

AMBLESIDE PARISH CENTRE

*For the community
and churches of Ambleside*

Annual Review 2022 to 2023



*Delicious Jubilee Celebration Cake
made by local resident Jane Garner
for The Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebration*

Our Aims

1. Serve the needs of the community of Ambleside and the surrounding area
2. Provide and develop community projects
3. Provide accommodation and facilities for individuals, groups and organisations
4. Develop and sustain partnerships with other organisations

Our Ethos

We are a faith-based Community Centre. We aim to be welcoming, caring, inclusive, helpful and creative. We want everyone who uses the Centre to feel valued.

A word from our Chair

As I look back on this past year at the Parish Centre the word that comes to mind is gratitude. Gratitude for the leaders of all the projects taking place at the Centre supporting our local community. You will read in the report of the amazing work that is being done for so many people in our area at all ages. I am grateful for all the volunteers that give of their time, energy and enthusiasm that adds so much to the Centre's life and activities. Thank you also to the many people and organisations that pay to use the Centre or give grants and donations without which we could not continue. Lastly, I thank the staff and Directors who work to steer the Centre and keep everything working in the background.

Looking forward I hope that we can continue to provide a place of support and acceptance to those who need it, a comfortable and well-equipped space for those who require it and a special venue in a beautiful setting for those who want to celebrate life's milestones.



Rob Ashworth - **Chair**

Acting Centre Manager Report

In a year where we have celebrated Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, followed a few months later by the sad news of her death, state funeral and subsequent accession of King Charles, we have also operated through the continued effects of the Covid 19 pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis.

Whilst we have seen regular groups returning to pre pandemic levels, there have still been members of our community who struggle with participating in community activities due to anxiety over contracting the virus. We have seen dramatic increases in the cost of utilities, food and services, which have affected everyone in the community and the Centre has seen a significant increase in running costs and maintenance costs of the building.

We have also seen changes in staffing as we bid farewell to Jane Affleck our Facilities and Events Coordinator who moved on to new pastures and welcomed Shan Porter into this role.

Despite all this we have had a full program of events and activities that have brought the community together.

A Celebration of The Great Outdoors Fundraiser

The first Fundraiser of the year, A celebration of the great outdoors was relatively quiet yet brought in £400. There were stalls including the Wainwright Society, Whitecross Bay Holiday Park, ... Covid 19 was still having an impact on the local community, with volunteers and locals isolating due to contracting the virus and the village itself was eerily quiet. So, we were disappointed to cancel the speaker in the evening due to low numbers of ticket sales. A small number of people embarked on the 5K walk to Pelter Bridge and back and our hospitality team provided delicious refreshments.

Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee

As I write this, I find it hard to believe that a whole year has gone by since we were celebrating Queen Elizabeths Platinum Jubilee. This was an amazing event that brought the community together to celebrate a significant historical milestone. I think we can say it was a great success. We were anticipating 60 people who had booked prior to the event, however, the event spread throughout the whole floor with approximately 120 people attending not including the entertainers (who had to have their food downstairs in Our Place).



There was a delicious afternoon tea served, including a beautiful Jubilee cake made by local resident Jane Garner, and entertainment that consisted of music from The Lakeland Fiddlers, Nick Marshall, and Friends Aloud, storytelling with Taffy Thomas and dancing from the Maria Frances School of dance.



The volunteers/hospitality team did a superb job. They were absolutely exhausted by the end of the day, but their hard work was appreciated by everyone who complimented them on the amazing afternoon tea.

We would like to thank the Lakes Parish Council for their donation of £200 towards the cost of the food and the entertainment.



1st Annual Summer Flower, Craft and Produce Show

In August we hosted our First **Summer Flower, craft and produce Show**. On hearing that the Horticultural society was winding down and the show was not going to happen, Gale and I got together with Joanne from Lily Lous and Peter from the allotment Society to create a mini version of the show.



25 people entered with 66 exhibits including cakes, scones jam, chutney and marmalade, poetry, handmade crafts, flowers and fruit and vegetables.

My personal favourite was Jane Renouf's picture of a bird (chicken) in flight.



We presented certificates, prize money and cups for Best in Show (Barbara Stothard for her Polenta Cake), Popular Vote (Diney for her beautiful basket of homegrown Vegetables), Best Single Vegetable and Longest Bean. There was positive feedback and themes for future shows were received. Once again, the hospitality team excelled themselves with refreshments. We raised £500 from donations, hospitality and the raffle.

AGM 2022

The Annual General Meeting on 30th November went well. It was lovely to see so many attend. It was good to meet up with funders such as The Roselands Trust who went away with a clearer picture of what happens at The Parish Centre.

Christmas 2022



In December we held a Community Christmas Party which was mainly attended by families with primary school aged children.

The children were exceptionally excited, and we had lots of fun playing traditional party games such as pass the parcel and musical chairs in The Wesley Room. Taffy Thomas engaged us with some winter tales, and we sang carols between Taffy's stories.

The hospitality team created and served an amazing buffet and a wonderful time was had by all. Approximately 60 people attended.

We distributed hampers and vouchers to our food cupboard recipients and gave out £300 in vouchers (using funds from a DEFRA grant) for 15 children who are in receipt of free school meals at Ambleside, Grasmere and Langdale primary schools. We are extremely grateful to those who gave generous donations of vouchers and money to put towards the hampers.

Then on 28th December we gathered for a festive lunch. The Community Lunch Team made a delicious spread once again.

BINGO and Chocolate Raffle Fundraiser for Our Place Youth Club

The final fundraiser this financial year was the BINGO session run by the Our Place Youth Club. There were a small number of attendees, though those who did participate enjoyed themselves. The chocolate raffle was a success with two large hampers as well as smaller prizes.

Finance Report

Throughout the year the Finance Governance group, Directors and Trustees met quarterly to review the Centre’s financial position and agree strategies going forward.

The Centre’s Financial Year runs from April to March and for the first time since before the pandemic the Centre could open fully for the entire year. Aware that staffing input would be reduced while the Centre Manager entered a period of maternity leave the Directors resolved not to undertake any non-urgent building works during the year which would inevitably have required a significant level of project management.



Last year I had reported that we had hoped to exceed the pre-pandemic levels of income from room hire with the Parish Centre having undergone major renovations to the roof and flooring in 2021 and people’s confidence increasing post-pandemic. We very nearly did achieve this, albeit 90% of the target:

Room Hire income

2019/2020	£38,066
2022/2023	£34,250

In previous years APC has applied for and received significant grant funding, With the cost of living crisis really taking a hold during the middle of the financial year, funding opportunities became scarce. Room hire income alone cannot be expected to cover the running costs of the Centre and unfortunately the year ended with a deficit of £8,153. This is not the first time the Centre has ended the year on a deficit but it is the first year costs have spiralled upwards in an unplanned and unexpected way due to the cost of living crisis - everything from energy costs to cleaning materials to insurance - threatening to place the Centre in a precarious financial position.

As an example of our increased costs, one that is familiar to us all even in our own homes, the energy costs increased in the second half of the financial year, doubling our annual expenditure compared to the previous year.

	2021/22	2022/23
Electricity	£3,590	£6,115
Gas	£2,081	£4,636
Totals	£5,671	£10,751

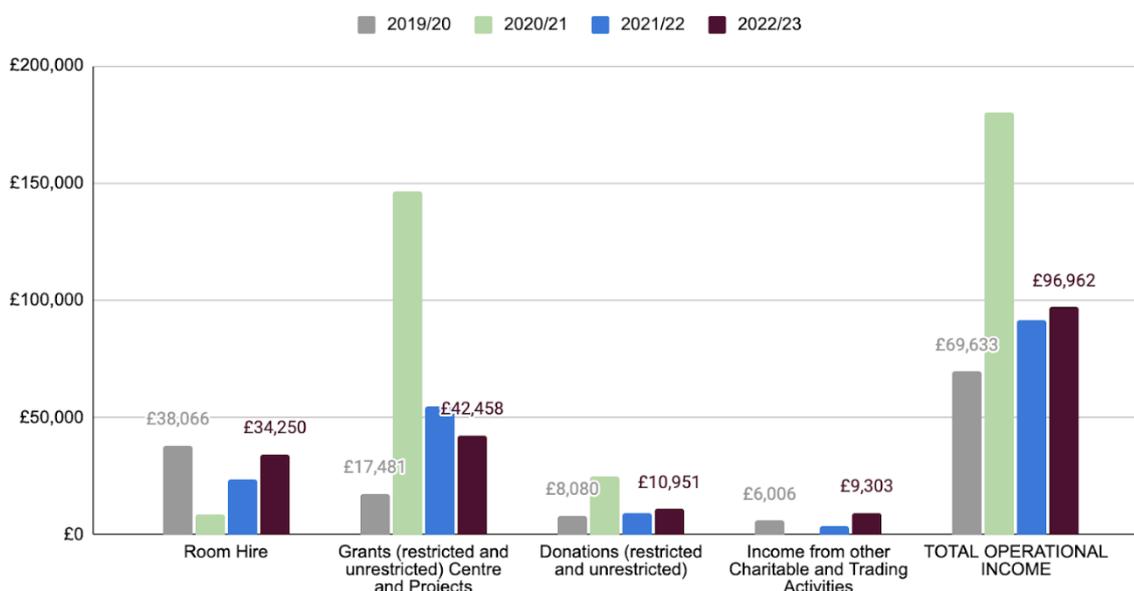
1. Income

Finance Graph 1

APC Income Trend (£) from pre-pandemic (April 2019- March 2020) through to April 2022 to March 2023

The first two graphs show **FOUR** years for comparison purposes:

APC Income Trend (£)



- Grey 2019/20 pre-pandemic
- Green 2020/21 pandemic at its height
- Blue 2021/22 intermittent Covid-19 restrictions (closed for 3 months)
- Black 2022/23 Centre fully open

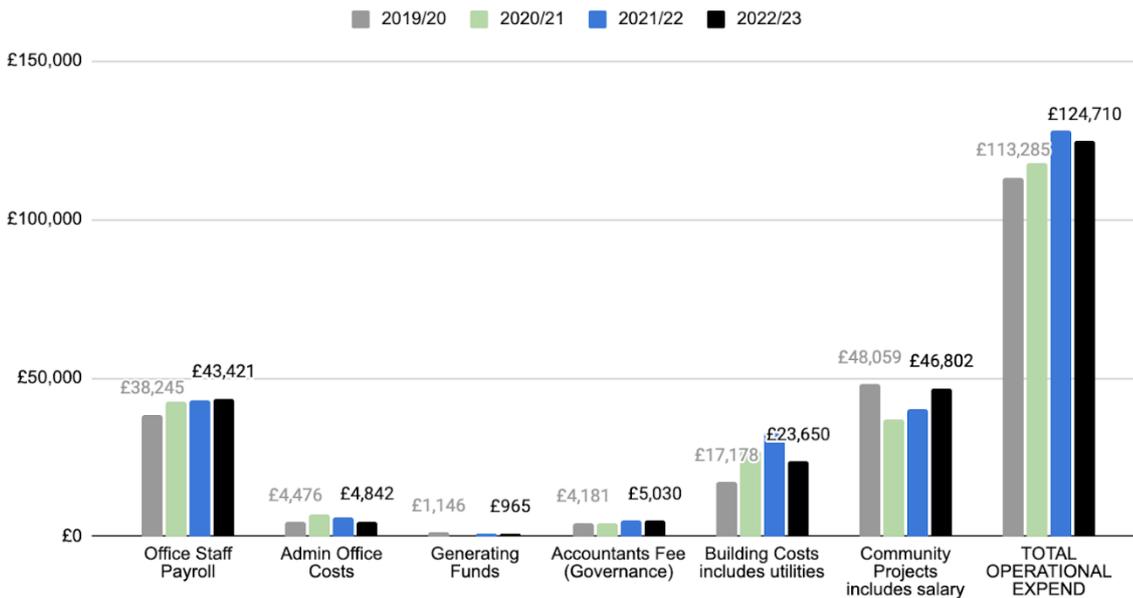
Key Points:

1. Since the “normal” pre-pandemic year of 2019/20 the total operational income has now increased by £30,000.
2. Room hire income increased from the previous year but has not quite returned to pre-Covid-19 levels, despite the Centre being fully open throughout the financial year 2022/23.
3. Grant income has reduced by £12,000 since the previous year but does significantly exceed the levels received in 2019/20, but not keeping pace with the increases in expenditure.

2. Expenditure

Finance Graph 2

APC Expenditure Trend (£)



Key Points:

1. In the previous year (2021/22, the blue column on the graph) the Centre had carried forward a surplus of funds and embarked on major repairs (Towers and Flooring). In 2022/23 (the black column) the total operational expenditure was only slightly lower, having reduced by £4,000 with no major repairs undertaken.
2. The cost of living crisis began to take hold mid-year in September 2022.
3. Expenditure did exceed income and the Centre was able to draw upon its general reserves but still ended the year with a deficit balance.
4. The Community Projects includes the first full year of salary of the Community Support Worker role.

Finance Graph 3

Actual Expenditure: Community Projects 2022/23

Year Ended 31 March 2023 Projects Expend £46,802



Key

Points:

1. Pie chart shows the actual expenditure by the Centre’s community projects, including staff costs where applicable.
2. Dementia - monthly support (new project)
3. The Village: for mums and babies, new volunteer led project with no expenditure (so not included in the pie chart)
4. By the end of the financial year Games For Men ran out of money with no funding sourced. Ring fenced reserves were set aside for refurbishment of the Pool Table.
5. All other projects finished with a surplus balance to carry forward.

3. Balance Sheet Funds

Restricted Funds include the value of the Leasehold property which is subject to a charge calculated by straight line depreciation every year of £50,822. Restricted Funds at the year end (31 March 2023) were £343,503 compared to the previous year of £394,325.

Due to previously stated reasons (ie less grants available to apply for) the Unrestricted Funds as at 31 March 2023 had decreased by £21,073 since 31 March 2022 which has reduced the cash in our bank account. The resultant deficit of £8,153 will be addressed in the following ways as agreed by Directors:

- Increase room hire charges from September 2023
- Create marketing material to highlight the different uses of the building, eg weddings and large group functions, conference facilities etc.
- Only undertake urgent and essential repairs unless specific funding available.

- Compile aggressive fundraising plan and Increase focus on fundraising through grant applications for unrestricted funds to cover core costs.

4. Reserves Policy

The APC Board of Directors continue to operate the Reserves Policy which is reviewed quarterly. Any movement in any of the Reserves must be approved at Board level and those decisions are minuted. The “Operation and Contingency” fund ensures the Centre would be financially capable of continuing to operate its core activities for a period of 9 months (ie running the office, paying staff, utilities and essential building maintenance).

Throughout the financial year none of the Trustees Designated Reserves were used. The “Centre General Reserve” has been re-named to “Unrestricted general funds”. At the close of the financial year this fund was showing a deficit of £8,153.

5. Governance

The Treasurer meets quarterly with representatives of the Facilities Governance Group to gain an insight into the maintenance costs and requirements, both adhoc and planned, which helps to inform the budget making process. The Treasurer prepares budget monitoring spreadsheets and variance indicators which are reviewed at the quarterly meeting with the Finance Governance Group and subsequently reports to the quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors.

Project leaders with the assistance from Laura Firth, who was both the Community Support Worker and covering the Centre Manager’s maternity leave, monitored the day to day operational expenditure of the Project budgets.

With grateful thanks to Einir for her conscientious Bookkeeping providing a valuable role in the preparation of the financial budgets. Ambleside based Accountancy firm, Saints & Co. has once again prepared the accounts despite another change in staff with David Dunlop taking over from Jon Fell at the year end.

Alison Pickering – Treasurer

Our Targets

PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING TARGETS SET FOR 2022-23

This financial year, whilst seeing a return to a near normal usage, has been challenging with the increased cost of living, in particular the increase in energy prices. Progress was made with fundraising at the beginning of 2023 to cover increases in gas and electric during quarter three, though this did little to reduce the overall deficit as costs rose considerably in the last quarter. There was an increase in members of the community requiring support from the community food cupboard as well as help with funding towards hospital transport. Despite the challenges we have been able to provide positive experiences through community events and activities and continued to create revenue through room hire and fundraising.

- 1. For income to match expenditure;** through meeting room hire target and matching fundraising need. To balance the budget, we need to apply for grant funding and generate revenue to address the identified shortfall.

The projects ended the year with a positive balance, however overall income failed to meet expenditure due to the unforeseen increase in running costs. Gas and Electricity bills were far higher than expected and despite a lottery grant of £7000, plus a warm spaces grant allocated to energy costs, the significant increase in energy prices meant that insufficient funding was raised. In addition to this the cost of maintenance, services and products increased.

- 2. To monitor a 'normal year' of operation;** this will be the first full business as usual financial year since 2019-20. It was agreed this was important to do, before committing to significant developments.

Post pandemic there has been an increased level of engagement in activities at the Centre with our community groups, regular bookings and one-off bookings.

- 3. To seek to raise funds for additional investments and developments;** before committing to spending (acoustics/ coffee machine/ access improvements)

There was an attempt to find funds for the conversion to LED lighting project, however the bid was unsuccessful. This led to a piece of work being completed to understand all the maintenance and improvement needs of the Centre. Updated quotes were gathered, and Shan is in the process of collating the information into a booklet to send out to prospective funders.

4. To begin the planning process earlier again; with a view to be where we were in May 2022, in March 2023 (for the financial year 2023-24).

Planning conversations for 2023-24 took place during the last quarter of 2022-23, which put us in a stronger position going into the new financial year

SETTING TARGETS FOR 2023 – 2024

- 1. Explore and implement new ways of generating our own income, beyond room hire and grant funding:** through a collaborative and creative team planning process, identify new and different income streams that can be trialled or piloted in 2024-25, to increase our resilience and ability to match income with expenditure.
- 2. Expand and strengthen our volunteer base:** actively promote our community groups and recruit new volunteers, with specific role profiles and duties to increase capacity and sustainability of the groups, whilst equipping existing volunteers with skills and resources required to fulfil their potential. Also look to recruit new Directors to the Board with skills, experience and attributes that can contribute to the Centre's sustainability and development.
- 3. Gain a better understanding as to who the community is that we serve:** begin to carry out market research to identify who is, and who isn't, currently engaged with the Centre and in what ways. This should include permanent residents, visitors, transient workers, second homeowners, service providers, businesses and other charitable organisations.
- 4. Consider ways in which we can become more environmentally and economically sustainable in both our operation and charitable work:** look to identify and implement where possible in our day-to-day ways of working, the maintenance and improvement of the building, and our generation of income.

Our Projects and Groups

Our Place

Our Place Youth Club aims to provide an inclusive, stimulating, empowering and enjoyable youth project for young people living in the rural area of Ambleside and the wider Lakes Parish; this includes running a weekly junior and senior youth club, delivering issue-based project work, delivering activities and trips out during school holiday periods.

The Our Place junior (10 – 12 years) and senior (12 – 16 years) youth clubs are held on a Tuesday evening at the youth club room in the Parish Centre Ambleside.

There is currently an average attendance of 19 members at the junior club with 29 members in total. An average of 12 members at the senior club each week with 34 members in total. However, both clubs currently have a membership of 63 young people who attend over the year.

The Junior Youth Club:

The junior club sessions usually starts with baking, the favourite and quickest bake to do are choc chip cookies. The group have also made sweet necklaces, decorated gingerbread hearts for Valentine’s Day and gingerbread trees for Christmas.

The junior members have enjoyed many crafts over the year, several with a theme. Rabbits and lanterns for Chinese New Year, decorated trophies for Mother’s Day, and for Christmas they made Gonks, candy cane reindeers, Poppy and Christmas wreathes to name but a few!



The Ninetendo Switch, table tennis, pool, table football and air hockey are always available throughout the session. Sports and Games in the hall with Calvin (qualified sports coach) are always looked forward to. Dodge ball and football are still the firm favourites.

In the lighter nights the group use the park instead of the hall. The playground is the main attraction although several of the group play football or manhunt. This has helped the youth club to reduce its overheads by not renting the hall.

Senior Youth Club:

The Senior Club is still male dominated with 7 females attending in total since September 2022. It is currently a mixture of old and some new members. The year 7 members come to play football and look forward to Calvin attending. With the older members, it's a bit hit and miss. Other than football practice and youth club the majority of the group don't go out of their family homes to socialise.

Toasties and refreshments are on offer each week and any left over from the junior baking session. The pool table and table tennis are the most popular with the senior members. Arts and crafts are being done by a couple of Year 7 females.

This year 2 senior club members have finished helping in the junior club as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. This brings the total to 5 seniors who have volunteered for their Award. One of the young volunteers is coming back to volunteer as part of his Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Easter Trip

There were 26 youth club members who enjoyed a brilliant day at the Pleasure Beach during the Easter Holidays. There were 2 staff and an adult volunteer who accompanied the group. Everyone behaved themselves during the coach travel. The highlights were 2 junior club members going on the Big One as they were tall enough this year and really excited.



Bingo

Funding was secured from Cumbria Youth Alliance to cover the costs to offer Community Bingo Sessions to raise funds for the delivery of the youth club. The first session took place this April, it was fairly quiet with roughly 13 people attending. The Chocolate Raffle was a big success and the whole event raised around £150. It is hoped that the Bingo will become a regular event at the Parish Centre and will help to raise much needed income to support the continuation of the Our Place Youth Club.

We would like to thank this year's funders: Lakes Parish Council: Kelsick Trust: Frieda Scott Charitable Trust: Cumbria Youth Alliance

Ian Parr, **Lead Youth Work Lead (Youth Engagement Service)**

All Together Now Group

Overall this has been a fairly settled year with no major challenges so has been an opportunity to make new connections with new people and new organisations. We established a relationship with CEDEC and through them had opportunities to work with Cumbria Libraries and artist Cathrine Sulyvan. A total of 57 people from 21 different countries joined us in activities or looked to us for assistance. These countries included Australia, Austria, Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Philippines, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Malaysia, Poland, Romania, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine and the UK.

March and April

We planted our potatoes and enjoyed the spring weather on lovely walks including Rydal caves.

May and June

More lovely walks including Stock Ghyll waterfalls, We did some Asian fusion cooking and made borscht. Later we sewed beetroot seed and look forward to even better borscht if they grow well.

July and August

As always, we took part in Rushbearing and the Flower Show. We also enjoyed the picnics, paddleboarding, made herbal teas from wildflowers and said goodbye to Maggie Pratchett who has been a big part of All Together since its beginning.

September and October

Thanks to free tickets from Cumbria Libraries, we enjoyed a fantastic trip to the Comic Art Festival in

Bowness. Twelve of us ranging in age from 9 to 69 years enjoyed a range of activities including live drawing sessions by leading comic artists projected onto a large screen, a trip into an artist's fantasy world via virtual reality headsets, exhibitions, and talks with artists from all over the world. Language was no barrier as most of the event was very visual however most of the group met with people from their own home countries and artists who spoke their first language which made this trip even more enjoyable. Other popular activities included table tennis, writing poetry, and foraging walks.

November

We enjoyed lots of craft activities, especially crochet, and had a lovely evening of Bolivian cooking. We hope to recreate this dish by growing our own Bolivian chilies next year.

December

The carol service was attended by some of the group, but we all had an opportunity to be part of it even if we could not be there in person as we made a video greeting in seven different languages which was played in church. We held our Christmas party later than usual this year to include our Orthodox friends and celebrated winter solstice with Chinese solstice dumplings.

January and February

We saw in the new year Latvian style with a special new year dish made from our own Latvian “maple peas” grown from seeds saved from plants we grew at Brockhole. We celebrated the Year of the Rabbit with Chinese food. And have begun a project with Cumbria libraries and Cathrine Sulyvan, a storytelling artist. We have had a couple of workshops with her so far and plan to create our own stories which we will illustrate and perform in the Japanese style known as Kamishibai. We hope this will continue into next year.

Stories Together

Our Library continues to grow. We now have almost 400 books in over 30 languages. We are grateful to our supporters for donations of books and craft supplies.

We have loaned out 74 books in 17 languages with many more books being enjoyed in the park or Parish Centre.

March and April

We made cards for Easter, Eastern Orthodox Easter and Mothers day as well as Ukrainian style decorated eggs.

May

A popular activity was making underwater goldfish pictures inspired by *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister (we have copies in the original German, English and Russian) We've since made kits for this activity so families borrowing these books can also take a craft kit.

June

We held a Rushbearing making workshop. Many families did not know anything about the tradition, and all enjoyed making a bearing and learning a little about this festival weather they took part in the procession with their bearing or not.

July and August

We made owl out of loo rolls and flower arrangements in the shape of birds to enter into this year's bird-themed flower show and are delighted that some of our regulars won prizes.

September

We made superheroes out of wooden spoons. Children were encouraged to write a story about their character.

October

This black history month we looked at the civil rights movement. We made buses out of cardboard boxes. Children were then sent home with a challenge to find out who Rosa Parks, Roy Hackett and Tarsem Singh Sandhu were and what their connection was to buses.

October is also a great time to research books on black history to add to our wish list.

November

We continue to be inspired by nature even though we were indoors. Activities included printing with autumn leaves and making acorn people.

December and January

We enjoyed Christmas activities. Then learned about the ways people celebrate lunar new year by reading stories and making Spring festival decorations.

February and March

We made dolls inspired by Red Riding Hood and planted seeds.



Gale Chen - All Together Now and Stories Together Co-ordinator

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE at Ambleside Parish Centre

During the period April 2022 to March 2023 we have had 36 students of many different nationalities. They have come from Ukraine, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia, Canary Islands and Thailand. The majority of new students have been Ukrainian refugees fleeing the ongoing war and now residing with host families in the Ambleside area.

The students have been of various ages and educational backgrounds. Ages have ranged from mid-teens to early 50s, though the majority are in their 20s and 30s. The majority are working in local hotels, restaurants and shops, and this includes many of those recently arrived from Ukraine.

Lessons included a grammar/vocab building element with lots of conversation and fluency practice. The main practical language focus continued to be English for work and everyday living, including topics such as 'giving directions', and English for CVs and 'cover letters'. Students are also encouraged to suggest specific language topics that are useful for them. The classroom environment is relaxed and friendly, and students are encouraged to use the English they know without the fear of making mistakes.

The main challenge of these lessons has been the range of language levels. Many of the new Ukrainian students have had little or no knowledge of English. But we also accommodate students at an intermediate or advanced level. To deal with this it is often necessary to divide the class into different groups for some or all activities.

Some students have brought children to the class. Sometimes these children have joined the class. Where this has not been possible, we have arranged for a volunteer to look after the children so that the parents can focus on the lesson..

We have continued to offer online classes on a Tuesday evening for those unable to attend classes at the Centre due to work commitments etc.

Student feedback has been positive and students have reported increased confidence and ability in using English in and outside of work.

Richard Dugdale – ESOL Tutor

The Evergreens Club

The Evergreen group enjoyed a successful year engaging in a wide range of activities and outings. Throughout the year 28 members took part in sessions with 14 regularly attending. We are extremely lucky to have a super team of volunteers supporting this group and are grateful to Agnes Backhouse and the Lakes Parish Council for funding to the running of this group.

We started the year with a visit from the Library Staff to talk about music and creating a playlist that triggered happy memories.



We had a talk from Steve Watts who shared his stunning images from his book *A year Like No Other* and talked to us about his charitable work. Gillian Kelly from AAFAF delivered an interesting talk that got the group asking questions and discussing climate change. Homecare shared experiences and talked about the services they offer as did Age UK. Judith Myers talked about the Shoebox Appeal and shared slides.

Local Photographer John Shedwick stunned everyone with his images from a trip to Svalbard (everyone adored the footage of the polar bears).



Local Author Marion Veevers came to talk about some of the books she has written, Taffy Thomas brought his talents of storytelling to the group in Memory of Betty Ingham and Ursula challenged the group with a workout with chair exercises.



We participated in Seasonal Crafts and flower arranging to celebrate Valentines Day, the Platinum Jubilee, Rushbearing and for the summer flower show, Christmas and Easter.



We had local visits to Ambleside Library, The Armit Museum, A Heritage tour and afternoon tea at Brockhole, and travelled to the Wordsworth Museum & Dove Cottage on the open top bus,



We then went a little further afield to The Theatre by the Lake in Keswick to see The Borrowers and in August had a Summer Day out in Blackpool.





We took a heritage tram ride which rattled along. Had a walk along the prom to the Lifeboat Museum, a picnic lunch then a hot drink. The weather was kind to us and a great day was had by all!



In addition to the outings, Gale delivered a super session for Chinese New Year, year of the Rabbit.

We had school dinner at Ambleside Primary School in the Summer and later in the year the Children joined us in the Parish Centre for Christmas Dinner.



The Oral History Society talks have been extremely popular. The group love to listen to Ali, Judith and Will talk about and share presentations of life in Ambleside in the past. Ali also delighted us with quizzes about the local area.



We had a games Session, time to knit and natter, lots of tea and cake and I think the icing on the cake this year was a visit from the Air Cadets with their aircraft simulator. Members of the group thoroughly enjoyed participating in flying, landing and sometimes crash landing the aircraft on the simulator.

APC events Evergreens participated in included the dementia Hub, Art Exhibition and the AGM.

Ambleside Community Food Club & Cafe



This group continues to attract a mix of those who need support with food, those who come for the company and those who support zero waste. It has been lovely to see familiar but new faces come along on a Wednesday morning. And good to see people who first came along to fareshare lunch now coming to the Café, we have particularly seen an increase in the number of men who come along for the social aspect of this group. It has become quite a social hub. Vulnerability can cover a range of things from food poverty to mental health and companionship, so I am delighted that this project can support a variety of needs through coming together to share food.

Numbers who need support fluctuate each week, but there have been 16 households within the Lakes Parish area who have needed support at some point through each month. We were able to deliver hampers and vouchers to those who receive support from the food cupboard over Christmas.

We have been working more closely with Angela Clark who operates the foodbank support in Grasmere. She brings donations to us, we make up food parcels as needed and Angela has been helping with any deliveries that are required for Grasmere residents.

This year we have supported Angela and her team with enabling collection of donations for the Air Ambulance at our food club café. Over £1000 was raised at each collection.

The Community Lunches have made a popular monthly appearance this year. Those who attend would like to see it become a weekly event, however there were not enough volunteers to maintain a weekly rota.

This year saw two new community groups established through the food project. Due to the high cost of energy and living costs in general these groups were developed with the help of a warm spaces grant.



We held a weekly Singaround on a Thursday evening providing a warm space, hot drink and biscuits and an opportunity to enjoy singing, playing an instrument and listening to others as we took turns to play or sing something. Thank you to Nick Marshall who has been instrumental (no pun intended) in getting this project up and running

We also commenced Supper Club on a Friday evening with the support of Lisa Smallshaw and volunteers who prepared delicious hot meals. This was aimed at people finishing work or college to pop in and have a hot meal before heading home so they didn't need to cook when they got home thus saving energy costs, however it became extremely popular with older people who wanted to come together over food to keep warm and have some company.



Without volunteers, donations and funding the project would not be able to support vulnerable people or our community in general. Thanks go to all our volunteers, local businesses: Granny Smiths, Tesco, Co-op, Apple Pie, Cornish Bakery, Spar who we regularly purchase from and receive donations from for the food project. And to our benefactors who make financial donations through participating in the group and purchasing refreshments, individual donations and grants. Thank you in particular to The Lakes Parish Council, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Community Foundation, South Lakeland District Council and The Roseland Trust who have supported us with grants and donations.

Dementia Hubs and Support Group

Dementia Awareness Hubs

These dementia awareness events follow the model of the 'South Lakes Dementia Community' Hubs, which meet monthly in Kendal. Organisations, charities, and other groups who provide services to those living with dementia, their families and carers are invited to the hubs where they can provide information, support and share their expertise with those who attend. We have received regular support from all the organisations we have invited.

Ambleside held hubs in June and September 2022 and March 2023. They were well advertised on social media, posters and parish magazines but the response from the public has been negligible. Many organisations have attended ranging from specialist dementia charities to more general charities, from personal carers support groups to home care businesses, from solicitors to library services, from local health care professionals to those from the Memory Clinic. All have welcomed the opportunity to network in beautiful surroundings and they have appreciated the hospitality provided by Ambleside Parish Centre.

Looking to the future it would seem organising dementia awareness hubs twice yearly in Ambleside is not necessary as the Kendal hub is monthly and can be accessible to most people looking for information and guidance. But the format is good for organisations to network and the public to access information and guidance in one convenient place. Perhaps the Parish centre can look to widening the scope to enable the networking as well as attracting more of the public.

Dementia Support Group

Following feedback at the first Dementia Hub in September 2021 this group was established in February 2022 to offer support to local people living with dementia, their families, and carers. A diagnosis of dementia can be frightening for all those involved and, for some, the chance to talk about the situation in which they find themselves can be helpful.

The group continues to meet monthly on the 3rd Tuesday 10.00 to 12.00 and to offer a non-judgemental space where people can meet for a coffee and a chat. All the 5 volunteers have experience of caring for or working with someone with dementia.

Members talk about their frustrations, feelings of loss or some particularly difficult episodes or they may talk about their lives, and experiences. They are not under any pressure to join the conversation, for some just listening and being in an accepting environment is sufficient. Where appropriate volunteers will speak with group members individually to ensure all is well.



We have access to a number of activities designed for those living with dementia. These include games, jigsaws, memory cards, conversation prompts and lego.

In addition, following our work with the organisations attending the Dementia Hubs we have a lot of literature available to signpost people to various organisations for more practical help. Many of these organisations attend the group, when they can, to offer support.

Currently we have three regular attendees, all carers of people with dementia. In addition, others have dropped in seeking specific help with a particular situation or just somewhere to air their thoughts. Over the year a few people with dementia have attended, two live alone and no longer attend, two who have partners, one has attended with his partner and may return, the other decided it was not for him.

We have recently set up an activities table, an information table as well as the table where we sit and have a coffee and chat. We are considering inviting charity group members to the meeting every other month and advertising their presence to see if more people would then attend.

We are constantly reviewing our poster and other advertising methods with a view to attracting more member and we meet regularly to reflect on how the meetings are going and plan further strategies.

When asked those who attend the group say how helpful they find the time to be with others who are in a similar position and understand to some extent what they are experiencing. For some it is a form

of respite away from the daily turmoil of caring for loved ones or the difficulties of living with dementia.

The Village Mum and Baby/Toddler Support Group



At the beginning of the year, we had a number of mums and babies who attended regularly. However, the children reached an age where they were starting nursery, so numbers attending the group reduced.

We have been fortunate this year to have Grace Cauldwell bring along her sling library to Mum and baby support group and be on hand to offer support to new mums.

Links with school and other services have been explored in the early part of the year, however with sporadic attendance and the fact that those who attended have a close network of support, we found at the time extra support was not required.

Moving forward though, there are families in the community who would benefit from support and Grace and Sophie will work together to identify those needs and make links with relevant services.

Laura Firth – Community Support Coordinator

Bereavement Support Group

We have a core of folk who always come to the Bereavement Support Group and others dip in and out as they feel the need or are at home on the first Thursday of the month. We encourage each other to get out and about, visiting family and friends and generally trying their wings.



It is always a privilege to see our friends grow in confidence and share their experiences as they face the challenges of their new life. Most of the people who come to us are widowed but we find that occasionally someone who has lost a child, a parent or another loved one joins us. Learning to live with loss is a challenge for us all and we are there for everyone.

We always stress that we are not counsellors and have no qualifications, but many people have felt better for knowing that others understand their feelings. Our Group does not suit everyone, but we encourage anyone feeling bereft to come along and see if we can provide some small consolation.

Judith Shingler - **Bereavement Group Co-ordinator**

Games For Men

This group has continued to enjoy getting together on a Thursday morning to play pool, table tennis, complete a crossword together and have a cuppa, conversation and snacks. The group saw new members at the start of the year, but as work commitments increased numbers dwindled again.

The group were pleased to finally have the pool table renovated, with new felt, cushions, pockets and cues.

Chris Shepherd – **Games for Men Coordinator**

Services working in our Centre

Cedar Counselling Service

Life continues to be challenging for many people and mental wellness and illness have gained a much higher profile in the last few years. One recent statistic states that suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50 years of age, which is very shocking. However, we find that there is still a resistance or embarrassment with some people to seeking help in the form of therapy. This year enquiries have been slow at times but then with many enquiries coming all at once. This can result in a build-up of clients waiting for some space but we still manage to fit most people in within a month or two. Some of our counsellors continue to work with long term clients that have been coming for many months or even years, but we can usually find some space for those who need us.



We have continued with 6 counsellors all offering a few sessions a week on a voluntary basis during this year. We also continue to meet up as a team with regular group supervision sessions which continue to be so helpful for us all. We receive further training individually, mostly now via video link which has been cheaper and easier to access without having to travel long distances. We share the information received and what we have learned with the group at our meetings.

When we first meet a client, we regard each person and situation as unique. Sometimes the client does not know what they want from counselling or they can find it difficult to explain. People come

and say they are feeling depressed or anxious or unsettled in some way and as they begin to talk, they discover something about what it is that is troubling them. So many clients say that talking it through really helps. Some clients find that having come and told someone else about their situation over 2 or 3 sessions, this is enough for them. Others find that as they uncover some things, maybe from the past, that this leads them onto further questions, more self-discovery and the need to examine things more deeply. We get clients who ask at the beginning, how long will they need to attend therapy. This is not very easy to predict. We have always offered clients sessions for as long as they need. We do review regularly usually every 6 weeks to see if this is still working and fulfilling what is required.

We have continued to be supported financially by the Methodist church and St Marys, which enables us to continue to offer counselling for clients which is free at the point of access. We do ask clients to contribute to the costs if they are able, but we don't want money to be a barrier to seeking help. We are very grateful for all the financial support we have received over the years.

And finally, we want to say a big thank you to our volunteers who give their time and skill week by week and the clients who take that important first step to enquire about counselling and then come and trust us with helping them.

Judith Sutton - **Chair of Trustees, Cedar Counselling** (Charity no: 11568)

Chiropody

I continue to be very busy and would like to thank the centre for their ongoing support.

Rebecca Thorpe - Chiropody



Our Volunteers

We are so lucky to have such wonderful volunteers, who when called upon support groups and community events with baking, cooking, making and serving refreshments and so much more. We have such a dedicated and diverse range of people who give their time and energy so generously, providing the Centre and it's charitable work with an eclectic range of skills and experience. Our special thanks go to all these volunteers, as without them we would not be able to offer and support the community as we do.

Volunteers Active 2022-23

Zoe Ashworth	Marguerite Jenkinson
Amanda	Linda Kingdon
Elaine Barratt	Nigel Kingdon
Ursula Brendling	Liz Marshall
Alec Burford	Nick Marshall
Margaret Burford	Livvy Murray
Liz Cornford	Gwyneth Nixon
Zoe Carnell	Ali Peake
Ron Charles	Dympna Pyle
Maureen Clark	Leanda Robson
David Dodgson	Jane Renouf
Penny Dyer	Christine Reynolds
Brian Elleray	Marion Riley
Ann Fielding	Judith Shingler
Julie Faulkner	Lisa Smallshaw
Judy Fry	Meriel Steele
Jane Gomersall	William Steele
Helen Green	Mary Stevenson
Pat Green	Barbara Stothard
Jan Griffiths	David Stothard
Phil Hurons	Pauline Sunnucks
Ruth Halsey	Alice Troup
Philip Hyroms	Chris Turner
Sue Ion	Christine Watts
Val Jackson	Ruth Yates

Our Partners and Supporters

We would also like to thank the following for their partnership and support during the year:

The Methodist Church - Connexion
The Methodist Church - South Lakes Circuit
Rotary Club - Ambleside & Kirkstone
Age UK (Cumbria County Council)
Agnes Backhouse Charity Trust
ACTion with Communities in Cumbria
Ambleside Action for a Future
All Churches Trust Limited
Bryan Lancaster's Trust
Lakes Parish Council
Dowager Eleanor Peel Trust
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Frieda Scott Charitable Trust
Gateway Group
The Hadfield Trust
Rotary Club – Ambleside
The Roselands Trust
South Lakeland District Council
South Lakeland District Council – Malcolm Lamb
Windermere & Ambleside Lions
Cumbria County Council
Cumbria Community Foundation
Cumbria Young People's
Electricity North West
Evan Cornish Foundation
Prince's Countryside Trust
Windermere & District Food Bank
Woodrooffe Benton Foundation
Co-op
Furness Building Society
Kelsick's Educational Foundation
Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

Action with Communities In Cumbria (ACT)
Ambleside Health Centre
Ambleside Library

Ambleside Methodist Church
Ambleside Rotary
Ambleside & Kirkstone Rotary
Apple Pie Bakery
Cedar House Counselling
Cherrydidi
Co-op
Churches Together in Ambleside District
Cumbria Community Foundation
Cumbria Police
Cumbria Village Halls Network
Cumbria County Council
Dignity in Dementia
Granny Smiths
Lakes Parish Council
McClures
Spar
South Lakeland Age UK
South Lakeland CVS
South Lakeland District Council
St Mary's Church of England Ambleside
Tesco
Windermere & District Foodbank
Youth Engagement Services

All the local businesses who regularly support Community Food Club (Fareshare & Food Bank)

Our Directors and Members of the Management Committee

Dr Rob Ashworth*	Chair
Mrs Margaret Burford*	
Grace Cauldwell	[Joined Aug 2022]
Mr Michael Corin	
Mrs Jennifer Harrop*	
Lady Renna Kellaway	[Lake District Summer Music]
Mrs Linda Kingdon*	Secretary
The Revd Beverley Lock*	[Retired January 2023]
Dcn Maggie Patchett	[Resigned May 2022]
Mrs Allison Peak*	
Mrs Alison Pickering*	Treasurer
Mrs Catherine Powloski*	[Our Place Youth Project]

The Revd Graham Ransom* (Resigned May 2022]
Mrs Marion Riley* [Ambleside Art Society]
Mr David Stothard*
Headteacher or his/her representative Ambleside Primary School*

NB. * Directors of Ambleside Parish Centre

Our Staff

Gale Chen	All Together Now and Stories Together Co-ordinator [p/t]
Mandy Dorman	Cleaner/caretaker [p/t]
Sophie Bryde	Centre Manager [p/t] (MAT leave July 2022- April 2023)
Jane Affleck	Administrator/Booking Co-ordinator [p/t] from May 2022 – Jan 2023
Shan Porter	Events and Facilities Co-ordinator [p/t] from Feb 2023
Einir Roberts	Finance Administrator [p/t]
Chris Shepherd	Games for Men Co-ordinator [p/t]
Laura Firth	Community Support Coordinator [p/t] until Sept 2023 Centre Manager Maternity Cover from July 2022- June 2023

Contracted Services

Ian Parr	YES (Youth Engagement Service) Lead Youth Worker [p/t]
Debbie Parr	YES Youth Worker [p/t]