



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you



Building Stronger Communities

YMCA Neath | Impact Report 2024 - 2026

Everyone should have a fair chance to discover who they are and what they can become.

About YMCA

YMCA believes in fairness and opportunity. There are essential building blocks for a full and rewarding life: a safe home; acceptance; guidance; friendship; physical and mental health; academic support; employment skills; and access to real opportunities.

Many young people have never known these things; other people have lost one or more as they grew up, but we all need them.

All of us. At YMCA, we provide these critical foundations for a fresh, strong start for young people and a better quality of life in the community.

Our Values

We seek out.

We never stop looking for opportunities to change a life for the better.

We welcome.

We respect, value, support, and protect without fail. Everyone is included, and everyone should feel that they belong.

We inspire.

We build-and rebuild-people's confidence in their own strength, and foster conviction in everyone's potential.

We speak out.

We stand up for young people, speak out on issues that affect their lives, and help them to find confidence in their own voice.

We serve others.

We are committed to the wellbeing of the communities we serve and believe in the positive benefit of participation, locally and in the wider world.

Small Acts | Big Impact

Over the past two years, YMCA Neath has continued to evolve into a thriving community hub at the heart of Neath.

What began more than 150 years ago as a place of support, worship and opportunity continues today through the dedication of our staff, volunteers, trustees, partners and supporters.

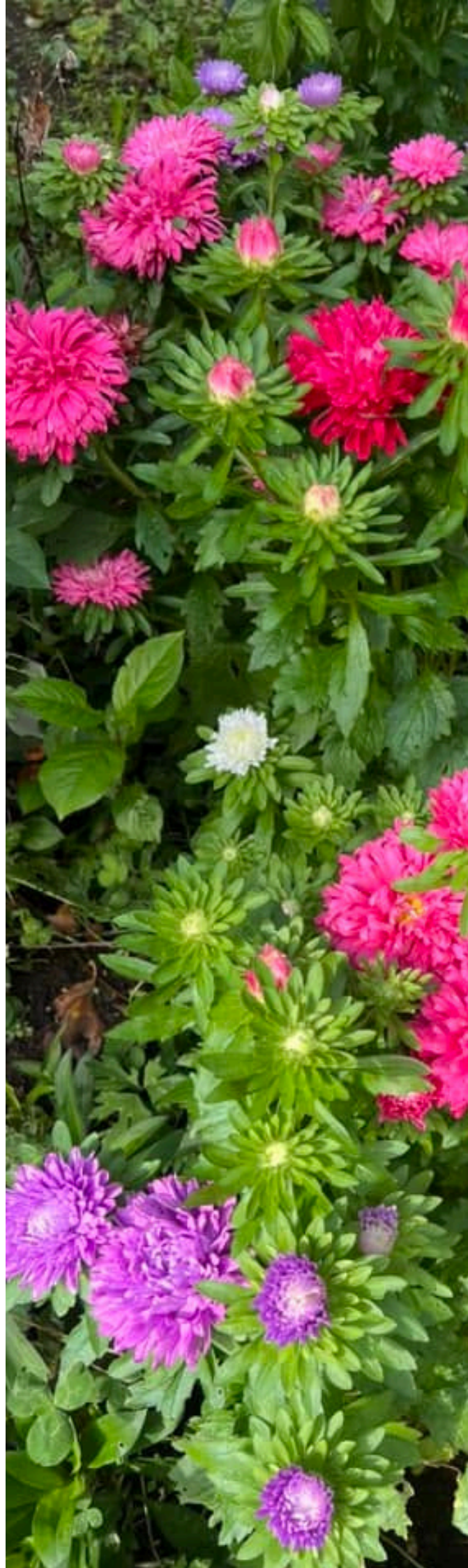
Together, we have responded to the changing needs of our community, creating welcoming spaces where people of all ages can access practical support, improve their health and wellbeing, build friendships and discover new opportunities.

During this period we have expanded services, secured significant investment, celebrated our 150th anniversary and launched a wide range of projects that have improved lives across our community. From supporting families through the cost-of-living crisis, to improving access to physical activity, tackling loneliness, protecting nature and preserving local heritage, every achievement has been driven by one simple belief:

**Communities are stronger
when people come together.**

This publication celebrates everything that has been achieved between 2024 and 2026. It recognises not only the projects we have delivered, but also the thousands of moments of kindness that happen every day within our walls.

As we reflect on everything we have achieved, we also look ahead with confidence. While challenges remain, so too does our determination to continue serving our community, protecting our heritage and ensuring YMCA Neath remains a welcoming place for generations to come.



Who We Are

For over 150 years, YMCA Neath has been supporting people across our Neath Port Talbot, providing opportunities for individuals to improve their health, build friendships, develop new skills and access practical support when they need it most.

Today, YMCA Neath is far more than a building. It is a hub where people of all ages come together every day to exercise, volunteer, learn, socialise and support one another.

Our centre is home to a wide range of activities and services including community fitness programmes, martial arts, youth activities, friendship groups, gardening projects, food support, volunteering opportunities and wellbeing initiatives.

Alongside these activities, we work closely with partner organisations to ensure local people can access advice, support and specialist services under one roof.

As an independent local charity, we rely on the generosity of funders, donors, volunteers and our community to continue delivering these vital services.

Every pound invested into YMCA Neath is reinvested back into improving opportunities for local people.

Our vision remains simple:

To create a welcoming, inclusive community where everyone feels they belong, everyone is treated with dignity and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



Our Impact



Behind every number is a person, a family or a community brought together.

Every statistic in this report represents real lives, real stories and the collective efforts of our staff, volunteers, trustees, partners and supporters.



Supporting Our Community

At YMCA Neath, community is at the heart of everything we do.

Every day, people walk through our doors for different reasons. Some come to exercise, others to volunteer, meet friends, learn new skills or simply enjoy a cup of tea and conversation.

For many, the YMCA provides something even more important – practical support during difficult times.

Over the past two years, we have continued to respond to the changing needs of our community. As the cost of living has affected more households, demand for our support services has continued to grow.

Whether someone needs emergency food, baby essentials, affordable household items or access to mobile data, our aim is to ensure nobody feels they have to face life's challenges alone.

Our community support services have become much more than places to receive help. They have become spaces where people build confidence, make connections and know they will always receive a warm welcome.



Helping people through every stage of life

Our **Food Bank** provides emergency food parcels for individuals and families experiencing hardship. Working alongside local partners and generous donors, we ensure people can access support quickly and with dignity. Every visit is also an opportunity to offer advice, signposting and a listening ear, helping people access longer-term support when they need it most.

Our **Community Pantry** helps local people stretch household budgets by providing food and reducing waste. By redistributing surplus food that would otherwise go to landfill, the Pantry not only supports families facing rising living costs but also contributes to a more sustainable community.



Every child deserves the best possible start in life. Our **Baby Bank** provides essential items including nappies, baby clothing and toiletries to families with young children, helping reduce financial pressure during some of life's most challenging moments.

Digital access is now an essential part of everyday life. Through the **National Databank**, YMCA Neath provides free SIM cards and mobile data, helping people stay connected with family and friends, search for employment, access healthcare, manage benefits and take part in education.



Our volunteer-led **Charity Shop** offers quality donated clothing, household goods, books and toys at affordable prices, ensuring everyone can access everyday essentials regardless of their financial circumstances.

Charity Shop Sales: Over £14,000 raised



Health & Wellbeing

Building healthier, happier communities.

Health is about far more than just exercise. It is about confidence, connection, independence and feeling good both physically and mentally.

Over the past two years, YMCA Neath has continued to expand opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to improve their health and wellbeing. Whether someone is taking their first steps towards becoming more active, recovering from illness, managing long-term health conditions or simply looking for friendship, we strive to create a welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable.

Through affordable facilities, inclusive activities and specialist wellbeing projects, we are helping people improve not only their physical health, but also their confidence, mental wellbeing and quality of life.



Funding Spotlight
£40,000 | Clothworkers' Foundation
This transformational investment enabled YMCA Neath to refurbish its community gym with new equipment, improving accessibility and creating a welcoming space where more people can enjoy the benefits of physical activity.

A gym for everyone

Unlike many commercial gyms, our community gym has always been about people rather than profit.

We believe everyone should have access to affordable opportunities to improve their health, regardless of age, ability or income. Over the past two years, continued investment in our facilities has enabled more people than ever before to enjoy a welcoming and inclusive space to exercise.

Whether members are training for sporting success, returning after injury or simply looking to become healthier, our gym provides a supportive environment where everyone is encouraged to progress at their own pace.

"I came for an exercise class but stayed because of the people. I've made wonderful friends and always leave with a smile."



Active Lives for All

One of our biggest achievements over the last two years has been the delivery of our Active Lives for All project.

Thanks to funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we introduced a programme of inclusive fitness activities designed to remove barriers to participation and improve health across our community.

The project included:

- Chair Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Feel Good Fitness
- Stronger Steadier sessions
- Free Gym Access
- Creative wellbeing workshops
- Improvements to our accessible facilities

By providing free and accessible activities, the project enabled people who may never have considered attending a fitness class to experience the benefits of staying active while meeting new people in a supportive environment.

‘What helps most with your wellbeing?’

"Keeping my mind relaxed, my hands busy and feeling safe and happy."

Funding Spotlight

£30,000 | UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Active Lives for All project was made possible through a £30,000 grant from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This investment enabled YMCA Neath to deliver a wide range of accessible health and wellbeing activities, helping people become more active, reduce social isolation and improve both their physical and mental wellbeing.

Movement for every generation

One of the strengths of YMCA Neath is the diversity of activities available under one roof.

From young children taking their first gymnastics class to older adults attending gentle exercise sessions, our weekly programme provides opportunities for every stage of life.

Our classes continue to encourage people to:

- Improve physical fitness
- Increase confidence
- Reduce social isolation
- Improve balance and mobility
- Support positive mental wellbeing
- Build lasting friendships

More than exercise

Health and wellbeing is not only measured by physical fitness. Many participants tell us that attending YMCA Neath has helped improve their confidence, reduce anxiety and has helped create meaningful friendships.

A simple conversation over tea after a class can be just as valuable as the activity itself.

By creating welcoming spaces where people feel accepted and supported, we continue to strengthen both individual wellbeing and community resilience.

5 Volunteer Led Martial Arts Clubs





Friendship & Connection

Loneliness affects people of every age.

At YMCA Neath, creating opportunities for people to connect has become one of our greatest strengths.

Over the past two years, our friendship groups have continued to flourish, bringing together people from different backgrounds who may otherwise spend much of their week alone.

Whether enjoying a craft activity, taking part in a quiz, sharing lunch or simply chatting over a cup of tea, these groups have become lifelines for many members of our community.

Tackling Loneliness Together

Our **Friendship Circle** provides a welcoming weekly space where older adults can socialise, enjoy activities and build meaningful friendships. Sessions include guest speakers, entertainment, arts and crafts, games, celebrations and shared meals, all designed to reduce isolation and promote positive wellbeing. Many members tell us that attending Friendship Circle has become the highlight of their week.

Morning Mingle offers an informal opportunity for local residents to drop in, enjoy refreshments, meet new people and take part in activities. The relaxed atmosphere makes it easy for people to build confidence and become part of the wider YMCA community.

Recognising the importance of supporting men's wellbeing, **Mugs & Mates** provides a friendly space where men can come together to talk, share experiences and enjoy activities. What started as a simple coffee morning has grown into a thriving group that encourages friendship, supports positive mental health and helps tackle loneliness.

The greatest impact of our community groups cannot always be measured by attendance figures.

It can be seen in the friendships formed, the confidence regained and the smiles shared each week.

For many people, YMCA Neath has become somewhere they know they will always receive a warm welcome.



Tackling Loneliness and Isolation Top Priority for 78%*

*200 people asked



Greener Communities

Creating spaces where people and nature thrive together.

Over the past two years, YMCA Neath has transformed its outdoor spaces into a vibrant place where nature, education and community come together.

What was once an underused area has become a thriving community garden, providing opportunities for people of all ages to learn new skills, improve their wellbeing and reconnect with the natural environment.

Every improvement has been guided by a simple belief: when we care for nature, we also care for people.

Through volunteering, environmental projects and partnerships, we have created habitats for wildlife, improved biodiversity and inspired hundreds of visitors to discover how even small actions can make a positive difference.

Gardd Y Pobl

Our community garden has become one of YMCA Neath's proudest achievements.

Created and maintained by volunteers, the garden provides a welcoming green space where people can relax, learn new skills and connect with nature.

Throughout the year volunteers grow fruit, vegetables and flowers, helping create a space that benefits both wildlife and the wider community.

The garden is now used for gardening sessions, wellbeing activities, environmental education and community events, giving people opportunities to spend time outdoors while improving both physical and mental wellbeing.

Supporting Local Wildlife

Protecting nature has become an important part of our work.

Through funding and community partnerships we have introduced a range of biodiversity improvements across the YMCA site, including:

- Swift nesting boxes
- Pollinator-friendly planting
- Wildlife habitats
- Wildflower areas
- Nature-themed mural
- Wildlife observation equipment
- Educational interpretation boards

These features encourage local wildlife while helping visitors understand the importance of protecting our natural environment.



Did you know?

Wales is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries, with 18% of Welsh species – around one in six – at risk of extinction. Community green spaces play an important role in helping wildlife recover by providing food, shelter and connected habitats.



**Opportunities
to connect
with
nature**

Important to
67%*
*200 people asked



Looking after the environment isn't only about wildlife. It's also about reducing waste. Our Lending Shed encourages people to borrow rather than buy, helping save money while reducing unnecessary consumption. From gardening tools to DIY equipment, the project promotes sharing, sustainability and stronger community connections. It has become another example of how small projects can make a big environmental difference.

The success of our environmental work would not have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers and partner organisations. Together we have created spaces that improve biodiversity, promote wellbeing and encourage people to reconnect with nature. Every flower planted, every bug hotel built and every wildlife habitat created helps make YMCA Neath a greener place for both people and wildlife.

*"Much more of this society
needs. Excellent initiative!"*



Family and Youth

At YMCA Neath, we believe every young person deserves the opportunity to feel confident, supported and inspired to reach their full potential.

Over the past two years, we have continued to provide safe, welcoming spaces where children and young people can learn new skills, stay active, make friends and develop confidence in themselves.

From their very first gymnastics lesson to achieving a new martial arts grading or simply enjoying time with friends at one of our youth activities, every opportunity helps young people grow, build resilience and create lasting memories.

Our activities are designed to be inclusive, encouraging every child to participate, celebrate their achievements and discover what they are capable of.

Gymnastics

At YMCA Neath, we believe every child should have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of gymnastics regardless of financial circumstances. By keeping our session fees low, we help ensure children can access regular physical activity, build confidence and develop new skills in a welcoming and supportive environment.

Our Gymnastics Club welcomes around 40 young gymnasts every week, with children able to join from just 3 years old. Whether they are taking their very first jump, learning a cartwheel or mastering more advanced skills, every child is encouraged to progress at their own pace in a safe, supportive and fun environment.

Gymnastics provides children with so much more than physical exercise. Each session helps develop strength, balance, flexibility and coordination while encouraging perseverance, determination and self-belief. As children challenge themselves to learn new skills, they also gain confidence that extends far beyond the gymnastics floor.

At YMCA Neath, we celebrate every achievement. Success isn't measured only by medals or competitions - it can be as simple as trying something new, overcoming a fear or encouraging a teammate. Every milestone, no matter how small, is recognised and celebrated because we know these moments help shape resilient and confident young people.

Our sessions are led by passionate coaches who create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where every child feels valued and supported. Parents often tell us how much their children have grown in confidence since joining the club, developing friendships, independence and a positive attitude towards physical activity.

Thanks to the continued commitment of our coaches and the support of our community, our Gymnastics Club continues to inspire young people to stay active, believe in themselves and enjoy learning new skills.



Why Gymnastics Matters

- Builds confidence and self-esteem
- Develops balance, strength and coordination
- Encourages perseverance and resilience
- Creates lasting friendships
- Promotes healthy, active lifestyles from an early age
- Gives every child the opportunity to succeed





More Than Sport

- Develop confidence and self-belief
- Show respect for others
- Improve physical and mental wellbeing
- Work towards personal goals
- Learn resilience and self-discipline
- Become part of a welcoming community



Martial Arts

Martial arts have been at the heart of YMCA Neath for generations and continue to provide opportunities for people of all ages to challenge themselves, build confidence and become part of a supportive community.

Our centre is proud to be home to a number of thriving volunteer-led clubs, including Ninjutsu, Judo, Lau Gar Kung Fu, Karate and Ju-Jitsu, welcoming both beginners and experienced practitioners.

While martial arts develop strength, fitness and coordination, their greatest impact often comes away from the training mat. Every session teaches important values such as respect, self-discipline, patience and perseverance - qualities that benefit participants throughout their lives.

Our clubs provide a positive environment where people encourage one another, celebrate success together and work towards personal goals.

Whether someone is attending their very first lesson or working towards a black belt, everyone is supported to progress at their own pace.

Over the past two years, our martial arts clubs have celebrated numerous achievements, with members representing their clubs and Wales at regional, national and international competitions. Behind every medal, grading and competition result is countless hours of dedication from participants, coaches and volunteers who freely give their time to help others succeed.

YMCA Neath is incredibly proud of the volunteers who continue to keep these clubs thriving. Their passion, experience and commitment ensure that martial arts remain an important part of our community, helping people build confidence, improve their wellbeing and develop skills that last a lifetime.

Youth Activities

Young people need more than activities - they need somewhere they feel welcome. Throughout the year, YMCA Neath has provided opportunities for young people to meet friends, learn new skills and enjoy new experiences through a variety of youth activities and community events.

Whether taking part in Clwb Retro, holiday activities or special events, our aim is to create safe spaces where every young person feels included, respected and valued.

These sessions encourage creativity, teamwork and positive relationships while helping reduce social isolation and strengthen connections within the community.

Supporting Families

Our work with young people extends beyond organised activities. Through initiatives such as our After School Club, family events and practical support services, we help ensure children and families have access to healthy food, welcoming spaces and opportunities to spend quality time together. By supporting the whole family, we create stronger foundations for children to grow, learn and thrive.

Every Achievement Matters

Success looks different for every young person. For some, it is earning a new belt or medal. For others, it is making a new friend, speaking up in a group or simply having the confidence to try something new.

At YMCA Neath, we celebrate every achievement, no matter how big or small, because we know these moments help shape happier, healthier and more resilient young people.





Why Volunteer?

- Gain valuable skills and experience
- Meet new people and build lasting friendships
- Give something back to their community
- Support projects that make a real difference
- Collect Tempo Time Credits to spend on attractions, activities and events
- Build confidence and improve wellbeing

Volunteers

The heart of YMCA Neath: Behind every successful project is a volunteer who has given their time to help others.

Whether welcoming visitors at reception, leading community groups, coaching young people, maintaining our community garden, sorting donations, supporting fundraising events or sharing specialist skills, our volunteers play an essential role in everything we do.

Their dedication, kindness and generosity allow us to provide services that simply wouldn't be possible otherwise. Over the past two years, our volunteers have contributed thousands of hours supporting local people, helping create a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and included.

We are proud to work in partnership with Tempo Time Credits, recognising the incredible contribution our volunteers make. Through the scheme, volunteers earn Time Credits for the hours they give, which can then be exchanged for a wide range of activities, attractions, leisure opportunities and events across the UK. It's our way of saying thank you while encouraging volunteers to enjoy new experiences and continue giving back to their community.

Volunteering at YMCA Neath isn't just about helping others - it's also an opportunity to gain confidence, develop new skills, make lasting friendships and become part of something bigger.

Every volunteer brings something unique, and together they help make YMCA Neath the welcoming community hub it is today.

Partnerships

Strong partnerships enable us to reach more people, develop new projects and respond to the changing needs of our community.

Over the past two years we have worked alongside an incredible range of organisations, charities, businesses and public services, each bringing their own expertise, knowledge and resources.

Together we have delivered wellbeing activities, environmental projects, family support, youth work, volunteering opportunities and practical advice for local residents.

Our partnerships continue to strengthen YMCA Neath as a welcoming community hub where people can access multiple services under one roof.

Investing in Communities

Every grant awarded to YMCA Neath represents confidence in our work and belief in the positive difference we make.

Over the past two years we have secured significant funding that has enabled us to:

- Refurbish our community gym
- Improve biodiversity
- Support people facing food poverty
- Expand family support
- Deliver wellbeing activities
- Celebrate 150 years of YMCA Neath
- Improve our building

Without the support of our funders, many of these projects simply would not have been possible.

We remain incredibly grateful for every organisation and individual who has chosen to invest in our community.





Working Together

Every day, YMCA Neath provides early help that prevents small problems from becoming bigger crises. By offering practical support, opportunities to connect and access to trusted local services, we help people maintain their independence, improve their wellbeing and access help before they reach crisis point.

Working alongside organisations including Local Area Coordinators, Barnardo's, Calan DVS, Plattform, Neath Port Talbot Council, Neighbourly and many other community partners, we help create joined-up support that benefits individuals, families and public services alike.

By providing accessible, community-based support, we help reduce the need for more intensive interventions later, enabling people to remain healthier, more connected and more independent.

No single organisation can meet every need within a community. By working in partnership, we ensure local people can access the right support, at the right time, from the right organisation.



Celebrating 150 Years

For 150 years, YMCA Neath has stood at the heart of the local community.

Generations of people have walked through our doors seeking friendship, opportunity, support and a place to belong.

Since our foundation in 1875, the world around us has changed dramatically, yet our purpose has remained remarkably consistent - to strengthen communities by supporting people.

Throughout 2025, we proudly celebrated this incredible milestone, reflecting on our rich history while looking ahead to the future.

Thanks to funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we were able to honour our heritage through a programme of events and projects that celebrated our past while ensuring our story continues to inspire future generations.

A Legacy Preserved

Over the course of our anniversary year we:

- Installed four permanent heritage interpretation panels
- Unveiled a commemorative plaque and rededication stone
- Created a photographic record of our history
- Held a children's art competition
- Hosted local history talks
- Created a time capsule for future generations.
- Celebrated with members, volunteers and the wider community

These projects have helped preserve an important part of Neath's history while strengthening the connection between YMCA Neath and the community it has served for more than a century.

YMCA Neath would not be here today without the dedication of countless staff, volunteers, trustees and supporters.

Throughout its history, the organisation has faced many challenges, including financial pressures and periods of uncertainty.

Thanks to the commitment of those who believed in the YMCA's mission, the organisation has continued to evolve and remain a vital part of community life in Neath.

Their hard work has ensured that YMCA Neath remains open, active and ready to support future generations.

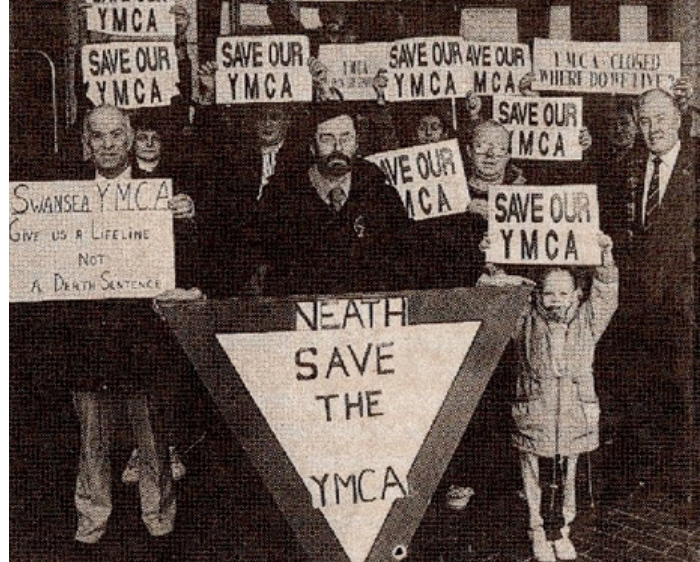
Looking Forward

While our history is something to celebrate, our focus remains firmly on the future.

As community needs continue to evolve, so too will YMCA Neath.

Our commitment remains unchanged:

- To provide opportunities
- To support those in need
- To strengthen communities
- To ensure YMCA Neath continues serving future generations for another 150 years



The YMCA we enjoy today exists because of the dedication and care of those who came before us. Generations of volunteers, trustees, staff and supporters worked tirelessly to maintain this building, ensuring it remained a safe, welcoming place for future generations. Their commitment has allowed thousands of people to benefit from the YMCA throughout its long history.

Today, that responsibility passes to us. It is our turn to protect and invest in YMCA Neath so that it can continue serving our community for the next 150 years. Every improvement we make, every repair we complete and every project we undertake is about safeguarding not only a historic building, but the memories it holds and the countless memories still to be made.



YMCA

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