



# ANNUAL REPORT 16/17

## Welcome

### Challenges and Changes

Our overall delivery of IT courses and support was impacted due to a number of factors including the reduction in staff capacity due to a vacancy.

Flexible & Online sessions were affected reducing from 2 sessions to one session per week. The changes to ILA announced in June of this year have further affected the ability to provide ECDL and as such the remaining session came to an end in June 2017

ILA agreements in place with SDS were terminated and registered centres had to apply to regain the registered/approved status required. Delivery of other courses including First Aid and Food Hygiene were affected with learners unable to secure funds and organisations unable to provide opportunities.

The number of referrals received from Job Centre Plus was affected due to internal staff changes, new Work Coaches currently still undergoing training, unfamiliarity with JCP opportunities system and emphasis currently on Universal Credit.

Support provided to the women from HMP Cornton Vale reduced due to closure of the main facilities and an uncertainty surrounding whether the Independent Living Units would remain.

Well established (5 years) weekly Money Advice support services provided by Stirling Citizens Advice ended in March 2017 due to lack of funding. The CHANGE Money Advice service, a three year partnership between Raploch Urban Regeneration Company and ACE Cornton also came to an end in March 2017.

Finally the organisation experienced a period of transition in governance with a number of new Directors appointed in August of this year. We continued to deliver a very full programme with additional support from many of our volunteers and introduced a number of new learning opportunities surrounding health and well-being. The new Board of Directors have been attending regular information sessions in order to understand ACE as an organisation, its aims and objectives.

In time this will develop the Directors skills and knowledge supporting them to make informed decisions on the way forward and future of ACE and whilst many of the above mentioned challenges and changes had a negative effect on the organisation many more positives are now being experienced.

A huge thank you is given to Ann-Marie and Staff and our volunteers for all their hard work and determination to see ACE continue providing support within the community.

Cathie Cook, 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 informal learning at the pace of the learner
- Providing a choice of methods and ways to learn
- Creating a friendly and non-judgemental atmosphere.

## Our Achievements

**451** 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 & Volunteer 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
- First Aid in the Workplace
- Complementary Therapies
- Digital Photography
- Needles & Pins
- Get Going Group

### Course

**REHIS Elementary Cooking Skills** – An ACE Volunteer continued to deliver this course supported by other volunteers.

Information sessions on the Food Waste Tool Kit have been incorporated into the delivery of our Elementary Cooking Skills class. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service - Cook Safe Sessions had been incorporated into week 1 of the delivery of Elementary Cooking Skills.

‘Excellent, well organised, felt safe in kitchen’ (AL)



### HMP Cornton Vale

We continue to work with the Community Development Officer and the women who are on license in the independent living units. These women are unable to go back into the prison to use the education centre so learning within the prison is not an option. **Four** women have been attending on Friday mornings making use of the IT drop in facilities. Support has been provided with email accounts, enrolment forms and College applications. Another is currently attending ACE Create. Two of the women progressed on to ECDL with a third looking to complete a SAGE training course and another completed a FVC full time – Hospitality Course whilst still receiving support with IT Skills at ACE.

Upon release one is continuing with the SAGE Training, another secured a College place HNC Accounting and a third has been offered a place at University BA (Hons) Event Management with Foundation

### Needles & Pins

Beginning in September of this year and delivered by two experienced and skilled volunteers this class gives individuals the opportunity to acquire skills in all types of sewing and knitting.

#### Needles & Pins

*'I have learned different sewing techniques which have improved my ability to improve as a quilter' (RK)*

*'I like the fact that ACE is in my local community' (AM)*



## Get Going Group

In partnership with Raploch Urban Regeneration Company established a men's learning and support group. A programme delivered over 12 weeks and covering a range of topics including employability skills, practical workshops, health and welfare sessions.

## C.H.A.N.G.E.

Support sessions continued weekly in Fallin nursery, Bannockburn library, ACE Cornton and Orchard House Health Centre. Initially an 18month project Oct 2014- March 2016 this was extended and sustained until March 2017.

All Support sessions ended in Fallin nursery, Bannockburn library, ACE Cornton and Orchard House Health Centre on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

From **the beginning of the project** Katie has supported **238** individuals with a total financial gain of **£207,957.60**.



### IT Skills

*I have really enjoyed my morning in the class, I feel it's a great team and all support each other (AC)*

*Most enjoyable experience great crowd and tutor (IC)*

## Case Study

### Katrina M

I attend the ACE centre class for I.T. Skills for beginners, having little experience with computers and now I have the confidence to progress studying towards my E.C.D.L. which I would not have been able to do without the support of the ACE staff.

ACE offers so many different activities for all and has given me a great boost in confidence regarding computers.

The staff at ACE are friendly, considerate and extremely helpful with discussing courses that are of interest to me.

In the past I have gained the certificate of Basic Elementary Food and Hygiene Certificate and I plan to take further courses such as the Photography course and the First Aid course when they become available.

I enjoy studying at ACE due to its relaxed and informal atmosphere and would encourage anyone to attend and learn new skills as it definitely makes you more confident within yourself and it's amazing the number of new friendships you can make.



### Food Hygiene

*'We are hoping to open a community café at Recyke-A-Bike. I'm also involved in sports events as a volunteer and we need people to be OK to handle basic food for the runners & volunteers' (AB)*

*'I am a nutritional therapist. I want to do cooking demonstrations so need to be certified' (PD)*

## 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, Emergency First Aid at work and First Aid (3 day course).

## 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 IT, Cookery, First Aid.
- 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

## Case Study

### Carol D

I started ACE in January 2016 when I was in open conditions at Cornton Vale. I came here initially for help with my IT skills. I attended on a Monday morning not being able to use a computer before. I learnt a lot from the volunteers and workers at ACE.

This helped me to move on to Forth Valley College to do a Hospitality course in Food & Beverage level 2, which I have passed the course and I'm now ready to move onto University, I have been offered a place at West London University to do a BA (Hons) Event Management with Foundation

I still come to ACE for cooking skills and more help with my IT skills. I have put a life of crime behind me and hopefully have a good future ahead.



## Board members

Rose Curley	Chairperson
Walter Robertson	Treasurer
Roni Fleming	Board Member
Cathy Cook	Board Member Resigned 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
Karen McLeish	Board Member Resigned 16 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2016
Karen McIntosh	Board Member
Helen Cormack	Board Member

## Staffing

Ann-Marie O'Hare – F/T Development Manager

Julie Gough - P/T Administrator

Robert Pears P/T Learning Support Worker

Marjory Frew P/T Learning Support Worker

Mary O'Neill	Job Coach
Liam Kelly	Job Coach
Tom Hogg	Job coach
Aaron Higgins	Job Coach

Ben Reid	Tutor
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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
- Bank of Scotland Foundation
- The Robertson Trust
- Stirling Council Community Pride Fund

In partnership ACE also received funding support from Stirling Council's Community Empowerment and Regeneration Challenge Fund.

We would like to thank all our funders their support makes our work possible.





**ACE Cornton**

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