

New Community Zone Initiative for Gurnos

In 2017 Welsh Government announced a new initiative called **Children First**, with the purpose of allowing local community and organisations to work together to address the specific need of children and young people to reduce inequalities. Welsh Government invited bids to become a Children First Pioneer Area. In recognition that this work encompasses the wider community, a bid was submitted to pilot two Community Zones, one in Merthyr Tydfil and one in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

Since April 2018, the pilot Community Zone based in the Gurnos area has been working with the community and partners to develop a Community Hub where community members can access information, advice and assistance to services in their area.

With the securing of grant funding, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council are pleased to have developed a partnership approach with Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil in providing and recruiting a new Information and Advice Officer who will be based at the hub providing a valued services to the community

Ceri Samuel is the new Information and Advice Officer which is part of the Community Zone pilot scheme within the Gurnos area. Ceri started in post in January this year and is currently connecting with agencies and service providers that would be interested in promoting their services within the Community Zone.

Ceri's role is to:

- provide information, advice and signpost the community to community groups, activities and services in their area
- work in partnership with communities, agencies and services to support the community
- raise awareness of community and voluntary sector services



Ceri can be contacted on 01685 353 904 or by e-mail at ceri.samuel@vamt.net



Welcome to the March edition of Inform in 2019. Our aim is to provide our members with up to date news and information and we welcome contributions and feedback from all readers of this newsletter.



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YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS MAGAZINE TOO!

If you could like to include an article, news item or Focus on your group in the next edition, contact VAMT enquiries for more information: enquiries@vamt.net.

Adverts/Inserts policy

In each Inform we are able to insert adverts and up to 5 different leaflets from member or other organisations. We have a rate card for private agencies who wish to advertise or place inserts and prices start for £25. There is also a rate card for voluntary organisations for charges covering pre-printed inserts and inserts that need to be copied. Contact VAMT enquiries@vamt.net



@VAMTtweets
@VAMTvolunteer
@merthycarers
@merthyrMAGNET
@onevoicemt
@c1stsouth





Camau Cadarn/Positive Steps has been established for the past 5 years and has gone from strength to strength helping people in Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf to become more independent!

For the first 4 years the service was funded by Land Rover and has recently been funded by the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) Community Capacity Grant scheme for Dementia. The service has also been successful in securing funds to set up a new Dementia support service within the county boroughs.

The British Red Cross service covers Merthyr and RCT and is an 8-week support program designed to maximise independence and develop community resilience. The name of the game is 'client centred' with a holistic approach to intervention supporting people aged 50 and over.

The Positive Steps service is there to help people with a variety of conditions, including physical, psychological and social areas of a person's life. It also helps people to reduce loneliness and isolation.

The Positive Steps team are always developing their knowledge and skill set as part of continuous professional development, recently taking part in



the 2 day 'Mental Health First Aid' course which was well attended and allowed staff and volunteers to apply their new skills with service users, enabling a more client centred service.



The service user is at the heart of the Positive Steps Service and we take pride in following the Red Cross' fundamental premise of utilising a humanitarian approach.

For further information on the Positive Steps service contact **Ken Carpenter** on **07720038615** or email **KCarpenter@redcross.org.uk**

Further information on the ICF Community Capacity for Dementia Grants can be found on page 11.

Volunteers needed!

We have a huge selection of volunteer opportunities here at Dowlais Community Centre - from reading support volunteers, to helping with our after school clubs and everything in between.

We also need an army of helpers for our largest event of the year Spread The Word Festival 2019 taking place on 11th April, both on the day of the event and beforehand.

If you can spare any time at all, whether it's regularly or just a one off, we want to hear from you! Volunteering is a great way to meet friends, gain valuable skills and add to your CV - plus we are a friendly bunch! So come on, say hello and join our team!



Welcome Friends

Volunteers are urgently needed in your area. There are older people in your community who don't see anybody from day to day and are lonely and isolated.

Welcome Friends Merthyr Tydfil Volunteers provide them with the company and companionship they so badly need. Giving just an hour of your time to visit someone in their home can make a real difference.

Cancer Aid

Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil are recruiting volunteers to work in our charity shop.

Do you have a few hours to spare each week? Would you like to gain new skills and make new friends, if so then why not volunteer for your local cancer charity.



Independent Visitors

NYAS are currently recruiting Volunteer Independent Visitors/ Befrienders



Befriend and support children and young people in care.

We are looking to expand our network of Volunteer Independent Visitors and would love to hear from people of all ages and backgrounds who want to make a positive difference to a child's life.

An Independent Visitor (IV) is an adult volunteer who befriends and develops a long-term friendship with a young person in care.

This can involve helping young people develop new interests, skills and hobbies or going on outings such as to the cinema, bowling or just a walk in the park.

The volunteers are called 'Independent Visitors' because they are a truly 'independent' person outside the care system giving the young person continuity, which is something not always possible with changing carers and social workers.

You will receive IV training, supervision and support to fulfil this role.

We are currently recruiting for volunteers in all areas who are able to commit approximately 2 - 3 hours each month to meet with a young person and spend some time with them to carry out an activity of their choice.

To comply with NYAS's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, all successful applicants will be subject to an enhanced DBS (CRB) Disclosure check

All applications for the position will be considered, however NYAS would particularly encourage applications from male, black or other ethnic minority candidates in accordance with section 159 of the Equality Act 2010.

Is your organisation looking for volunteers? Do you need help recruiting?

The Volunteer Centre in Merthyr Tydfil provides support at a local level for individuals looking to volunteer as well as support for organisations looking to recruit

If you would like help recruiting volunteers or just find out what support is on offer for your organisation then please get in touch with **Fran** at the Volunteer Centre on **01685 353901** or email **frances.barry@vamt.net** <https://www.facebook.com/volunteering.tydfil>

FareShare Cymru are coming to Merthyr Tydfil!

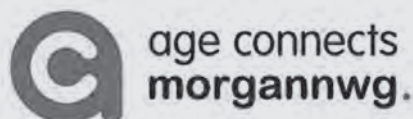
FareShare Cymru is a registered food redistribution charity based in Cardiff, working throughout South Wales.



We work with suppliers and distributors in the food and drink industry securing good quality, surplus food, which we then redistribute to our partners. Our partners are the charities and not-for-profit organisations who provide food to vulnerable people within their local community. The food is used in their kitchens, the kitchens used by residents, a community café, cooking classes, food parcels, breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs etc.

The food we provide is ambient, fresh, chilled or frozen and is in date and of a high quality but is surplus for a number of reasons. We are currently setting up a Local Collection Point in Merthyr Tydfil where partners will be able to collect food.

If you are a not-for-profit organisation who can put good food to good use, please get in touch today and help us to fight hunger and tackle food waste! katie@fareshare.cymru
0773 618175/ 02920 362111



WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS IN THE MERTHYR TYDFIL AREA

Age Connects Morgannwg's Reaching Out project aims to reduce isolation and loneliness for older people by providing one to one volunteer befrienders. We have a number of people on our waiting list in the Merthyr Tydfil area, and are looking for volunteers to visit them on a weekly basis. Can you spare just an hour a week to become a volunteer befriender and make a real difference to the life of an older person living in your community?

For more information please call **01443 490650**, or email jackie.prosser@acmorgannwg.org.uk
Age Connects Morgannwg
5-7 Mill Street • Pontypridd • CF37 2SN

Inspire2Work

Inspire2 Work is funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) working with young people aged 16-24 who are not in employment, education or training (EET). The Inspire2 Work Team offer support via a highly experienced and qualified youth work team.

Inspire2 Work offers packages tailored to meet the needs of young people that can be delivered on a one to one basis or within small group sessions. These sessions help to improve health and well-being, to gain qualifications and to find suitable routes into employment, education or training.

What can Inspire2 Work offer?

Lead Working – one to one support with your allocated worker to help to improve confidence and self-esteem and your ability to work as part of a team through mentoring, advice, guidance and career planning

Pre-Employment Training – achieve Health & Safety, Manual Handling and First Aid certification plus a variety of other work related accreditation and training

Qualifications – work towards a recognised level 2 qualification in work related subjects such as Creating a Curriculum Vitae, Developing Personal Confidence and Self-Awareness and Interview Skills

Work Preparation – support to complete job searches, job applications and to prepare for interviews

Work Placement – networking with local employers to offer work placements to extend your CV moving you ever closer to employment

Contact Inspire2 Work Team:

Pen-y-Dre CEC
Pen-y-Dre High
School Campus
Gurnos
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 9BY
Tel: (01685) 727457



Deafblind UK



We support people with combined sight and hearing loss to live the lives they want.

Whether you need some support to get back on your feet after a diagnosis, a helping hand to help you do the things you love, someone to turn to when you're feeling low or some information, advice and guidance, we're here to help. Losing your sight and hearing can be frightening. Our team of experts is here every step of the way to show you life beyond sight and hearing loss.

Information & Advice Line (IAL)

Whether you have questions about sight and hearing loss, are searching for information or simply need someone to talk to, we are here. We have a team of dedicated and professional staff and volunteers ready to answer your queries and offer confidential and impartial advice.

Our free Information and Advice Line offers support and guidance to people living with sight and hearing loss, their carers, family and friends, as well as professionals working with deafblind people. It is manned by a team of professionals.

Tel: 0800 132 320

Text: 07950 008870

Email: info@deafblind.org.uk

The Information and Advice Line is free to call and is open from 9am to 5pm Monday – Thursday and 9am to 4pm on Friday.

We can help you with:

- Finding information
- Connecting to other organisations
- Emotional support
- Understanding your condition
- Accessing support
- Using Deafblind UK's services

Befriending



Our befrienders are here to talk, laugh and build lasting friendships with. Living with reduced sight and hearing can be lonely. For various reasons people may find themselves becoming increasingly isolated and unable to enjoy the same level of social interaction that they may have otherwise done. That's why we offer a free befriending service where you can be matched to a volunteer befriender to enjoy some regular company.

We offer three types of befriending:

Home befriending

Home befriending involves a volunteer befriender visiting you on a regular basis to have a chat, share hobbies, go out and about or do whatever you want.

Tele-befriending

Tele-befriending involves your volunteer befriender talking to you over the telephone on a regular basis. This works well for people who live in more remote areas or who may find it easier to communicate over the telephone.

E-befriending

E-befriending involves talking to a volunteer befriender via email. This is ideal for those who are deaf or hard of hearing or those who want a lighter befriending option.

Befriending is a highly rewarding way to volunteer and is flexible enough to fit around other commitments. It gives you the chance to build a lasting relationship with someone and to experience first hand the difference that you are making. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer befriender, please get in touch.

Digital Inclusion

Our digital support service teaches you to make the most of your tablet or mobile phone to enable you to live as independently as possible.

- Connect with friends and family
- Do online shopping and banking
- Discover specialist apps

You'd be surprised at just how much your mobile phone or tablet can do for you. Most handheld devices have a range of in-built accessibility features which can make a huge difference to someone with sight and hearing loss. From magnification to voice recognition, we can show you how to make the most of the technology you've already got or we can show you how to use specialist accessibility software.

We are always looking for volunteers to share their experiences with technology. Whether you are living with sight and hearing loss yourself or you are interested in giving your time to those who are, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us for more information about volunteering with our digital inclusion project.

Casework

Our free one-to-one caseworker service is a membership benefit available to members, carers and those who support deafblind people.

Through our casework service we provide specialist information, advice and at times critical support, in areas such as accessing and understanding healthcare and treatment, and gaining social care and legal advice. We always aim to support to the best of our ability even on short notice.

We also offer support in times of emotional crisis for members and their families via the Information and Advice line. All casework is strictly confidential within the team. This ensures we can offer the best possible

advice, guidance and outcomes by drawing on team members' individual expertise and experience. Complex cases are managed by our casework manager who oversees cases and supports our team. We work closely with our Information and Advice Line team to ensure that all the information we provide is accurate and up to date.

We also offer specialist support, advice and information to other professionals supporting or advocating on behalf of deafblind clients. If there is a need for additional or alternative professional support, our caseworkers will not act as representatives for Deafblind UK members but will assist and enable access to the necessary services.

Are you deafblind aware?

Our fascinating deafblind awareness talks give an insight into the unique issues that affect people living with sight and hearing loss. Whether you are a health and social care professional, school, business or community group, each talk is tailored specifically to you.

As the number of people living with sight and hearing loss in the UK is rising, it is important that more and more of our wider community is aware of how to be considerate and supportive towards deafblind people.

We can help you to discover:

- What deafblindness really is.
- How to communicate with deafblind people.
- How to guide someone who is deafblind.
- How you can help and support your own stakeholders who have sight and hearing loss.
- How to make sure the information you provide is as accessible as possible.

If you would like to become a member of Deafblind UK, volunteer for us, or would like any more information, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you!

Contact **Holly Mills** on
07950037823 or by email at
holly.mills@deafblind.org.uk

Merthyr Mendicants: Merthyr's helping hand since 1962

The Mendicants is one of Merthyr Tydfil's oldest and well respected fundraising charities. For more than fifty seven years we have relied upon the generosity of local residents, organisations and businesses, who provide us with vital funds, which are used locally to assist people who are in need or hardship.

Our main fundraising period is the six weeks prior to Christmas, when Santa, complete with sleigh and his Mendicant elves is an iconic sight collecting at Tesco Extra and at the grotto in St. Tydfil's Shopping Centre. In recent years we have been forced to give up neighbourhood collecting using the sleigh and focus on static locations mentioned above.



Members meet on the third Monday of each month at the Conservative Club in the town centre, where forthcoming events and social evenings are planned and requests for assistance are discussed and sanctioned where necessary. There is no formal training required, but new Mendicants can rely on experienced colleagues who are always on hand to provide guidance and advice.

Mendicants enjoy their charitable work and are proud of the service they provide to the community. However, there is a growing demand from those who approach us for assistance and at the same time the public are requesting that we return to Christmas neighbourhood visits again. Therefore, in order to meet these demands we need more members who are prepared to help us raise still more funds.

- Are you looking for enjoyable charitable work?
- Do you enjoy working with the public?
- At Christmas are you prepared to dress in seasonal hats, engage with the public and have fun at the same time?
- Are you prepared to give a little of your time that others might benefit?

- Do you have what it takes to be a proud Mendicant?

If you can answer yes to any of the questions above or would like further information please contact:

John Goff Hon. Secretary

Tel: 01685 722350

Mobile: 07766710765

Email: MerthyrMendicant@gmail.com



New Service from Hafal

Hafal is now established at The Willows community centre in Troedryhiw to support people with mental illness. We can offer a range of activities to help people with their recovery; we are excited to announce that we have started work on helping the centre to develop the previously overgrown garden area which will become a space for the community to enjoy. We are there each Thursday from 9.30am until 3pm.

hafal @ The Willows

A range of accredited and non-accredited courses and activities are offered, other courses and activities are available:-

• Cookery	• Woodwork
• Gardening	• Music
• Arts & Crafts	• Managing Anxiety
• Open access/drop in	• 1:1 recovery planning

**Hafal Cwm Taf,
The Willows, Bridge St,
Troedryhiw, Merthyr Tydfil,
CF48 4DX**

Thursdays from 9am until 3pm

People accessing the service will also be able to take advantage of additional support from Hafal's national services, such as our online community Cllc and the Mental Health and Money Advice Service!

For more information, please contact
cwmhaf@hafal.org or 01695 884918
Ceri: 07967 330667
Rob: 07675 373524

www.hafal.org



New Independent Third Sector Member for Cwm Taf Health Board

Dilys Jouvenat was appointed to the Cwm Taf Health Board as an Independent Member for

the Third Sector in August 2018. This is Dilys' first contribution to Inform – we look forward to hearing more from her.

My Background

I worked in Local Government for over 40 years and was the Equality & Diversity Manager at RCT Council when I retired in 2015. During my working life I was also involved in my Trade Union, Unison, and served at all levels in the Union including ten years on the National Executive Committee. I also served five years as a member of the Wales Committee of the Equality & Human Rights Commission.

Community Involvement

I have always been involved in local issues, my current involvement includes being part of a local group campaigning to get a Multi-Use Games Area in our local park, being a trustee of the Ystrad Rhondda Youth and Community Hub which is a community group set up to bring the old Ystrad Girls and Boys Club building back into use within the community, I am also a volunteer with the Dig 4 Health project that works with the local primary school in Ystrad to provide growing spaces within the community to encourage healthier eating. I

am part of a group working with young people to organise a 'JAM' in our local skate park, this involves partners from several agencies.

I have been Chair of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Citizens Advice Trustee Board since 2016 and am the Rhondda Coordinator for the Women Against State Pension Injustice campaign group representing 1950's born women who have been affected by the changes to State Pension Age and am working with women in the Cynon Valley to get a group started there. I am a committee member of the Rhondda Over 50's Forum.

My Board Role

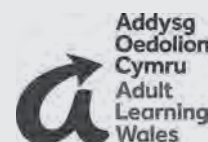
As a member of the Board I sit on the Audit, Finance, Performance & Workforce and the Quality, Safety and Risk Committees I have recently been asked to become the Whistleblowing Champion for the Board.

The role of all the Independent Members is to scrutinise the work of the Health Board and the committees I sit on involve a lot of reading and even more importantly a lot of questioning! I am learning every day.

Since my appointment I have attended forums and events to introduce myself and to learn about the third sector organisations within the area. I have visited some to see first hand what they do and would be more than willing to meet with organisations to learn about their work.

Free training from Adult Learning Wales Skill Development Fund

We are able to offer courses on Volunteering, Digital Literacy, Employability, Health and Safety and many more. We would normally need 10 learners to run a course. If you would like to discuss these courses further, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or on the telephone contact below.



- Digital Literacy
- Customer Service Skills
- Applying for a Job
- Career Planning
- Creating a tailored CV
- Interview Techniques
- Team working
- Good working relationships in the workplace
- Resilience Skills
- Assertiveness Skills
- Problem Solving
- Study skills
- Health and Safety
- Train the Trainer

...and lots more!

For further info please contact our Ebbw Vale office on **01495 369869**
or email: **judith.wilding@adultlearning.wales**

Carers Awareness AGORED Training Opportunities

Cwm Taf UHB are offering Carers Awareness AGORED training. The Carers Awareness Agored training course is a tool which develops awareness of Carers and how they can be supported within the community. By identifying Carers in the community you are able to signpost Carers for information, support and refer to local Carers information services should the Carer wish.

The Agored training course is a level 1, 2 credit module. The module consists of 4 units.

For each unit there are a number of examples and evidence that has to be provided on how you identify and support Carers. It does not require any identifiable information as details can be anonymised. The course is fully funded and support will be given at every stage with an assessor attending your place of work for one hour per month (more if you want to complete sooner). There is an opportunity for the learner to develop the role of the Carer champion and make it their own project, which will enhance their own personal development.

For more information please email cerys.gamble@wales.nhs.uk

Carers Week 10th-14th June 2019

In readiness for Carers week, Cwm Taf UHB are holding an information stand at Prince Charles Hospital from 10th – 14th June 2019. Would your organisation like to attend to promote what services and support you offer Carers within the community? Please note as space is limited we only have access to one information stand. If you would like to man an information stand for a day or morning/afternoon please email Cerys.gamble@wales.nhs.uk

GP Carer Champions

Do you look after someone? Then you could be a Carer.

A Carer is anyone who cares, unpaid (except for Carer's allowance), for their partner, family member or friend who due to illness, disability, mental health or addiction cannot cope without their support. A Carer can be anyone of any age. If you support someone who would not be able to manage without your help, you are a Carer, even if you don't think of yourself that way.

To find out more about support that could be available to you please ask for the Carer champion at your GP surgery.

Samaritans Rural Roadshow – Breakfast Briefing

**Wednesday 20th March 2019 (Part of National Conversation Week) •
10am – 11:30am • Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT), 89-90 High St,
Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8UH**



Samaritans Cymru will be running a rural roadshow event in partnership with Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil. These events engage with local charities and organisations in rural areas in Wales to raise awareness of the increased risk of suicide in rural or isolated areas. The roadshow is designed to inform participants of suicide risk in Wales and most importantly, how to help people in distress and signpost them to sources of support.

What's covered in a breakfast briefing?

- Suicide rates in Wales – current context and high-risk groups
- Working with Compassion workshop – This interactive session explores our Working with

Compassion toolkit which has been designed to equip staff with the skills they need to act more compassionately in their workplace in order to improve outcomes for customers, clients and service users

- Spotting the signs of emotional distress
- What to do in a mental health crisis
- Our Samaritans service – how we can help those in distress

If your organisation would like to attend, please contact **Emma Gooding, Policy and Communications Officer** on e.gooding@samaritans.org

Cwm Taf Social Services & Wellbeing Partnership Integrated Care Fund

COMMUNITY CAPACITY GRANT SCHEME FOR DEMENTIA 2018-20

VAMT and Interlink would like to confirm the following projects have received grant funding through the Community Capacity Grant Scheme and have a specific focus around those living with dementia, their families and/or carers:

Scheme	Summary	Location
Still Me	Multigenerational project, support group and activities for people living with dementia and their carers and families. Run by people living with/affected by dementia	Taff Ely (Garth Olwg, Church Village)
Valleys Kids	A Place and Time for You : Targeted community care programme – sustaining the successful pilot scheme offering 3 weekly closed group sessions for people with dementia and their carers; and fortnightly home visiting programme for carers Dementia Friendly community centre in Rhydyfelin, offering coffee bar, information activities etc	Rhondda Taff Ely - Rhydyfelin
Gellideg Foundation Group	Weekly support group for carers and family members, plus a weekly activities group for people living with dementia	Merthyr Tydfil - Gellideg
Arts Factory	Opening up current groups / activities to those with dementia and their carers, plus offering a taxi service for those where transport is a barrier to access	Rhondda - Ferndale
British Red Cross	Camau Cadarn Positive Steps – 12 week goal based Befriending service – already in place for older people and to be expanded to include more older people and carers with dementia	Cwm Taf wide
The Parent Network	Carers peer support groups and network	Merthyr Tydfil
St Matthew's Church	Support group for people with dementia and their carers	Rhondda – Treorchy
Pontyclun Community Council	Support group for people with dementia and their carers	Taff Ely – Pontyclun
Dementia Friendly Maerdy	Advertising of the support group for people with dementia and their carers.	Rhondda – Maerdy
Age Connects Morgannwg	Local engagement to determine level of need and inform a strategy for how the Cynon Linc Hub (due to be launched Spring 2010) and ACM can support people living with dementia to maintain their health, wellbeing and independence	Cynon

For further information on any of these project then please contact:

Sharon Richards
VAMT – **01685 353932**
sharon.richards@vamt.net

or

Anne Morris
Interlink
amorris@interlinkrct.org.uk

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A Day with Merthyr Valley Ramblers

Late in January of this year, our scheduled Saturday walk was the Penpych Circular, led by Chris. It was a miserable day, low cloud, misty and drizzle but spirits were high as we started our walk from the woodland park, just above Treherbert.

After about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of steady climbing, we came to our first waterfall on the Nant Berw Wion

The next waterfall was about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile further upstream. Although still misty, the rain was beginning to ease off.

Then, the climb began towards the head of the Rhondda River. As it was quite a steep climb, there were plenty of rest stops so that we could all catch our breath and cool off a little.

Finally, we arrived at the Rhondda River, tumbling down the hillside. Our guide Chris, pointed upstream and we could just see the main waterfall in the distance, waiting for us.

Finally, we made it to the main waterfall and what a spectacular one too. We had been very lucky our guide explained, because all the rainfall in the previous days had filled the rivers up and that the waterfalls were the best that she had ever seen.

A quick cuppa followed before we made our way back down the mountain, crossing streams and seeing more waterfalls before re-joining the Rhondda back to the park, where we arrived, tired but happy.

For more information on Merthyr Valley Ramblers, including their programme of walks visit their website at www.merthyrramblers.org.uk or www.ramblers.org.uk/merthyr-valley



This newsletter has been published by Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil, Voluntary Action Centre, 89 – 90 Pontmorlais, High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8UH. Telephone: (01685) 353900

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The views expressed in this edition of Inform are not necessarily those of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.

Croesawir erthyglau nail ai'n ddwyieithog neu'n uniaith Gymraeg.

The closing date for articles for the next edition (June 2019) is 18 May 2019.

