and Christmas. Caerphilly Miners is becoming a "community hub", with community members coming to offer us help or use our services. We have also made our centre available for children's and adults' birthday parties, Halloween and Christmas parties and for special events.

Work is still in progress to make full use of our current resource. Challenges for our volunteer team are to maintain our ambitious programme of activities within the ground floor rooms, raise our profile, generate more volunteering opportunities, and attract new activities and clients. We also want to make our café, IT suite and youth activities more sustainable, whilst retaining their affordability, although in the past year increasing room hire and larger classes has made this difficult.

We have been working with local churches and shops, United Welsh's Together Programme, Menter Iaith, and Keep Wales Tidy. Social Services use our project for their clients to tap into Elderberries, Cinema Club, Chair Exercises, Crafts, our Café and

Gardening Club. We also provide meeting spaces for Help for Heroes, Side by Side Choir, Autistic Society, Alzheimers' Society, MS Society,

Breathing life into the building depends on the inspiration and support of all parts of our community – older and younger people, members and volunteers, members of local clubs and churches, people running events, our partners, and committed volunteers.

Making the project financially viable demands that we generate both room hire and project activity. Over the past year we generated over £50,000 income from these activities, representing a huge amount of joint effort and goodwill. The Stewards ensure that the centre is welcoming, and activities run smoothly. Project teams and community members initiate new activities and the Marketing Group promotes them. The staff team ensure that the building is clean, bookings are taken, and invoices are paid.

Projects

Elderberries

The Elderberries meet every two weeks to enjoy each other's company, meet familiar and new faces, be entertained, learn new things, have afternoon tea and a bit of fun in a relaxed atmosphere. The Elderberries provides an important lifeline for many members, especially those who live alone. The Elderberries are a wonderful group to work with – they support us, each other and the wider community. They remind us of our good fortune and the need to sustain each other.

Sadly, we lost members during the last year, but our members continued to attend when they could and new people joined both the Social Afternoons and Cinema Club. We regularly have 20-25 people to the Elderberries and 15-20 to the Cinema Club. It hasn't been possible to sustain our Thursday afternoon Whist Club. We have created a Directory of members, which we used to check up on people's wellbeing during bad weather and which provided the basis of our buddy scheme during lockdown. A new Elderberries Planning Group was set up in September 2019 – Sue Balch, Liz Stamford, Carlos Maza, Marion Watts, Shirley Williams and Katherine Hughes. They have met regularly to develop a programme of activities and have been helped by Irene Burrows, Marjorie Gray, Louise Kenyon, Stuart Elliott, Val Baynton and Kath Virgo. Thanks are due to them and also to Rob Bleach and Karen Masters for supporting the Cinema club.

The Elderberries enjoyed a varied programme of activities including outside speakers, quizzes, 'Antiques Roadshows', Call my Bluff, sharing of career highlights, and trips out. In 2019 the main trips out were a fund-raising walk around Roath Park (which raised over £400 for project funds) and a trip to Porthcawl in July. In February the Elderberries joined up with the catering volunteers and made a scrumptious afternoon tea, enjoyed by over 30 people. The Elderberries made donations to the foodbank at harvest and Christmas and many people contributed rectangles to the Knitting Project.

Chair Exercises

Caerphilly Miners is doing its bit to support well-being and slow down the onset of immobility amongst older people. In response to a website request, we set up a Chair Exercise class in November 2016, which is now the largest in Caerphilly, with 16-20 people regularly attending. Ruth Starr and Katherine Hughes have been running the class

since September 2017. The membership remains constant, with people leaving through ill health and new people replacing them. Some of the members joined the Seated Dance class run by Beth Ryland throughout Covid Lockdown, but they have now returned.

Gardening group

Members of the Gardening Group – Ruth Starr, Jean Lewis, Louise Kenyon, Alison Banks, Philip and Jenny Jenkins, Geoff Dunn, Simon Phillips and Katherine Hughes with help from the Stewards – have done what they can to keep the planters and front bed colourful and our site free from weeds over the past year. Working parties have been held monthly, including weeding, leaf gathering, and planning meetings. Throughout 2018 and in the early part of 2019 the work of the group was hampered by the reconfiguration and construction of our car park. However, in September 2019, a couple of working parties were held to develop the newly constructed front beds. Hundreds of bulbs and plants were planted in September 2019 and there was a lovely show in Spring 2020. The plan for this year is to raise the beds, increasing the soil depth and improving drainage.

In September 2019, under the leadership and inspiration of Chris O'Meara, we applied to the National Community Lottery Fund for a Climate Change Garden of the Future project which was awarded in November 2019. We spent the next few months learning about climate change. With guidance from David Thorpe of Cyberium and Nicola Perkins from Local Farms and Gardens we learned about climate change and its impact on soil and cultivation. Following a consultation workshop in November, we drew up an invitation to Landscape Architects to design our garden. Fiona Cloke Associates was awarded the contract in December and we had further workshops in January and February 2020 to complete the design. The project sadly could not proceed during lockdown, but we are still intending to complete the main structure of the garden before the end of 2020 with a view to starting planting in 2021.

Music Group

The Music Group - Louise Kenyon, Jayne David, Marion Watts, Irene Burrows, Rikki Pullen and Katherine Hughes - has been running musical events for the Miners since 2012. In 2019-20 they held three events – a choir concert with Caerphilly Male Voice Choir at Wesley Methodist Church on 5th April, a Cymanfa Ganu at Tonyfelin Chapel on 30th June and a Christmas Musical Soiree at the Caerphilly Miners on 14th December. The Music Group also supported other events in the Miners such as carol singing at the Christmas Fair. Sadly the group will not be able to perform in 2020-21, although the group is still meeting to plan events further ahead.

Craft and Chat Group

Volunteer Neelie Davies established what is now known as Crafts and Chat in May 2016. She was joined in 2017 by Belinda Snow, Winnie Reid, Mary Hughes and Lynn Curtis and in 2018 by Sheila Hopkins. The group provided the opportunity for people to drop in and make things and includes people with significant needs. The group regularly had 12-15 members in the group and they focused on fund-raising for the Miners; at the Christmas Fair they made over £600 in sales of craft activities and a cakes stall towards funds for the Miners and craft materials.

Caerphilly Miners has participated in a knitting project run by the Caerphilly Churches making blankets for needy families. Participants are mostly Elderberries, who contribute rectangles which are sewn together into a blanket. Knitting usually takes place in the autumn and winter. Winnie Reid from the Craft and Chat Group has been putting together the rectangles into blankets for the past three years. In 2018 we donated 12 blankets to the craft group at St Martin's Church who packaged them and presented them to the families. In 2019 we prepared 12 blankets but did not donate them before lockdown and during lockdown the project expanded enormously.

Children's Crafts

Safeguarding

The centre extended its activities for children and young people in 2017. Two of our trustees obtained their DBS certificates and we ensure that at least one of them is available for all children's activities. A safeguarding course run by local churches prompted us to recruit a Safeguarding Officer, Trustee Ann Lewis, who has developed a Safeguarding Policy, agreed by the Board of Directors in July 2017 and updated each subsequent year.

The Children's Crafts, Film and Tea Party Saturday afternoon events, held on the 3rd Saturday afternoon of each month came from a Health Trust Lottery grant awarded in 2016 to engage people from disadvantaged communities. Volunteers Amie Morgan, Neelie Davies, Ann Lewis, Katherine Hughes and the then School Ambassadors created the concept based on a popular children's theme. The event has been tweaked over the years to streamline the tasks for volunteers and make the event easier to manage. The project has not only successfully attracted a following of parents and children from all over Caerphilly, but it has also generated opportunities for many volunteers to be involved.

Neelie Davies and Belinda Snow initially took responsibility for interpreting the film concepts into crafts; over the last year Belinda has taken the lead with help from members of the Craft and Chat Group, Winnie Davies, Sheila Hopkins and also a parent Sarah Warr. Ann Lewis developed creative cupcake decorating. Marion Watts and Chris Cooper have provided stories and we also have had a team of people showing children how to do the crafts, running a raffle, the film show, and tea party.

Thanks are due to the following for running the project in 2019-20: Amie Morgan, Neelie Davies, Belinda Snow, Val Baynton, Louise Kenyon, Simon Phillips, Chris Cooper, Jenni Jones-Annetts, Christine Shawyer, Ann Lewis, Glenda Burnett, Katherine Hughes, Marion Watts, Natasha Gittings, Avril Owen, Liz Paull, Sheila Hopkins, Lauren James, Kairen West, Jemma West. There is a great sense of camaraderie within this team.

Stay and Play

Stay and Play, a parent-toddler group, run on a Thursday morning, has been run since 2017 by Tasha Gittings. In 2018 she established Glowyr Bach, a Welsh 'stay and play' group on a Friday. The groups have been popular and supported by a loyal following of volunteers, especially on a Thursday. Over the past year the groups have been supported by Chris Jasper and stewards Geoff Dunn and Ann Lewis. Ideally, we would like to create paid work in early years activities at the Miners, because of the skills and commitment involved, but to date we have not been able to achieve this.

Youth Forum

Our Youth Forum consists of past school ambassadors from primary schools within the Caerphilly cluster. We currently have active forum members from St Cennydd and Cwm Rhymney. The Youth Forum last met in mid-November and were told about the scheme for developing a garden for climate change at the Miners. They were extremely interested and eager to be involved. Some excellent suggestions were made that were subsequently included in the Gardening Group's plans. Sadly, because of lockdown, we have not been able to hold another meeting and at present we are uncertain as to the situation regarding releasing pupils from school during the autumn term 2020.

School Ambassadors

Ann Lewis has been developing our School Ambassador Scheme for the past six years. We now have agreement from all the schools in the Caerphilly Basin to engage in the scheme. It aims to facilitate links between Caerphilly Miners Centre and local schools. The Ambassadors have met twice since the last report, we met a new group from year 5 in October 2020 and we were fortunate that we were able to arrange a spring meeting in February 2020 prior to lockdown. The new Ambassadors were introduced to the centre, its history and its current projects, they toured the building and were given an update by Katherine about the development of the upper floors.

Once again, we have benefited greatly from an impressive group of young people, full of ideas, enthusiasm and good sense. Sadly we were unable to meet during the summer term due to lockdown and at present it is not clear when we shall be able to resume our regular Ambassadors meetings.

Welsh Medium Activities

We have recently reviewed our Welsh language policy with all posters and published materials now bilingual. Our website has been updated and is available in both Welsh and English. Some of our volunteers are learning Welsh.

Ann Lewis, Trustee, is the Chair of the Welsh Group at Caerphilly Miners and its regular members are Nia Parsons, John Lloyd, Jenni Jones Annetts and Lowri Jones. The Group has continued to sustain initiatives and to fundraise. The Welsh Group were in the process of raising money by running a rugby sweepstake early in 2020 but lockdown prevented the championship from concluding. We hope it will continue during the autumn so that the group can award the winner!

A successful Welsh murder mystery evening was held at the Miners as a fundraiser in November 2019 with a buffet created by volunteer Kate Allardyke.. Other fundraising activities included a Te Prynawn in July, prepared by a team of volunteers - Christina Watts, Juliet Lanchbury, Kath Virgo, Chris Shawyer and Katherine Hughes.

Welsh language classes run by Coleg Gwent have increased in number again this year but of course moved online in March 2020. Ann and Jenni-Jones Annetts run a weekly Welsh Conversation Class which has resumed on zoom since July 2020. A Welsh medium I-Pad course ran until February 2020 and may resume. The group have also sponsored a Welsh play group, Glowyr Bach, at the Miners and Caerphilly Miners Centre was represented as usual at the Ffiliffest in Caerphilly Castle in June 2019.

Classes, courses and activities

We run a wide range of dance classes at the centre. Line Dancing has run at the centre from April 2016 to February 2020. A 50+ Dance class, Seated Dance and a Disability Friendly Dance class are all held on Mondays. A chair exercise classes is run by two volunteers on Thursdays. Three yoga classes, four Tai Chi classes, Pilates class and Mediation sessions were also held. We also were able to offer classes in art, jewellery, Welsh I-Pad, literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy classes. Five Welsh classes and Welsh Conversation 2 Spanish and a French classes were also run.

The centre also hosted 2 choirs – Side by Side (autistic support) choir on a Tuesday and Rechoir on a Saturday. It also provides a venue for Weight Watchers and Slimming World sessions.

ITEC ran training at the centre for most of the year, providing courses for returning to employment. Bridges into Work and occasionally Community Education also run day courses regularly for unemployed people. We also have one off training and Away Days for some of the local businesses in the area. We continue to seek to build on this. We have also trained our volunteers in Manual Handling, Fire Safety, Health and Safety, First Aid and Food Hygiene.

Supporting our Community

Caerphilly Miners Centre has teamed up successfully with Repair Café Wales. They meet on the 4th Saturday of each month under the leadership of Kathy Orriss. The Repair Café regularly attracts 20 – 30 requests and is growing. Louise Kenyon, Chris Cooper, Chris Shawyer, Ann Lewis, Teresa Rees, Rhianon Rees, Avril Owen and Katherine Hughes have volunteered regularly.

We have hosted Castle View Residents' and Caerphilly Friends of the Earth meetings. The Centre is open for local community members to run their organisation's events or for private parties. We have also run fund-raising activities for local charities. We continue to work with local churches and choirs, United Welsh, and Caerphilly County Borough Council, and Aneurin Bevan Health Board. As a 'community hub' our aim is to support to other groups and add value to what we can collectively do together.

Marketing and Social Media

We have built on our Marketing Strategy. Rachele Beasley and Sean Robinson both updated our website in 2019 and Ann Lewis translated everything to create a bilingual website - caerphillyminerscentre.org.uk. Belinda Snow took on the task of designing posters and keeping Facebook up to date. Belinda and Katherine Hughes met monthly to plan our marketing activities and together they did what they could to maintain our connectivity with our community.

In October 2019 Mari Arthur, funded by Lloyds Bank Foundation, met with Belinda and Katherine to support our marketing activity. We met again in early March and started to plan the way forward. They came COVID and Mari has helped us to transform our offer to the community. We recruited new members – Sinead Kirwan, Lauren Cripps and Jordan Maders.

Café and Catering

From April 2016 until September 2019 our part time volunteer café was managed by Kath Virgo, supported by a small team of regular volunteers - Christina Watts, Jenny Perkins, and Juliet Lanchbury. In August 2019 we decided to close our café during the week to allow for additional room hire. We attempted to develop a Saturday café during the Autumn and early Spring, but it did not prove profitable and is currently closed. In the meantime we trained 10 new volunteers in food hygiene and developed a new catering team. The café received another Grade 5 Food Hygiene Certificate in September 2019.

The catering team have produced buffets for events, refreshments for parties, lunches for workshops and training days. Thanks are due to all the volunteers who contributed in various ways to our catering effort: Jenny Perkins, Juliet Lanchbury, Christina Watts, Simon Phillips, Sue Burgess, Katherine Hughes, Glenda Burnett, Louise Kenyon, Chris Shawyer, Chris Cooper, Kath Virgo, Kathy Orriss, Kate Allardyce, Sheila Hopkins, Dawn Cole, Yvonne Fidler, Chris Jasper, Jenni Jones-Annetts, Karen Masters, Susan Masters, Stephen Nash, Avril Owen, Liz Paull, Doreen Pope, Rhiannon Rees, Teresa Rees, Sean Robinson, Marion Watts, and Shirley Williams.

Fundraising

We ran a Summer and Christmas Fair in 2019-20, generating nearly £2,000 of fund-raising between them. The Craft and Chat group, cake bakers, the café and individual stallholders all contributed to this. Thanks are due to our volunteers and supporters: Val Baynton and Pete, Fran Brown, Glenda Burnett, Chris Cooper, Lynn Curtis, Jayne David, Neelie Davies, Geoff Dunn, Sheila Hopkins, Katherine Hughes, Louise Kenyon, Ann Lewis, Amie Morgan, Winnie Reid, Dorothea Saunders, Chris Shawyer, Belinda Snow, Kath Virgo, Marion Watts and Shirley Williams.

The Elderberries raised over £500 from a sponsored walk in Roath Park in May 2019 and a Te Prynhawn in February 2020. Jenni-Jones Annetts has run a Smarties tube coin collection. The Welsh group generated funds for Welsh language activity and The Craft and Chat Group raised funds for craft activities. We also generated grants for 50+ Dance and Seated Dance with Beth Ryland.

Restoring the building

The total cost of restoring the building is an estimated £2 million. We created two phases for the restoration. The first phase – enveloping the building and restoring the ground floor – was largely complete by February 2016 at a cost of nearly £800,000.

We completed the configuration as a second phase in 2019, costing a further £300,000 with funding WEFO/Welsh Government, Caerphilly CBC's Community Regeneration Fund, Coalfields Regeneration Fund/Together and CISWO. Our aim was to develop the external area, providing 40 car parking spaces, public open space and green spaces. We also secured a further grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to create a Climate Change Garden of the Future, which has been planned, and is in the process of being developed.

The final stages are to restore and refurbish the first and second floors of the building. The first floor will include a Community/Commercial Kitchen and Function

Room/Community Hall, a Craft and a Music Room and various areas of storage and services. This plan was the result of extensive consultation and experience of managing the ground floor. Even before Covid our ground floor was full most of the time and extending our community space on the 1st floor was designed to relieve pressure on the existing space. The experience of the Covid pandemic has shown that this is vital for our community. Within the 10 small rooms on the second floor we plan to hire space out to acorn enterprises so that we generate an income, develop employment and breathe further life into the building. Invitations to tender went out for these proposals in August 2019, but there was a technical problem with the tendering process and it had to be done again. The plan is now to complete in 2020-2021.

Thank you!

We'd like to thank our members, volunteers and the wider community for all the support you have given us over the years and particularly in the past year. These are extremely difficult times for our community, but we have stuck together and supported each other. Our collective resilience is here for all to see. The last few months have shown how important Caerphilly Miners Centre is to our community and we will do our best to sustain it in whatever way we can.

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