

# Impact Report for 2025

Advancing the social inclusion of  
people with learning disabilities



# Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



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# OUR VISION

Growing independence

Social opportunities  
that support friendships

Developing work skills

Being part of the local  
community





# OUR VALUES

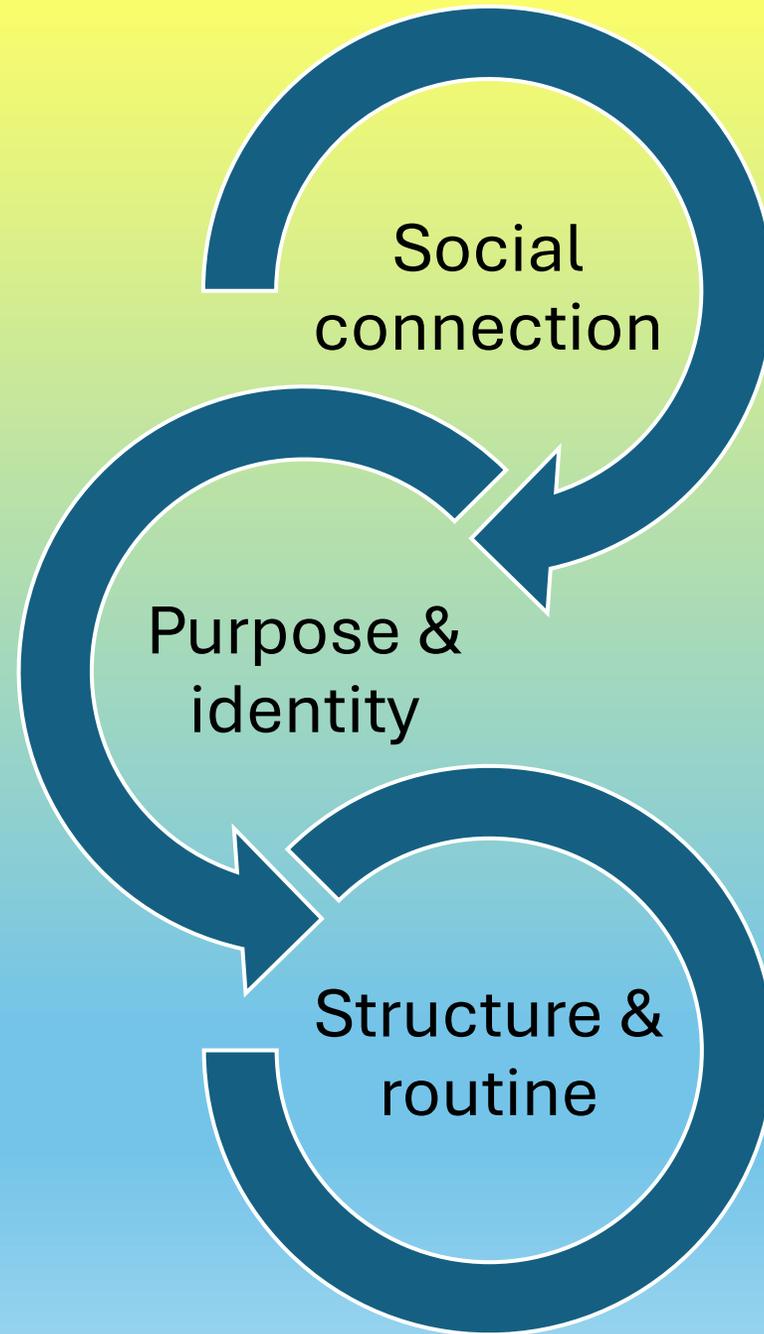
**Growing in self-confidence**  
through experience and  
achievements

**Building self-esteem**  
through interactions  
that support feelings  
of self-worth



**Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.**

# How we support the social inclusion of people with a learning disability...



# Social connection

**Making new friends and meeting ‘old’ ones**  
A good way to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to commit to a shared activity together.



This might be attending our twice monthly social group, being part of our gardening team, a shop team, or joining one of our ‘takeaway’ evenings.

# Social connection



Both shops and the allotment continue throughout the year and are especially important for members when other term based activities are not taking place.



The gardening team are our longest established group and have been together for a number of years. They enjoy the sociability of the allotment and have made firm friends with the allotment community, some of whom join them for coffee each week. Members and some families also enjoy attending the allotment barbeques. The gardening group remains a very important part of our members' lives.



# Social connection

Social networks and teamwork provide many opportunities for friendship, being part of a community and reducing feeling lonely.



Volunteering in our shops or allotment gives a meaningful context to both practise and develop social skills, including interacting with both peers and the public.

# Purpose & identity



Purpose-driven activities are linked to better emotional resilience and mental well being which supports feelings of self-worth, achievement and a sense of being useful. Positive feedback has an important role in developing those feelings of self-worth. The better you feel about yourself, the more likely you are to have a positive view of your life.

Our shop assistants do all the practical tasks involved in running a shop or coffee shop with the manager's role being one of training and support. Everyone learns specific retail or hospitality skills as well as generic work skills such as independent travel, time keeping, reliability, initiative and social communication.

# Purpose & identity

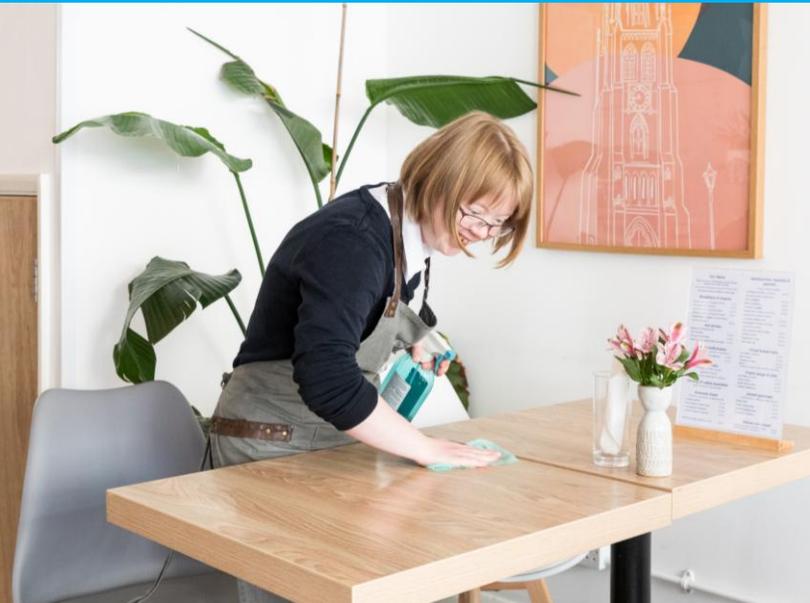


Knowing that your time and effort are making a difference develops self-worth. The group continue to grow in confidence and on arrival walk round the allotment identifying the jobs needed for the day.



Everyone has their favourite tasks, whether this is picking and trimming the vegetables or more physical maintenance jobs. The team enjoy both working at the allotment and in customers gardens.

# Structure & routine



Having a structure and routine to the day reduces anxiety and knowing what is expected is very important. Tick lists of tasks needed to set up the shop before customers arrive are useful and enable the young people to be independent and use their initiative, e.g. prioritising the tasks, which might include changing the table flowers. Regular shift rotas offer stability which can reduce anxiety.

OPENING SCHEDULE						
Week beginning	MON.	TUES	WED.	THURS	FRID	SAT.
<b>Cleaning</b>						
Fridges, freezer and chiller temperatures checked						
Kitchen counters clean and disinfected						
Counter areas clean and disinfected						
Tables are clean						
Check stocks of handwashing and cleaning materials						
Clean trays						
Ensure the milk wands on coffee machine are clean						
Check cups above coffee machine are clean						
Check cutlery in drawers is clean						
Clean cupboard doors, kitchen & counter						
Clean skirtings and doors						
<b>Food safety</b>						
Allergen information is accurate for all items for sale						
Defrost cakes if needed						
Check food stock in fridge – in date for all the menu						
Check food stock in fridge upstairs						
Check probe thermometer is working.						
Check probe recording is being recorded.						





In our shops ALDAG ensures that all our trainees are supported to learn work skills whilst developing independence, self-initiative, and social interaction skills.

### **Being work friendly for people with a learning disability:**

- clear and logical rules and expectations
- a calm environment
- a quiet area away from the main workspace available if needed
- training for managers in recognising positives and skills
- all instructions and policies communicated clearly and accurately
- non ambiguous language used at all times
- work schedules adhered to as much as practicable, potential changes communicated in advance
- fixed hours rather than variable shifts
- a clear routine and work schedule
- visual prompts and cues available
- accessible information (communication strategies)
- repetition of tasks
- tasks supported until person is confident enough to work independently
- success and achievements acknowledged immediately and not left to a cumulative summary
- trainees given 1:1 feedback
- small step targets
- work skills include trainees own generated targets

# Re-Use It shop

62a West Street, Dorking

Team meetings provide an opportunity for everyone to talk about what is going well and how we could improve what we do.

	<b>Re - Use It</b>
<b>Trainees Report for trustees</b>	
	<b>Likes</b> Working on the till Putting items on display Sorting out the sizes for clothes Talking to and greeting customers Sorting donations Finding out if donations work
	<b>Don't like</b> Working in the backroom for too long A lot of sorting Don't like throwing things away
	<b>Suggestions</b> When it is busy make sure that the person working in the front has help on the till Make sure that everything has a price on it as it is difficult when I am on the till and <u>have to</u> ask

## Self esteem - learning using small steps

### Target: identify currency and its value

### Managers comments

I have asked Jxx to work with me every few weeks to count the amount in the donation tin, to help her with coin recognition and simple addition. When we first started this, Jxx could not count to ten without help. Neither did she recognise coins other than 1p and 2p. Her confidence has grown tremendously since then. She still asks for support when counting out coins, but if a transaction on the till requires simple change, Jxx can do this unaided.

### Jxx's comments 05.06.25

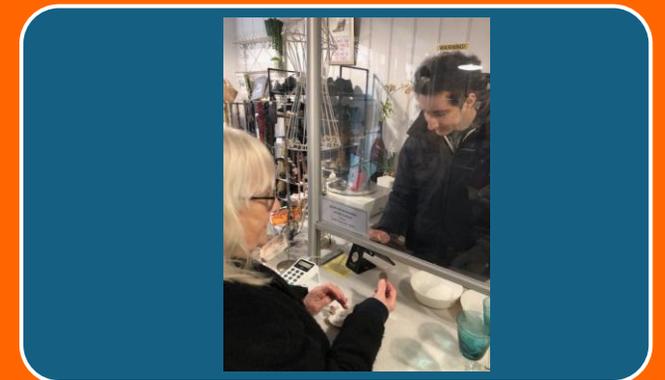
I am a lot better at doing the till and the money box. I can recognise different coins and am working on counting them. I enjoy doing this. It helps me with my money at home. I can recognise old pound coins. When we had a game to find the coins the fastest, I won nearly every time. I know you have two 50p coins to make a pound.

# Re-Use It shop

62a West Street, Dorking



**Routine sequences support achievement, building confidence and independence.**



**Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.**

# Re-Use It shop

62a West Street, Dorking

## Target: Sorting donations

Empty donations onto table (or floor) before sorting  
Identify clothes or shoes that are dirty or torn  
Place rejected clothes into appropriate rag bag (clothes, shoes, books, belts etc)  
Place good clothes on hangers and onto steaming rail  
Check china and glass for chips, put in box for disposal  
Check puzzles, games are complete and in good condition

## Manager's comment

Jxxx is getting extremely competent at sorting through the donations. He is quick to spot faults and when to “rag” an item, placing it in the appropriate container. He is not so good at recognising brands as yet, but as he does this job in tandem, it isn't an issue. He has an excellent ability to put garments neatly on a hanger.

## Trainee's comment 30.04.25

When I'm unpacking a bag I have to see if it is broken or discoloured then I have to put it in the rag bag. When we get the bric a brac we do the same thing we have to wash it and see if it has a crack and put it in the box. It's the same as the clothes.

## Target: Customer service

Welcome people when they come into the shop  
Smile at customers  
Be helpful, respond quickly when a customer asks for help  
Say 'goodbye', 'thank you'

## Manager's comments

Cxxx is always very bright, positive and welcoming to the customers coming into the shop, even when he, himself, is feeling anxious.

He is polite and tries to listen carefully to what they are saying, but if he becomes overwhelmed, is quick to call the manager for help.

After concluding any sale, he thanks them for coming and shopping. He is also quick to open the door for customers who are struggling with bags, prams or wheelchairs.

## Trainee's comments 29.05.25

I feel like I am doing the right thing when I do that.

# Cups & Co coffee shop

114 High Street, Dorking RH4 1BA

Over 2025 we have had 20 trainees, working in the coffee shop, including three students working on their Duke of Edinburgh Award, with shifts varying from half a day a week to two days a week. Everyone follows an individualised training programme focusing on three specific hospitality areas; customer service including taking orders and managing money, making hot drinks and food to order and maintaining kitchen hygiene. Personal targets may include getting to work on time, how to communicate with customers, numeracy or literacy skills. Online training in Food Safety & Hygiene has been successfully completed by 10 trainees and our apprentice achieved his Level 2 in Food & Beverage with a distinction. Following the end of his apprenticeship we employed him for one day a week whilst he applied for jobs, successfully moving onto a paid job in a busy pub focusing on food preparation. As a bridge to employment in the community we have employed one other trainee for two days a week as the apprenticeship scheme was inappropriate and a paid job supports her CV moving forward.

Staff meetings provide an opportunity for everyone to talk about what is going well and how we could improve what we do.

 <b>Trainees Report</b>  Trustee Meeting October 2025	
	<b>Likes</b> Drying up Cleaning tables Using the till Refilling the napkins Making coffees Making food
	<b>Don't like</b> Washing up Being quick in the kitchen
	<b>Suggestions</b> Add fishfinger & baked beans to children's menu Try cooking bacon and scrambled eggs in the air fryer Have a noticeboard in the main shop for photos and leaflets Have a noticeboard in the kitchen so we can write on things we are getting short of Swap over the aprons so that the green ones are on lower pegs as they are difficult to reach Collect the coffee grounds and give to people for their gardens Only fill the milk jugs half full so we don't waste so much milk Don't have more than 4 people working at the same time

## Different types of coffees

### SHORT BLACK ESPRESSO

Short black espresso is the 25-30 ml extraction of coffee beans ground for the espresso machine with pour time of 15-30 seconds. The short black espresso is the foundation part to every [espresso based](#) coffee drink. Short black is traditionally served in a preheated small ceramic cup.



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### DOPPIO (DOUBLE ESPRESSO)

Double espresso or Doppio is a strong coffee simply consisting of two short black espresso of the 2oz or 60 ml extraction of coffee filter. A double shot of espresso served in a demitasse or ceramic cup which is preheated. It is often referred to as a standard double.



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date:

### AMERICANO (LONG BLACK)

Americano or Long Black is very simply an espresso shot topped up with hot water or just a filtered coffee.

- Simply boil water around 200 ml or 6 oz or 2/3 cup and pour in a cup or mug.
- Extract 1 shot of espresso around 75 ml or 2 oz (more if you like it stronger) over the hot water.



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### CAFÉ LATTE

Café latte or "Latte" for short, is an [espresso based](#) drink with steamed milk in a 1:3 to 1:5 ratio with a little micro-foam added to the coffee.

- Extract 1 shot of espresso around 2 oz or 75 ml into a cup or tumbler.
- Add steamed milk and pour on top around 5 oz or 150 ml.
- Putting some micro-foam around 1 cm on top of the steamed milk.



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### CAPPUCCINO

Cappuccino Espresso is [similar to](#) a Café Latte and made with hot milk and steamed milk foam. Main difference is that a cappuccino is served in a cup instead of a glass tumbler with more foam and sprinkle chocolate on top of the drink.

- Extract 1 shot of espresso around 2 oz or 75 ml into a cup.
- Add steamed milk (5 oz or 150 ml).
- Add micro-foam around 2-3 cm on top of the steamed milk.
- Place sprinkle chocolate powder on top of the coffee.



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### FLAT WHITE

A flat white an espresso made [similar to](#) a latte or [cappuccino](#) but it does not have any micro-foam or chocolate on top drink, it contains only steamed milk.

- Extract 1 shot of espresso around 2 oz or 75 ml into a cup.
- Add steamed milk and with less or no micro-foam.



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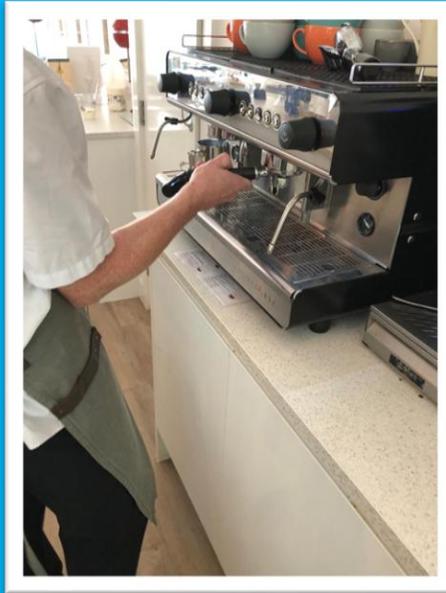
### MOCHA

Mocha (cafe mocha) is [similar to](#) a latte only hot chocolate syrup is added.

- Pour 1 shot of espresso into a cup.
- Add 1 spoon of chocolate syrup or cocoa powder into the espresso shot and stir.
- Add steamed milk (5 oz or 150 ml).
- Top off with 2-3 cm of micro foam.
- Sprinkle chocolate powder on top.



date:  
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date:



## Learning using small steps

Making an Americano

Place saucer on tray

Use the grinder to pour out 1 or 2 shots into holder

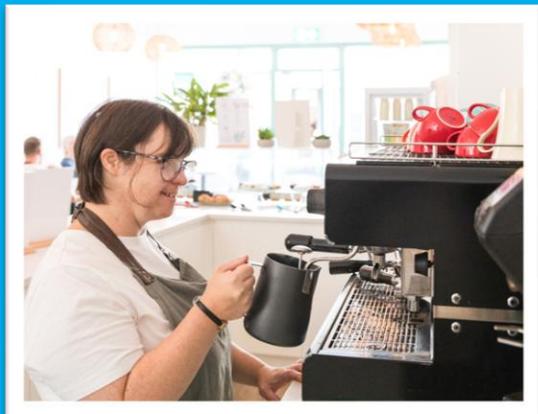
Use the coffee press

Fit holder into coffee machine

Place cup under spout and press double icon

Place cup onto saucer – no spills

Add jug of milk, sugar and teaspoon to tray



## Making cold food to order



**Structure and routine support achievement.**

## Using pictorial recipes for independence

A collage of images illustrating the use of pictorial recipes for independence. The collage includes: a finished pancake topped with strawberries and chocolate sauce; a stack of pancakes; a toaster; a strawberry; a hand slicing a strawberry; a bottle of syrup; and a slice of pancake with a strawberry.

**Allergens**

- Dairy
- Wheat, gluten



I first started working at Cups & Co in September 2022 as an intern as part of my internship at Nescot college, it was enjoyable and very supportive. My social skills were increased, my mental health improved, I learned very fast and was supported the whole time. If I made a mistake, I was gently informed and was able to correct it with no difficulties. After the year was up, I was offered an apprenticeship which I accepted, and my time there became even more enjoyable. I learned so much more and I became even more confident in myself and my capabilities, my time there has been very special and enjoyable.

It has been an experience I am never going to forget and has done a magnificent job in preparing me for the working world. Thanks to the experience and teaching that I gained through Cups & Co I now have a job as a kitchen assistant in a busy pub. I prep food, make dishes and help the head chef with whatever needs doing. It took a little bit longer than I hoped to find a job but I did not give up, and the support of friends and family gave me strength and determination to keep going. Cups & Co is a wonderful place and working there has been an absolute privilege and it has helped me in so many ways, and I will always be grateful.



# What do our customers think?

Lovely little cafe! Staff are incredibly nice. Food was lovely and well priced. We had 2 avocado on toast, which were delicious! Everything is clean and very well presented.

We definitely will return. Highly recommend!



Food: 5/5 Service: 5/5 Atmosphere: 5/5

Lovely charity Cafe. The food was great. Staff were so friendly and great service.  
Food: 5/5 Service: 5/5 Atmosphere: 5/5

Recommendation for vegetarians

Highly recommend

Vegetarian offerings

Clearly labelled vegetarian dishes

Wheelchair accessibility

Flat entrance for wheelchairs with space inside

Source: Google reviews

What a wonderful find in Dorking, so glad we didn't just head to a chain coffee store for a bit of lunch. Cups and Co is absolutely great and what they are doing for the local disability community is absolutely wonderful and I must say the staff gave exceptional customer service and way better than any chain coffee shop I have ever been to.

Keep it up everyone and hope to visit again soon whilst I am passing

Food: 5/5 Service: 5/5 Atmosphere: 5/5

Great place for breakfast

Food: 5/5 Service: 5/5 Atmosphere: 5/5

Noise level

Quiet, easy to talk

Wait time

No wait

Parking

Parking in local car park.

Kid-friendliness

Superbly dealt with.





# Gardening Team

Poors Allotments, Leatherhead



This year we took advantage of our fruit cage to grow raspberries and blackcurrants which we took over to the coffee shop to sell to customers. Our tomatoes were a great success and supplied the coffee shop over the summer with all they needed for their salads. We planted up pots with our plants that we sold at Ashted Village Day and any left over were sold at the coffee shop.

**At our weekly meetings we decide whether we need to buy seeds, bulbs or plugs for our planting scheme.**

Unfortunately, 2025 hasn't been our best year for some vegetables from the allotment, mostly due to the long spells of dry weather. It can be challenging to provide enough watering and we rely on volunteers for support. Both potatoes and onions, which have been great in the past, were less successful this year. This led to a group discussion about the effects of climate change and how we need to adapt our growing plans.



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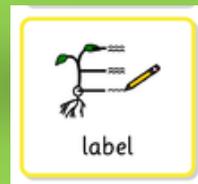
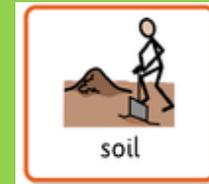


# Gardening Team

Poors Allotments, Leatherhead



The annual planning meeting is always a highlight and as usual took place over lunch at the pub. A great way to talk about what is growing well (or not) and to suggest ideas for the year's planting schemes and what is going to be the focus this time.



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# Gardening Team

Poors Allotments, Leatherhead



We have been thinking how to change what is grown.



We plan to grow more flowers for cutting including the daffodils that brighten up the allotment in spring plus more salad vegetables for use in our coffee shop.

Freezing our soft fruit as it ripens.



As soft fruit has a very short 'shelf' life we are planning on making jam with our produce that can be used in the coffee shop as well as being sold.

Reviewing our 'no dig' approach.



We were extremely busy over the winter, as we abandoned the 'no dig' policy in order to rid the beds of some persistent weeds. We're planning to resume 'no digging' in the spring.

A new plan to help with the summer watering problem.



Bury some terracotta pots (known as ollas) which will release water over time into the ground – it's a very old watering system that has recently become popular.

# Social Activities

## The Dell Centre, Ashtead

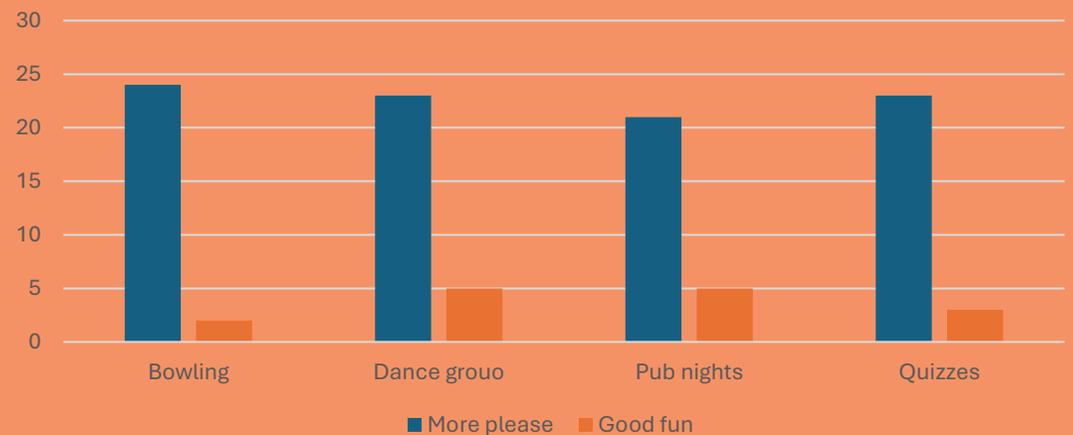
Conquerors Club continues to meet on alternate Fridays from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. There is a good regular turnout of members with new people joining throughout the year. We enjoy our annual activities such as celebrating festivals (especially if they involve food) plus a visit to the local pantomime. Regular meetings include dance activities led by outside providers, e.g. ballroom dancing in the style of Strictly Come Dancing or Funky Moves with a rather different focus! The music during our non dancing evenings is provided by our own brilliant DJ, Alex, and those who want to can practice their boogying. Craft is popular with our young ladies whilst the young men tend to choose more sports based activities such as pool or table tennis. Everyone enjoys the healthy eating projects although the results rarely make home! Our outdoor space is used whenever we can – ball games in the summer and the firepit, sparklers and toasted marshmallows in the autumn. We always enjoy a quiz and both Nicola and Claire are ace quiz setters with prizes for the winners.

**Regular surveys make sure that the members are part of the planning team.**

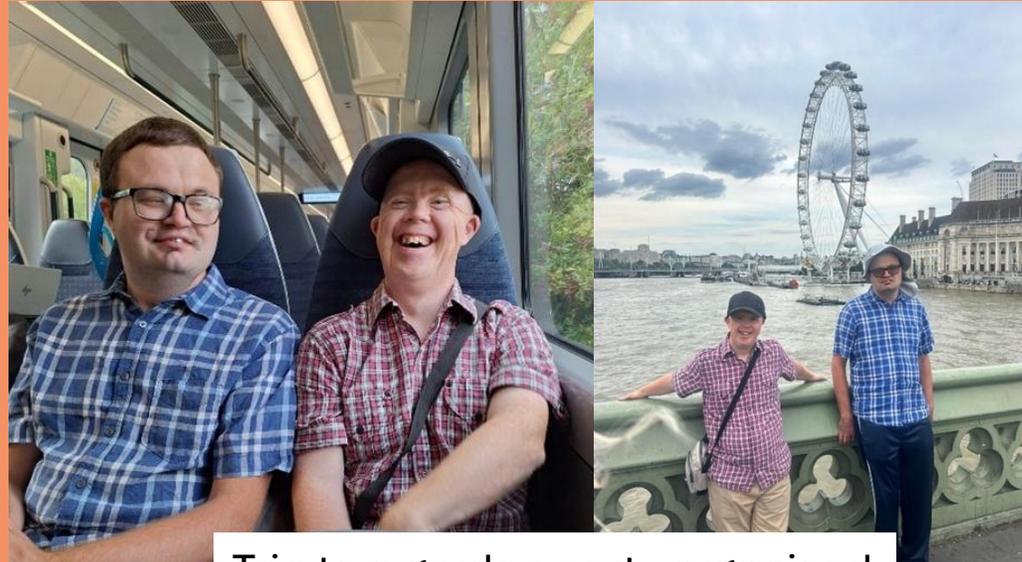
Which of our usual evening activities do you like best?



What other activities would you like more of in 2026?



# Social Activities



Having fun!



Trip to a garden party organised by Lewis Communications



A 'takeaway' evening for all the shops teams

# Connecting with the community



We are members of Circular Dorking and also network with the other businesses through social events. Both shops, Cups & Co and Re-Use It were nominated for a Mole Valley sustainability award and received highly commended at the Mole Valley **Sustainability Awards** Evening, in October. The event brought together local organisations, businesses, and community leaders to share ideas, foster collaboration, and celebrate the efforts shaping Mole Valley into a leader in sustainability.

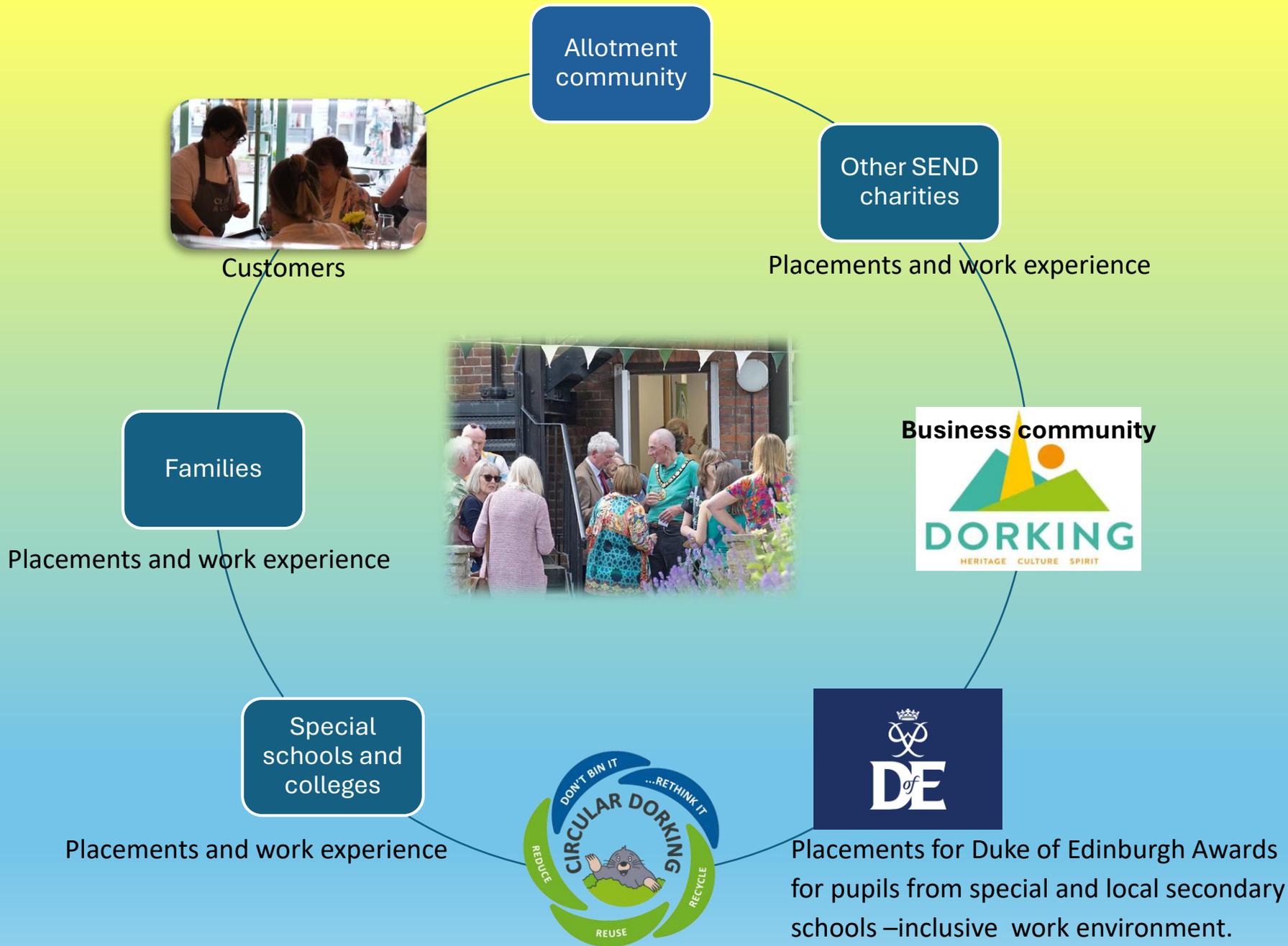


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# Connecting with the community



**Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.**



Thank you very much for offering a work experience placement to our student ....Work experience is an invaluable opportunity to extend students' learning and we are very grateful to you for making this commitment and giving your time. Our main aim for students is to give them an insight into working life and to give them the opportunity to work alongside adults, undertaking new tasks and developing their self-confidence.

As we are nearing the end of this academic term, I wanted to touch base with you all.... This programme cannot run without you and your teams. The encouragement, patience and kindness you have all showed to our interns has been incredible. They have all had a wonderful year, and have learnt so many new skills.

I just wanted to send an email about L, he is loving being a part of the Friday team and is very happy to continue working at Cups and Co, I have been very impressed with his progress and ability to work independently. I just wanted to check in to make sure you were happy with L continuing his work experience on Fridays, his parents are happy for him to continue and would be keen for him to also work in half terms and over the holidays on Fridays.

Dear Lovely Planter Waterers!  
First of all, a huge thank you for agreeing to look after a planter (or two or three in some cases). The whole town is grateful for your community spirit.

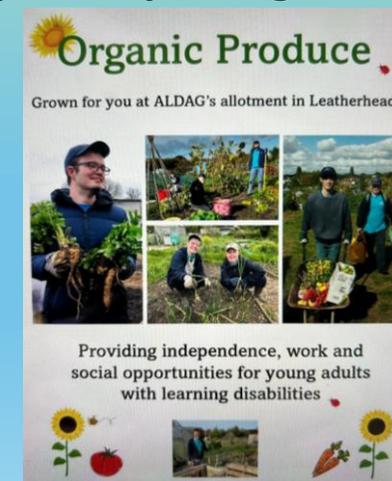
# Connecting with the community



As members of Dorking BID with over 300 businesses we take part in all the planned celebrations and town trails that form part of BID's 'Hello Dorking'.



Our fundraising plans often involve working with other groups and joining in with the wider local community.



Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.

# Central Surrey Voluntary Action's Volunteer Awards 2025

## AWARD RECIPIENTS



**Central Surrey Voluntary Action**  
Supporting the voluntary sector in Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell and Mole Valley



info@aldag.org.uk

www.aldag.org.uk

At ALDAG our mission is to promote the inclusion of people with learning disabilities into their local community life through developing social and supported employment opportunities.

### TEAM CITATION



ALDAG promotes the social inclusion of people with a learning disability. We achieve this through our two shops – Cups & Co and Re-Use It who each have a manager, and our allotment. Our teams of people with a learning disability work each day in different provisions and this is when our volunteers are so important – supporting and developing relationships enabling our young people to grow in confidence, self-esteem and skills.

Our social club is run entirely by volunteers – sometimes the only opportunity for friends to meet up. Thank you to all our volunteers for a massive 2,400 hours of support.

### LONG SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

#### ANNE WARREN

Anne is a very special person who has volunteered in our charity shop since it opened in 2019. She is a highly valued, totally reliable member of the team helping so many of our trainees to develop in confidence and social communication by creating a happy, welcoming working environment.

#### GLYNIS GRAYSON

Glynis is such an enthusiastic and supportive volunteer in our Conquerors Club, she has volunteered for over ten years – and has provided friendship and fun for all our members. Glynis will always go the extra mile and in addition has volunteered to take members home when this is needed.

#### HILARY BRADLEY

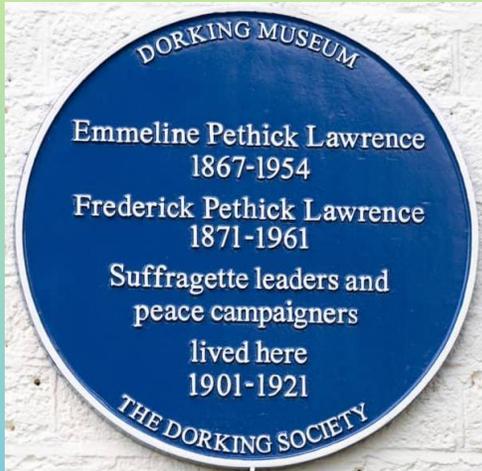
Hilly has been a brilliant volunteer in ReUse-It for six years and her enthusiasm extends to taking objects to auction and raising extra funds for the charity. Hilly has been a great support covering for absent colleagues so the shop can stay open and not let down our trainees.



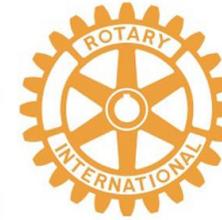
Thank you to  
all our  
volunteers  
for a massive  
2,400 hours  
of support  
during 2025



# Pixham Ladies



# Rotary Club of Dorking

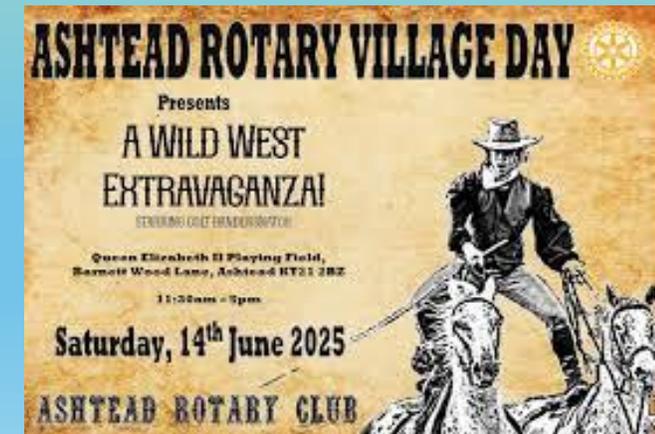


# John Ede Trust

# The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund



# MOLE VALLEY COMMUNITY LOTTERY



# Fundraising

Thank you



And a special thank you to all the individual people who donate regularly or raise funds for us – and that includes some anonymous supporters too. ALDAG relies on donations and grants to keep funding all our activities – THANK YOU from everyone in ALDAG.

