

STEPPING STONES YEAR 2 REPORT

*Creating opportunities, building
confidence, strengthening
community.*



THE STORY OF OUR PROJECT THIS YEAR

WHAT NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDING HAS HELPED US ACHIEVE

Because of the National Lottery funding, we have been able to continue to provide opportunities for people of all ages across RCT to connect, learn new skills, improve their wellbeing and volunteer. Throughout this year we have delivered a variety of activities, events and volunteering opportunities designed to reduce isolation, improve quality of life and strengthened community connection.

Families have benefited from a range of regular low-cost and free community events, including our *Halloween Spooktacular*, *Cambrian Christmas Elfventure*, *LGBTQ+ Celebration Event*, and *Easter Event*. Each event was fully attended, demonstrating the demand for accessible community activities that bring people together and create lasting memories.

Building on the skills and strengths of our staff team, we have also expanded our inclusive dance programme to reach different groups across the community. Activities have included *Dance Fitness* sessions at CVT, *Seated Dance* classes in Tonypandy delivered in partnership with Little Shed, and *Dopamine Dancing* sessions for individuals attending care homes and day centres. We have also introduced *Family Dancing* sessions on our football pitch, encouraging people of all ages to be active, have fun, and connect with others.

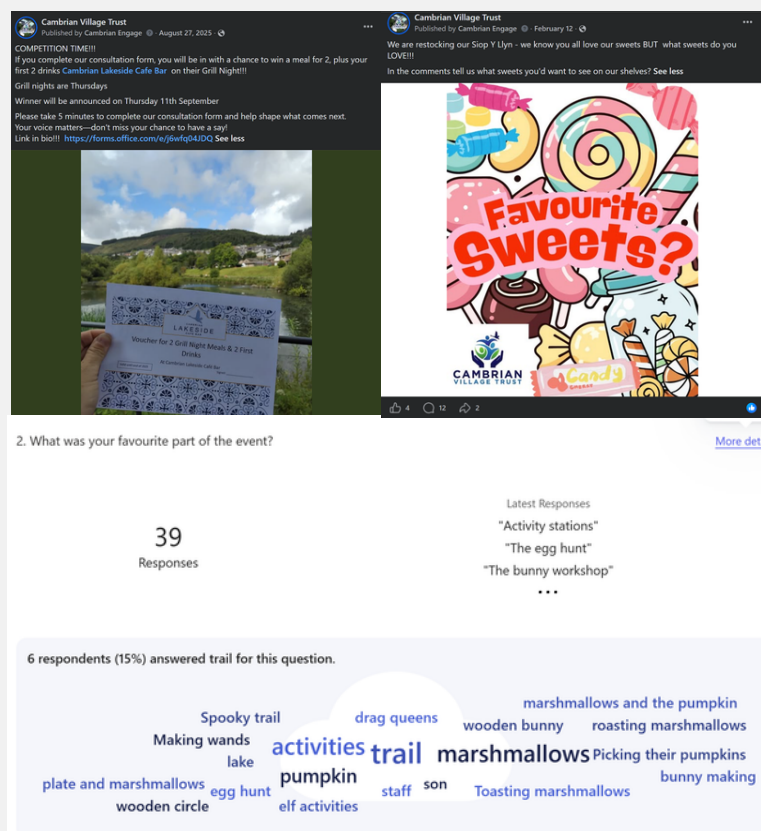
Alongside these activities, our volunteer programme has continued to grow, providing meaningful opportunities for local people to develop new skills, build confidence, gain experience, and play an active role in supporting their community.



HOW WE HAVE INVOLVED OUR COMMUNITY

Listening to Local People

Community involvement continues to be at the heart of the Stepping Stones project. Through regular conversations, feedback using Microsoft Forms, Whats App groups, Facebook polls and questionnaires, we have listened to the needs and interests of the people who use our services. This ongoing engagement has helped shape the activities we deliver, making sure they are relevant, accessible and sustainable.



Working in Partnership

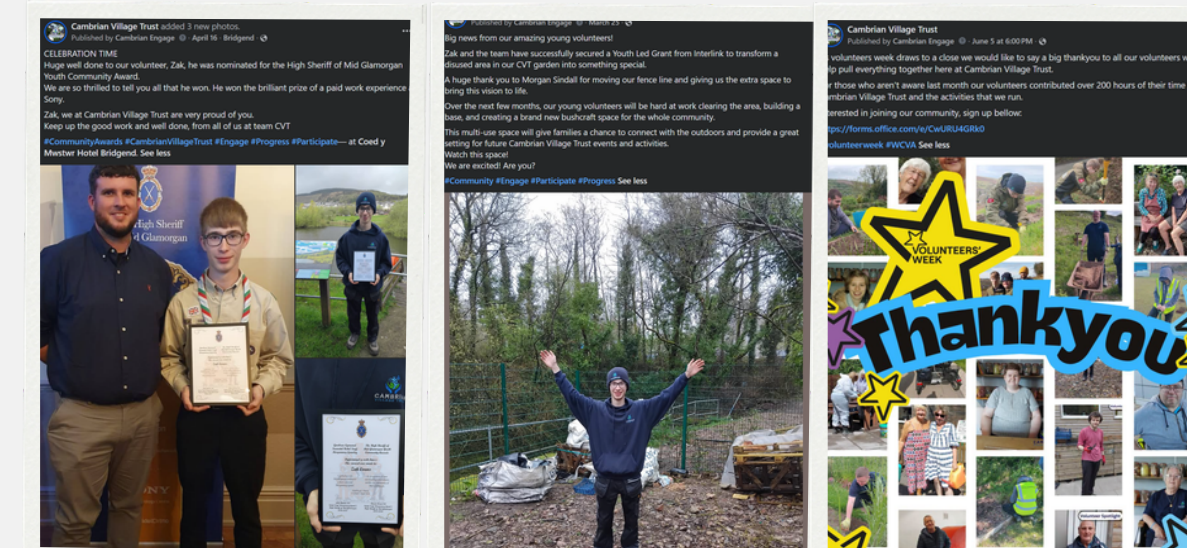
Working with other organisations has helped us reach more people and provide a wider range of opportunities across the community. Throughout the year we have worked alongside local organisations, referral agencies, community groups, and health and wellbeing providers which helped us deliver inclusive activities, provide volunteering opportunities and connect people with additional support when needed.



and many more..

Building on Community Strengths

Volunteers remain at the heart of the Stepping Stones project. Many are young people or individuals with additional learning needs who have gained confidence, skills, and valuable experience through volunteering. National Lottery funding has enabled us to provide progression opportunities, including training, further learning and pathways into employment. Several volunteers have taken on mentoring roles, supporting new participants and helping to deliver activities. Some have even progressed into paid sessional staff positions, demonstrating the positive impact that volunteering can have on personal development, independence, and future opportunities.



WHAT WE DELIVERED



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & MILESTONES OF YEAR 2



Q1

- Full summer programme for the community.
- New Community Development Project Worker.
- New Community Development Coordinator



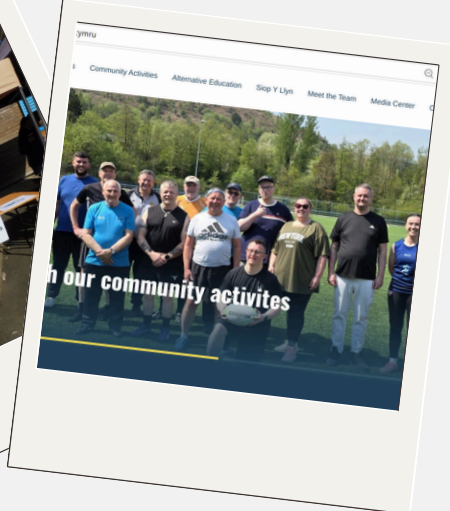
Q2

- New mini bus for volunteers. Providing opportunities for volunteers to access other organisations and remove travel as a barrier to volunteering.



Q3

- Won Most Supportive Work Experience Employer Award from Careers Wales
- Organised first ever CVT LGBTQ+ event.
- Secured online qualifications through 4D Academy for Volunteers



Q4

- Collaborated with the new Ysgol Cambrian for our Easter Event as part as their transition day.
- New Cambrian Village Trust Website

Impact Report – 6 Months at a glance

Year 2 National Lottery

Impact Report made
6 months into Year 2
and published on our
Facebook for the
community to read

Community Snapshot

 Participants aged from 16 to over 87

 Majority from the local area

 Mix of new and returning participants

 Inclusive, accessible sessions for all abilities

Volunteers

44

Volunteer
Hours

2066

Volunteer Hours
value

£25, 225

New Sign Ups

295

Sessions Delivered

251

Staff Delivering
Sessions

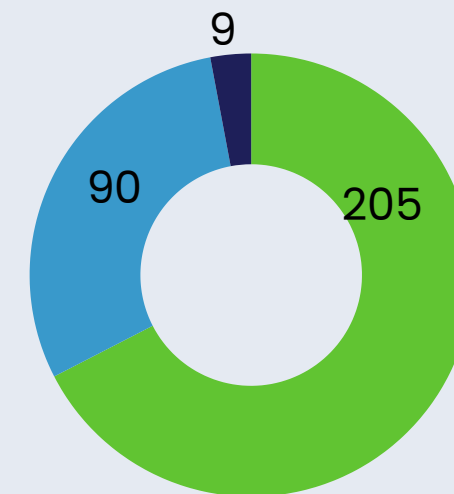
13

Delivery
Hours

500

Outcomes & Beneficiary Targets Since Sept

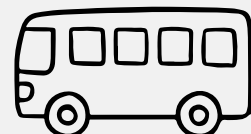
-  Adults who feel excluded from participation in outdoor activities
-  New peer support groups set up in collaboration with the local community
-  Adults and young people receiving mentoring support



2025 Wins



3 sold out events.
Over 200 total participants.



New minibus for
volunteers



Siop y llyn
Revenue
£3384.88



Facebook Views
640.7K

6 Months
later..



YEAR 2 - IMPACT SNAPSHOT

Over
500

NEW SIGN UPS

Over
30

ORGANISATIONS WORKED WITH

56

VOLUNTEERS

412

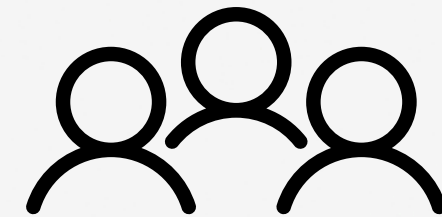
SESSIONS DELIVERED

27

ACTIVITIES / PROGRAMMES

3500

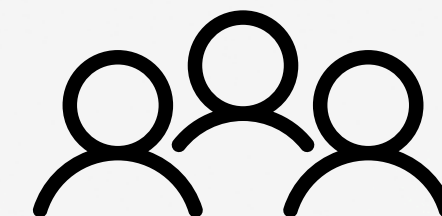
VOLUNTEER HOURS



Facebook Followers
841



Facebook Views
2.1 Million



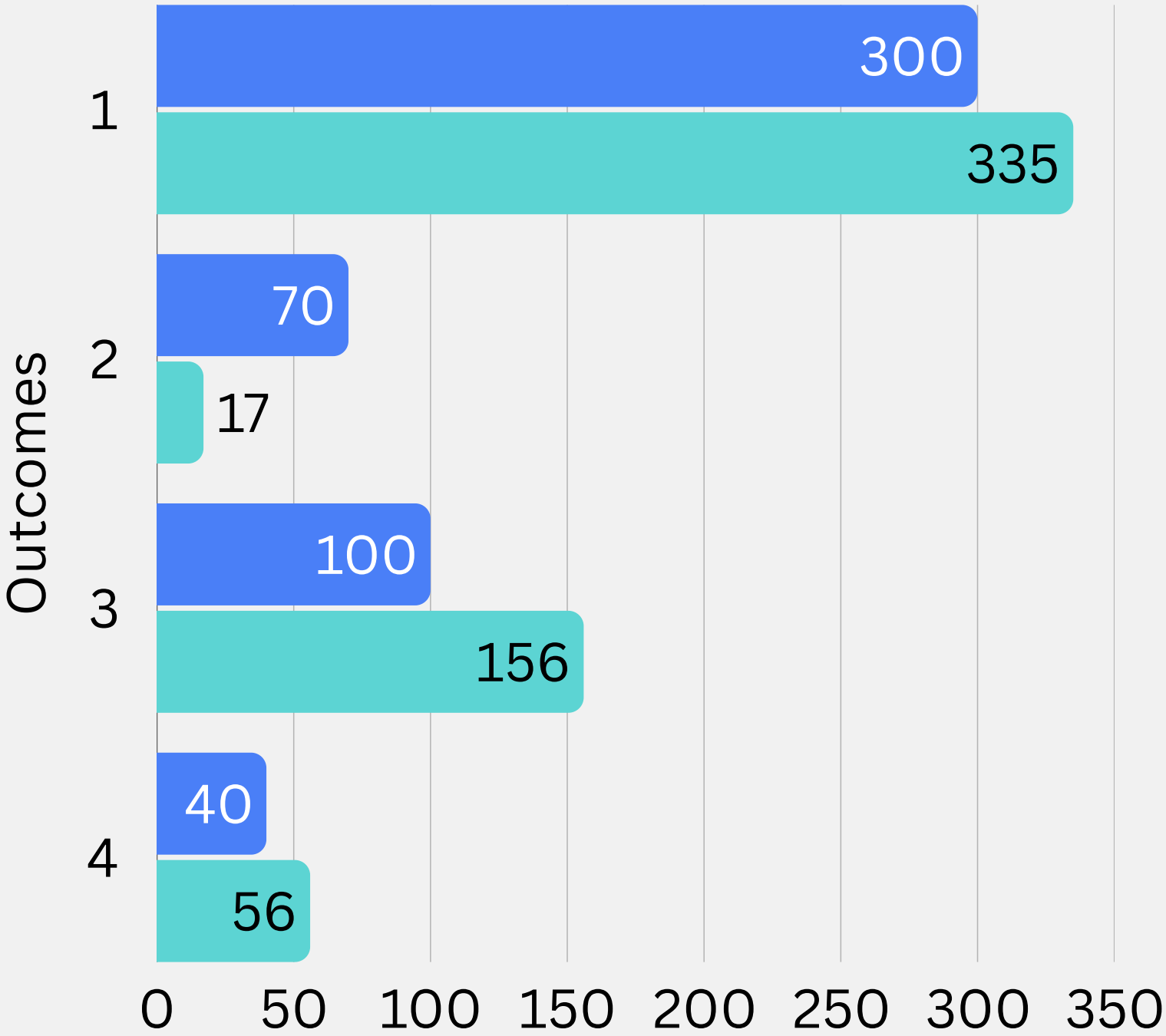
Facebook Followers
184



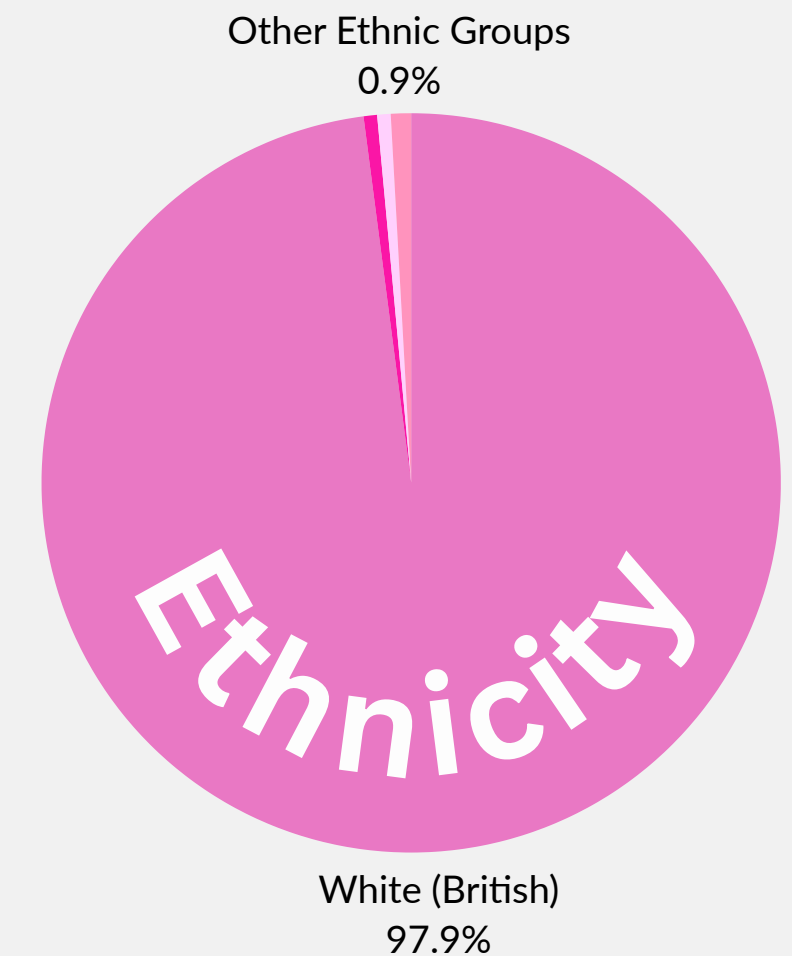
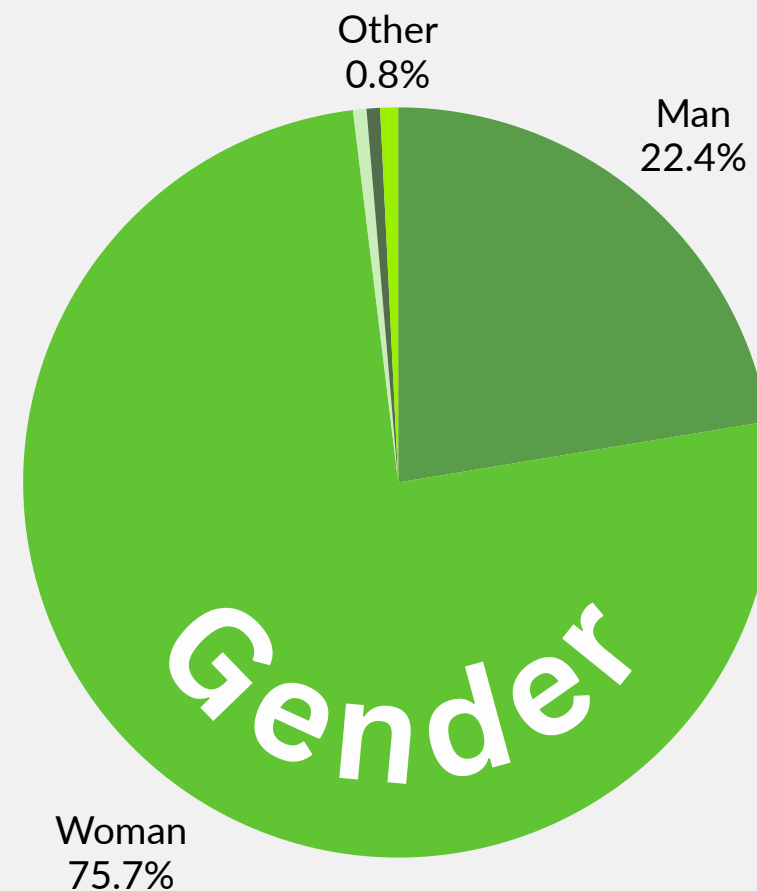
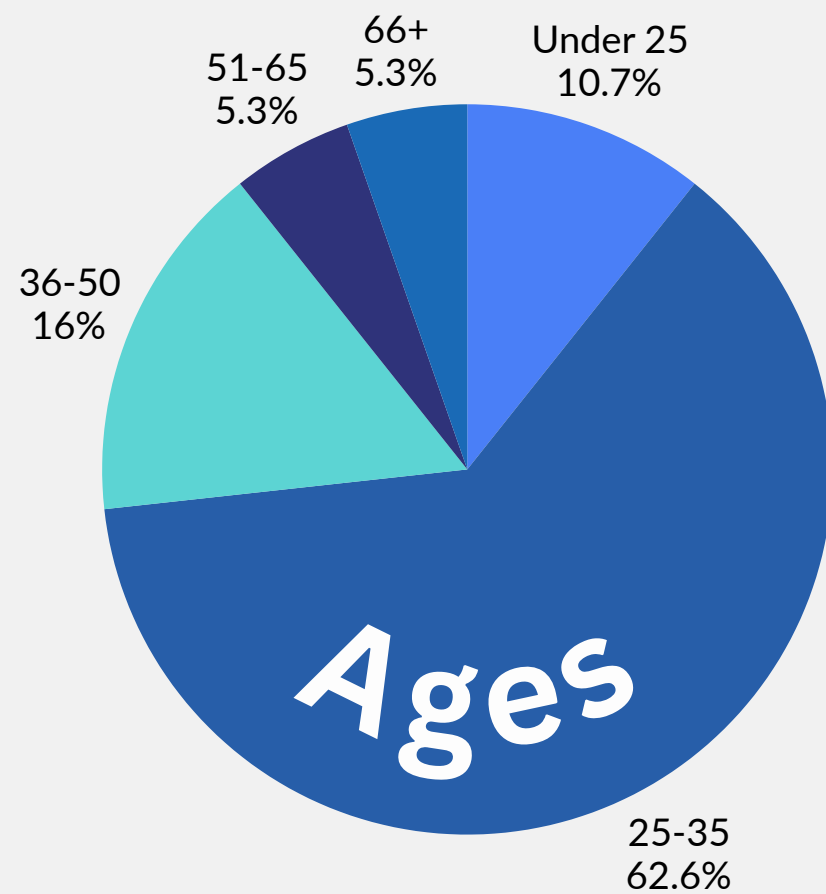
Facebook Views
81.9 Thousand

PLANNED OUTCOMES VS DELIVERED OUTCOMES

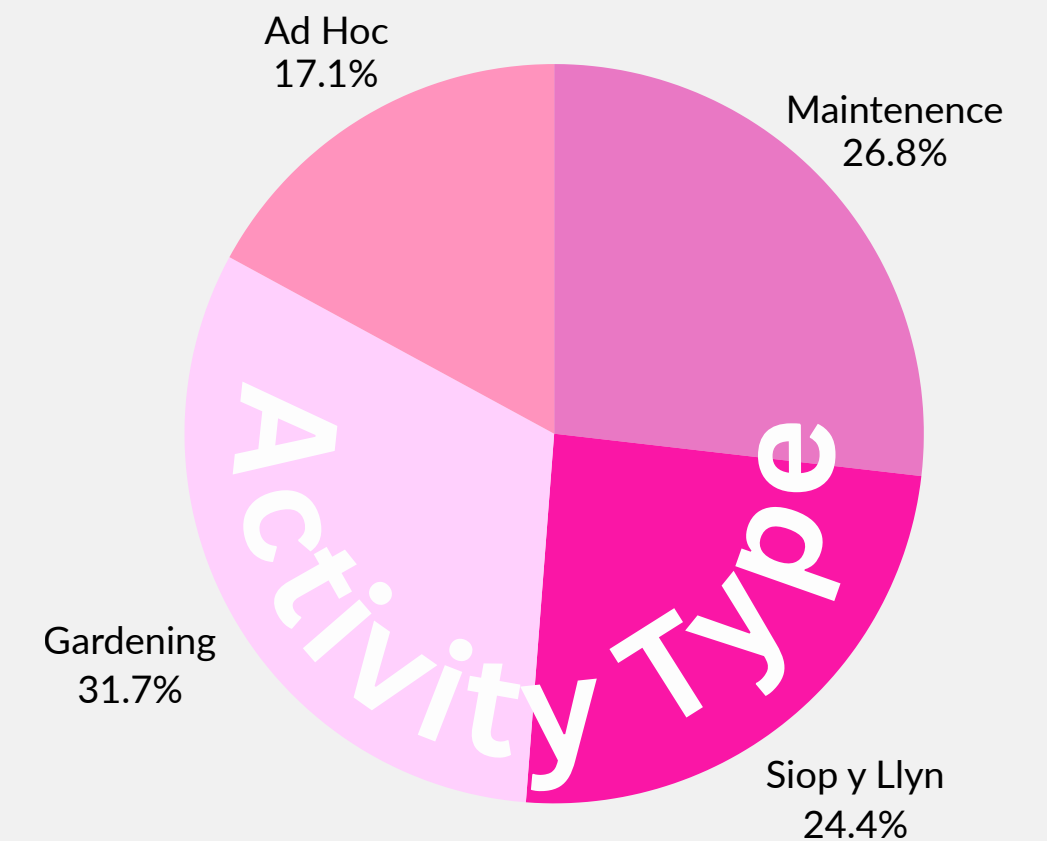
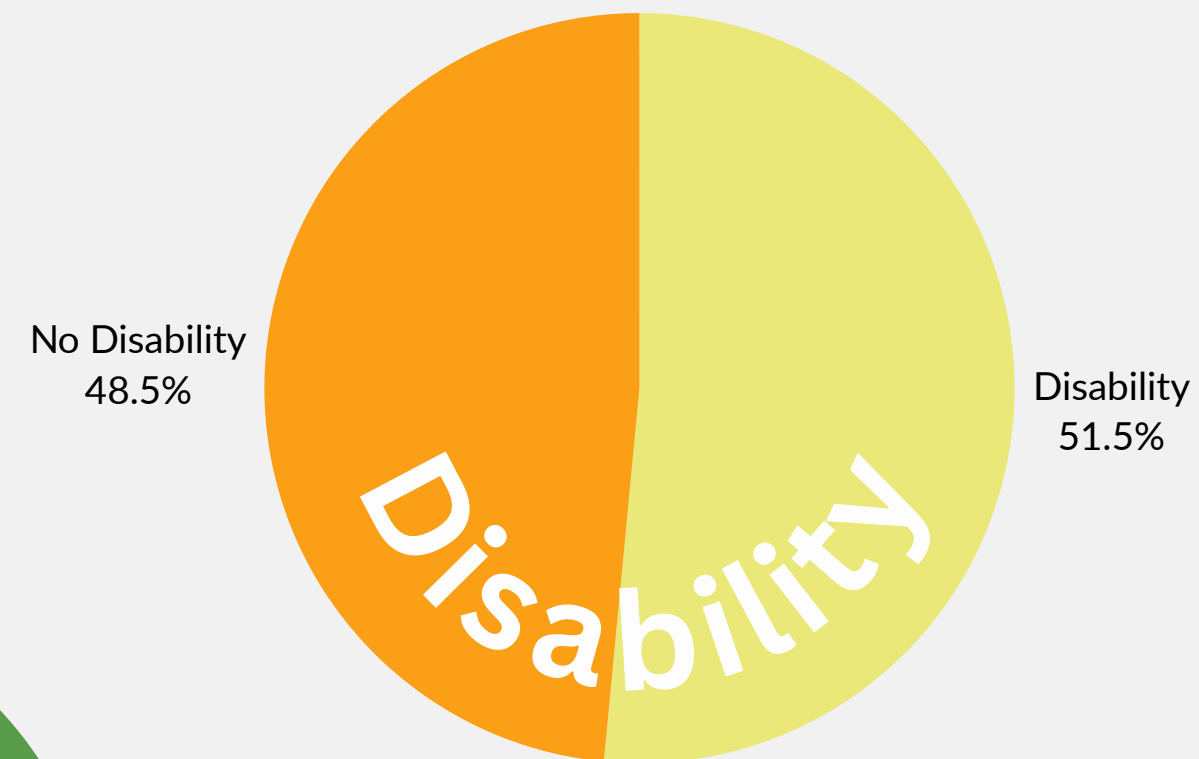
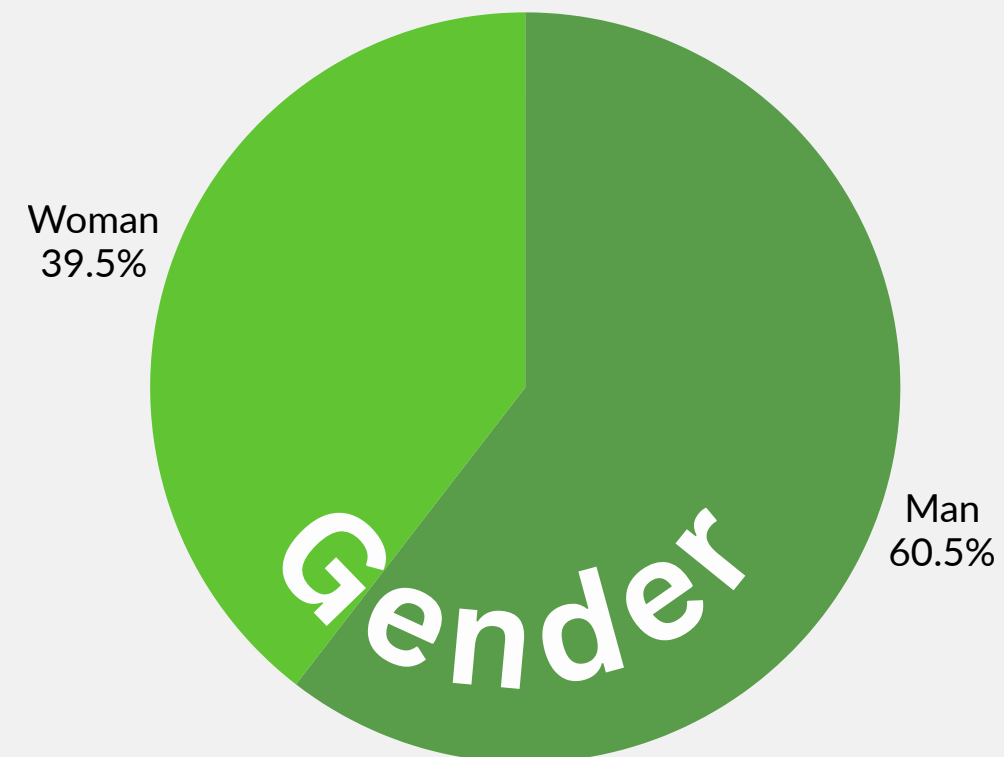
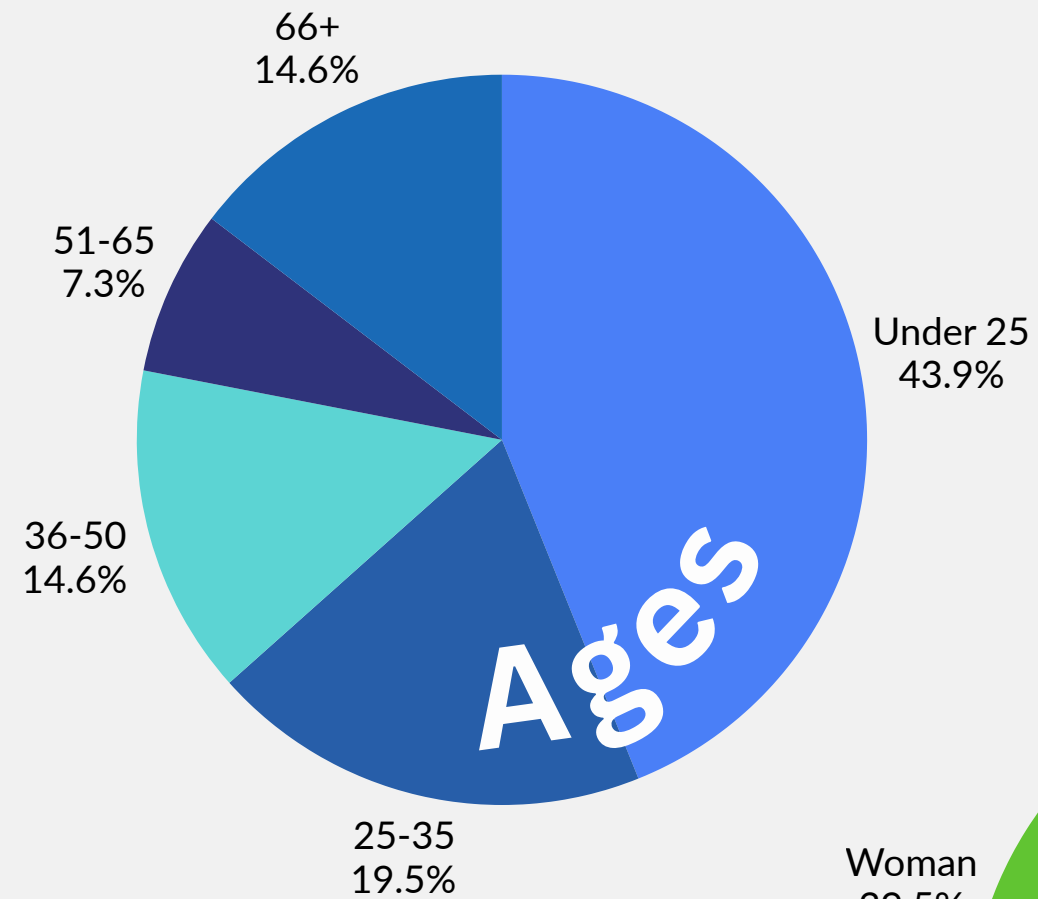
Outcomes	Target	Year 2
1.Adults who feel excluded from participation in outdoor activities have access to CVT's Health & Wellbeing and Outdoor learning opportunities.	300	335
2.Adults and young people receive mentoring support and matched to further skills training or a range of development opportunities including 2 community led social enterprises established	70	17
3.New peer support groups set up in collaboration with the local community, as a means of sustaining mutual support and engaging in meaningful pursuits. Current peer support groups are strengthened.	100	156
4.Adults and young people have grown in confidence, self esteem and wellbeing and their life chances improved by volunteering	40	56



KEY DEMOGRAPHICS - ACTIVITIES



KEY DEMOGRAPHICS - VOLUNTEERS



VOICES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

ZAK

Zak joined the Stepping Stones volunteer programme after looking for opportunities to gain practical experience alongside his college construction course. Having developed skills through Scouts, he was keen to apply his learning in a real-world environment. Since joining the project, Zak has become an invaluable member of the team, contributing over 750 volunteer hours across grounds maintenance, woodworking projects, community gardens, and local school developments. Through these experiences, he has gained practical skills, confidence, and new qualifications.

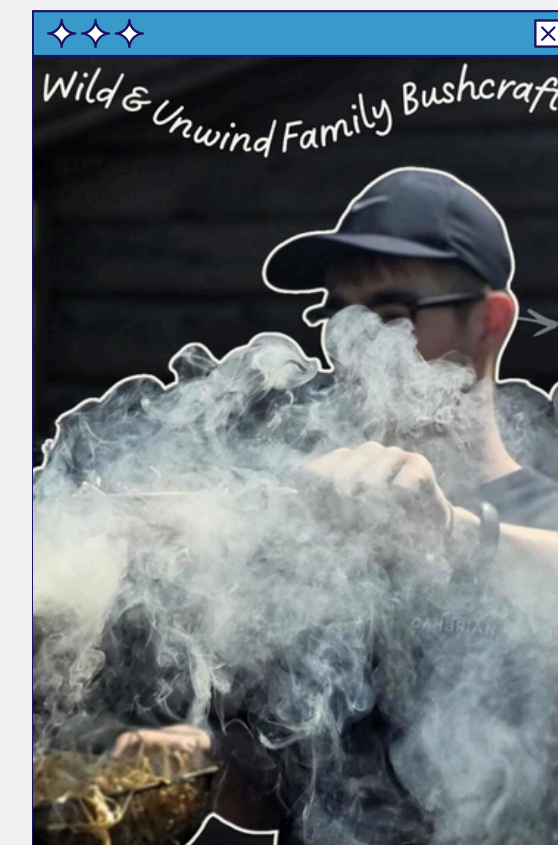
In Year 2, Zak's role has continued to grow. He now delivers paid sessional work through Wild and Unwind, an after-school bushcraft programme that enables children to connect with nature while parents benefit from time to relax and socialise. He secured funding through Interlinks Youth Led Grant to transform an unused space into a bushcraft area for volunteers. He has also completed additional training, including Manual Handling and Level 2 Food Safety qualifications, and is preparing to achieve his CSCS card to further support his future employment opportunities.

Impact

- Over 750 volunteer hours contributed
- Progressed from volunteer to paid sessional worker
- Completed accredited training courses
- Mentors younger volunteers
- Developing a pathway into an apprenticeship

Zak says

"I've learned lots of new skills, met new people, and enjoyed being involved in projects from start to finish. I'm excited to keep learning and developing in the future."



VOICES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

TESS

Finding Belonging Through Gardening

After moving to the area, Tess was looking for a way to meet new people and become part of her local community. Having previously worked as an Occupational Therapist and with an interest in gardening, she joined the Stalk to Fork gardening group after seeing a local poster.

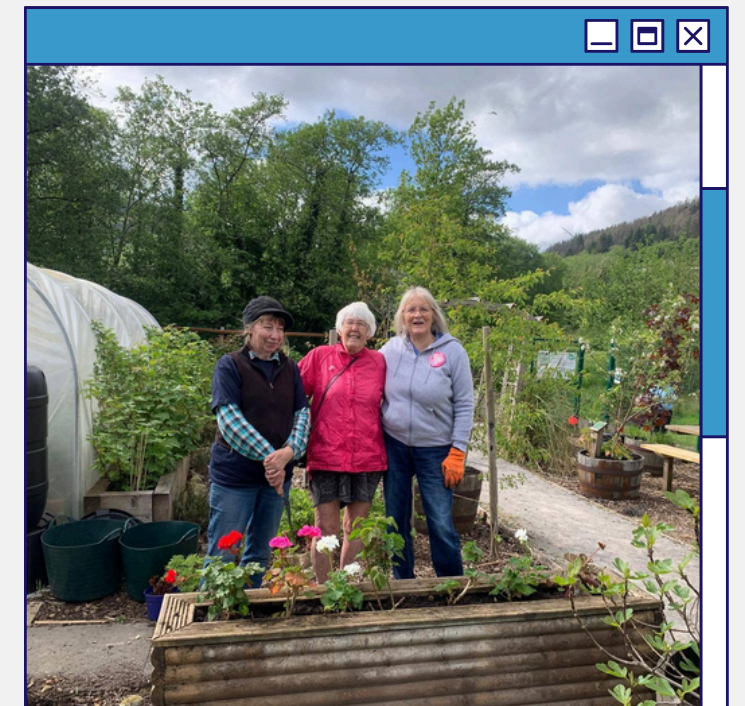
Since joining, Tess has expanded her gardening knowledge, particularly around growing vegetables, while building new friendships and becoming an active member of the group. Drawing on her own experience and background in mental health, she now helps new members feel comfortable and welcomed.

Impact

- Increased confidence and knowledge
- Developed new gardening skills
- Built social connections within a new community
- Supporting and welcoming new participants

Tess says

"It's grown me — both in terms of the people I've met and how I've grown personally."



VOICES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

JAN

Walking Towards Better Wellbeing

Jan joined the Wednesday Walking Group after hearing about it during a visit to Cambrian Lakeside. As walking is an important part of maintaining health and wellbeing, the group provided an opportunity to stay active while meeting like-minded people.

As some of Jan's friends have become less able to participate in outdoor activities, there was concern about becoming increasingly isolated. Through the walking group, Jan has developed new friendships, remained physically active, and gained the confidence to attend activities independently.

Impact

- Reduced feelings of isolation
- Improved confidence
- Increased social connections
- Continued physical activity and wellbeing

Jan says

"This walking group has diminished any fears of becoming isolated, and I feel very happy with my life."



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT

What has gone well:

- Our volunteer programme has continued to grow, with volunteers progressing into mentoring, training, paid sessional work, and employment opportunities.
- Family events, health and wellbeing activities, and outdoor sessions have been consistently well attended, demonstrating strong community demand.
- Partnership working has enabled us to reach more people and create additional progression opportunities for participants.
- Offering a wide variety of activities has helped us engage people with different interests, abilities, and support needs.

Challenges we have faced

- During the winter months, access to suitable indoor space can be limited. This has highlighted the importance of partnership working and using community venues to ensure activities can continue throughout the year.
- Promoting activities and reaching new participants remains an ongoing challenge. We have continued to use social media, community noticeboards, and our outdoor whiteboard to raise awareness and encourage participation.
- We have experienced occasions where people book onto free activities but do not attend, preventing others from taking up those spaces and making it more difficult to maximise the benefit of some sessions.

Lessons for the future

- Investing in volunteers continues to provide some of the strongest outcomes, creating pathways into training, employment, leadership, and mentoring opportunities.
- As we move into Year 3, we will focus on developing more community-led and volunteer-led opportunities. We plan to provide additional training and mentoring so that volunteers feel equipped to lead activities independently. This will also help achieve Outcome 2.
- By empowering local people to lead activities and support others, we can continue building a strong, connected community long after the funding period ends.
- Clear communication and effective promotion are key to ensuring community members are aware of the wide range of opportunities available.



OUR PRIORITIES FOR YEAR 3

In the coming year, we will:

-  Strengthen our volunteer programme through training, mentoring, and leadership opportunities.
-  Develop more sustainable, community-led activities across the project.
-  Create more progression opportunities into training, qualifications, volunteering, and employment for participants and volunteers which will support Outcome 2.
-  Develop new opportunities with the local ALN school opening in September, creating inclusive pathways into outdoor learning, volunteering and skills development.
-  Continue reducing isolation and improving wellbeing through accessible activities that bring people together and strengthen peer support networks

