

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

**VOLUNTARY ACTION
MERTHYR TYDFIL
GWEITHREDU GWIRFODDOL
MERTHYR TUDFUL**



Annual Report

2016-17

Mission Statement

To increase the **extent, quality and impact** of **voluntary action** in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil by **supporting, representing and assisting** Third Sector organisations and volunteering.

Effecting change by enhancing well-being of individuals, organisations and communities.

Vision

- To be the **centre of excellence in Merthyr Tydfil** for the provision of services to organisations and individuals involved with the Third Sector and volunteering.
- To **create a healthy community** by helping to develop organisations to meet their needs, maximizing volunteering opportunities and sharing our mission with all stakeholders.



**VOLUNTARY ACTION
MERTHYR TYDFIL
GWEITHREDU GWIRFODDOL
MERTHYR TUDFUL**

Voluntary Action Centre
89-90 Pontmorlais,
High Street,
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8UH

Tel: 01685 353900
Fax: 01685 353909
enquiries@vamt.net



@VAMTtweets
@VAMTvolunteer
@merthyrMAGNET
@onevoicemt
@c1stsouth



www.vamt.net



Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector **Cymru**
Third Sector
Support **Wales**



Gwirfoddoli Cymru
Volunteering Wales



ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI
LOTTERY FUNDED



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Foreword by the Chair and Chief Officer

Ian Davy
Chief Officer



Brian Lewis
Chair

We are pleased to introduce the twentieth Annual Report of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.

It seems a long time since two members of staff opened the door of a top floor office in Oldway House to mark the first day of operations of VAMT in April 1997. The Executive Committee under the chairmanship of John Meredith MBE had been meeting since November 1996, following VAMT's Inaugural meeting held earlier that month.

Over the past 20 years, trustees and staff have come and gone. One or two have left and then returned. A few are still here and many others have contributed numerous years of service. Projects have come and gone with the funding cycle but the core aims of VAMT have remained much the same – to promote and develop volunteering and third sector organisations in this County Borough.

Despite a seventh consecutive year of core funding being reduced, VAMT continues to achieve results as this report demonstrates. In addition to our core work our partners have continued to fund the Community Coordinators and the Community Capacity Grant Scheme from the Welsh Government Intermediate Care Fund. These projects have evaluated very well, as has South Cluster Communities First and MAGNET. This annual report,

in a change from the usual format, shows some highlights from these projects as both Communities First and MAGNET come to an end in 2018.

VAMT continues to collaborate with our neighbour, Interlink RCT, and work together on regional activity such as the new Public Service Board, the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act, safeguarding and volunteer training.

As Chair and Chief Officer we are committed to ensuring that we remain an effective organisation with the aim of facilitating a strong and influential third sector and improving volunteering in Merthyr Tydfil. We can only achieve this with a committed team of trustees, staff and volunteers. We thank them for their support and hard work.

Finally, we must take the opportunity to thank the main funders of VAMT for their continued support: namely the Welsh Government, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cwm Taf University Health Board and the Big Lottery Fund. Also, thanks to Wales Council for Voluntary Action for their continued support.

Facts and Figures

Active and involved citizens

Number of volunteers placed (all ages) **162**

Number of enquiries on good practice in managing volunteers **38**

Membership

Total membership **269**



Global Village 2016

Effective engagement in policy

Number of strategic planning/working groups involving third sector membership **64**

Number of third sector forums or networks supported **4**



Global Village 2016

A thriving and sustainable third sector

Number of website visitor sessions **41,521**

Total number of enquiries received and responded to **3,425**

Number of magazines/newsletters published **7**

Number of recipients for each issue **525**

Number of trustee enquiries received and responded to **42**

Number of trustee events organised **2**

Number of participants **22**

Number of funding advice enquiries received and responded to **49**

Number of funding events organised **1**

Number of participants **42**

Amount of funding obtained by groups as notified during the reporting period

£147,431

Number of training courses provided **28**

Number of participants **258**

Number of new organisations/social enterprises or new services developed **12**

Amount of funding provided through grants/loan schemes **£359,450**

Some Highlights

Active and Involved Citizens

- A **'Celebrating Volunteers'** event was held at the Red House in Merthyr Tydfil. Specially designed certificates were endorsed by Dawn Bowden AM and Gerald Jones MP.
- At the VAMT AGM Dawn Bowden presented Merthyr Mendicants with the **Nicola Park Award** for their "Outstanding Contribution to Volunteering in Merthyr Tydfil".



Merthyr Mendicants

- Successful **outreach service established at the Job Centre** and has achieved very good results.
- Supported Welsh Government staff based in Merthyr Tydfil to undertake **employee volunteering projects**.
- A briefing session was held for organisations that engage with volunteers on the **Disclosure and Barring Service** (DBS). The session was attended by 45 participants.
- Cwm Taf **Managing Volunteers Forum** established with 12 organisations attending the first meeting.



A thriving and sustainable third sector

- **Magazine** – Four editions of VAMT's hard copy newsletter, Inform were published.
- **Social Media**
 - The VAMT main Twitter account @VAMTtweets has 1341 followers and the VAMT Facebook page 211 likes.
 - Merthyr Tydfil Volunteer Centre Facebook (573 likes) and Twitter @VAMTvolunteer (469 followers)
 - Merthyr Tydfil Carers Facebook (60 likes) and Twitter @merthryrcarers (274 followers)
- 42 organisations have received **governance advice** and support in the year.
- 49 organisations have received **funding advice** and support in the year.
- VAMT acts secretariat to the **Merthyr Tydfil Community Trust** which is a small independent charitable trust that gives small grants to small groups. This year they gave out 16 grants totalling £3,500. In addition, VAMT staff organised a fundraising quiz for charity raising £755.
- Administered the **Crystal Trophy Award** on behalf of partners. 27 applications were reviewed against set criteria. The top four applications were selected and invited to an awards ceremony to present their projects and to hear the outcome of the panel decisions.
- **Safeguarding** - supported several organisations concerning issues with the safeguarding process, all of which have been resolved and each has required changes to the reporting system. In addition;
 - Safeguarding training has been delivered to 30 individuals.
 - 18 individuals from a range of organisations have been supported in two group visits to the regional MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).
- Instrumental in establishing the **Merthyr Tydfil Men's Shed** following the identification of gaps in activities and social groups specifically for men in the county borough. The Men's Shed was launched with activities such as fishing, gentle exercise, art, knitting and guided walks.



Celebrating Volunteers



Effective engagement in policy

- Facilitated the **Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Forum** on a bi-monthly basis
- Facilitated the **Children & Young Peoples Voluntary Organisations Forum (CYPVOF)** on a quarterly basis.
- Facilitated **"A Conversation with Dawn Bowden AM"** - Twenty representatives from the third sector attended a wide ranging discussion about issues and concerns.
- The **Carers Strategy Network** continued to meet quarterly and acted as a conduit into the newly formed Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group of which four Third Sector partners are now members.
 - The **Carers Emergency Card** was introduced in June 2016.
 - **Training** was organised with statutory partners for unpaid carers and delivered in First Aid and Moving & Handling in response to carer interest.
- **Public Service Board** – VAMT (and Interlink) are represented on the new Cwm Taf Public Service Board which is a merged body for RCT and Merthyr and the new Cwm Taf **Strategic Partnership Board** which sits beneath the PSB.
- **Social Services & Wellbeing (SSWB) Act Implementation** - VAMT is an integral member of the structure to support the implementation of the SSWB Act. This includes representation of the Chairs at the SSWB Partnership Board and the Chief Officer at the Leadership Group. In addition, the CVCs lead on the building community capacity workstream. This has developed into the development of the **Social Value Forum** which is a requirement of the Act and is being led jointly by the CVCs.

Communities First South Cluster

April 2013 –
March 2017



Some highlights

- **2013 – 14 Learning:** The introduction of the Save the Children Fund FAST programme to the cluster's primary schools was a major success. It brought parents, children, teachers and the wider community together, to make sure young children get the support they need to fulfil their potential at school – and in life. Initiated in Bedlinog Primary School and independently evaluated by the University of Middlesex the programme received excellent reviews and was subsequently extended to Troedyrhiw and Edwardsville Primary Schools.
- **2014 – 15 Prosperous:** Community Career Clubs were and continue to be run throughout the Cluster area supporting community members to write effective CV's, use Universal Job Match, meet the conditions of Job Seekers Allowance and complete job applications. Training courses in Construction Skills Certification Scheme and Personal Track Safety enabled participants to gain employment in construction and rail. As a result of these clubs 15 people secured employment while another 8 secured JGW positions and 90 work related qualifications were gained.



- **2015 – 16 Health:** Physical Literacy was introduced to all of our schools to help the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding of a child, whilst supporting their development in movement foundation, which in turn builds confidence and skills to participate in physical activity long-term. Over the year we engaged with 460 young people all of who improved their fitness levels.
- **2015 – 16 Learning:** Homework clubs ran each week at Afon Taf High School from the start of the academic year. The focus was primarily on Maths. A generic homework club ran every Thursday, where pupils were encouraged to bring in their homework and were supported by teachers whilst also having access to ICT equipment. As a result of these clubs the GCSE attainment levels in GCSE Level 2 results inclusive A* to C grades including Maths and English show a 90% pass rate. This project was also recognised by the Merthyr Tydfil Academy of Success as the best Extra Curricular Activity and was awarded the Making the Difference at School Award for 2015.
- **2016 – 17 Health:** Play Together Programme delivered by Trinity Child and Family Centre providing a range of sessions and activities during 2 hour sessions. 1 hour – parent and child together followed by Parent with Agency whilst child is cared for by staff.
- **2016 – 17 Health:** Peer Support was delivered to pupils of Afon Taf High School at Treharris Boys & Girls Club. This programme was provided following discussions with Youth Workers based at the club who had raised concerns over the mental health and well-being of young people attending the club. This project has been a huge success and well received by the young people and staff at the club.
- **2016 – 17 Prosperous:** The 'Induction to Construction' course was run as a partnership project between Communities First, Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association who were building 23 houses, Keepmoat Construction and Communities for Work. The two week programme was designed to support 12 local unemployed people to gain the skills, experience and qualifications needed to start a career in the construction industry.



Integrated Care Fund



Established in 2014 under the original Welsh Government Intermediate Care Fund (now Integrated Care Fund) Community Coordinators were introduced to help improve relationships and connectivity between Health, local authority, third sector and housing. They have established themselves as a 'go to service' for information, advice and support around third sector service provision, and they support partners across all sectors, and citizens themselves, to engage with local services and activities which help maintain independence and improve wellbeing.

Their knowledge around service provision is maintained by continuous mapping of the local area which enables them to recommend alternative solutions to formalised packages of care.

Also their intelligence around gaps in provision ensures that the Voluntary Councils are able to help influence new development; such as new befriending schemes introduced via the Community Capacity Grant Scheme.

- Findings from a **Stakeholder Survey** in 2016 showed that respondents reporting a 73% increase in confidence in the quality of services delivered by third sector. 100% reported increased knowledge of services offered by the third sector
- **1070 referrals** for information, advice and assistance were received between April 2016 and January 2017. This resulted in **2032** individuals being signposted towards community based services and activities, and over **470** being directly supported by the team to access appropriate services or support.
- The team is actively working with **88%** of GP practices across Cwm Taf and continues to broker third sector organisations into Primary Care for improved connectivity
- **293 people** attended 12 flu myth busting sessions arranged and facilitated by the team. 100% of participants found the session useful and said that it raised their awareness of immunisations and their importance to health and wellbeing

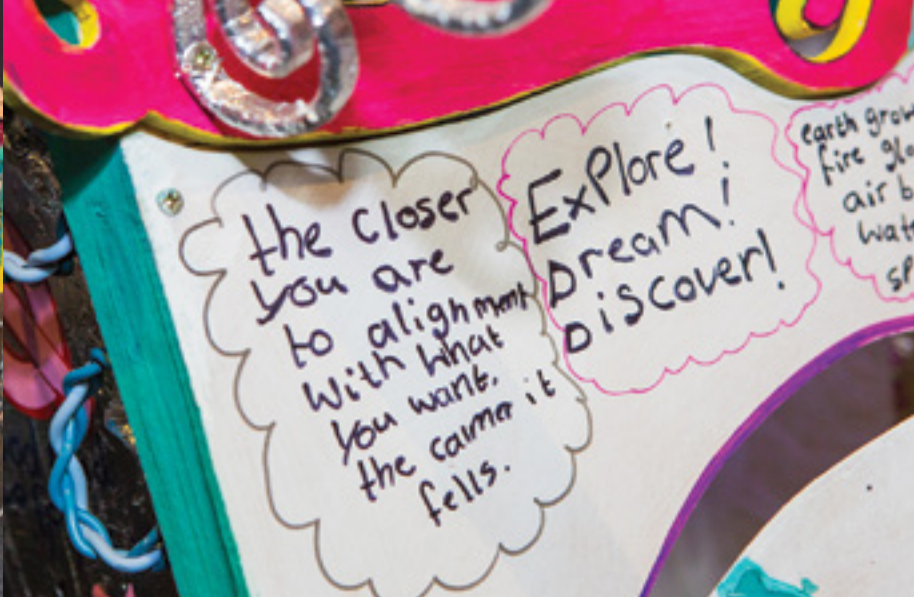
Community Capacity Grant Scheme

On behalf of the Social Services & Wellbeing Partnership Board, VAMT successfully administered another ICF Grant Scheme, awarding 15 organisations funding of £120,000. Chosen for their innovative approaches these projects delivered services between October 2016 and March 2017. Some of their work included:

- **Developing therapeutic gardens** at 2 residential homes, alongside a therapeutic horticultural based programme of activities for 25 residents
- **Providing a range of health and wellbeing opportunities**, including physical activities such as walking groups and dancing sessions where 100% of beneficiaries reported enjoyment of the activity and 80% reported improved confidence. Introducing a new walking football initiative, engaging 34 new participants in weekly sessions which progressed to competitive games across the wider geographical areas
- **Providing specific programmes of activities** for individuals who had experienced **breast cancer** and also **past carers** to help them reintegrate/remain socially connected within their communities.
- **Providing 1:1 advice/support around housing and identified needs**, resulting in income maximisation of over £32,000 being achieved. Also 85 minor housing adaptations and 41 healthy homes checks were undertaken, all contributing to the prevention of falls and helping individuals to maintain independence
- **Collectively engaged over 100 volunteers** in supporting project delivery



MAGNET



MAGNET is a portfolio of 7 projects aiming to engage with marginalised communities of interest to strengthen their voice in influencing public services and policy. 2016-2017 was its penultimate year, with the various projects scheduled to finish during 2017-2018.



Merthyr Achieving Greater Networking & Engagement Together

Supported by



Some facts and figures

3113 children and young people engaged in the project.

415 positive messages about young people and Merthyr Tydfil

People often do not realise that the Cardiff City Region extends as far north as Merthyr Tydfil. This project shone a light on Merthyr... (POSSIB, Dawnsio'r Lingo Final Report)

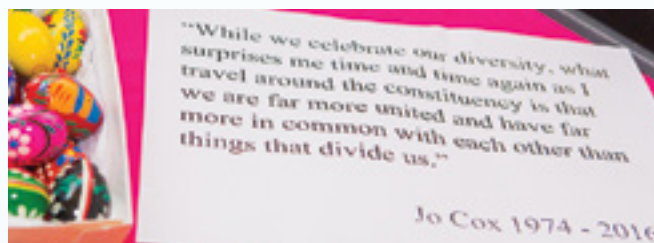
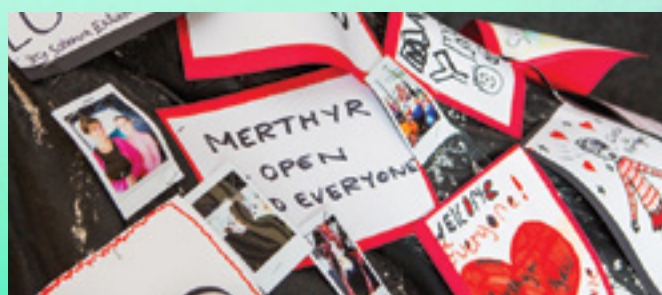
I have improved my confidence and skills on how to talk in front of people and to new people... (Perthyn participant)

3364 adults engaged

65 Forums or engagement mechanisms established or supported

18 new services developed

70 policies/public services influenced or change to become more appropriate



It's a good project to shout out what's good about Merthyr Tydfil that no-one else sees... (Up and Coming Young Reporter)

216 public sector representatives report a better understanding of citizen engagement

489 people from communities report they are more positive about or involved to have their voices heard and influence services



Although legislation has changed, cultural and societal attitudes and services need to change... (Visible participant)

Without Focal Point, I really don't believe everything would have gone as well as it did... I'm really grateful that I could signpost them to Focal Point for further explanation and help. (USDW)

Statement of Financial Activities

(including income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2017

	2017			2016
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Total £
Income				
Donations and legacies	4,700	-	4,700	-
Income from charitable activities:				
Grants and contracts	195,488	1,479,611	1,675,099	1,444,409
Management fees	59,516	7,416	66,932	92,562
Income from other trading activities:				
Rent and accommodation income	70,901	-	70,901	60,559
Telephone and postage recharged	9,375	-	9,375	9,128
Training income	270	-	270	1,900
Investment income	2,647	-	2,647	1,129
Other income	1,172	10,578	11,750	9,275
Total Income	344,069	1,497,605	1,841,674	1,618,962
Expenditure				
Expenditure on charitable activities	358,113	1,213,416	1,571,529	1,620,520
Total Expenditure	358,113	1,213,416	1,571,529	1,620,520
Net Income/(Expenditure) for the year	(14,044)	284,189	270,145	(1,558)
Transfers between funds	(6,750)	6,750	-	-
Net movement in funds	(20,794)	290,939	270,145	(1,558)
Funds brought forward	626,780	58,654	685,434	686,992
Funds carried forward	605,986	349,593	955,579	685,434

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year.
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Income and expenditure

As at 31 March 2017

	2017	2016
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tangible fixed assets	305,759	329,788
Current Assets		
Debtors	138,934	393,271
Cash at bank and in hand	679,403	154,495
	818,337	547,766
Liabilities:		
Amounts falling due within one year	168,517	192,120
Net Current Assets	649,820	355,646
Net Assets	955,579	685,434
Funds		
Unrestricted income funds	605,986	626,780
Restricted income funds	349,593	58,654
Total Funds	955,579	685,434

Board and Staff Members



VAMT's Reception Volunteers

Board 2016-17

Names of Directors

Brian Lewis – Chair
Helen Thomas – Vice Chair
Paul Gray – Treasurer
Nicola Mahoney
Ceinwen Statter
Maria Thomas
Huw Williams
Anne Roberts
Laura Guard (until November 2016)
Ruth Hopkins (from November 2016)

Volunteers

Louise Patterson
Helen Mahoney
Kevin Eddy
Sarah Gibbon
Selina Williams
Kay Powell
Marion Price
Diane Sheppard
Martin Williams

Staff Members 2016-2017

Alison Harris	Third Sector Officer
Amy Jones	Communities First – Community Inclusion Officer (until March 2017)
Bethan Evans	Communities First - Family Liaison Key Worker
Bethan Morgan	Communities First - Performance & Monitoring Officer (until August 2016)
Carol Hindley	Administration and Finance Manager
Claire Williams	Communities First – Learning Communities Lead Officer
Darcy White	Clerical Assistant
Deanne Rebane	Community Coordinator Primary Care
Elaine James	Community Coordinator Merthyr Tydfil
Frances Barry	Volunteering/Youth Volunteering Officer
Hannah Mills	Communities First – Prosperous Communities Lead Officer (until January 2017)
Hilary Edwards	Deputy Chief Officer
Ian Davy	Chief Officer
Karen Foley	Volunteering Officer
Ken Long	Communities First South Cluster Manager
Kendra Tarplee	Communities First – Primary Family Support Officer
Laura Johnson	Administration and Finance Officer
Maria Abson	Mental Health Development Officer ¹
Maria Roberts	Communities First – Administrative Officer
Nia Williams	One Voice Project Officer (from September 2015)
Rachel Thomas	Communities First – Healthier Communities Lead Officer
Rachel Wyatt	Mental Health User Involvement Development Officer ²
Sally Richards	MAGNET Project Manager (until March 2017)
Sharon Richards	Health and Social Care Facilitator / ICF Project Manager
Sian Musto	Carers Information and Development Officer (until March 2017)