

We are Derwen!

A round-up of events, fundraising and other Derwen Charity news!

We are very grateful for all the support we have received during 2024, and continue to receive, from individuals, organisations and businesses who give so generously and support our students, clients and our fundraising events.

Derwen Charity relies on donations to enable us to provide a huge range of exciting, and life-changing, experiences for our students and clients, which help them to learn new skills and gain confidence in their abilities.



Total donations
across 2024

£252,918.48

The Vintage Advantage
Charity Shop

£134,345.34

Spinathon



For the third year in a row, our Sports Coordinator Steve Evans signed up to 24 hours on the saddle, this time alongside our Health and Social Care Trainer, Kelli Jones.

Our reception area was transformed into our spinning venue, thanks to generous donations of over 20 spin bikes from Oswestry School, Coach House Fitness and Active8 Gym.



At 10am, Derwen Dance Crew kicked the event off with a high energy performance to set everyone up for the long 24 hours ahead. Students and staff came to support Steve and Kelli by doing their stint on the bikes, and local artist DoodleDeb documented the event through 'doodles' on the reception windows.



We welcomed Oswestry Jive who came down to entertain our spinners, followed by a performance from local band The Recursives.

Sports Instructor Sian kept the energy high with regular themed spin classes throughout the 24 hours, from Country to Disney and even an ABBA themed class at 2am. Morrison's Oswestry kindly donated a huge snack box to keep us going too!

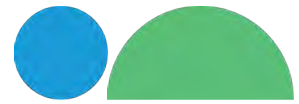
Before we knew it, the sun was coming up and supporters gathered to cheer on the spinners for the final countdown. Confetti cannons were used at 10am to celebrate the massive achievements from everyone!

Once all the donations were collected, we were thrilled to announce that the total had reached an amazing £6,600! This brings the total amount raised over 3 years to £28,000.

These funds have allowed us to fully refurbish our sports hall changing rooms, and will fund a new sports track to be built around the playing field, to encourage our students and clients to get out and exercise in the fresh air.



10km Challenge



Last year, we relaunched the annual Sponsored Walk as the Derwen 10km Challenge. For the last few years, the walk has taken place on the same day as the Fete, so we have taken it back to being its own stand-alone event.

On the day we saw over 120 people participate: a great mix of students and their families, members of the local community and staff.

Whether they were walking, jogging or running, participants completed a 10km or an optional 6km route starting at Derwen College, following country lanes and circling back through Gobowen before being welcomed back with a medal and a goodie bag.

The weather tested everyone's strength, as it went through all the seasons within just a couple of hours. A special mention must go to the volunteer marshals who sat out in the hail and the bitter winds to make sure everyone kept to the correct route.

There was an entry fee to take part and we also encouraged participants to gain sponsorship. We were thrilled to see we raised over £3,100 for the event. These funds are also going to support the cost of the track around the playing field.



Derwen Fete & Dog Show

Probably the most popular event of the year! Thankfully, the sun was shining for the annual Fete Day, bringing a wave of visitors to our Marketplace. We had a large variety of local traders and stall holders selling their products and crafts. There was music from Mark Lord and the Ladies Orthopaedic Choir, and we also enjoyed the annual duck race which was as popular as ever!

Staff from all departments of the college got involved with roles including serving on the bar and the barbecue, running the ice-cream stall, getting creative with face painting, and dressing up as characters from Paw Patrol. A great effort was made by everybody and the day was a huge success.



The following day, we welcomed over 60 dogs to our Derwen Dog Show. With threats of torrential rain, we felt very lucky to only receive a short shower towards the end. The judge, Debbie Knight from Bristles Grooming, had the hardest job choosing favourites for each round. The overall winner of the day was the very cute Albie who went home with a whole host of treats.

Across the weekend, we took an amazing £11,500 for Derwen Charity. A special thanks to the following organisations who kindly sponsored the event and helped us achieve this.

The Food Heroes, Ecclesiastical, Rees Astley, TG Builders Merchants, Clira Water Hygiene Specialists, Fire Safe Services Ltd, Medaco, MD Specialist Cleaning Services, Technical Services, CES, Jones Brothers, CC Door Systems, Duffy's Diner, Farm and Pet Place.



Christmas Fayre



The Christmas Fayre 2024 saw our Garden Centre greenhouses transformed into a bustling Christmas market with over 30 local stallholders selling a range of crafts, food and decorations ready for Christmas.



The aroma of hot dogs and mulled wine set the scene for the Porthywaen Silver Band to entertain the crowds with Christmas tunes.

The man in red paid a visit to The Orangery Restaurant to tell stories and spread Christmas cheer to visitors in our Audience with Santa sessions.

From tombolas to children's crafts, there were so many ways in which people were able to contribute to Derwen Charity whilst having some festive fun.

The event was a huge success, and we were ecstatic to count over £12,000 from the day, which also saw record takings in The Walled Garden Café, The Vintage Advantage charity shop and the Garden Centre.

We are so thankful to supporters of events like these, and a special mention goes to Ecclesiastical for their donation of £500, which covered the costs of the grotto gifts from Santa.



LEGENDS! With Mark Lord, Take 5 and Derwen College

This is the third charity concert hosted by Mark Lord, Derwen College trustee, at the Holroyd Theatre. Students from our Performing Arts pathway were invited to perform with Mark Lord and Take 5, as well as the opportunity to perform their solo acts in front of a full audience.



Thanks to sponsorship from Berry's and match funding from Lloyds Bank to cover the costs of putting on the show, we were able to take away £1,650. These funds will go to Performing Arts. This year the Performing Arts Department have been able to use the funds for some new instruments and microphones.

Duke of Edinburgh's Awards

Students were able to embark on their Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Awards this year thanks to our amazing supporters:

- Basil Houghton Trust
- Cae Glas Lodge
- Fitzalan Lodge
- Shropshire Masonic SMCA
- Oswestry Lions Club
- Oswestry Cambrian Rotary Club
- Wynn Developments
- Shropshire Youth



Alex Williams Chester Marathon



Hospitality staff member Alex Williams set herself the challenge to run a marathon before she reached her 40 birthday. In October, she took part in the Chester Marathon and smashed her target, raising a total of £665! Thanks to everyone who sponsored Alex.

We are excited to have successfully acquired places in the London Marathon from 2026 through to 2029 and we will be looking for keen participants to register their interest to run on our behalf.

If running isn't your thing, we are always looking for people who are willing to challenge themselves to raise money for Derwen Charity. If you have any ideas, please do get in touch.



Derwen Care Lake Vyrnwy Sponsored Walk



On 20 July, our clients, with the support of our Derwen Care team, challenged themselves to walking six miles at Lake Vyrnwy. After their exertions, they relaxed and enjoyed a picnic in the Sculpture Park located at the bottom of the dam.

The clients were raising money to fund an outdoor social space at their residential area at Derwen College. The plan is to create a patio area, with a pergola covering, that has a built-in barbecue, seating areas and raised garden beds. Donations came flooding in and they raised over £2,100!

Nurture Project



We have also been raising funds to help expand our Nurture provision, a programme for students with complex or profound and multiple learning disabilities. The expansion will include bespoke teaching spaces that are adaptable to meet the range of learning, medical and behavioural needs of our students. Thanks to grants and donations, this year we have been able to raise over £300,000 for this project. Our thanks go to:

- Movement for Good, Ecclesiastical
- Steve Morgan Foundation
- The Walker Trust
- Oswestry Lions
- St James's Place
- Baron Davenport



Volunteer Support



British Gas volunteers donated and installed a traversing wall for our students to use in our outdoor activity centre. The wall will help students with skills such as balance, coordination and agility, and help to improve spatial and directional awareness, which in turn helps them complete their Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Awards activities. British Gas have been a great support of DofE at Derwen College for a number of years.

HSBC volunteers joined our gardener, Don, to help with a day of sprucing up the flowerbeds around our Marketplace. With a site that spreads over 50 acres, volunteer days like this make a huge difference to the workload of our groundskeepers.

A special mention to everyone who volunteers their time to help at Derwen College. Whether it's a shift in the charity shop, marshalling at our 10km challenge or carparking at the fete, every minute given is so greatly appreciated, and we couldn't get the results we do without you.

- Kate Forster
- Gill Williams
- Molly Evans
- Sue Nicholls
- Matt Beni
- Mark Williams
- Isobel Jones