

INFORM

December 2018



Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • *Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful*

THANK YOU BRIAN

After 19 years of service as a trustee of VAMT, Brian Lewis stood down at VAMT's recent AGM. Brian has been Chair of VAMT for the past 11 years and was Treasurer for 8 years prior to that. Brian fronted many of VAMT's events during this time as Chair and did so with his usual grace and humour. Brian has been a popular and supportive Chair with both staff and trustees, past and present. He is very well known in the local sector having been involved in the Credit Union, Citizens Advice Bureau, Communities First, Homestart, Over 50's Forum and others. Brian has been unwell recently but is recovering and hopes to be a VAMT trustee again in the future.



Annual General Meeting 2018

VAMT's AGM was successfully held in November and attended by 84 people. As well as the AGM formalities, Dawn Bowden AM launched the report on the research she has been carrying out on health and social care services in the constituency.

The draft report "No One is a Bystander - Everyone is an Ally" can be found on her website www.dawnbowdenam.co.uk. The report describes her thoughts about how we can continue to develop the local NHS and care services as a wellbeing service rather than an ill health service.

Ian Davy, Chief Officer, presented the Annual Report for 2017/18. Copies have been sent to all VAMT members but it is available on www.vamt.net/annual-report or by contacting the VAMT office.



Three new trustees were welcomed to the VAMT Board, Kayleigh Norval (Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil), Amber Lewis (Pant and Dowlais Boys and Girls Club) and Michelle Jones (The Parent Network). They are very welcome and join the six remaining elected

trustees, Anne Roberts, Paul Gray, Nicola Mahoney, Ruth Hopkins, Mark Ward and Helen Thomas as well as co-opted trustee, Suzanne Davies. In addition to Brian Lewis, Huw Williams (Adult Learning Wales) also stood down as a trustee after 6 years service. The Board will elect the officers at their first meeting following the AGM which will be in the New Year.

Welcome to the December edition of Inform in 2018. 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.



Contents:

Focus on	3
Volunteering Vacancies	4
News	5-16

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.

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ICF Project Manager

Claire Williams Community Co-ordinator Merthyr Tydfil

Deanne Rebane Community Co-ordinator Cwm Taf Primary Care

Frances Barry Digital Support Officer

Susan Broad Admin and Finance Assistant

VAMT's Board

Suzanne Davies *(co-opted)*

Helen Thomas *Vice-Chair*

Paul Gray *Treasurer*

Ruth Hopkins

Nicola Mahoney

Ann Roberts *Acting Chair*

Mark Ward

Amber Lewis

Kayleigh Norval

Michelle Jones

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



A disability Charity making a difference!



MTIB is a long standing local charity and employer who have been supporting disabled and disadvantaged people into employment for the past 95 years.

We are very proud to support over 200 people per year to gain skills for employment and to support many of these into sustainable jobs. MTIB works with a wide range of people who often face multiple barriers to employment and we support each individual to move towards their goals – such as training, volunteering or employment. Our support also extends to employers who we seek to capacity build to be more confident and inclusive.

MTIB is the first Disability Confident Leader in Merthyr Tydfil and was the second organisation in Wales to achieve this accolade. The Disability Confident Campaign is a UK wide government initiative to increase employers' understanding of disability and as a Leader, MTIB is supporting other organisations and employers to gain skills in this field.

On the 12th October 2018 MTIB, jointly with Jobcentre Plus, hosted a Disability Confident event at Morlais Castle Golf Club. The event was

aimed at employers and attended by over 20 local companies as well as our MP for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney Gerald Jones. We had speakers from both individuals and employers to showcase what disability and employment can look like as well as what support is available. The JCP Director for Wales, Fiona Jones also spoke along with colleagues from Access to Work.

MTIB hopes that more employers will sign up to the Disability Confident campaign and that more employers will be encouraged to recruit a diverse workforce as a result. We currently deliver a range of contracts which support local people into employment and we are continuously looking for employers and placements for our customers. Our main projects at present are our 2 WCVA Active Inclusion Projects which are aimed at those aged 25+ and who have a disability or work limiting health condition. Eligibility also requires individuals to be either economically inactive or long term (12m+) unemployed. The projects offer flexible and individualised support including employability skills but also paid work placements and in-work support. We are really keen to hear from both employers and individuals who want to take part – please contact the Employment & Training team on **01685 370072** for more information.



Caseworker Volunteer for the Royal Air Forces Association



The charity that supports the RAF family

The Royal Air Forces Association (or RAF Association) is a member-led, registered welfare charity that provides welfare support to serving and ex-serving RAF personnel and their families. A Caseworker is someone who carries out welfare work for the RAF Association. Welfare work is about making a visit and listening to an individual to assess their needs to find out how the Association can provide help and support to them. Support can include anything from helping put a client with a recent disability in touch with social services in order for them to put an application for a downstairs wet room to putting in an application to the RAF Association for funding for a new kettle for a client who cannot afford to replace their broken one.

Full accredited training through "AIM" is provided for this role and upon successful completion of the training volunteers will gain a Welfare Support: Information and Advice qualification at level 2.

Volunteers should expect to commit to around two hours per week, and will be required to submit reports detailing outcomes of their visit.



South Wales Victim Focus
Ffocws Dioddefwyr De Cymru

Our volunteers play a vital role within our Victim Focus Teams, providing emotional and practical support to people affected by crime



Every day our volunteers generously give their time to help people move beyond crime. Their support helps people feel stronger, understood and able to move forward with their lives.

There are many ways to volunteer:

- work with people affected by crime,
- raising awareness
- raising funds
- providing office support.

Volunteer Mini Bus Driver at the Engine House



A Volunteer bus driver is needed to help with mini-bus transport to provide a pick up and drop off service. The volunteer driver will be responsible for driving the mini bus provided to help provide an outreach service in the Merthyr Tydfil Community to help engage children and young people access the youth provision. Applicants must be over 25 years old with a clean driving licence.

Homestart



This is an exciting opportunity to become a family support volunteer. Our volunteers are trained to support families that have varying needs from poor mental health, physical disabilities, child disability, social isolation, bereavement ... this is a non-exhaustive list and the support we provide is both flexible and individualised to the families we support.

Volunteers are matched with a family to provide support through home visiting for approx. 1.5 – 2 hours a week (recommended time). Support that volunteers provide encompasses a befriending approach and includes emotional support as well as practical support such as help with health appointments, forms, community activities, budgeting advice, activities with children etc. Our volunteers find the support they provide to be both a rewarding and positive experience in making a difference to family's lives. Our aim is to support people to enjoy family life even though they may be experiencing difficulties.

Greyhound Rescue Wales

are seeking volunteers for their new shop on the High Street in Merthyr Tydfil. Various shifts are available and no experience is needed just enthusiasm and a desire to help the charity.



For further information on any of the above opportunities or to find out more about other volunteering opportunities across the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough contact Laura Johnson laura.johnson@vamt.net, 01685 353902 or visit <https://volunteering-wales.net/>

Hafal's Outreach Programme now up and running!

Hafal supports people recovering from serious mental illness through a comprehensive and holistic recovery programme. Their Outreach Programme is now up and running in the Merthyr Tydfil area where experienced Recovery Practitioners provide help and support with recovery plans. Drop in sessions are also available at each venue on a Thursday.

- Merthyr Remploi (9am to 12 noon) to discuss referrals, 1:1 support sessions and signposting.
- Merthyr Institute for the Blind (9am to 3pm) for arts and crafts, music, a Managing Anxiety course, open access and 1:1 support.
- The Willows Centre, Troedyrhiw (9am to 3pm) for carpentry, horticulture/gardening, walking football, arts and crafts, 1:1 support sessions and peer support. There is also potential for additional activities eg cookery.

There is also a friendly walking group with organised walks throughout the Merthyr area which are scheduled on Wednesdays.



Staying Well this Winter

Community Coordinator Deanne visited the new Hafal Woodwork Group at the Willows and provided information on immunisations, focussing on the annual flu jab. It was pleasing to hear that most of the group have already had their jab, but one member said he hadn't as he said he thought that it would make him ill. Following some "myth busting" with the group, and reassuring them with the facts, he said that he is willing to reconsider his decision.

Another member of the group wanted information on activities he could attend when not at Hafal, and he was signposted to the Reconnect 50+ Hub, which he said he will attend on Monday mornings at Hope Chapel.

If you would like a talk for your group then please contact Deanne for more details:

Deanne.rebane@vamt.net or
telephone 01685 353954 / mob 08977 618245

Hafal can be contacted on **cwmataf@hafal.org** or by contacting **01685 884918** or **07805 665527**.



Mae plant Merthyr angen Gofalwyr Maeth o Ferthyr
Merthyr children need Merthyr foster carers

☎ 0800 678 3798

🌐 merthyr.gov.uk/foster



New Community Co-ordinator for Merthyr Tydfil



Hi, my name is Claire Williams and I'm the new Community Co-ordinator for Merthyr Tydfil. I came into post at the end of September and previously worked in Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil at a Lead Officer with Communities First. I've

been working in the Third Sector since 2013 and it's great to be back in Voluntary Action doing a job that I love.

As a Community Co-ordinator my role encompasses working with people aged 50 + to tackle loneliness and isolation by providing information and advice as well as working in partnership with communities, agencies and services to support older people in order for them to live independent lives within their communities.

If you would like any further information about this project, please email me on

Claire.williams@vamt.net or ring **07580 866547**.

Work of Virtual Ward team is recognised in UK awards shortlist



An Aberdare practice has been shortlisted as Team of the Year in a prestigious awards ceremony taking place in London. The Virtual Ward team at St John's Medical Practice will discover if they have beaten competition from across the UK at a gala night at the Park Plaza hotel in Westminster.

The event marks the 10th anniversary of the General Practice Awards which aim to 'celebrate the very best examples of innovation, dedication and leadership taking place in primary care'.

The 'virtual ward' is a new method of working developed at the practice. A multi-disciplinary team of about 10 staff, including GP, district nurse, pharmacist, social worker, community paramedic, occupational therapist, manager and third sector services collaborate to take services to their patient at to avoid crisis admissions to hospital.

They meet once a week to discuss sick or vulnerable patients who may need more intensive support

from the Primary Care Team to continue to live and function safely at home. The initiative frees up GP's time to concentrate on complex medical cases and keeps patients out of hospital.

Community Coordinator for Health, Deanne Rebane, attends the multi – agency weekly Virtual Ward Round meetings, signposting and making referrals to 3rd sector services to support patients' care plans. Amongst others, many patients have been referred to Red Cross and Royal Voluntary Service for befriending services, CAB for benefits checks, and support from the Alzheimer's Society, Parkinson's UK, Drink Wise Age Well and the RCT Carers Project.

Dr Owen Thomas of St John's Medical Practice said:
"Having Community Co-ordinators on hand to participate in the discussions enables them to identify there and then things that can help, making them a truly integrated member of the team and able to manage those patients and their needs".

The Community Land Advisory Service Cymru is here to help you with land and planning matters on your community green space project!

We are here to help you find land, acquire more land, do deals with landowners (including local authorities) to allow community use of land and to help you get all the necessary permissions including planning. Our press release on the new Welsh Government funded programme <https://wl.communitylandadvice.org.uk/en/news/12072018-1754/welsh-government-funding-boost-community-land-use-Wales>

If you need any land or planning advice for your community green space project, please email lucie@farmgarden.org.uk Please also help us spread the word about this new service by forwarding our details onto relevant contacts

Joint Care Programme

The Joint Care Programme is a 12 week, community based programme targeted at patients who are overweight and have chronic knee and/or hip pain. The programme will support them to lose weight, increase activity levels and improve their overall health and well being.

The Joint Care Programme is run throughout Cwm Taf and Merthyr Tydfil programmes are held at:

- Merthyr Leisure Centre- evening programmes available.
- Aberfan Community Centre

The programme offers a weekly session consisting of 1-hour exercise and 1 and a half hours of evidence based nutrition advice (Foodwise), including some practical cookery sessions. Pain management, behaviour change and goal setting are incorporated into the sessions.

The Joint Care programme is free of charge. However, patients are encouraged to attend additional exercise sessions within the centre or within the community which will have a small cost attached.

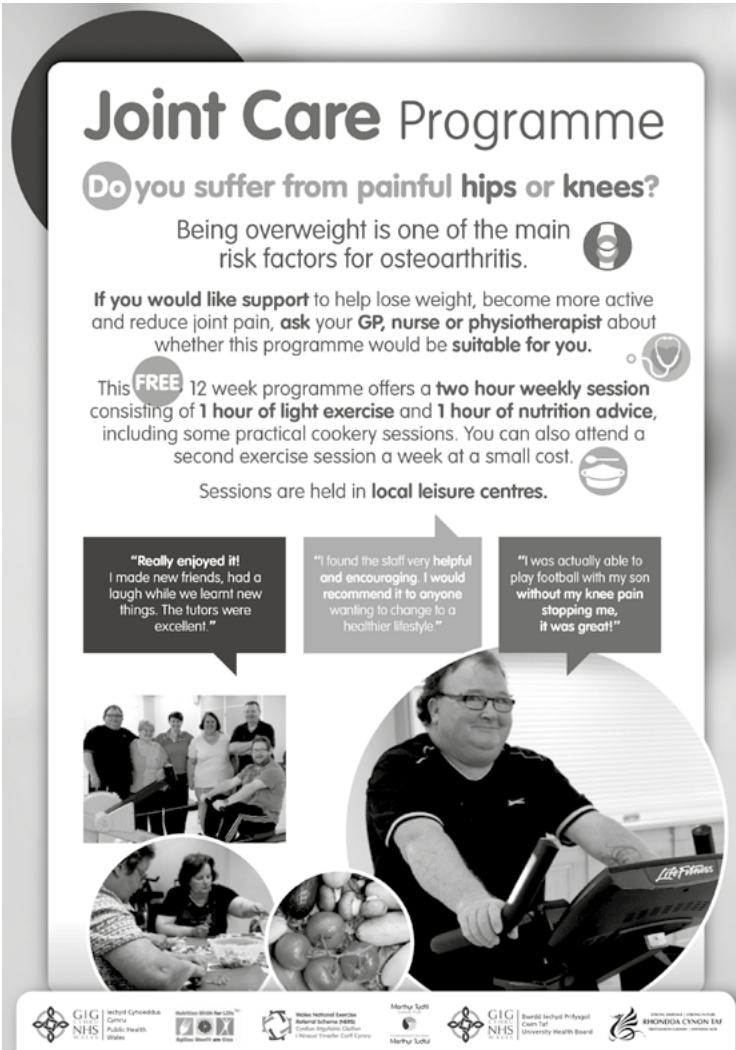
Patients can access the programme by being referred by their health care professional.

For more information, please contact:

Carla Jackson –JCP Referral Co-ordinator
Joint Care Programme, Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre, Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1UT

Phone: 01685 727442

Email: carla.jackson@merthyr.gov.uk



Joint Care Programme

Do you suffer from painful hips or knees?

Being overweight is one of the main risk factors for osteoarthritis.

If you would like support to help lose weight, become more active and reduce joint pain, ask your GP, nurse or physiotherapist about whether this programme would be suitable for you.

This **FREE** 12 week programme offers a two hour weekly session consisting of 1 hour of light exercise and 1 hour of nutrition advice, including some practical cookery sessions. You can also attend a second exercise session a week at a small cost.

Sessions are held in local leisure centres.

"Really enjoyed it! I made new friends, had a laugh while we learnt new things. The tutors were excellent."

"I found the staff very helpful and encouraging. I would recommend it to anyone wanting to change to a healthier lifestyle."

"I was actually able to play football with my son without my knee pain stopping me, it was great!"

The flyer includes images of participants in a group, a man on a treadmill, and a bowl of fruit. Logos for GIG NHS, Merthyr Tydfil, and other local organizations are at the bottom.

CAB Services

Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil run drop in services on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. These are based in our main office on Post Office Lane. We have extended the time of our drop in service from 9.30am - 3.30pm.



We offer specialist advice on Welfare Benefits and Debt. We also offer advice and assisted information on a range of other different topics including housing, employment and consumer rights. We have a new Supporting People project to help with the on-going problems with Universal Credit, with a team of UC advisers to help and support clients with complex Universal Credit issues. We also deliver a UC service at the local Job Centre Plus two days a week on a Thursday and Friday from 9.30am - 12pm. This is being run on a drop in basis and is in relation to Universal Credit issues.

We have a new energy advice project starting called Warmer Wales. This will cover all aspects of energy advice including switching supplier, energy efficiency and income maximisation. We also continue to assist our local community by researching and campaigning for change; changes to policies and practices.

Please get in touch if further information is required: 01685 382188.

If you would like an appointment please telephone 01685 382188 Ext 212.

Space to Rent

Taff Bargoed Development Trust have premises for rent

Two large offices to let at the Taff Bargoed Development Trust (Climbing Centre) Trelewis, Mid-Glamorgan CF46 6RD. The site offer plenty of free car parking and catering is also available on site.

The offices are both 24 x 16 feet and fully furnished with cabinets, tables, desks, chairs and bookshelves that offer 400 square feet of space in which to operate a variety of businesses. This office also has an interactive whiteboard, projector, storage cabinets and a meeting table for up to 16 clients which is ideal for training and meetings.



The Trust also has a large industrial unit to rent. The unit offers immediate access onto the B4255 between Bedlinog & Trelewis with good links to the A470 and Cardiff.

The unit can lend itself to a variety of business uses and is very flexible. It contains a 4 tonne car ramp, tyre changer, wheel balancer, trolley jacks and other equipment to operate MOT's and car repairs.



There are also two large containers to let (18 feet x 8 feet) with easy access and are very useful for storage to support businesses or domestic uses.

Contact 01443 710827 for further details or mail enquiries@tbdt.co.uk You can also check out the Trusts new web site @ www.tbdt.co.uk

Engine House boosts opportunities for children & young people in Merthyr Tydfil!

The Dowlais Engine House is a Monday-Friday youth provision for 8-25 year olds in Merthyr Tydfil. The centre offers exciting opportunities, activities, groups, clubs and trips including visiting local areas and attractions including Folly Farm. Over October half term children and young people got creative with artists from Mess Up The Mess, musical with one to one tuition, outdoors with the fire/police service and historical with Cyfarthfa Castle, and Fit and Fed with healthy eating.

Keep an eye out for new developments at the centre, LGBT+ youth group, youth forums, chatterbooks initiative with Dowlais Library, room hire, working closely with the community and much more. To get in touch please contact us on **01685 375318** or email **amber@dowlaisenginehouse.co.uk**.



LGBT+ YOUTH GROUP

@ The Engine House, Dowlais
CF48 3HA

Monday 10TH Dec | 5.30 - 7.00pm

Age 14 - 25

Workshop with Pride Cymru & help us start our new LGBT group in Merthyr Tydfil



Let us know your coming by calling us on 01685 375318 or email gemma@dowlaisenginehouse.co.uk

Free session with refreshments



50+ Social Evening hosted by Age Connects Morgannwg and M&S Café, Merthyr Tydfil

Age Connects Morgannwg (ACM) are hosting a monthly Social Evening for people over the age of 50 at Marks and Spencer in Merthyr Tydfil. This evening provides an opportunity to meet new people and enjoy fun activities over a coffee and a cake.

Each social evening provides an informal presentation from Age Connects Morgannwg and wider organisations about their services, followed by an activity provided by Artis Community Group and refreshments from M&S. Activities are suitable for all ages and abilities.

Age Connects Morgannwg, is a local independent charity covering RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend, which provides services and support to people over the age of 50 to allow them to live independently. By teaming up with M&S Merthyr, they want to help reduce isolation by providing a safe place for people to come and enjoy the company of other like-minded people.

Previous social evenings has offered presentations from organisations such as Merthyr and the Valleys Mind and Alzheimer's Society, and activities run by Artis Community including, 'Dancing for the Brain', 'Creative Writing', and 'Crafty Card Making'.



Tony, who heard about the event via the befriending service offered by Age Connects Morgannwg, is now a regular attendee and said this about the social evening; *"It was really good. I have been to the sessions and so far I have really enjoyed it. It's a bit of fun and the staff were very helpful and friendly. The more people that attend, the more opportunities there will be to make even more friends."*

The next 50+ Social Evenings are on **11th December** and after Christmas on **22nd January** at M&S Merthyr Tydfil coffee shop.

If you would like more information about the event, you can call **01443 490650** or email **information@acmorgannwg.org.uk**

If you would like to find out more about the service Age Connects Morgannwg provides, you can check out their website at **www.acmorgannwg.org.uk**



Aberfan Canoe Club International Competitions 2018

Once again this year Aberfan Canoe Club has been involved with supporting the Great Britain Canoe Polo Teams in International Competitions. Katie Howes was selected to play for the under 21 Women's team and Elan Winter and Zoe Anthony were appointed Senior Competition Referees.

Earlier this year the National Teams (senior men, senior women, under 21 men and under 21 women) competed in the European Championships in Mechelen in Belgium. After several hard-fought games in this International Competition, the senior men were 8th, both the senior women and the under 21 women were 4th in their groups and the under 21 men were the Gold Medallists.

On now to Welland in Canada for the World Championships and again Great Britain fielded teams in the same categories. Katie Howes was again selected to play for the under 21 women's team.

After a dramatic victory over France and a defeat to Germany the under 21 woman's team progressed through to the top half of the draw in 3rd place,

going on to secure a spot in the semi-finals with a tie against Germany. Despite losing to them in the first round the team put up a stellar performance – the game was an extremely tight one. However, a 4-3 defeat meant that the U21 woman's side had to settle for a 3rd/4th place play off.

Again, a narrow 3-2 defeat to New Zealand meant that they finished the competition in a brilliant 4th place. Final placings were - U21 Men Gold, U21 Women 4th, Senior Men 7th and Senior Women Silver.

Aberfan Canoe Club members Elan Winter and Zoe Anthony refereed throughout the competition and Elan had the honour of being invited to officiate at the Senior Men's final.

Some 31 teams from all over the world participated. Congratulations to everyone.



Dowlais Community Centre
Wednesday 1pm - 3pm

Gellifaelog Primary School
Thursday 1pm - 3pm

Treharris Boys and Girls Club
Friday 9.30am - 11.30am

Gurnos Chestnut Way
Friday 1pm - 3pm

The Parent Network
MERTHYR TYDFIL

PosterMyWall.com

The Parent Network

The Parent Network Merthyr Tydfil is a peer support group that gives parents, carers and grandparents the opportunity to have a voice in their community. We help raise confidence, knowledge and esteem through activities and training. All this is accomplished through good partnership working. The activities we can facilitate but the training, taster sessions etc are all provided by partners. Our groups run weekly during term time for 2 hours during school time.

Parents can choose to do training like paediatric first aid, food hygiene, health and safety or confidence building or they may prefer to learn transferable skills like sewing, knitting or making crafts and do outdoor activities. We can also get in guest speakers, have taster sessions in weaning, potty training, sugar craft or cooking, the choice is yours. We also offer volunteering opportunities and will train and support you to facilitate groups. If you let us know what interests you, we will try to accommodate. All parents, carers, grandparents, kinship carers are welcome and of course you can bring your children.

So why not come along and tell us what you would like to do.

ELITE Paper Solutions



At ELITE Paper Solutions, we see ourselves as a stepping stone, allowing people with disabilities & those at a disadvantage to gain vital experience in the workplace before moving on & progressing within the local communities. To date, we have successfully progressed over 200 people on to further opportunities.

Our most recent project 'Active Inclusion' aims to support people facing complex barriers back into work, through providing a vast range of activities such as basic skills training, volunteering, money management and social skills.

The Active Inclusion Project is available in the following areas:

Merthyr Tydfil Rhondda Cynon Taff Bridgend

In line with the Community Capacity Grant Scheme, we're also providing work opportunities for people with an Autistic Spectrum or Neuro Development Disorder within Merthyr Tydfil and encourage anyone with this condition to engage with our friendly team.

ELITE Paper Solutions assist organisations throughout Wales with the provision of Secure Confidential Shredding, Document Scanning, and Archive Storage. With highly competitive rates, and fully accredited processes, we're able to offer our customers complete peace of mind throughout the entire process of document management.

Since opening our doors in 2015, we've achieved rapid growth and currently service over 400 customers across Wales. In the last few weeks, we've proudly signed a contract with NHS Cwm Taf University Health Board, for the provision of destruction and subsequent recycling of confidential paper waste.

Ian Thomas, Enterprise Manager at ELITE said: "We are delighted to have won this contract. We are dedicated to offering employment, volunteering and training opportunities to people who may be living with challenges in our community, whilst also being able to assist organisations reduce their carbon footprint through the effective recycling of their waste."

If you'd like further information, please contact 01443 692061 or use the 'live chat' function on our website - www.elitepapersolutions.co.uk.

Friends of Merthyr Tydfil Youth Music

For about four decades, The Friends of Merthyr Tydfil Youth Music have worked with the local authority to provide opportunities for our young people to learn and perform in the community.

We are a group of dedicated volunteers who are passionate about the power of music and its impact on people's lives. We work to create resources for the provision of instruments, equipment, lessons, rehearsal and performance facilities. We are grateful for the contributions from individuals, small businesses and large corporations. We also provide opportunities for our youth to attend professional music productions and performances to increase awareness and provide inspiration.

We believe that music changes lives. By promoting the Merthyr Tydfil Youth Music Service and its associated music groups we aim to get more young people involved with, and enjoying music.

If you would like to make a donation or volunteer to help us please contact us via friendsofmytym@gmail.com or **07340 278420**. We need help with a weekly tuck shop, gathering raffle prizes, publicity and fundraising.



Helping you get "Re-connected"

Funded by the ICF Community Capacity Grant Scheme, Safer Merthyr Tydfil's Reconnect Project launched in Merthyr Tydfil on the 1st July 2018. The aim of the project is to assist individuals aged 50+ who are lonely and isolated to get "Reconnected" with their community, building their social interaction and networks by means of interactive, group activities and opportunities to learn or share skills.

We offer a 12-week mentoring commitment delivered by trained volunteers and encourage our clients to get reconnected with local activities already taking place within the community. We cover the whole of Merthyr Tydfil and also deliver activities and hold special events in the North & South of the Borough.

Re-connect activity taster groups

Our 50+ Activity Hub is held in Hope Chapel Basement - Town Centre (Disabled access and facilities,) Mondays 10am-12pm where we have a wide selection of activities including; creative crafts, decoupage, card making, puzzles, pyrography, back to baking, and a seating area for a chat and a cuppa



We have a smaller venue for the more vulnerable and shy clients, this craft group is held in Caerwern Community Hall, Ynysfach, Tuesday 1.30pm till 3.30pm.

For further information or to request a referral form, please contact the Reconnect Project Co-ordinator, Helen McShea on (01685) 353999 or email hm@smt.org.uk

Funded via the ICF Community Capacity Grant Scheme

SMT  **RECONNECT+**

Supporting Safe and Confident Communities
Cefnogi Cymunedau Diogel a Hyderus

Are you age 50+

Alone? Isolated? Lost your confidence?

We can help you

RECONNECT

- 1:1 Mentoring programme
- Support and help to combat isolation
- FREE service across Merthyr Tydfil
- Opportunity to join group activities
- Grow confidence, reconnect with people

GET IN TOUCH!

Tel: 01685 353999
Email: hm@smt.org.uk

SMT Voluntary Action Centre, 89-90 Pontmorlais CF47 8UH

Funded via the ICF Community Capacity Grant Scheme

SMT  **RECONNECT**

Supporting Safe and Confident Communities
Cefnogi Cymunedau Diogel a Hyderus

VOLUNTEER

... and make a difference!

Connecting with and improving lifestyles for anyone 50+ living in Merthyr Tydfil.

Could this be you?

We offer a robust training programme, supervision and out of pocket expenses. We also need creative skills for our group mentoring sessions and events.

Why not join our Volunteering Team?

Applicants must be 18 years or older

GET IN TOUCH!

Tel: 01685 353999
Email: hm@smt.org.uk

SMT Voluntary Action Centre, 89-90 Pontmorlais CF47 8UH

Rural Action Cwm Taf

Rural Action Cwm Taf is part of the Wales Rural Development Plan 2014 – 2020 which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government. The programme works with communities and enterprises located in the Rural Wards of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf namely Bedlinog, Cyfarthfa, Merthyr Vale, Plymouth, Treharris, Vaynor, Maerdy, Rhigos and Ynysybwl. The programme's remit is to:

- Diversify the rural economy
- Improve quality of life in rural communities
- Engage with grass roots communities
- Encourage new innovative ways to sustain rural development.

Rural Action Cwm Taf currently funds six projects all of which have volunteering opportunities for interested individuals.



Connecting with Nature

Basing activities at sites in 4 Rural Wards of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough, Actif Woods and The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW) will engage with local communities by carrying out surveys, habitat and access management, and offering activities and training. This project will engage with rural community groups to encourage access to local green spaces, to benefit the health of the landscape, individuals and the community. Delivered by The Small Woods Association & Wildlife Trust. ActifWoodsMerthyr@smallwoods.org.uk



Countryside Guardians

The project will work in the rural wards of Vaynor, Cyfarthfa and Bedlinog. Through volunteering activities the project will also provide accredited training in countryside management to cement the skills learnt and improve community confidence, and provide opportunities for the beneficiaries to

improve employment prospects. Delivered by Keep Wales Tidy. Jake.Castle@keepwalestidy.cymru

Cwm Taf Place Based Digital Support

The Cwm Taf place based digital support project supports community groups in rural wards and addresses the limited access of IT, lack of IT skills to address community needs and the lack of ability to make effective use of IT to increase grant income and access on line resources. The project will provide IT workshops and support community groups by upskilling leaders of community and voluntary organisations and active citizens in subjects such as On line funding and fundraising; Online governance and access to information, advice and guidance; IT tools to support strategic, business and financial planning and Web based tools for community engagement and communication including using social media. Delivered by Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil. Frances.barry@vamt.net

Supporting Rural Assets & Services

This project will provide flexible, tailored support to community groups who may be looking to take on an asset within the rural communities of Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) and Merthyr. The project will engage with organisations that wish to consider or undertake a transfer and deliver Action Plans which will review and highlight areas in community groups which require support such as: governance; board skills and experience; financial management systems, policies, business model, equal opportunities, community support, and work with

the group to gain the skills to ensure they are ready to undertake an asset transfer. **Natalie.Sargent@coalfields-regen.org.uk**

Taf Bargoed Catchment

This is a community project which will work to engage landowners, Commoners, local residents and schools with their river catchment and learn about the importance of healthy rivers and the biodiversity within them. A skills, engagement and training project, surveys will be undertaken with Natural Resources Wales to identify issues in the catchment as well as a river restoration course for volunteers involved in the project. Delivered by The South East Wales Rivers Trust. **Tonyreesuk@googlemail.com**



TIPical Valleys

Through a two year-long phase of public engagement, education, active citizenship, research and sympathetic community management, the project will bring together people from local communities with specialists from a wide cross section of stakeholder organisations and encourage them to work together and take part in a series of walks, talks, surveys and inspirational activities and experiences which will embrace, promote and interpret mineral spoil localities. Communities will

be encouraged to form interest groups around mineral spoil sites and work with the project to change the perception of rural Tip land areas. Delivered by The British Institute for Geological Conservation. **TIPicalvalleys@gmail.com**

To find out more on how the Rural Action Cwm Taf programme might be able to help you please contact the Rural Action Cwm Taf Implementation Officer on **01685 725467** or email **Ruralaction@merthyr.gov.uk**

A further call for grant applications will be issued shortly.

Community Wellbeing Group at the Leisure Trust

The "Community Wellbeing Group" is the product of consultations with groups, individuals, residents and agencies within Merthyr Tydfil. The group is the community arm of Wellbeing@Merthyr (Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust). We are a volunteer run group whose main purpose is to interact with people who are or are at risk of suffering from isolation and loneliness. While older people are at most risk, all ages can suffer so our group is open to all.

Activities are run in the various venues we have across the borough. Our current activities include kurling, boccia, tennis, lunch clubs and gardening.



If you are interested or know someone who may be interested in joining our group please contact Merthyr Central Library on **01685 725 258** and ask to speak to someone regarding the Wellbeing group.



Successful Fundraiser for Merthyr Tydfil Community Trust



There was a packed room at West End Bowls Club recently for a fundraising quiz in aid of the Merthyr Tydfil Community Trust.

The evening which was organised by VAMT staff raised a total of £1,187 which is more than the previous occasions the quiz was held. Twenty one teams entered including a team which included both Gerald Jones MP and Dawn Bowden AM. Congratulations

to the winners "West End Gold" who claimed the magnificent trophy.

Les Byard, Chair of the Community Trust said *"Thank you to all those who participated in what was a fun evening and to all the local businesses that donated raffle prizes and auction prizes."*



The Trust which gives small grants to small groups that operate in the County Borough intends to make a call for applications in January. To ensure you receive an application form when available - please contact **VAMT on 01685 353900** or email **laura.johnson@vamt.net**

Volunteer Fair for Young People at The College, Merthyr Tydfil

VAMT organised a successful Volunteer Fayre at The College earlier in the autumn. The aim of the Fayre was to offer voluntary organisations a chance to promote their services as well as recruit volunteers. The event was open to all schools in the county borough of Merthyr Tydfil as well as college students and members of the public, it was well attended with 23 organisations present on the day.



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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 (March 2019) is 20 February 2019.