Creating POSITIVE IMPACTS TO GETHER for PEOPLE, PLACES & PLANET

groundworknorthwales.org ut









Charity registration no. 1093176

Charity registration no. 1080838

Charity registration no. 1004132





Foreword by **Karen Balmer**, CPFA, Group CEO

I have worked at Groundwork North Wales for over 12 years, and I can honestly say that our support has never been needed more. The people we support continue to face an unprecedented cost of living crisis and alongside this our natural environment is under threat from climate change and human impact.

At Groundwork North Wales, we believe that working with local communities to build their resilience is vital in facing up to the challenges of a global economy and changing climate. We know that the negative effects of climate change and environmental breakdown impact first and worst on those who have the least power in society, and who contribute least to the cause of the crisis. A 'just transition' to an inclusive, net zero economy must tackle, rather than entrench, this inequality and provide a springboard for better work and healthier, happier lives in the places that need it most. This means creating green jobs that build wealth in local communities, changing behaviour to reduce the wastage of food, energy, and water, providing biodiverse, accessible green spaces, supporting businesses to be more responsible and empowering communities to lead activities that improve their quality of life and promote health and well-being.

We are grateful to all our partners and those who support our work, and we are always open to new and innovative partnerships with those who share our vision of a greener future for our people, places, and planet.

Our 2023 annual review highlights the inspirational impacts that the Groundwork North Wales team, volunteers, and beneficiaries have made over the last year. I hope you will find it an enjoyable read.















Chair's Statement Nigel Reader, CBE, Groundwork North Wales Chair of Trustees

I have been privileged to serve as Chair of the Groundwork North Wales Group for a third consecutive year.

We have emerged from the challenges of the prolonged period of the pandemic stronger and even more determined to succeed. This year has seen us return to full operation but with an even greater resolve to do the best we can to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of the communities we serve.

As the challenges of climate change and the nature emergency loom ever larger, and with an unprecedented cost of living crisis impacting so alarmingly on fuel and food poverty, our mission has never been so vital.

The commitment and enthusiasm I have encountered amongst management and staff continues to amaze and inspire me. But we cannot do it alone. We are indebted to our many volunteers for their continuing loyalty and support, to the generosity of our funders, and to our partners whose collaboration continues to magnify and multiply the difference we can make.

Guided by a new strategic direction focusing on people, places, and the planet, my fellow trustees and I look forward to supporting the group in the years ahead and to building on the many successes of 2022-23.





We encourage people to get involved in volunteering and experience the benefits it offers; from building confidence and improving mental well-being to developing skills and increasing employment prospects.

Volunteering is a great team building opportunity that brings tangible benefits to individuals, organisations and communities. To get involved with any aspect of our work please get in touch.





Company registration no. 2614714/ Charity registration no. 1004132

www.groundworknorthwales.org.uk

01978 757524 ☐ info@groundworknorthwales.org.uk











Company registration no. 3889382 Charity registration no. 1080838

www.wild-ground.org.uk











Company registration no. 4367121 Charity registration no. 1093176

www.refurbs.org.uk









ACHIEVEMENTS

Groundwork North Wales has been recognised for it's dedication to our work for the benefit of people, places, and planet through several awards over the past 12 months.

Once again Groundwork North Wales have secured a place in the SE100 for 2023 (the top 100 social enterprises in the UK) for the 4th year running and have been selected as finalists in the Climate and Leader of the Year categories and received a highly commended in the Impact Management category.

We were thrilled to have won the Employer of the Year award in the Great British Awards – Business & Community, with judges commenting:

"This organisation has close knit staff teams working in an environment which empowers and encourages them to thrive. Their financial results demonstrate resilience, growth, and sustainability. The "feel good" factor of this employer is truly evident".





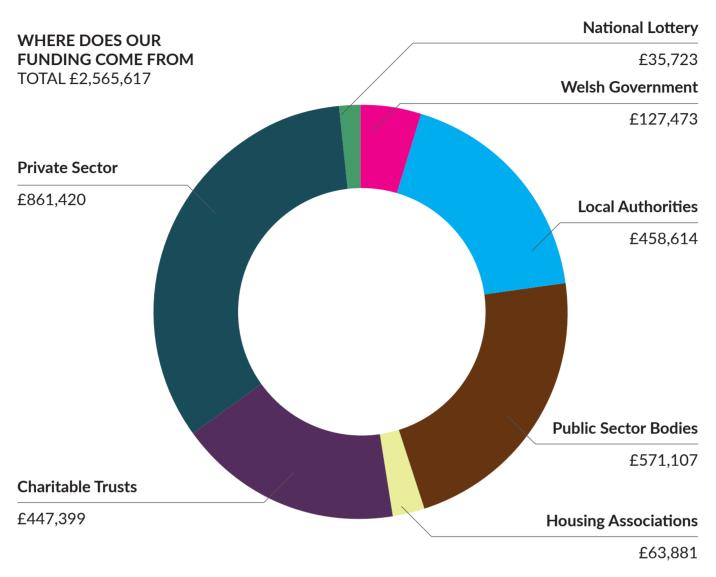






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FINANCES



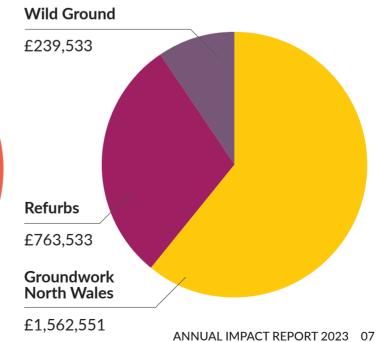
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WHERE DOES OUR FUNDING MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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Places £609,121 Planet £803,525

GROUP INCOME SPLIT

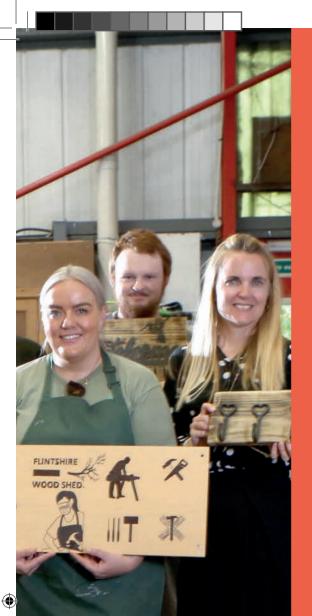




Positive well-being for people is demonstrated through how they are feeling, performing, and achieving as individuals, communities and as a nation, and how sustainable that is for the future.

Positive well-being is feeling well, physically, mentally, financially, and socially. This can be brought about by taking positive action for the good of society, the economy, the environment and for the community. These actions are demonstrated through our People focused projects.







WOOD SHED

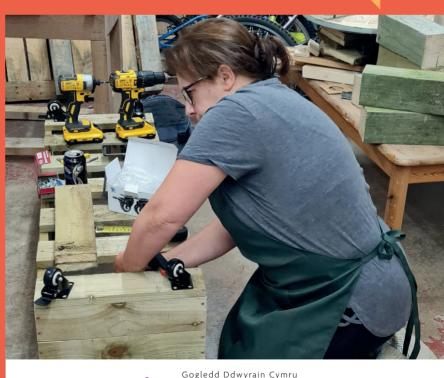
Funder: Adult Community Learning North East Wales

The Wood Shed Project offers a friendly, relaxed and supportive environment where people can get together to learn new skills, practice old ones, and make items for sale. Activities include repairing furniture, creating small wooden craft pieces such as planters and bird boxes for resale, and joining in various expert craft workshops.

As well as working on meaningful tasks that benefit the environment and the local community, the participants improve their emotional and mental well-being through spending time with others who have shared their experiences.

"I enjoy coming to the Wood Shed because I live alone, and I am able to socialise and meet new people. I have previously worked for over 40 years, and it gives me the opportunity to learn new skills and develop my existing ones. I could not access formal learning, such as a college, due to my age. Attending the Wood Shed gets me out of the house, keeps me busy, and helps share my knowledge and skills.

I have gained knowledge from others and developed my skills. I like to support others and enjoy being with like-minded individuals." Tony Watkin





ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023 09

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COMMUNITY LEARNING - IT AND DIGITAL SKILLS

Funder: Adult Community Learning North East Wales

Groundwork Training has been working in partnership with Adult Community Learning North East Wales (ACL) to deliver a range of funded courses in Flintshire and Wrexham for those aged over 19.

Adult Community Learning
North East Wales is a joint
venture between Flintshire
County Council and Wrexham
County Borough Council
to provide the very best
adult learning opportunities
and outcomes in the local
communities.

IT and digital skills courses have been an important part of the programme particularly for older people. The courses have improved confidence of learners in using IT. Course content ranged from navigating a Chromebook, tablet, or smartphone, to using social media, being safe online, and effective web searches.

These IT and digital skills courses have been a key part of the employability support for groups of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees in Flintshire that Groundwork Training has worked with through the ACL partnership.





Attendees took part in accredited Level 1 IT related courses, to assist with improving IT skills and improving reading and writing skills.



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Funder: Nationwide Community Grants

Happy Families has provided support to young parents and families across Wrexham and Flintshire to thrive in their own homes. Attendees face several challenges in their day-to-day lives such as the pressures of parenting young children, being single parents, having partners in prison, domestic abuse, money, housing, and employment concerns as well as issues from their past.

Sessions offered advice and guidance on budgeting, job hunting, interview techniques, household energy advice and where to go to look for training. Practical sessions allowed the participants to get creative, doing tactile things with their hands, all of which helped towards the individuals' social and economic well-being.

Attendees were able to experience professional baby sensory and baby massage sessions which they would not be able to access otherwise.

"The sessions have improved attendees' confidence and have massively reduced the isolation that being a new parent brings. Attendees are enthusiastic about what a lifeline the project has been." Attendees Support Worker



- > 57 young parents supported
- of whom 47 young people have undertaken training
- 6 young people have gone on into education, training or employment

Supported by



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MAKE AND MUNCH

Funders: Tesco Community Grants, Adult Community Learning North East Wales & Hubbub

An after-school club for primary-aged children called Make and Munch has been held at the Buckley Caffi Cyfle site. Children took part in an upcycling craft session receiving a free evening meal, with parents/carers enjoying a hot drink and a piece of cake.

The sessions averaged 13 children and 8 adults per session. In October the session was based around not wasting pumpkins. Children were able to carve a pumpkin and the parent/carers were given a pumpkin recipe card to take home.

"Elyza had such a wonderful time at Make and Munch. Thank you so much. Everyone is so kind." Sian Alison







NEXT STEPS

Funders: Welsh Government Strategic Voluntary Youth Work Organisations Grant & Principality

Next Steps has supported disadvantaged young people to improve their confidence, selfesteem, social networks and skills. The young participants initially suffered with very low confidence and poor mental health. They had dropped off the radar of youth support services, were refusing school (or had left early), and were severely socially isolated.

Our supportive approach has gently reversed their negative experiences and helped them to move towards a better future by building their confidence, reducing anxiety, creating friendships and increasing their resilience. It has enabled them to engage in a group setting, getting to know others of their age with similar experiences. They have made friendships which have persisted outside of the project sessions – for some, the first "real world" friendship they have experienced in years.

Through varied sessions such as sports, crafts, walks and nature-based activities, the young people have realised that they can try and succeed at new things, that they can connect with other people, and that their lives are not 'hopeless'.

12

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 16 young people have gone on into education, training or employment

34 young people undertaking training

36 young people reporting improved well-being



Funded by
Welsh Government

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REPAIR SESSIONS AT BUCKLEY

Monthly repair sessions are held at the Repair and Reuse centre in Buckley. Each session everyday household items such as clocks, lamps and hoovers are repaired as well as larger household items such as a garden strimmer.

"The team at Refurbs Buckley were brilliant. Managed to fix the CD Player on my old HiFi and provided a friendly service in a very friendly and comfortable setting. Would highly recommend and will be returning." Russell Pearson



People helped to reduce waste sent to landfill





LUNCH & COMPANY

Lunch & Company is a luncheon club, for individuals over 55 based at the Caffi Cyfle site in Alyn Waters Country Park.

The sessions aim to improve social well-being by reducing isolation and loneliness amongst older people and supporting them to stay connected and build new friendships. The luncheon club, offers a chance to socialise, meet new people and enjoy a delicious two course meal prepared by Caffi Cyfle with entertainment and activities.

"Always enjoy going there, lovely food and service, everyone very friendly." Kath Mccann

WINTER WARMER PACKS

Funder: Postcode Community Trust

The Caffi Cyfle sites support families in local communities by acting as a base to assemble and distribute Winter Warmer packs.

Households who were struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis and rises in energy costs were provided with Winter Warmer Packs containing various items such as quilts, blankets, hot water bottles, gloves, hats, socks, slow cookers, and food vouchers assisting them to stay warm and healthy.

Between November 2022 and January 2023, working with Refurbs Flint, the Caffi Cyfle sites distributed **156** Winter Warmer Packs across North Wales.







PLACES CONTRACTOR

The places where we live, work, and spend time have an impact on our well-being. A variety of place-based influences affect health, including physical, social context, and economic circumstances. Crime, racial and other forms of discrimination, pollution and climate change all have a profound impact on the places we spend our time and on our overall well-being.

By taking positive action for the benefit of the places we live, for society, the economy, the environment and for the community, positive well-being can be achieved and enhanced. These actions are demonstrated through our Place focused projects.







HEALTHY RIVERS: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Funder: Natural Resources Wales – Resilient Communities Grant

The Healthy Rivers, Healthy Communities project focuses on the River Clywedog involving associated green space at King's Mill, Wrexham, and the local community who live within walking distance. As well as being an important wildlife habitat and natural resource, this stretch of the river has great potential as a recreational and educational facility for the local community.

The project has established a new weekly community volunteer session, where volunteers gain skills and knowledge in environmental conservation techniques and biodiversity. They have carried out tasks including litter picking, installing interpretation boards, path improvements and riverbank vegetation management.

As well as path improvements, other access improvements have included new seating to be used for events, and construction of platforms to allow for better viewing of the river and its wildlife.

Two school sessions have engaged 46 pupils. The education sessions cover the key themes of biodiversity, pollution and river health.



Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales

CLYWEDOG VALLEY PARTNERSHIP

Funder: National Lottery Heritage Fund

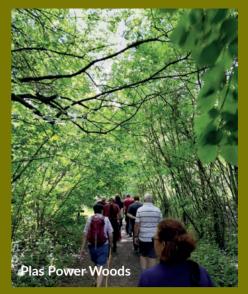
Groundwork North Wales is leading the Clywedog Valley Partnership which is a range of organisations and community groups all with an interest in the heritage of the Clywedog Valley, running from the moors above Minera Quarry to King's Mill just south of Wrexham city centre.

Our partnership has a vision to restore and enhance the heritage of the Clywedog Valley, to transform it into a thriving, resilient, vibrant and inclusive cultural attraction and resource; a place to experience history and nature through both quiet enjoyment and a diverse programme of events with wide appeal, benefitting people both locally and from further afield.

In early 2023, the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded a Resilience and Recovery grant to support the first steps toward making the vision for the valley a reality. Feasibility studies have been carried out for the heritage

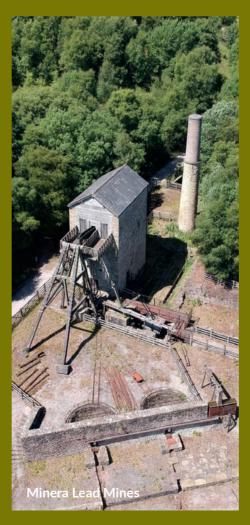
sites and will be used to develop future large funding applications to restore the heritage attractions and provide new ways for people to learn, enjoy, and get involved.













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SAFER STREETS

Thanks to WCBC (Community Safety, Community Cohesion, Youth Justice and Education) working in partnership with North Wales Police, funding was secured from the Safer Streets 4 fund.

We have delivered youth engagement sessions to pupils from Ysgol Clywedog and Rhosnesni High.

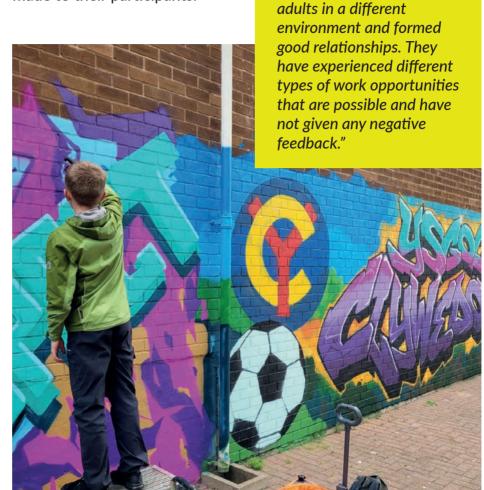
The programme creates opportunities for young people who have been identified as taking part in anti-social behaviour or who are at risk of doing so.

The sessions have provided skills, support, opportunities and in-depth discussion around the topic of anti-social behaviour in school and in local communities. The young people who have participated have learnt new skills through participating in activities as well as achieving formal qualifications.

Participants have ownership of the sessions, working together to plan activities. Activities included improvements to their school environment such as the creation of a graffiti mural artwork featuring iconic images representing Wrexham and inspirational wording.

The young people have participated in community litter picks and enjoyed practical hands-on woodwork tasks, aimed at improving their physical, intellectual and communication skills. Health and safety considerations, teamwork, and following instructions, were all part of these sessions.

Donna Edwards, Assistant
Headteacher Rhosnesni High
had only positive feedback on
the difference the sessions have
made to their participants.



"The sessions have been

fantastic. Pupils have had

the chance to develop

new skills, experienced

interacting with different











WELCOME TO WALES

Funder: The Volunteering Wales Grant administered by WCVA

Welcome to Wales has supported young refugees who have recently arrived in North East Wales. There is limited support available for older young people, and they often experience loneliness and isolation due to language barriers and unfamiliarity with the area, as well as facing discrimination.

Project promotion featured Ukrainian, Afghan and Syrian languages to reach these refugee communities.

After initially taking part in activities to get to know each other and the local area, and build their confidence, the young people have moved on to volunteering. The group are supported to be creative in many different ways including various art forms and using recycled wood to make decorative items.

The group members practice their spoken English together, share aspects of their different cultures, and improve their well-being through regular social contact, while being able to contribute positively to their new community through volunteering.

3 COUNTIES CONNECTED COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

Funders: Transport for Wales, Community Rail and Avanti

Groundwork North wales are hosting the 3 Counties Connected Community Rail Partnership. The purpose of Community Rail Partnerships (CRP) is to encourage greater use of sustainable travel on rail services through increased participation by local communities in their rail line.

This is achieved through a range of activities at and surrounding local train stations to provide economic, social, and environmental benefits to the region's residents and visitors.

The aim is to engage people with a greener way of living, encourage different community groups to get involved in station adoption and investing in the Chester – Shrewsbury – Crewe Transport for Wales line as a gateway to show what all North Wales and the border areas have to offer.





















COMMUNITY FRIDGE

Funder: Hubbub

Our Community Fridge is based at Refurbs Flint and is tackling food waste. However due to the cost of living crisis people are relying on using this resource weekly. The fridge is stocked by collecting surplus food from supermarkets, local food businesses, and producers.

The fridge brings the community together to eat, connect, learn new skills, and reduce food waste.

Leading up to Halloween, the Community Fridge ran a campaign called #EatYourPumpkin encouraging the community to utilise the pumpkin 'waste' from jack o lanterns and make a soup. Samples of the soup were available from the Community Fridge along with a takeaway recipe card and the soups ingredients.

- ➤ 5.04 tonnes food diverted
- > 117 members
- **▶** 12.6 tonnes of CO₂ saved





MAKING MORE OF MINERA COUNTRY PARK

Funder: The Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme administered by WCVA

Building upon the recent renovations and events programmes at Minera Lead Mines heritage and interpretation centre, the Making More of Minera Country Park project has provided opportunities for local people to get involved in volunteering to maintain the site's habitats for wildlife. This has been complemented by an education programme and seasonal events.

Cynllun Cymunedau y Dreth Gwarediadau Tirlenwi

WCVA
CGGC

Arienii gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Fundad by
Welsh Government

Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme

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The education programme is specific to Minera, providing opportunities for children from local schools to learn about the built and natural heritage of the site, and to value it for future generations.

Volunteers have improved the country park through woodland and grassland management, path maintenance, improving and creating garden areas, and maintaining open viewing areas for visitors to enjoy the heritage features.

In the latter half of 2022/23, the project has

- > Engaged 5 regular weekly volunteers
- > Planted 20 trees
- Benefitted 4,500 local people by improving 5,000m² of green space



ENERGY

Funders: Big Energy Saving Network (BESN) and Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP)

Through the Big Energy Saving Network (BESN) and Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) project the Energy Team have been able to deliver much needed energy saving advice and install easy energy saving measures to households in North Wales.

Energy advice has been offered on:

- Switching electricity supplier or tariff.
- Warm Home Discount scheme.
- Signing up for the Priority Service Register.
- Energy Efficiency.
- Applying for a grant or debt write-off fund.
- Applying for fuel vouchers.

Value of energy vouchers administered

"I was extremely impressed with the service provided. The advice given has helped me stay warm during a worrying cost of living crisis. The home visit was extremely beneficial".

Rosemary, an elderly resident attended a community event and was able to benefit from both BESN and LEAP. Our energy advisor was able to offer advice on the Warm Home Discount, the Priority Services Register, and Energy Efficiency, install easy home energy efficient measures and offer further energy saving advice for her home by resolving her boiler flow issue.

Combining the advice and easy measures installed, Rosemary has the potential to save £242 per annum with a Carbon Reduction of 141.8 Kg CO₂e.







In spring and early summer, Wild Ground completed the annual great crested newt survey **season.** The survey season is a major undertaking for the organisation and requires staff to work night shifts, whilst planning carefully to maintain a regular volunteering and events programme, and to continue with essential nature reserve management.

Ash dieback has been a particular focus during this year, requiring careful monitoring and selective felling of our tree stock, and replacement planting with other native species.

Seasonal habitat work has taken place throughout the year across our network of sites, and we offer volunteer sessions Monday to Friday every week. Tasks include woodland, grassland and wetland management, as well as general site works such as path maintenance and fencing, and traditional tasks such as hedgelaying and scything.

A major piece of work at Aberderfyn nature reserve has reprofiled a 30-metre underground pipe which was prone to blockage into an open ditch for improved drainage, and a subsequent diversion of the reserve's footpath.

Seasonal events and education programmes have taken place across all the sites throughout the year.









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TRAINING

Groundwork Training provides bilingual training services to organisations, businesses, and individuals pan-Wales as well as employability programmes working in partnership with various agencies such as Maximus, DWP and Communities for Work. This supports individuals to connect with others, learn new skills and gain accredited qualifications.

We provide experienced, qualified professional trainers who ensure participants take away the relevant knowledge and skills and the confidence to apply the learnt knowledge and skills.

Training sessions can be delivered face to face or online through distanced or blended learning. They can be delivered in house, saving you time and money whilst your team get the most out of their training at a time and date to suit your team, in a familiar learning environment.

We recognise the diversity of people's learning styles and needs in all our delivery, adapting our teaching methods to ensure inclusivity.

Groundwork Training supports the charitable work Groundwork North Wales undertakes improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the disadvantaged and vulnerable in our communities.







We offer a wide variety of courses at a range of levels;

- First Aid HSE approved courses including combined compliance courses for childcare and schools
- Mental Health First Aid
- Health & Safety in the Workplace from short courses to IOSH Managing Safely & bespoke courses
- Health & Safety-related courses manual handling, fire safety, COSHH, working at heights
- CSCS Card related courses
- Food Safety
- Safeguarding Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults

Contact us to find out more about our bespoke courses we can design and deliver to meet your specific needs, and our employability and pathways training.

01978 757524 | training@groundworknorthwales.org.uk www.groundworktraining.org.uk

EMPLOYABILITY AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

Groundwork Training is delivering funded courses on behalf of Adult Community Learning North East Wales (ACL) for adults aged over 19 at various locations across Wrexham and Flintshire in 2023.

ACL is a joint venture between Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council providing adult learning opportunities and outcomes in our communities.



The partnership has recently received a positive Estyn Inspection saying:

"Many learners experience an increase in their confidence and willingness to go on to more formal learning. The tutors establish a good rapport with their learners and the Partnership has a realistic understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement".

Having worked closely with the ACL Partnership since its inception Groundwork Training are pleased with the positive report and are proud to be part of a partnership that is making a difference to learners, giving them the confidence to progress to further learning, training or employment across our communities.



SUPPORTING WOMEN REFUGEES

The ARAP project is a multi-agency approach in Flintshire to support a group of Afghan and Iraqi women who have fled their native countries due to conflict. Groundwork Training supported this through delivering courses aimed at improving their confidence, developing English language skills and promoting a greater understanding of the Welsh and British culture.

Sessions are delivered from Ty Calon in Deeside, a relaxed and informal setting where toys are provided for babies and toddlers that attend with their mothers. Each session involves fun activities and is an opportunity for the women to practice and improve their conversational English, familiarise themselves with local services and facilities, and improve their understanding of Welsh and British Culture.

Sessions are structured and start with a recap of the previous week and share this with the others to start the conversation in English. Refreshments are provided through the sessions and learners are encouraged to order drinks at the café independently to practice their spoken English.

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The group have visited the local library and all learners registered as members and borrowed books to practice their English and loaned children's books to take home and read with their children.

Feedback from sessions:

"I like coming here, this group makes me happy!"

"My husband tells me my
English is getting better.
I love coming to group, it makes me happy!"

"I am speaking more English at home with my children."

EFFEITHIAU AR EIN POBL, LLEOEDD A'R BLANED 2022-2023 IMPACTS ON PEOPLE, PLACE AND PLANET 2022-2023

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POBL PEOPLE

Pobl sy'n derbyn hyfforddiant People undertaking training

4,644

Pobl ifanc a gafodd gymorth i ddysgu a chyflawni Number of young people supported to learn and achieve

289

Pobl a gafodd gymorth i fyw bywydau iach a gwneud dewisiadau iach People supported to live healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices

420



Mudiadau cymunedol a gafodd gymorth

Community organisations supported

242



Cymunedau/grwpiau cymunedol a gymerodd ran Communities/community groups engaged

119

Sesiynau tacluso cymunedol Community clean ups



(



Coetiroedd a gafodd eu gwella neu eu creu Woodlands improved or created

√ 43

Mesurau effeithlonrwydd a gafodd eu gosod Efficiency measures installed

686



Arbedion ar garbon domestig Household support domestic carbon savings identified

> 89,168 kg CO₂e



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Pobl a ddywedodd bod eu lles (cyffredinol) wedi gwella ar ôl cymryd rhan

People reporting improved well-being overall) post engagement

865

People engaging with the Pobl yn ymwneud â'r amgylchedd naturiol natural environment







Pobl a gafodd gymorth i leihau eu defnydd o adnoddau naturio

natural resources (Energy, Water) People helped to reduce use of

2,304

Cynefinoedd wedi'u hamddiffyn a gafodd eu cynnal, eu gwella/creu Protected habitats maintained mproved or created

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37

Gwastraff a waredwyd o fannau cyhoeddus

Waste removed from public space

157,545 kg



Community growing projects Prosiectau tyfu cymunedol





Tunnelli o wastraff a arallgyfeiriwyd Tonnes of waste diverted from landfill o safleoedd tirlenwi

> 637 tonnes

Mannau cyhoeddus a gafodd Public spaces improved eu gwella

√ 92

Areas of land improved Tir a gafodd ei wella

> 80,845 m²



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