



ANNUAL REPORT 14/15

Welcome from the Chairperson

Partnership working again came to the fore this year with much hard work, sweat and tears coming to fruition in the very successful SWITched On program and its complimentary course Employability Plus. These courses were produced in cooperation with our partners Forth Valley College, Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise, Raploch URC and Stirling Citizens Advice.

Unique in the Stirling area these courses gave learners a real boost in confidence, IT and Employability skills. Commended by Job Centre Plus and their clients we hope to run them again should further funding become available.

The CHANGE project in partnership with Raploch URC and funded by the Stirling Council Welfare Challenge Fund, is now live with two dedicated staff members working in the communities of Bannockburn, Raploch and Cornton.

Our Elementary Cooking skills course is going strong, with Youth services and other partners requesting block bookings and individual places on this excellent life skills opportunity.

Through our partnership with Cornton Vale Prison more of those prisoners who are returning to their own communities are given an opportunity to get individual help and join in classes to give them the skills and confidence to tackle the challenges which lie ahead.

Again this year ACE Cornton and our partners have been at the forefront of Learning and Employability Skill provision in the Stirling area, benefiting those who have barriers to life and learning in Cornton and other communities around us. We are looking forward to the challenges of the coming year and the opportunities it may provide for ACE to advance developments in the planning stage.

Once again the Board thank Ann-Marie, Ian, Julie and our volunteers for all their hard work over this year.

Rose Curley, ACE Chairperson

INTRODUCTION

ACE Cornton is a registered charity based in Cornton, Stirling (SC025482). We are also a Scottish company limited by guarantee (265663). We provide community based adult learning to enable people to reach their potential and improve their quality of life. This is achieved by learning new skills, building confidence and self esteem. We focus on breaking down people's barriers to learning and encouraging and supporting people through their learning. We work with learners who wouldn't access more formal learning opportunities and use traditional educational routes. Our services are targeted primarily at people from Cornton and the other regeneration areas of Stirling, as well as people from groups that experience barriers to learning. These barriers include being on a low income, having a disability or experiencing ill health.

Our aims are –

- To engage with people disengaged from education and facilitate their take up of ACE services
- To provide support for learner's throughout their learning journey within and beyond ACE and remove personal barriers to learning
- To change lives positively through the provision of quality adult learning opportunities
- To provide services in response to locally identified educational needs

“help adults from all Stirling communities to overcome barriers to life and learning, improving their quality of life and wellbeing”

Accessible learning opportunities

We offer a wide choice of learning both in subjects and format in order to meet the needs of our learners and encourage them to fit learning into their lives and around family and work commitments. We offer a combination of tutor led classes, flexible and on line learning and access to the IT suite. We aim to remove the barriers to learning by

- Being based in a convenient location close to where people live
- Offering no cost quality learning opportunities
- Being open in the day and occasional evening, so that people can fit learning around other commitments
- Providing additional personalised support for learners within and out with their learning
- Providing free quality Childcare for learners whilst they learn at ACE
- Providing informal learning at the pace of the learner
- Providing a choice of methods and ways to learn
- Creating a friendly and non-judgemental atmosphere

Job Coaching

Clients of Stirling Council Employability service participated in a variety of training in Job Coaching including VIAS Systematic Instruction and a Job Coaching course at FVC amongst others, allowing delivery of a support service which enabled the Job Coaches to access paid employment whilst providing a high level of peer support to others with long term health conditions and disabilities in their place of work. Stirling Council Employability Service received the SUSE Innovation Award for a 'fresh and successful approach to employability' in 2014 for this support project.

In October 2014 ACE Cornton recruited and employed eight Job Coaches with the majority being clients of Employability and have continued training and supporting these individuals. Recently the Job Coaches have been working on a number of support contracts and ACE is confident that as this service becomes more established and a greater awareness is made of the support available, more and more individuals will benefit from this.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

361 individuals took part in learning opportunities at ACE over the year.

The majority of learners progressed their learning over the year and accessed other services and support that were provided while other learners took part in just one class. In addition to this we engaged with many more local people through street work and outreach work.

Tutor led classes

Taught classes were provided in a wide range of accredited and non-accredited subjects. Subjects included –

- I.T. Skills for All
- ACE Create
- REHIS Food Hygiene
- European Computer Driving License
- REHIS Elementary Cooking Skills
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- Handling Children's Behaviour Class
- Women only Workshop
- Intro to Counselling

SwITched On

In partnership with Forth Valley College, Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise and Raploch Urban Regeneration Company, our first joint funding success.

We were successful in securing JCP Flexible Support Funding to deliver a 6 week course covering basic IT, internet, email, Universal Job match etc. Branded SwITched On this course begun on the 8th July 2014 and was delivered throughout the following year – a total of 33 cohorts of which ACE delivered 11 of these both in Cornton and as an outreach course in Hillview, St Ninians.

I could not attach CVs or store my CV properly. I can now and more.

GW

I'm much more confident in job searching and using emails etc. for applications.

HA

Helpers & tutor were very good and I got a job at the end of the course which was excellent

EMcN



Elementary Cooking Skills



ACE Cornton is a provisionally approved REHIS centre for the delivery of this course.

Delivered at ACE by four local Volunteers who have completed a variety of training courses themselves including REHIS Food Hygiene, Train the Trainer and the REHIS Elementary Cooking Skills and are now registered trainers with REHIS.

The course runs over six weeks and a total of 31 individuals have completed the course and achieved accreditation in Elementary Cooking Skills.

This course is aimed at those with little or no cooking skills and is useful to those who have potential to move onto further education i.e. hospitality or to increase employment opportunities i.e. cafes, food retailers.

The recipes are chosen making use of the NHSFV Community Food Development - How to resources, reference is also made to the eatwell plate, information surrounding 'Don't Wash Raw Chicken' has been incorporated into the delivery of the course and through communication with the participants who choose the menu each week, on occasion we have made use of recipes provided by the participants.

All individuals fully participate in the preparation and cooking of the ingredients with instruction and support if required provided by the Volunteers and their peers.

The weekly sessions all end with everyone sitting down to eat and having a chat about the food they have prepared, menu for the following week and in general socialise.

C.H.A.N.G.E

In October 2014 ACE Cornton and Raploch Urban Regeneration Company were successful in securing Stirling Council Welfare Reform Challenge fund, set up by Stirling Council to enable projects aimed at assisting people affected by changes to the welfare system. This funding has enabled the recruitment of a Community Finance Tutor and a part-time Money Mentor. Financial resilience workshops will be designed and delivered in Cornton, Raploch and Bannockburn with one-to-one support for individuals provided through drop in sessions or appointments by the Money Mentor. Recruitment and training of volunteers and training of staff in other third sector organisations throughout Stirling will also take place ensuring that the delivery of this training is sustainable for the future. The project is designed to help people take control of their money by offering free confidential income maximisation sessions and household budgeting workshops.



ACE CREATE

ACE Create – Fantastic and friendly Create at ACE offers a unique learner lead experience. Providing a warm and relaxed atmosphere, where new friends meet and everyone's ideas and creativity counts. Individual ideas can be developed or class projects evolved and put into action. Using everyday materials and recycled items, nothing goes to waste, whether its wool or woodwork we'll give it a go. Our Tutor Sarah is a previous learner who upon completion of a number of Creative classes at ACE continued onto College and has achieved her HND in Art & Design and set up her own business.

'It's amazing how helpful, creative and supportive the tutors and peers have been helping me to regain confidence and faith in myself and others'

MK



Employability Plus

ACE Cornton, Forth Valley College and Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise submitted a partnership funding application to Job Centre Plus Flexible Support fund for the design and delivery of a 5 week course branded Employability Plus. The application was successful and this course piloted during January to March 2015 with ACE delivering 3 of the 5 cohorts.

The objectives were to increase employability skills, some pre-vocational skills and access and information about on-going future support. Course content included: Confidence Building and Assertiveness, Identifying Behaviour Patterns and Changing Attitudes to Work, CV Building tailored to each candidate and tailoring CV to job application and to post applied for, Interview Skills – types and techniques, Barriers to Work and Financial Advice, Mock Interviews and Feedback, and Volunteering Session.

17 individuals attended the course

Short courses

First Aid in the workplace

Delivered for the first time in May 2014 specifically for Clients of Stirling Council's Employability Service and again on a number of occasions in the following six months a total of 37 individuals achieved accreditation.

This is a one day course involving both theory and practical sessions. Designed to equip individuals with the skills required to act as a First Aider within the workplace.

Instructor was very friendly, the course was very enlightening. Loved it, it was really good, clear, understood very easy

LEARNER

REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene

This short one day course has been designed to provide an introduction to food hygiene for anyone working with food and includes tuition and assessment.

The course covers food poisoning and its prevention, personal hygiene, bacteria, common food pests and working habits of the food handler.

Accredited by REHIS, a certificate is awarded upon successful completion of the assessment. Delivered on seven occasions throughout the year 47 individuals have gained accreditation. Individuals from a variety of local organisations/community groups have participated i.e. Home Start, Raploch Community Partnership, Sunlite Café amongst other members of the local community.

I learned a lot about Food Hygiene that I didn't know and feel that I will be able to cook more safely at home.

LEARNER

The classes mentioned here and others we offer throughout the year are provided both by tutors we employ directly, our own volunteers and in partnership with local organisations, charities and Forth Valley College. These arrangements allow us to provide a full and articulate timetable appropriate to local needs and priorities. These classes offer support to people who want to progress their learning and where possible identified progression routes for learners in subjects within and out with ACE.

I have only been out of work for 6 weeks but my confidence was getting low. The volunteers at ACE cheered me up and gave me some great help to find a job. There isn't much out there for people like me to get help and ACE fits the bill.

CATHERINE

I cannot afford the travel to other parts of Stirling but the Job Centre demand I get a proper CV and learn computers. I would like to come to ACE but hopefully I will find some help at Bannockburn Library which Ian kindly phoned for me

ANGUS

I am going to join ACE Cornton's Cooking Course soon. I was very stressed about my benefits as I have no computer experience and no CV. Ian was a great help and I feel I can cope with being out of work if I am working towards a cv and gathering other skills. I don't know why there is not more facilities like this one in Stirling.

SANDRA



Additional support for learning involving volunteers

ACE has recruited, supported and provided training to a group of volunteers who are now experienced in the support of learners in the classes we offer. Volunteers are supporting in a variety of classes including IT Skills, Work Search Session, SWITched On and also deliver other opportunities for ACE.

These Volunteers help learners overcome the barriers to learning often encountered by those who attend community learning classes. They can also offer a chance for learners to discuss problems which are not directly part of learning but can prove to be a barrier to progress. We also have volunteers who can offer advice on subjects such as IT and starting your own business.

Volunteers further support ACE with IT maintenance, Database and our Website & Facebook page.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to all of our Volunteers as their continued commitment to supporting ACE is greatly appreciated.

Open access to the computers and internet & Work Search sessions

With Welfare Reform and the introduction of Universal Job Match, the ability to both use and have access to IT facilities is crucial. As more & more emphasis is placed on the use of IT to search and apply for jobs and online completion of benefit application forms, many individuals from the disadvantaged groups will become further excluded as it becomes a necessity to be IT literate.

We use a variety of methods to address these issues including advice, guidance, and 1:1 support from staff and the opportunity to attend Work Search sessions as a result

- Work search sessions are now delivered weekly with many progressing onto IT Skills.
- A total of 102 1:1 advice sessions to individuals have been provided, with most progressing onto other opportunities at ACE
- We still offer open access times so that learners can access a computer and the internet for free. Learners can work away on their own projects during these times, search for jobs or surf the net

Individuals gain IT and employability skills and this provision contributes to alleviating the increase in financial hardship and related health issues associated with this. Learners gain confidence in their abilities thus enabling them to better cope with the changes ahead.

I have a job now so a big thanks to ACE and all your support while I was unemployed. There is no other resource locally which is so helpful to myself and others in my position. The support I received at the Job Search was excellent as I am not exactly a wizard on a computer

LANCE



Tom's Story

Tom came to ACE through our partnership with Employability in Stirling Council. Tom was a client of theirs wishing to return to work but needing confidence building in the kind of setting ACE offers. Following discussion it was agreed that studying for ECDL and shadowing ACE's current Computer Buddies was the correct path to follow.

After a time to start his ECDL class, Tom started to volunteer with our Monday IT Skills class which had existing buddies already allocated. In no time Tom was helping out as part of the team, quickly gaining confidence to help class members. Tom would also help out with advice from his previous career path.

With ACE developing & delivering the SwITched On course, it became an ideal time for Tom to further develop his volunteering as a 'buddy' on this opportunity. Tom's previous skills which had become evident while helping on IT Skills were soon put to good use on SwITched On. This was a new course which needed staff and volunteers to be flexible and innovative. Tom was an excellent part of this team, helping out both at ACE and Hillview, Cultenhove.

At this time ACE Cornton were also looking at recruiting a team of Job Coaches following discussion with Employability (Stirling Council) who already had suitable candidates to be considered for interview. Tom was encouraged to apply for one

of the positions and was successful. He is now attending training to gain the additional skills needed.

Tom was also approached by ACE to volunteer on a new and innovative approach to CV and Interview skills called Employability Plus. Tom helped with the development and introduction of this course, which was a huge success considering the tight timescales and JCP demands involved. Tom was an excellent part of this team and reacted well to the demands of this course and the learners on it.

Tom's confidence is much improved and he has become an asset to the team here at ACE.

'So although I haven't moved into Fulltime Employment yet my confidence and self-worth has improved 10 fold and the future looks a lot brighter now than it did before. And to anyone who finds themselves in a similar position why not try some volunteer work, or even drop in at Ace and try one of the courses on offer or see if we can help you! Or you can Help us?'

The reason I chose this class was I don't have to travel and the people that help me are very good at explaining and advising me what to do, very pleasant as well.

HL



LEARNER'S STORY

Kirsty

"I attend Ace Cornton on a weekly basis from the open estate in Cornton Vale, and have done for about 13 months now. Initially, I attended for purposes of partaking in the arts and crafts class on a Wednesday morning and to brush up on my ICT skills; however, after commencing college in September, I now attend to undertake my college work.

Although I am mostly a confident and outgoing person, I have quite a few anxieties about public perception and my future given my criminal background. I am made to feel comfortable by the relaxed atmosphere here, where no one is concerned about your background. The staff here at Ace have been a real, massive support to me and a constant encouragement with regards to planning my future. They are all very welcoming and take time out to personally get to know you and provide any support or assistance that they can. In return I have helped with volunteering tasks such as administering their Facebook page and admin tasks.

I have observed many of the classes ACE provide on a weekly basis and I truly think that they are an asset to this community; I look forward to attending each week and enjoy the warm reception that's always presented here. "



Impact of our work

Our work has brought about the following outcomes for our learners –

- Increased awareness of adult learning opportunities
- Increased engagement in adult learning
- Improved access to I.T. equipment
- Increased skills in a range of subjects including Beauty Therapy, Alternative therapies and in IT.
- Increased self confidence and learners confidence in their own ability to learn
- Increased social networks and reduced social isolation
- Increased employability
- Increased aspirations
- Improved IT skills of unemployed people for seeking and applying for work
- Learners have progressed on to other learning, training opportunities, into employment and into volunteering
- Increased learners ability to contribute to society

ILA registered learning centre

ACE Cornton is an ILA (Individual Learning Account) approved centre, a Quality Mark for the standard of learning we provide. We are authorised by Skills Development Scotland to offer courses approved by them and accept ILA funding in payment.

We currently offer REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene and Emergency First Aid at Work.

LEARNER'S STORY

Linda

Linda finally came to ACE this year joining one of our Cooking courses in April. Due to lack of confidence and other barriers to learning, she had often talked about joining classes but never made it. Immediately she took to being part of the class and improving her self- confidence in learning and interacting with others. She was soon asking what other courses were available, and enlisted for certificated courses such as our REHIS Health & Hygiene later in the year. She became a regular attendee and often expressed how much this interaction with classes and other learners was helping improve her expectations in life.

Linda also expressed a wish to volunteer locally but did not yet have the confidence to go looking for an opportunity by herself. The staff at ACE suggested she try the local Parkinsons Charity shop and Ian went with her to give her a bit more confidence. Linda is now volunteering regularly at the shop, enjoying the experience and social side of being there. She is also still attending opportunities with ACE, most recent being enlisting for a Mental Health First Aid course.

Linda commented "Before I came to classes at ACE my barriers to life and learning were taking their



toll on me , leaving me with depression and little social contact. Now I am on my way to enjoying what learning new skills has to offer and I would never have had the courage to volunteer as I am without the help of the staff at ACE."

*Excellent course, good tutoring
and volunteers'*

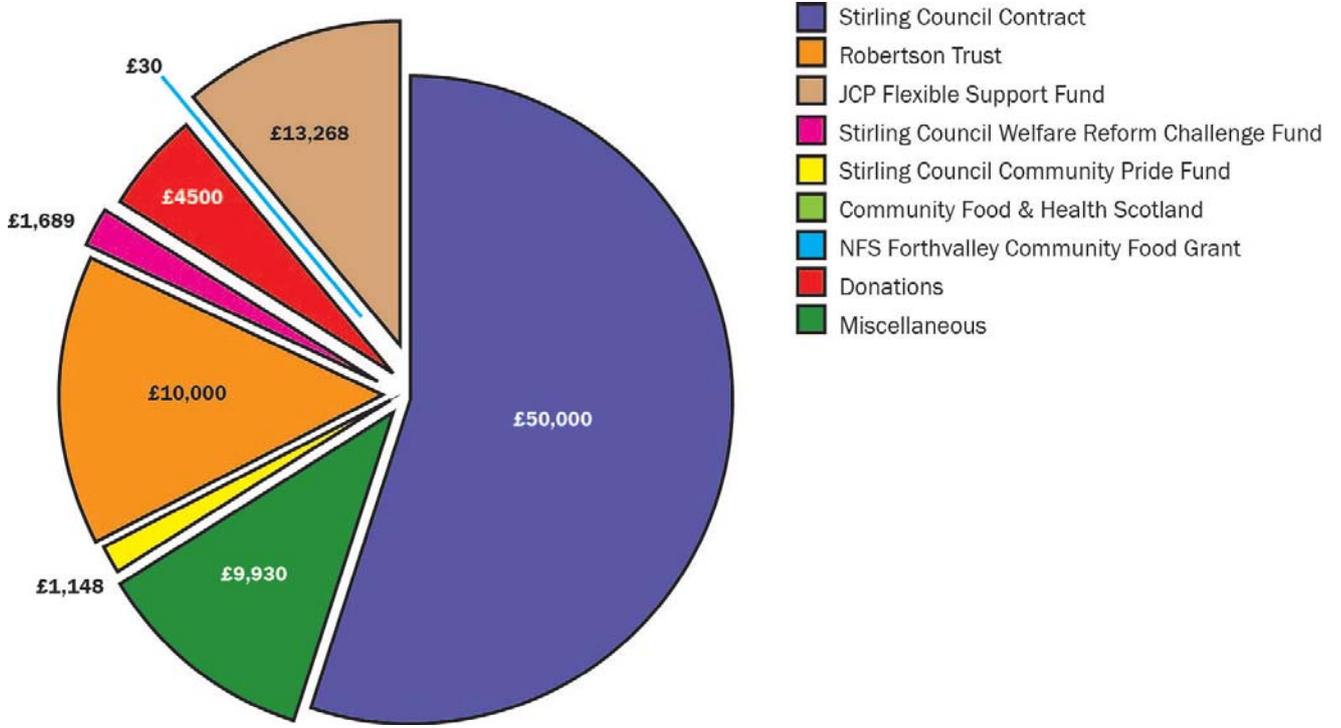
SB

*The course was really good and
everyone gets a chance to do something.*

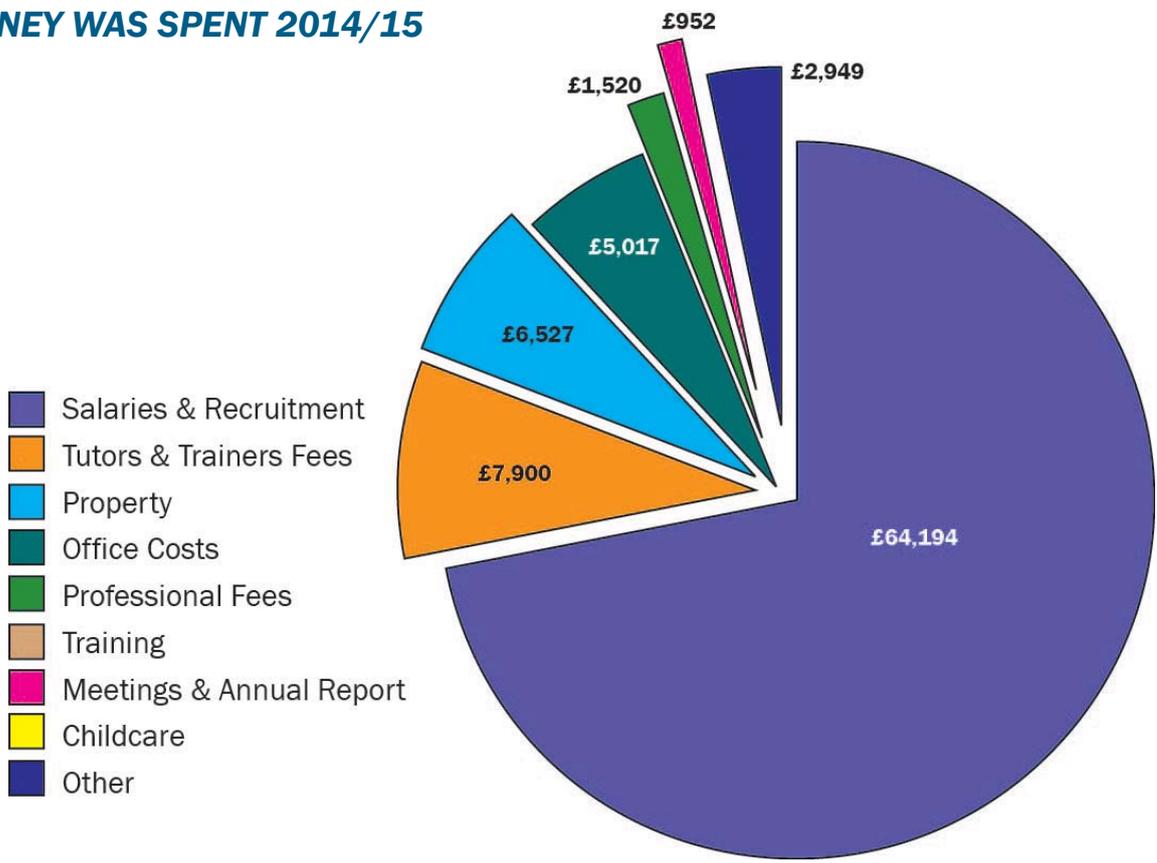
LEARNER



MONEY RECEIVED 2014/15
£90,565



HOW MONEY WAS SPENT 2014/15
£89,059



BOARD MEMBERS

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Ian Brown – F/T Learning Support Manager
 Ann-Marie O'Hare – F/T Finance & Office Manager
 Julie Gough - P/T Administrator

Mary O'Neill	Job Coach
Liam Kelly	Job Coach
Tom Hogg	Job coach
Aaron Higgins	Job Coach
Teresa Billington	Job Coach
David Crossley	Job Coach
Mark Scott	Job Coach
Ray Statter	Job Coach

Ben Reid	Tutor
David Firth	Tutor

ACE also employed a number of additional tutors to deliver our classes throughout the year, a huge thank you to all off our tutors and also to Heather McCorkindale FVC Flexible & Online Learning tutor. We would also like to thanks the Staff from our partner organisations, their support was much appreciated and enabled delivery of many more classes.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

This year we were funded by –
 A contract with Stirling Council

- The Robertson Trust
- Stirling Council Community Pride Fund
- NHSFV Community Food Grant

Donations were received from:

- Tay Charitable Trust
- Stirling & Bridge of Allan Round Table
- The Stafford Trust
- Cruden Foundation Limited

In partnership ACE also received funding support from the JCP Flexible Support Fund and Stirling Council's Welfare Reform Challenge Fund. We would like to thank all our funders their support makes our work possible.





ACE Cornton

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ACE Cornton is a registered Scottish Charity SC 025482

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