



Tackling social exclusion on a deprived housing estate by working with schools to bring to light a little understood Neolithic and Iron Age heritage site earned Cardiff University the award for Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community.

The Caerau and Ely Rediscovering (CAER) Heritage Project is a collaborative partnership between Cardiff University, community development charity Action in Caerau and Ely, local schools, community groups and major heritage organisations in Wales.

The project focuses on Caerau Hillfort, a nationally important heritage site located between two Cardiff housing estates that are among the most socially and economically challenged wards in Wales.

The scheme puts local people at the heart of archaeological and historical research through excavations, artefact analyses, exhibitions and films. CAER has built partnerships with seven local schools involving 1,538 pupils in co-produced activities, and engaged with almost 15,000 visitors at its events.

Twelve academic staff from the university have provided research expertise and educational support, while 100 students have also been involved, and some have even produced dissertations that were directly informed by research on the project.

“Historical research and archaeology involving academics, volunteers and local people have become a means of addressing contemporary issues of social exclusion and educational needs, promoting skills development and challenging negative perceptions of these communities,” the judges said.

“Substantial grants have also been secured to transform the historic site into a sustainable future resource for this community, with the potential evidenced by the many thousands of visits the site has received.”