



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

Annual Report

2019-20



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.



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www.vamt.net



Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Volunteer Centre Merthyr Tydfil



@VAMTtweets
@VAMTvolunteer
@CwmTafCC

Voluntary Action Centre, 89-90 Pontmorlais,
High Street, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8UH
Tel: 01685 353900 • enquiries@vamt.net

Charity Registration Number 1118403
Company Registration Number 6058360



Gwirfoddoli Cymru
Volunteering Wales



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



FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR AND CHIEF OFFICER

We are pleased to introduce the twenty-third Annual Report of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.

This year felt like one of consolidation with a much smaller staff team than in recent years but also one of refresh and developing new initiatives. VAMT continues to strive to support our members and demand continues for our core services, that is, volunteering support, governance support, funding support and our representational role. Our partners have continued to fund the Community Coordinators and a range of grant schemes from the Welsh Government Integrated Care Fund. Our networking role continues on both a local and regional basis with local networks and events continuing to be well supported.

We were delighted to support the development of the new “Tacking Loneliness and Isolation” project during the year and expending our level of support for the Calon Las Community Hub in Gurnos.

VAMT continues to engage with regional activity such as the Regional Partnership Board and the Public Services Board. This now encompasses collaboration with Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations as well as Interlink RCT following the changes in the regional boundary. We were also pleased to administer the Comic Relief Community Fund grant scheme for the region.

As Chair and Chief Officer, we are committed to ensuring that we remain an effective organisation. We can only achieve this with a committed team of trustees and staff and we would like to 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 and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. Also, thanks to Wales Council for Voluntary Action for their continued support.



Anne Roberts, Chair



Ian Davy, Chief Officer

FACTS AND FIGURES

Total number of instances of advice/support for organisations/stakeholders

1,792

Number of volunteers supported

223

Number of Third Sector organisations provided with direct advice/support

177

Number of Third Sector organisations referred to specialist support

4

Number of participants at training courses provided

122

Amount of funding provided through grants schemes administered by VAMT

£483,797

funded

88 projects

Amount of funding received by Third Sector organisations following support

£234,664

funded

15 projects

Number of attendees at forums and events organised by VAMT

565

Total membership

280

Aim 1 - Enable third sector organisations to deliver services, improve in all aspects of their work and become resilient

- **Governance support** has been provided to 47 organisations. Detailed support has been provided to 8 organisations on issues such as governance options and risk, constitutional matters, legal structures, monitoring and evaluation. Advice and guidance was given to one organisation on a confidential basis. A report was compiled over a period of nine months with extensive recommendations. The report was presented to their Trustee Board and was accepted.
 - **Funding support** has been provided to 54 different organisations with 7 organisations receiving more detailed support. 33 funding opportunities were promoted on the VAMT blog and social media.
 - Published four copies of **Inform magazine**
 - **Social Media**
 - ◆ VAMT website had 3,052 users visit the site and there were 4,932 page views.
 - ◆ Published 130 posts on the VAMT News Blog - there were 1,848 users and 2,633 page views.
 - ◆ VAMT Twitter has 1,867 followers. In the year there were 43,928 tweets impressions (reach), 135 new followers and 259 mentions.
 - ◆ VAMT Facebook has 478 followers, 466 likes and there were 202 posts published.
 - **Coronavirus Response**
 - ◆ In response to the Covid emergency, VAMT staff moved to home working on 18th March 2020.
 - ◆ Developed a help and support services spreadsheet indicating offers of help and support from third sector and local organisations. By 31st March, this contained 66 services including shopping, befriending, prescription delivery, food delivery, help advice and support. This was used extensively by all agencies across the borough to find third sector support for their clients, tenants and general enquirers.
 - ◆ Between 18th March and 28th March, 8 general briefings on updated support were distributed to VAMT members and other key contacts to enable them to stay abreast of developments in the sector.
 - ◆ Developed and published initial guidance on Covid for local community schemes; GDPR updates, risk assessments and a model volunteer agreement.
 - ◆ Volunteering opportunities were promoted and recruited.
- A full summary of the VAMT Covid response will be highlighted in the next Annual Report.
- Supported the **Merthyr Tydfil Food Poverty Network** who prioritised developing community fridge /food pantry initiatives. Two collaborative bids were submitted, both of which were successful, to develop food pantry provision, across the borough.
 - Acted as the lead CVC in administering the **Comic Relief Community Fund** across Merthyr Tydfil, RCT and Bridgend. 25 applications were received totalling £197,000. A panel was convened by VAMT with representation from the trustees of the three CVCs in the region. 20 applications were approved and all of the £145,000 available was dispersed. VAMT is responsible for the administration and collecting the monitoring reports for the projects.
 - Facilitated initial discussions with **Lloyds Foundation** and local stakeholders. Following this Lloyds confirmed that Merthyr Tydfil will be one of their 6 selected areas in which they will provide additional support in the UK and is the only one in Wales. A three day visit by Lloyds Foundation took place in November where their staff visited several local organisations and also attended VAMT's AGM. The next step was to convene a larger workshop to include all partners to identify priorities and agree a way forward. However, the event planned for March was postponed due to the pandemic. Contact

has been maintained and Merthyr Tydfil is still a priority area for them. The commitment is to a resourced, long-term (5-10 years) development, focusing on locally led priorities.

- Assessed applications for **TSSW Landfill Tax grant scheme** for the two bidding rounds during the year.
- Administered the revised **Community Capacity Grant Scheme** for small and micro grants which was promoted across the membership of both VAMT and Interlink. 20 applications were awarded totalling £60,000.
- Administered a **Dementia Community Capacity Grant Scheme** which spans two financial years. 10 projects have been introduced via the scheme and will deliver services throughout the Cwm Taf region.
- Managed a **Cwm Taf Capital Grants Fund** worth £70,000 resulting in agreement of 11 projects being able to progress.
- Continued to administer the ICF funding for **Befriending Services**. 5 projects were supported, the RVS Good Neighbour Scheme, Volunteering Matters Welcome Friends Project, Valleys Kids – Keeping Connected with your Community, Age Connects Morgannwg – Reaching Out Project and Safer Merthyr Tydfil – Reconnect 50.
- Supported the **Funders Fayre** organised by the MP and the AM for Merthyr Tydfil. There were 6 direct enquiries at the event which were followed up.
- Collaborated with Interlink and BAVO in facilitating the **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Social Value Network**. The April event was held in Merthyr Tydfil and 71 people attended.
- Supported five organisations with **financial accounting**.
- Day to day **financial support** provided to two organisations on a formal contractual basis.



- Involved in delivering the **Cwm Taf Crystal Trophy Awards** which recognise the contribution to well-being by third sector organisations. Safer Merthyr Tydfil Reconnect 50 project took the first prize of £1,000 plus Crystal Trophy. Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association won the third prize of £500 for their Fit and Fed (Holiday Hunger) Project.



Crystal Trophy Awards



Reconnect 50 • 1st place



Fit and Fed • 3rd place

Aim 2 - Strengthen representation and influence of third sector organisations

- Facilitated six meetings of the **Health and Wellbeing Forum** which were attended by 173 participants.
- Facilitated the **Merthyr Tydfil Food Poverty Network** which met on 3 occasions, focussing on actions which have resulted in a social media campaign on take up of free school meals, school uniform grants and increased joint working with social landlords to enable "Fit and Fed" to be delivered across 10 areas in the borough.
- Co-facilitated and co-delivered three meetings of the **Merthyr Tydfil 50+ Forum** with Merthyr Tydfil CBC. About 60 people attended each meeting.
- Facilitated the **Cwm Taf Dementia Care Providers Forum** jointly with Interlink.
- Facilitated the **Cwm Taf Carers Providers Forum** jointly with Interlink. 3 meetings were convened and attended by 39 people.
- Supported the **Environment and Green Spaces Network** to organise a field trip to several environment / conservation projects in the Borough. There were 25 participants.
- Led on the **"Tackling Loneliness and Isolation"** objective in the Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan which reports directly to the Cwm Taf Public Services Board. Arising from that work developed a shared **strategic approach to "Social Prescribing"** in collaboration with Public Health and other partners. This document was endorsed by the Public Services Board as well as the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board.

Aim 3 - Enhance volunteering and wellbeing through participation and community action

- 223 potential **volunteers** were supported with at least 97 being placed. There was a sharp increase in the number of individuals interested and being placed into volunteering towards the end of March due to lockdown. 21 people were given general information regarding volunteering and 41 people were placed between 18th and 31st March.
- Weekly **outreach** at the local Job Centre and Merthyr Tydfil College.
- Supported 16 organisations directly with **volunteer recruitment** issues.
- Supported 14 organisations with issues of **good practice in volunteering**.
- Worked with the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum to deliver the **Youth Led Grants Scheme**. Seven projects were awarded a total of £9,760.
- Training and awareness session held on the **Volunteering Wales** website attended by 13 organisations.
- Two meetings were held of the Cwm Taf **Managing Volunteers Network**.
- A vibrant **Volunteering Fair** was held at Merthyr Tydfil College in September which 25 organisations attended.





Calon Las Community Hub

- Two outreach events were held as part of **Volunteers Week**, one at Tesco's and the other at Marks and Spencer.
- As part of VAMT's **Employee Volunteering scheme**, two local organisations were supported.
- The **Community Coordinators** project continued on a Cwm Taf basis in partnership with Interlink.
 - ◆ Issued 12 monthly bulletins
 - ◆ Distributed bulletins to over 900 contacts across all sectors.
 - ◆ Signposted 693 individuals to third sector services and activities. 32 were specifically related to Covid.
 - ◆ Referrals received for 548 individuals for issues ranging from benefit checks to social support. 36 referrals were specifically related to Covid.
 - ◆ Held 11 screening / immunisation sessions at GP Practices.
 - ◆ Held 12 myth busting sessions providing information to 300 people.
 - ◆ Supported British Liver Trust to promote and host their "Love your Liver" roadshow at VAMT – over 50 people attended and were provided with a free scan and advice.
 - ◆ Brokered Alzheimer's Society dementia support staff to attend new weekly dementia clinic at St Johns Medical Practice.
- ◆ Worked in partnership with Diabetes UK and Cwmbach Diabetes Support Group to develop a new "Living with Diabetes" initiative in south Cynon Valley.
- ◆ Delivered 6 presentations to statutory sector teams and one to BSc Health inequalities students.
- ◆ Made 214 referrals to third sector and statutory services. 24 referrals were made specifically in relation to Covid.
- ◆ Brokered 34 sessions on behalf of third sector orgs to enable them to improve engagement with primary care / health and raise awareness of their services directly with patients.
- ◆ Made 33 referrals for benefit checks for income maximisation.
- ◆ Made 17 referrals to Care & Repair for home safety checks.
- Supported the **Gurnos Community Zone** implementation and continued to employ an Information & Advice Officer at the Calon Las Community Hub. In August, this was augmented by the appointment of a part time Community Development Officer. They have:
 - ◆ Supported individuals by making 40 signposts to services/activities within the area and making 6 onward referrals to other organisations/projects.
 - ◆ Brokered in 12 new services to the hub.
 - ◆ Organised and facilitated a Dementia Cupcake day, raising £140 for the Alzheimer's Society.

- ◆ Supported Volunteers Week and other initiatives such as Adult Learners' Week.
- ◆ Supported the organisation of the Community Hub launch event in September.
- ◆ In partnership with the Dog's Trust organised two free Health Check sessions.
- ◆ In partnership with 3G's Youth Project hosted a Christmas event for the community. Over 100 attendees including 80 children.
- ◆ Organised Santa's Grotto for the Gurnos residents.
- ◆ A Facebook page for Calon Las has been developed to promote the services available at the Community Hub and to encourage more dialogue with the local community. 298 followers have been achieved.
- ◆ A Community Litter Pick event was organised and involved 46 people.
- ◆ Held a consultation process around the proposed expansion of the Hub.



Tackling Loneliness and Isolation Project

- Implemented the **Tackling Loneliness and Isolation Project** in October which provides for a development officer to work with communities in Merthyr Tydfil and RCT. The project has:
 - ◆ Helped set up a Dowlais Men's Shed project with 6 men.
 - ◆ Set up the Calon Las Men's Indoor Activity Group supported by Keir Hardie Health Park and The Gurnos Men's Group.
 - ◆ Set up a new over 50's group called The Golden Girls based in Caedraw.
 - ◆ Delivered a Dementia Friends training session to the Merthyr Historical Society and four dementia friends training sessions to Merthyr Valleys Homes. 39 staff and community members participated and completed the training.
 - ◆ Supported the Upper Rhondda community consultation in February.
 - ◆ Delivered a Indoor curling taster session for the Taff Ely 50+ forum attended by 27 community members.
 - ◆ Delivered a Meet and Greet community consultation at Gilfach Goch Day Centre attended by 20 community members.
 - ◆ Delivered a taster event at Ystrad Rhondda OAP hall attended by 16 community members.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

	2020			(As restated) 2019
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	202,036	865,551	1,067,587	686,003
Other trading activities	73,709	-	73,709	79,364
Investment income	1,104	-	1,104	2,218
Other income	6,127	-	6,127	3,246
Total income	282,976	865,551	1,148,527	770,831
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	(291,256)	(784,186)	(1,075,442)	(970,776)
Total Expenditure	(291,256)	(784,186)	(1,075,442)	(970,776)
Gains/losses on investment assets	(8,373)	-	(8,373)	-
Net (expenditure)/income	(16,653)	81,365	64,712	(199,945)
Transfers between funds	36,214	(36,214)	-	-
Net movement in funds	19,561	45,151	64,712	(199,945)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	426,951	41,824	468,775	668,720
Total funds carried forward	446,512	86,975	533,487	468,775

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

	2020	(As restated) 2019
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tangible fixed assets	123,838	148,934
Investments	66,627	-
	190,465	148,934
Current Assets		
Debtors	192,685	105,209
Cash at bank and in hand	339,144	369,234
	531,829	474,443
Creditors:		
Amounts falling due within one year	(188,807)	(154,602)
Net Current Assets	343,022	319,841
Net Assets	533,487	468,775
Funds of the Charity:		
Restricted income funds		
Restricted funds	86,975	41,824
Unrestricted income funds		
Unrestricted funds	446,512	426,951
Total Funds	533,487	468,775

BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS

Board Members

Anne Roberts Chair
Edward Dawson (from 20/11/19) Vice Chair (from 3/2/20)
Helen Thomas Vice Chair (until 3/2/20)
Paul Gray Treasurer
Nicola Mahoney
Mark Ward
Kayleigh Nor-Val
Michelle Jones
Amber Lewis (until 20/11/19)
Michael Ronan (from 20/11/19)
Brian Lewis (co-opted)
Suzanne Davies (co-opted)

Staff Members

Carol Hindley Administration and Finance Manager
Ceri Samuel Community Zone Information and Advice Officer (Gurnos)
Claire Williams Community Coordinator
Deanne Rebane Community Coordinator
Frances Barry Volunteering Officer
Hilary Edwards Senior Development Officer
Ian Davy Chief Officer
Laura Johnson Administration and Finance Officer
Ryan Bevan Tackling Loneliness Development Officer (from September 2019)
Sharon Richards Health and Well Being Manager
Susan Jones Community Development Worker (Gurnos)