

Derwen College

Trustees' Reflections
2021

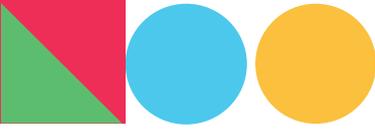


A place of possibility

Registered Charity No. 1153280
Company Registration No. 8615826.

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The trustees (governors), who are also the directors, of Derwen College Charity here report on the activities of the charity in 2021

Kathleen Kimber – Chair and Chair of Search and Governance

Helen Owens – Vice Chair

Lucy Beaumont – co-opted governor 25 March 21

Louise Burns – co-opted to Resources and Business 9 December 21

Cllr Krista Childs – resigned 11 February 21

Barbara Court – Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance

Michael Cowan – Chair of Standards and Effectiveness

Vicki Cox

Paul Crosby

Peter Dagger – co-opted to Audit and Risk Assurance 25 March 21, resigned December 21

Paul Evison

Elizabeth Leigh – co-opted governor 25 March 21

Mark Lord – co-opted committee member to governor from 25 March 21

Paul Milner – nominated to co-opted governor 15 July 21

Marianne Rolland – co-opted to Standards and Effectiveness 25 March 21

Helen Smith

Jamie Ward – Chair of Business and Resources

Amanda Williams – resigned from committee co-option 15 July 21

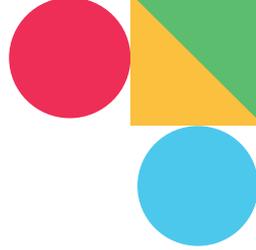
Carol Thompson – Clerk and Company Secretary

We place on record our sincere thanks to all trustees and co-opted committee members who have given generously of their time and constructively of their experience and wisdom. Resignations have, in all cases, been because of personal situations and demands which have left people feeling unable to contribute as they believe they should as a trustee. We have welcomed several new members and hope that in 2022 face-to-face meetings will be possible and Board members will resume their familiarity with the College, its students, clients and staff.

Much information about the charity and its activities and endeavours will be found on the website: www.derwen.ac.uk



Winning the Tes FE Specialist Provider of the year was one of the highlights in 2021.



The College's Mission, Strategic Priorities and Values

Updated in 2021

Mission: to enable everyone to achieve beyond what they and others believe possible.

Strategic Priorities:

Ensure our long-term sustainability

Areas of focus

- △ Rigorous financial management
- △ Constant review and update of provision
- △ Appropriate diversification
- △ Risk assurance measures
- △ Environmental commitment

Excel in every aspect of our operation

Areas of focus

- △ Our holistic approach to people
- △ Quality assurance
- △ Staff CPD and performance management
- △ Staff wellbeing
- △ Compliance monitoring
- △ Response to changing legislative environment and the SEND landscape
- △ Being a learning organisation

Make the most of our exceptional resources

Areas of focus

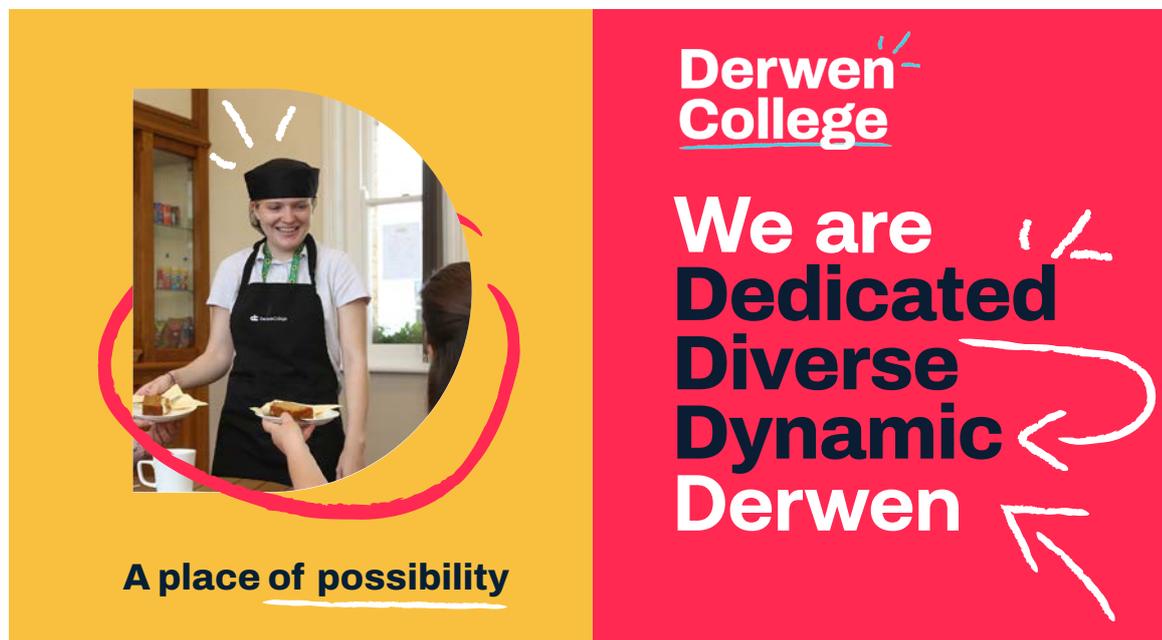
- △ Accommodation review and planning
- △ Campus management
- △ Commercial developments
- △ Satellite opportunities
- △ Safeguarding
- △ Partnerships

Be trailblazers, initiators and researchers

Areas of focus

- △ Our position / reputation within the sector
- △ Risk appetite
- △ Initiatives and innovations
- △ Marketing, publicity and communication with stakeholders
- △ Award applications
- △ Build thirst for increased understanding

The College's Values:



Derwen College

**We are
Dedicated
Diverse
Dynamic
Derwen**

A place of possibility

2021 – the year when the College gained much public recognition

Tes (Times Educational Supplement): FE Specialist Provider of the Year

Lead judge Lynette Barrett said:

During such adverse and difficult times, this College has shown how it has remained focused on student achievements and outcomes. The staff worked relentlessly to remain open and create new ways of working, which allowed some of the most vulnerable young people in society to achieve their outcomes without compromise.

Pearson National Teaching Awards for Schools and Colleges: Excellence in Special Needs Education. Gold Award – Stephen Evans

As Sports & Leisure co-ordinator, Steve recognises and promotes the physical and mental benefits of exercise, encouraging teamwork, social skills and fun. By partnering with community and national sports organisations, Steve has enabled a wide and inclusive range of opportunities for students. He is an inspirational teacher and colleague, motivated by a resolve to find what makes each individual shine.

Pearson National Teaching Awards for Schools and Colleges: Digital Innovator of the Year category. Bronze Award – Jessie Vaughan

UK Career Development Award for Careers Programme in a Specialist School/College Winner – the award recognised the College's CV Builder app

The nasen Award for 16–25 Provision, sponsored by Brain in Hand

Derwen College was recognised for going above and beyond to support residential and day students with a wide range of complex needs, disabilities, and autism during the pandemic – ensuring that each and every student was motivated, engaged and



learning, whether at home or in college. Embracing online tools, staff ensured everyone stayed connected with Sports Day, Prom, Graduation, weekly sports challenges, national skills competitions, Makaton sessions, and even a Pet Show, all going ahead virtually.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme

The College's DofE Co-ordinator, Steve Evans, was one of only 50 people in the UK to be awarded a specially commissioned commemorative Duke of Edinburgh coin, awarded to inspirational volunteers

His passion and determination to support students through each of the sections of their awards is unrivalled.

Beacon Awards – finalist in the Mental Health and Wellbeing category

And as usual, students gained recognition and participated in skills competitions:

Two students received the High Sheriff of Shropshire's Outstanding Young Citizens awards.

World Skills – held virtually this year

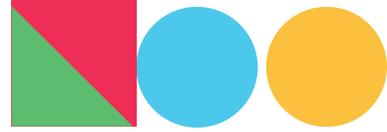
The student team from Derwen College Ludlow won Bronze in the Media Foundation Skills competition and a student on the Hospitality and Food pathway won Bronze in the Restaurant Service Foundation Skills competition.

And 1–5 March 2021 Derwen College organised and ran the virtual SkillsLive Derwen competitions for schools and colleges across the country.

and 2021 – the year the Covid 19 Pandemic continued

2020 had challenged everyone and much had been learnt that was to enable continuous, safe and meaningful activity throughout the changing regulations and conditions of 2021. The College had to adapt, as did everyone across the country. It did not close but remained open throughout. With so many clinically extremely vulnerable people to support, both residential and day, student and client, very frequent monitoring of procedures and outcomes took place. Arrangements for social distancing, bubbles, mass regular lateral flow testing, virtual meetings, trips, work experience, visitors on site, social activities on site, commercial activities, safety control measures (e.g. face covering, open windows) and back up isolation procedures were all managed and a road map through it all produced for staff. Students adapted to changes in working arrangements positively and generally calmly. Efforts were made to ensure that, when they were not on site, all had the devices needed and that home-working was fully supported. Relationships with families were strengthened.

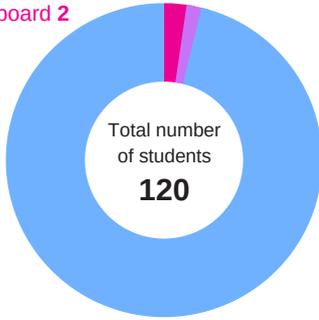
Sadly, the College experience for those who have joined us in 2020 and 2021 has not been what we would have wished for them. While huge progress has been made by students, the lack of normal social interaction has had an impact on personal development and relationships. Staff are working hard to address these and accompanying issues and mitigate the impact of the restrictions. Staff and trustees are aware of the limitations of virtual meetings. None the less, work continued and progress was achieved, but differently.



The students during 2021

Student Cohort 2021 - Summer Term

Study Programme 116
Supported Internship 2
Springboard 2



66 Males
54 Females

Aged 16-18 Aged 19+



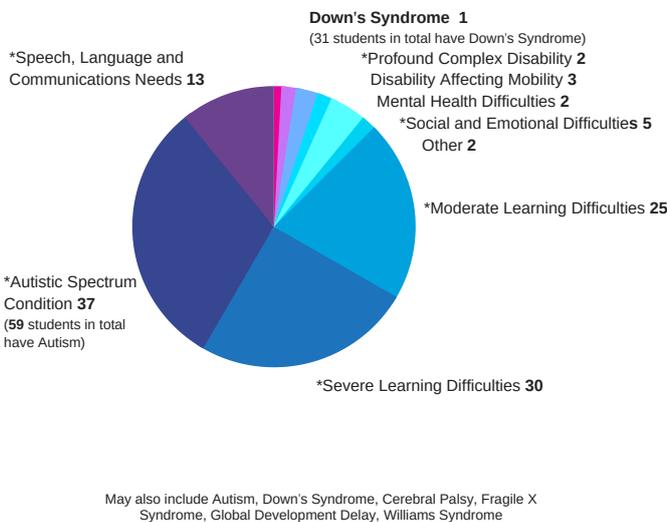
74 Residential Students



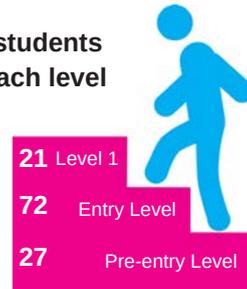
46 Day Students

- 19 Main Site
- 11 Derwen@ Walford
- 5 Derwen@ Craven Arms
- 11 Derwen@ Telford

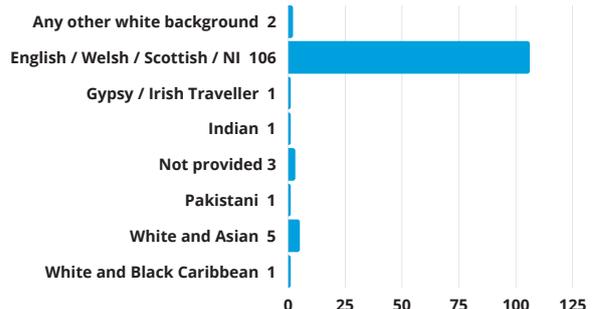
Primary Learning Difficulty / Disability



Number of students working at each level



Ethnicity



Pathways

During the admissions process students make an informed choice about which Pathways to embark on when they start college. Pathways are detailed programmes, adopting a holistic approach to student development, and constantly under review. Currently the following Pathways are available:

Gobowen Main Site: residential and day

- △ Horticulture
- △ Hospitality and Food
- △ Retail and Enterprise
- △ Performing Arts
- △ Learning for Life
- △ Nurture

Ludlow (formerly Craven Arms): day provision

- △ Business Support and Enterprise

Telford: day provision

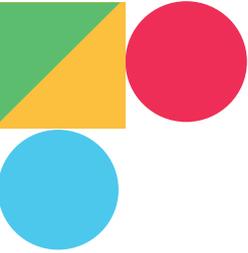
- △ Business Support
- △ Hospitality

Walford: day provision

- △ Horticulture
- △ Sport and Fitness

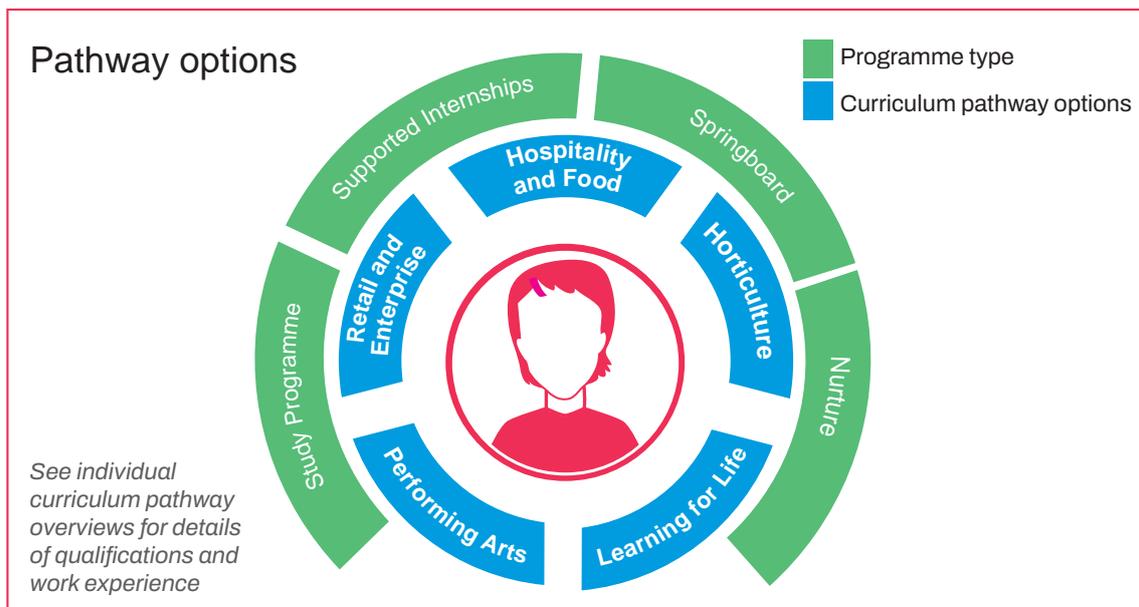
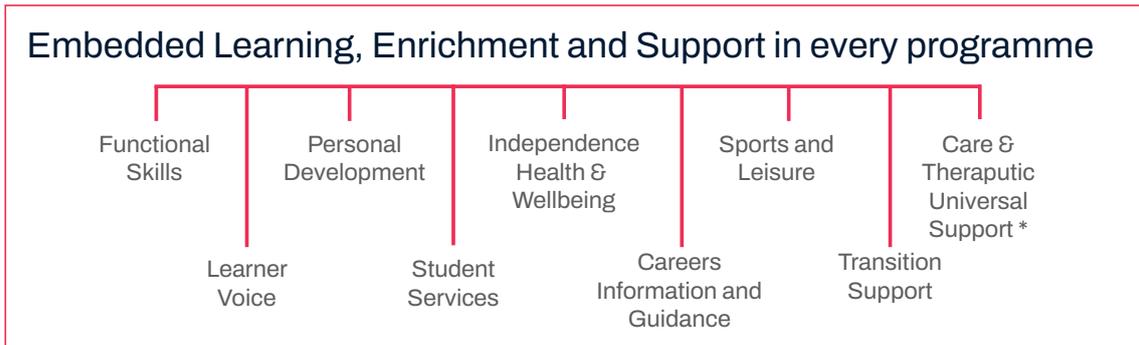


Derwen College Ludlow's new eco-building



For 2020–21 these were summarised as:

Curriculum Overview



Possible outcomes for Derwen students

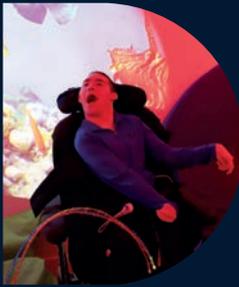
- Work-ready skills leading to paid or voluntary work
- Independence skills leading to living in Supported Living
- Purposeful choice making
- Further education / training

* Access to specialist clinical therapies is dependent upon appropriate funding

The new provision, opened in September 21, was the Nurture programme, for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Derwen College

Nurture Programme



We have been delighted to introduce our Nurture programme for students with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).

Nurture is highly personalised for each student, with a curriculum based around Independence, Cognition and Learning, Social Interaction and Wellbeing, and Communication.

It is a non-vocational programme aimed at supporting young people from school to adult life, maximising positive choice making to increase and enhance quality of life outcomes.

Therapies

Students on our Nurture Programme are fully supported by a wider team of therapists. This support may be in a 1:1 session, or embedded into group learning activities. Students also have access to the on site hydrotherapy pool.



Sensory Room

Students have access to our on-site state-of-the-art Sensory Room. The sensory room offers a fully immersive experience, containing a range of equipment which the students can control and personalise, giving them maximum independence in their environment.



Benefits of using a multi-sensory room,

- Improves students' wellbeing and willingness to learn
- Enhances students' sensory motor skills
- Focuses on a learning experience in an immersive environment
- Develops a students' social and emotional skills
- Fosters social connections

Care in Education

Students care needs are central to our approach in Nurture. Personal Care, eating and drinking or medication are things that we do with the students, supporting them to have control and independence in these areas of their lives.



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Tel: 01691 661234
 Derwen College, Gobowen, Nr Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 3JA

Outcomes

Student progress against their Education, Health Care Plans and their agreed personal targets is closely monitored. The number of students proceeding to part-time employment, voluntary work or further education has increased, although their learning difficulties and disabilities are more complex than in previous years. This reflects in part the amount of time and effort spent working with students and families to identify satisfying ongoing activity in the home area once courses are completed. It was expected that 79% of summer 21 leavers would progress to supported living, a significant increase on 2020 (24%)

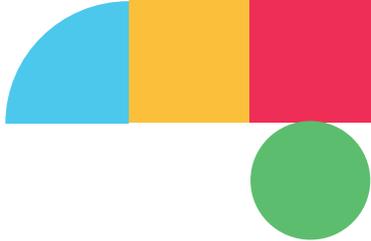
The clients during 2021

It is one of the objects of Derwen College charity that we provide accommodation for people with disabilities and learning difficulties. The trustees have worked closely with the Senior Leadership Team and have reviewed the provision we make within this objective and what that means for our clients, our residents, of whom there were 35 in 2021. Our commitment is to look at:

- △ how we provide for the **wellbeing** of the clients
- △ how we can ensure their **long-term security**
- △ what we can do to offer **meaningful activity** in their daily lives
- △ how we offer **care and support**

and, how we do this within current regulations and concepts of best practice.

In seeking to provide a well thought through, sustainable, high quality service, in surroundings where people feel supported and valued, we have sought specialist advice, particularly specialist



charity legal advice. As we finalise plans for supported living agreements and the launch of Derwen Care, we shall continue to talk with and consult our clients and their families

Excellent performance and quality

The College is characterised by a drive for continuous improvement and has strong and varied processes of reflection, evaluation and analysis.

Internally it has a well-established, thorough and transparent self-assessment system. Quality and the achievement of Improvement Plan targets are monitored throughout the year and the formal departmental evaluations of performance and outcomes are moderated at the end of the summer term by panels which include trustees. These rigorous self-assessment procedures led the College to grade its performance 2020–21 as good, with an expectation that it would be outstanding the following year!

There are numerous audit and monitoring procedures in place. In autumn 21 a Learning Review was commissioned, using an external consultant. This was part of the drive to ensure reflection on specific experiences and activities leads to the lessons learnt being shared and implemented across the College.

Inspection and public recognition

External Quality Assurers' feedback from awarding bodies has been extremely positive.

Good checking systems are in place. All documents were signed and dated. Good practice was demonstrated throughout. All learners' work sampled was of an excellent standard with learners demonstrating a good understanding of the topics for all qualifications sampled. (BTEC report)

The College holds the Matrix Standard and received the following comment following the three day re-accreditation process:

a friendly, welcoming, and professional service that goes the extra mile to provide the students, staff, and employers with the opportunity to explore their specific needs. This linked to a culture within the service amongst leaders and staff that live and breathe the values of care, learning and personal development.

The College was inspected by Ofsted, under the new Inspection Framework, from 9–11 November 2021, gaining the following grades:

△ Overall effectiveness	Good
△ The quality of education	Good
△ Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
△ Personal development	Good
△ Leadership and management	Good
△ Provision for learners with high needs	Good

The report includes:

Learners are safe and enjoy their time at the College.

Senior leaders have created a caring, calm and inclusive environment for staff and students. Staff have high standards and clear expectations of learners' behaviour. As

a result, staff support learners well. Learners' behaviour and attitudes are exceptional, and they make good progress in their vocational course and independent living skills.

Leaders plan vocational pathways well. After a period of core skill development, teachers help learners to apply their knowledge, skills and behaviours in internal and external work placements. Leaders have established industry champions to ensure that teachers train learners in the most up-to-date approaches and procedures for the sector.

During the pandemic, senior leaders invested in innovative ways of providing students access to realistic work opportunities. For example, they developed internal placement opportunities through a charity shop and food takeaway outlet. Students continued to develop their vocational skills during this time.

Learners become more independent in their personal lives. Through regular tutorials, learners participate in discussions and take more control of their decision making. They improve their ability to travel, shop, cook and manage their personal laundry. As they acquire these skills, they move successfully into more independent living arrangements.

Learners take pride in their achievements and are keen to learn more.

Learners benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities... Learners are encouraged to join the thriving student union and to represent their fellow students... Representatives improve their communication skills and negotiate improvements for the benefit of all learners.

It is three years since the Care Quality Commission inspection and re-inspection is awaited. The College submitted its Provider Information Report, as requested in September 2021.

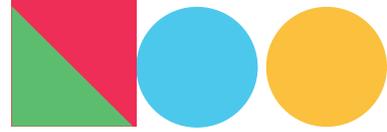
During the regular monitoring of Food Safety and Hygiene standards all residences were awarded a five star rating.

Many members of the public do not understand learning difficulties and disabilities and their impact on individuals – and on those closest to them. What may seem a small and inconsequential step to some people is, in fact, a major achievement and life changing. Staff and trustees are committed to ensuring life-enhancing progress for students and clients and feedback from families brings constant testimony to such progress.

When we look back at X's last three (and a bit) years, we can't help but smile and feel an overwhelming sense of pride. Our little boy has become a confident, independent, hard-working, self-assured young man and that is down to the relationships, experiences, education and training he has had with you. (Parent)

We felt very supported by Derwen in the transition and importantly in the liaison with our local authority. I honestly can't think of anything you could improve on. XX and I remain incredibly grateful to everyone at Derwen for your care of XX – through thick and thin – over her four years with you. (Parent)

I took X to see her consultant paediatrician for her 'Diabetic Review'... Dr B had not seen X for nearly two years, and was astonished in what he called her transformation.He explained that X had lost nearly 3 stones and what she had done was 'absolutely amazing'. X explained that she was eating better at college, was more active in the gym,



was swimming and hydro. She explained she was in the Panto.... The team felt that Derwen had been marvellous for her. (Parent)

and a social worker in Telford:

The college clearly have a trauma informed and nurturing approach to the young person, they ensured his views were put forward as part of the meeting and next steps, they spoke really fondly of him with positive regard. They have a clear plan to support with his social skills...

and from a member of the public, who saw a group out for a pizza one Saturday evening:

As a parent, as someone who works in education and just as a human being, I wanted to express my absolute awe at the amazing work your staff were doing to support your young people during their meal and also at how amazing your young people were with their manners and interaction with each other. They were all an absolute credit to your college and I haven't stopped thinking about their kind natures, compassion to each other and their engagement with the adult staff.

Development projects and College sites

2021 was characterised by a considerable amount of activity. At the main site, as The Derwen School (an independent operation not linked to this charity) closed, we were delighted to take back into our use the buildings they had used. This and our detailed review of all building usage and the approved accommodation strategy allowed for much adaptation and update of resources. Facilities for the new Nurture programme were put in place; all therapies and nursing services were grouped and moved to new premises; the programme of upgrading residences and flats was continued; facilities for Corner House (day students) and the swimming pool and sports hall were upgraded, Admissions moved in to the Art Centre. The agreed detailed development programme will continue in 2022.

The College opened its new charity shop, Vintage Advantage, to considerable press and public acclaim. This is providing work experience for our students and volunteering opportunities for our clients. The new Tip Top Take away service was developed as another work related experience, and proved a much needed service during the pandemic.

The Telford site completed a very successful first year and September saw the numbers more than double as a new intake arrived.



Inside the Vintage Advantage

The Craven Arms site, for which a much more satisfactory building had been sought, moved to the Eco Park at Ludlow. This site has much potential and good transport links.

Work on the former Derwen Estate to transform it into a Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme base achieved just that: a transformation. It is intended that this facility will be made available to other similar groups.



Students receiving instruction from Steve for their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Land which is part of the College main estate is on the market as development land and a purchaser identified.

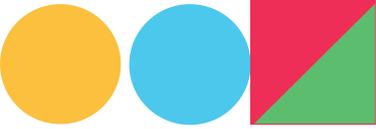
As part of the Association of Colleges and Natspec SEND Pilot Partnerships Project, the College is working with our partner college, Hereford, Ludlow and North Shropshire College, focusing initially on reciprocal work experience placements.

Exciting partnership working is being explored with Al Noor, Dubai, and with the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped, who are seeking consultancy support for their vocational training.

Leadership, management and staffing

The Senior Leadership Team is headed by Meryl Green, the Principal and CEO, who works with three Directors: Business and Finance; Human Resources and Estates; and Care, Health and Wellbeing and is supported by the Company Secretary. They have proved a committed, close working and very able team, with whom Governors work particularly closely. They ensure quality, provide real vision, drive and challenge and are supported by highly competent senior managers.

Staff numbers have increased, reflecting new and expanded provision and the increasing complexity of student' disabilities. Nationally, the labour market has become much tighter but the College has yet to experience the critical recruitment difficulties many are experiencing. Continued professional development is closely monitored and any low completion rates actively followed up. A new online training platform and CPD Handbook have been launched in the autumn. Trustees have been pleased to see, indeed are almost envious of, the continually increasing staff wellbeing facilities and programme.



Governance

The development of the Charity

Derwen College charity has a long pedigree. It was founded in 1927 by Dame Agnes Hunt and was originally associated with the Orthopaedic Hospital in Gobowen. The Derwen Estate was purchased in 1928 and the first trust deed was established on 3 August 1932. It was varied or affected by schemes of the Charity Commission dated 25 January 1968 and 18 August 1972, and then consolidated in the Deed of 29 November 1988.

An incorporated charity was established on 18 July 2013, Derwen College (Charity number 1153280, Companies House number 8615826). The former charity remains in existence as Derwen College Trust (charity number 208745) with the sole purpose of managing the permanently endowed property. It appointed as its trustees the new Derwen College charity.

The solicitors drew up a uniting directive which allows a single set of accounts to be drawn up, as the two entities have the same financial reporting period. 'Linked' financial statements for both Companies House and the Charity Commission are submitted annually for reporting purposes.

The regulatory framework of the charity

Under the agreed Articles of Association to which the College is now working there are:

at least seven and not more than twelve co-opted trustees, appointed by resolution of the Board conforming to any criteria the Board determines. The term of office of all trustees is five years, with an expectation that usually after three terms of office the Trustee shall be eligible for re-election only after a year has elapsed.

The invitation to up to five local authorities to nominate a trustee was removed from the Articles during 2021. It was no longer appropriate or used.

Governors' activity in 2021

The Board works closely with the Senior Leadership Team. A very positive working relationship has been developed, which recognises the need for governors to provide effective challenge as well as active support.

Much of the detailed analysis and scrutiny of the College's operation is managed by the committees, of which there are four. The Resources and Business Committee was formed in the summer 20 drawing together work previously undertaken by the Business and Finance, Estates, and Human Resources Committees. A new committee was formed at that time, Audit and Risk Assurance, and it has had a successful first year and undertaken work across the College's operation. The Standards and Effectiveness Committee continues its focus on care and the curriculum, and the Search and Governance Committee monitors the profile of the Board and the quality of governance.

The key decisions and areas of activity during 2021 concerned:

- △ managing the Covid19 pandemic
- △ the adoption of a new Strategic Plan
- △ the adoption of the Accommodation Strategy



- △ participation in and review of the Ofsted inspection
- △ the adoption of a commercial activity 3-year plan
- △ establishing a Sustainability and Environment Committee
- △ monitoring of curricular provision and performance
- △ monitoring of Care action plans, safeguarding and therapies
- △ approval of the College's Self-Assessment Report
- △ adoption and monitoring of the budget and accounts, key financial performance indicators
- △ monitoring of Human Resource data and staff wellbeing
- △ review of development projects, and building and land developments
- △ health and safety and regulatory control monitoring
- △ the implementation of agreed procedures and processes
- △ the review of Risk Assurance and Business Continuity Plans
- △ the recruitment, training and performance of trustees

The Ofsted Report of the 9–11 November 2021 inspection recorded:

Governors are highly experienced within the education and care sector. They use their experience well to scrutinise the information they receive from senior leaders, managers and staff. They provide strong and appropriate support to senior managers. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the recent Care Quality Commission inspection, action plan and progress made against the action plan.

Financial management

A going concern

The audited and approved annual accounts are submitted by the due dates to both the Charity Commission and Companies House. After making all appropriate enquiries, very thorough consideration of draft budgets, and cash flow up to 2023, and having taken key strategic decisions, the trustees expect the charity to have adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing financial statements. The sale of further assets will have a significant positive effect.

The financial impact of the pandemic will be shown clearly in the audited accounts. The College benefited from the Government's Job Retention grants for staff who were eligible to be furloughed, but it lost income as a result of the enforced closure of its commercial outlets. The College also furloughed some staff, and it was able to access grant monies to support the additional costs associated with minimising the risk and impact of Coronavirus infection and testing programmes.

Risk management

The trustees regularly examine the principal areas of the College's operations and consider the major risks faced in each. There are established resources and review systems which, under normal conditions, should allow any risk to be managed to an acceptable level in the College's day to day operation. College risk management has two distinct tiers: strategic and operational. The operational level is reviewed on a 'real time' basis and deals with individual departments, students, functions and duties. At the strategic level, the Senior Leadership Team reviews the



risk assessment register monthly; it is reviewed at least termly as part of the College quality improvement plan; it is scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Issues are debated and reported at Board meetings. This includes College pension arrangements, insurances (e.g. cyber security) and trustee responsibilities to ensure these remain in line with current legislation and operational factors.

The College's spacious campus is, when pandemic regulations and guidance allow, open to visitors and customers in the public areas and is imaginatively and purposefully managed to enable students to interact with staff and members of the public appropriately and safely. However, the open-plan nature of the campus and the heightened staff awareness of potential hazards necessitate regular reviews. Gates at strategic points on the campus enable a secure area for students, away from the public areas, to be closed off at 9 p.m. each evening. The central area of the College is pedestrianised. Departmental operational risk management encompasses all locations and individuals. There has been a major programme of installation of CCTV monitoring equipment and installation of intruder alarms and significant upgrading of pathways.

Site safety is reviewed through the Health and Safety Committee, which includes governor membership, is audited by specialist advisors and monitored by external agencies.

The College provides a safe and supportive environment for learners to access the internet, including social networking sites. Staff across the College give a high priority to all aspects of online safety and the safeguarding team rigorously monitor risk in this area with personalised strategies being implemented to support individuals as appropriate.

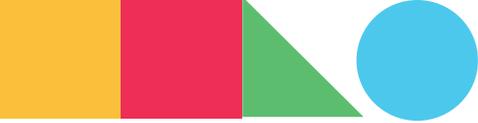
Public benefit

Derwen College transforms lives. The number of students who proceed to supported living, students' progress in managing their medication, travel and healthy eating, clients' response to the meaningful activities programme, the amazing number who gain Duke of Edinburgh's Awards each year (a total of 16 students have achieved Gold since enrolling in September 2020), the confidence shown in work placements, performances and encounters with the public, are all examples of significant development and growth. The quality of provision is inspected by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and other agencies. The Board believes that the College provides excellent value for money to the public purse and that student outcomes mean they can be less dependent on benefits throughout the rest of their lives. The high level of staff expertise is a key element of the College's management of learning, student support and innovation.

Fundraising

The usual annual fundraising events, the Walk and the Fete, have again had to be put on hold. Other initiatives have, however, generated some income. Students have undertaken sponsored activities, particularly while at home. The Easter Challenge for staff was to walk over 3,000 miles, visiting all the counties our students travel from, and in the summer fifty climbed Snowdon. Funding has been secured to remodel the waterside garden, behind the Bradbury Retail Centre (The Hub). This will be a three-year project, led by 'Leaf it to Us' students, assisted by Learning for Life. There was a virtual walk to Lapland at Christmas, and a monthly online draw, the Bonus Ball Competition, has been introduced. The Freemasons and Rotary organisations continue to support the Duke of Edinburgh's Award activities.

The trustees are committed to the necessary capital spending to maintain and enhance the College's facilities and to meet the legal and regulatory requirements. The major appeal for



£1,000,000 launched to fund the further development and upgrading of the Agnes Hunt bungalow properties, is ongoing.

Investment policy and performance

The College takes a prudent, low risk approach to investments, placing cash surpluses on deposit to attract a return, although this is not especially attractive with the current level of interest rates. This is principally because the reserves may need to be utilised during the short to medium term for cash flow and for capital projects. The investment strategy of the Derwen pension scheme has been the subject of a detailed review with very positive results.

Where next?

During recent years the College has managed a reduction in residential student numbers, a significant increase in day student numbers, the increase in the complexity of students' disabilities, the opening of three satellites, an expansion of the curricular programme, a major restructuring of provision for clients, the funding and opening of the hydrotherapy pool, massive improvements to buildings, and the sale of some assets. This has been achieved through team work, detailed planning, and without recourse to borrowing. The Senior Leadership Team and the trustees believe the charity is now in a strong position; it will embed the many developments and pursue its drive to improve continuously.

In the short term at least, Covid 19 will continue to have an impact. However national developments offer more unknowns and potential challenges. The publication of the High Needs Funding Review is awaited and will be critical. The Learning and Skills Bill going through Parliament must be closely followed. We await an all-age Autism Strategy, a Disability Strategy, a Review of Children in Care, and the outcome of consultation on the Mental Capacity Act.

We remain committed to providing an outstanding service to those with disabilities and learning difficulties

Approved by the Board of Trustees on February 2022

Kathleen Kimber, Chair