

Annual Report 2021 - 2022



Working Together Ludlow

*To include people with learning
difficulties and disabilities*

www.workingtogetherludlow.co.uk

About us

Working Together is a charity supporting adults and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

We aim to provide supportive opportunities and promote the positive role that people with learning disabilities can play in the local community.

We are based in Ludlow, south Shropshire.

Our dedicated team of staff, volunteers and Trustees work collaboratively and inclusively with our members, their families and carers to create a positive environment for all.

Our aims

Our aims are to foster a welcoming, loving and supportive environment to:

- promote happiness, good health and wellbeing
- encourage a strong sense of belonging
- develop a stimulating and creative work and social environment
- encourage all to develop their own skills and talents
- do what we can as well as we can
- create an environment where all are valued, appreciated and included
- encourage the inclusion of people with learning disabilities in all aspects of community life



To include people with learning difficulties and disabilities



20th Anniversary Year



2022 was the 20th anniversary of Working

Together and to mark this we held various events and celebrations, including a very special 'Garden Party' in September 2022.

During the year we brought together memorabilia and photos that we have collected over the years and put these into albums we can share.

We are extremely grateful to all who have been involved with Working Together over the past 20 years, to make it what it is today and we enjoyed celebrating throughout 2022.

The Fee Star Award

As many of you will be aware, our colleague and close friend, Fiona Calderwood, passed away in 2021.

Fee was at the heart of Working Together and brought us fun, laughter, care and compassion and she is sadly missed by everyone.

To remember Fee we will be presenting an annual award.

The Fee Star will be presented to a person who has really shone by bringing fun, laughter, care or compassion to Working Together.



It's been another successful but challenging year at Working Together.

In our last annual report (2021) we were beginning to move out of lockdown and developing a new normal as we began to learn to live with Covid. This didn't happen as quickly as we might have wanted, with the guidance for those 'at higher risk' from Covid requiring caution in relaxing Covid safe rules.

To keep everyone as safe as we can we haven't re-opened the café to the public, but we began to gradually invite family, friends and supporters to join us for drinks and snacks by pre-arranged bookings. We have also been instrumental in working with the Baptist Church, providing the meals to support the relaunch of the Thursday Community Lunch at Rockspring. We have continued our relationship with the Food Bank, including supporting their new, monthly Open Table events.

These partnerships are firmly rooted in our food and independent living skills ethos and provide purposeful opportunities for our members to engage with the local community alongside the development of new skills and abilities.

We've strengthened our relationship with the Ludlow Spring Festival and Food Festival, where we operate the Bag Creche, providing a strong purpose for our members together with the opportunity to attend and volunteer at some of Ludlow's most prestigious events.

These are all valuable opportunities, as was our involvement in Ludlow's Fringe Festival and Eco-Carnival, to encourage the inclusion of people with learning disabilities in all aspects of community life and promote the positive role people with learning disabilities can play in the local community - core parts of our charitable purpose and mission.

Through our daytime service we continue to grow the range of activities on offer and have increased the number of members who attend on a daily basis and will continue to build on this in the forthcoming year.

Members have an increasing interest in gardening, making the most of the outside space at Rockspring and building good working relationships with our Community Gardeners to grow fruit and vegetables that we can cook and share with the wider community. What started as an occasional Gardener's Club has quickly developed into a core activity with all our members enjoying the opportunity to grow, tend and harvest the crops.

Alongside our food and cooking activities members continue to enjoy our longstanding Writers' Club and Sewing Bee.

In September 2021 we took over the Charity Bookshop in Craven Arms and welcomed its loyal volunteers into the WT family. Bookshop sales are an important, sustainable source of income for the charity and we are grateful to all the bookshop volunteers for their fantastic fundraising efforts.

The bookshop is providing excellent opportunities for our members to learn new skills as they are involved in sorting and selling good quality books online. There are also opportunities for supported volunteering at the shop itself.

Youth Club continues to flourish on a Tuesday evening with a new young cohort enjoying all we have to offer. Diversity also got back underway in 2022 and is starting to find its feet fortnightly on Wednesdays with a growing membership.

We pay tribute to all our members for their determination to demonstrate what a positive contribution they can make and their commitment to making Working Together what it is.

Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, trustees, supporters, funders and friends for enabling us to continue to successfully move forward in such a positive way.

Rockspring Daytime Services

Our mini Café and activity space at the Rockspring Centre provides us with excellent opportunities for delivering skills based training.

We offer positive, purposeful and meaningful activities in a welcoming community based setting, encouraging confidence building and independent living skills in a safe and fully supportive environment.

As always cooking has remained at the heart of everything we do at Working Together.

This ranges from the members doing online food shopping or our Tuesday morning, weather permitting walk into town (or a trip on the local bus) to local supermarkets to do a planned food shop, usually stopping off at one of the local cafes for a cheeky drink along the way.

On a weekly basis our members cook lunch, not only for themselves but also their families and carers or make an occasional treat to take home. They prepare over 50 lunches a week as well as planning the shopping requirements and preparing a two course community Lunch which is served by the Baptist Church in the Rockspring Community Centre on a Thursday.

We also bake cakes by order for our supporters and for the Foodbank open table events. At Christmas members made over 400 mince pies to fulfil orders for family, carers, friends and supporters.

Our members enjoy all aspects of cooking and wholeheartedly join in with other, more mundane essential jobs, including loading the dishwasher, cleaning tables, vacuuming and the laundry.

A rewarding piece of cake always goes down well with a cup of tea in the afternoon.

We have also enjoyed trips to Helena Lane for the Jubilee Garden Party, a boat trip on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal thanks to the Willow Trust and tenpin bowling at the Grove. More trips and activities are planned in the future.

This past year has been a valuable time for members to get involved with gardening.

All our members have enjoyed planting vegetables and flowers in the community garden and the Working Together outdoor area.

We make sure things are kept well watered during dry spells and get very excited when things begin to flower or when our raspberries, potatoes and other fruit and vegetables are ready to pick.

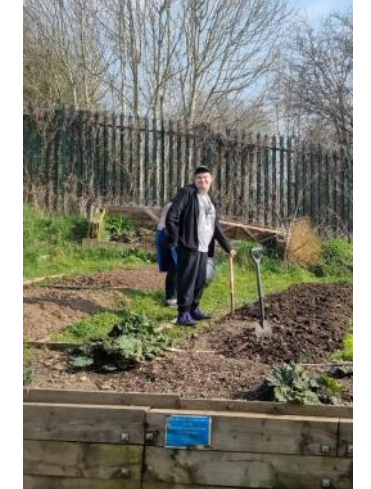
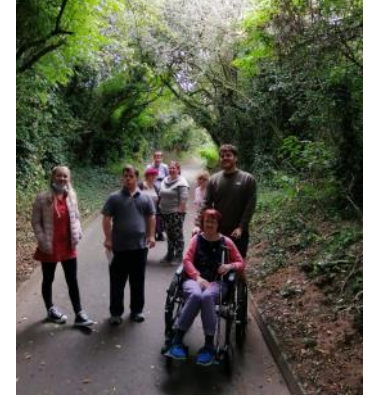
We have now taken on two beds in the garden and are working with the volunteer community gardeners, growing fruit and vegetables that we can cook with in the kitchen or share with the local community.

Through 2022 we planned our Friendship Garden, a space for members, staff and volunteers to spend time enjoying the outdoors and to remember all our friends and the Working Together family.

Gardening Club

Gardening Club started out as an opportunity for members to enjoy the outside space we have at Working Together and our access to the Community Garden - where we had originally volunteered to look after a full sized bed.

Gardening Club has now become an everyday activity that all our members enjoy and contribute to.



Sewing Bee

At the Rockspring Centre we have plenty of space where we can enjoy making things for ourselves, to sell and as gifts for friends.

It's a very relaxed activity as we all chat, often laugh and sometimes listen to music as we sew!

Members are encouraged to take their time to choose their own fabrics, ribbons and threads from our collection.

Members produce something that is entirely personal to them and have made some great things over the years.

It was super for Sewing Bee to be able to get back to a degree of normality in 2021/22.

Projects in this year included the lavender bags we made which smelt amazing and proved a big hit with friends and family.

Out of date lentils may not be high on the list of materials to sew with - but we did! We used them to make doorstops shaped like mice, while for Valentines Day we created some padded hearts which we made into bunting.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was our visit to Stitches in Leominster. Stitches is a small haberdashery run by the amazing Liz. Liz was so kind, helpful and accommodating, donating two meters of fabric of their choice for the three girls that visited, who were delighted, we were bowled over by her generosity.

To cap off the visit, we all went for tea, hot chocolate, scones and brownies at the Buttercup Cafe - possibly the main reason that Jan and Tom opted to join us for this trip!

The girls used their fabric to make kimono jackets and although it was a slow process, the end results were very impressive, complete with French seams.

We love doing the sewing bee every Monday, the girls are so keen to 'do' things and their skills have come on in leaps and bounds. We look forward to the next twelve months.

Writers Club

Writers' Club is for those who enjoy words, writing and creativity!

Some of our members are able to write independently, others have someone to write their ideas for them.

Everyone needs help from time to time but that is what we love to do: to share ideas, to help each other, to find ways to express ourselves and to find ways to present our work in displays, homemade books, on posters, pamphlets and more.

We have created poems, stories, holiday accounts, food writing, posters and book reviews. If a piece of artwork or other thing enhances our work, we will branch out to paint, glue, draw or play games.

Writers' Club had another happy and healthy year, writing seasonal poems to our hearts' content.

Our writing features regularly in our Almost Weekly newsletters for everyone to enjoy and we have wonderful displays on our notice boards at the Rockspring Centre for all to see.

Other projects during the past year have included learning to write Japanese symbols during the Tokyo Olympics, facts sheets, holiday accounts and designing and reviewing crumble recipes.

Writers' Club enjoy receiving postcards so don't forget to send us one when visiting different places.

As usual, we mixed in art, crafts and inspiring activities to enhance our writing experiences.



Youth Club

Youth Club is focused on providing space for members aged 11-18 years to socialise and feel part of the Working Together family and includes art sessions, discos, yoga, quizzes, trips to the cinema, bowling and days out.

All our activities are aimed at encouraging social integration and friendships, the development of social skills and independent living skills and to help prevent loneliness and social isolation.

Youth club continues to meet weekly every Tuesday evening.

We've said goodbye to some older members who have moved out of the area, but also welcomed new, younger members in 2022.

We plan our activities as a group and these have included cooking, crafts, karaoke and drumming.

We've enjoyed sessions with the Ludlow Castle Croquet Club and made use of local amenities such as the ponds at High Vinnals.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee provided the opportunity for us to welcome our friends and families for an afternoon tea that we prepared together.

We have regular sessions with Diversity so that our members make friends and are comfortable moving on when they are older.

Youth Club is funded by Children in Need and we always enjoy celebrating with homemade Pudsey biscuits.

Diversity started back up in April 2022 after an extended break as a result of the Covid pandemic and some staff changes at Working Together.

Diversity takes place in an evening, once a fortnight, where members can participate in various activities in a safe environment. Activities have included quizzes and bingo, Yoga, a fish and chip supper night, local walks, bowling and croquette.

Members have also enjoyed meeting up socially in the local pubs for a chat and drink out in the community.

Diversity is a drop in activity and members can decide between themselves what activities they would like to do.

The evenings aim to provide a valuable time aimed at social skills and enjoyable opportunities for adults who otherwise might be isolated or spending time on their own.

Diversity

Diversity Club is aimed out our members aged over 18 years and, like Youth Club, is focused on providing space for members to socialise and feel part of the Working Together family.

Diversity includes art sessions, discos, yoga, quizzes, trips to the cinema, bowling, days out – plus occasional outings to the pub.

All our activities seek to encourage social integration and friendships, the development of social and independent living skills and to help prevent loneliness and social isolation.

Our 'almost monthly' Newsletters...



Not only are our newsletters a great way to keep in touch with everyone, they are a great way of hearing about what our members have been up to. All our newsletters can be found on our website: www.workingtogetherludlow.co.uk

Download your copy of this year's Annual Report:
www.workingtogetherludlow.co.uk/book/annual-report-2022

Paper copies are available on request



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