

February 2022

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • *Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful*

There's more than one way to show you care ...

Whether it's your community you care about, a cause close to your heart which you are passionate about, or you care for yourself by finding different things to do, volunteering can make a huge difference to people's lives. Things have been difficult over the last two years for everyone. As we slowly (hopefully!) make our way out of this pandemic, organisations in Merthyr Tydfil continue to deliver their services and develop new initiatives that need volunteers to support them.

This edition of Inform includes information from many local and national organisations who are looking for volunteers, and shares experiences of those who have volunteered and benefitted from the services of volunteers. Please share with anyone you think might be interested – contact Frances Barry, VAMT's Volunteering Officer on 07958 132822 or email frances.barry@vamt.net for more information on any of these vacancies plus many more opportunities.

If you enjoy reading about what's going on, you may like to watch this video of groups in action:



Focus on... volunteering

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

Welcome to the February edition of Inform in 2022. Our aim is to provide our members with up to date news and information and we welcome contributions and feedback from all readers.

Gellideg Foundation Group

The GFG was founded in 1998 when mothers came together on Gellideg to do something for their children. Since then we have grown into a nationally recognised charity that places people at the heart of all we do. We are here for everyone in Merthyr Tydfil. For years we have worked across the borough out of draughty inaccessible premises, but a few months ago we moved into our new Wellbeing Centre and are at last able to offer the support and joined up services that we have always wanted to deliver. We believe that social justice occurs when change happens at a personal, social and structural level and we strive to achieve this change through advocacy, service provision and personal and societal empowerment.

Our growing programme of support helps people across the age ranges to reach their potential and achieve wellbeing. We are doing this by developing programmes that tackle economic inactivity, environmental degradation, social exclusion, learning and skills deficit and ill health.

Our weekly programme currently includes: wellbeing activities (walking group, gentle exercise, dance, tea dance, luncheon club, friendship group), early years development (play groups, speech and language classes, Mums Matter, Henry courses), community activities (bingo, environmental group, craft classes), food and nutrition (pantry, cooking classes), financial support (CAB advice, assistance with grants and basic essentials), youth support (various clubs and groups, sport lending library, nightly sessions). Activities are delivered by GFG staff and partners. We are at the start of an exciting new phase of our journey and are in conversation with a wide range of partners. Join us to develop this future together, we are needs led, flexible and responsive to change. As our motto states *"The future is ours to create."*

At Gellideg Foundation Group, we have lots of volunteers who help us weekly, some for short periods and others for long stretches of time. We can accommodate all time commitments. People come to us in different ways, they contact us directly, some visit the centre, others might have been coming to sessions and have developed skills to deliver classes. Some volunteers are signposted here from other agencies and others are looking to gain work experience. We are very flexible and help people to find what position suits them best.



Gellideg Foundation Group (continued)

As we settle into our new Centre and as the Covid restrictions lift, each week we are starting new wellbeing sessions to support the community across Merthyr Tydfil.

Currently we have vacancies for volunteers in these groups:

Tuesday	10 – 12pm: crochet and craft class	1 – 3pm tea dance
Wednesday	11 – 2pm: walking group	2 – 4pm community bingo
Thursday	9 – 11 and 11.30-1.00pm playgroups	
Friday	12 – 2.30 luncheon club	



Come and join us, we'd love to welcome you here. One of the ways to wellbeing is to give your time to others. Why not start looking after yourself whilst helping others smile?

Fiona's Story

I'm a retired District Nurse and before that a teacher for 20 years. I retired from nursing on health grounds but still felt I wanted to do something with my time, something that I would enjoy and I also wanted to put something back into the community.



I registered as a volunteer through the British Red Cross at the start of the Pandemic. I had an email in October 2021 asking if I would like to volunteer at the Gellideg Foundation Group and this is when I started getting involved in the Food Pantry.

I'm the first point of contact as people come into the Centre for the weekly Luncheon Club. Prior to my volunteering at the Club, I helped out at the Food Pantry. In the lunch club I meet and greet, take money and take orders for the following week, serve tea and coffee, help with serving the food and clean the room after lunch club has finished. I also connect with people who attend the club and I also put quizzes together for people to get involved with at the Club.

I enjoy it, it's a nice place to volunteer. It makes me feel useful and more fulfilled as after I finished work I felt redundant. It gives me routine.

I feel I am making a difference to the community and its members as the Luncheon Club is well attended and people keep coming back. It gives members a chance to chat as this is the only time they come out of the house.

It's rewarding, fun and beneficial.

Salma's Story

I started at the GFG April 2021 through signing up as a volunteer with the British Red Cross, BRC had been involved the Foundation providing volunteers and this is how my initial volunteering started, as most people had gone back to work and they needed new volunteers.

My main role is helping with the Food Pantry so that includes the delivery of the food, stacking shelves, packing food bags for families ready for delivery. I think it's important that people are made to feel comfortable and at ease when they come to the Food Pantry.

At the start of the Pandemic I knew that there would be a need for volunteers and lots of people would need support. I wanted to be part of the community, it kept me busy and I love being busy. It's good for the soul. I just wanted to give something back and I wanted a purpose. It makes me feel good and no matter how tired I am, I always feel rejuvenated after doing my volunteering. I hope that I have made a difference to other people's lives.

I think people who don't volunteer are missing out. It makes you feel alive. It's the best job in the world !!!



Make a new friend while attending gigs and events – volunteer as a Gig Buddy!



Gig Buddies is a befriending scheme that pairs up adults with a learning disability and/or autism with a volunteer who shares the same interests so they can go to gigs and events together.

Many people with a learning disability find it difficult to attend events, especially at night, because of lack of support and no one to go with who loves the same things as they do.

As a Gig Buddy you can use your love of music, the arts, sport and culture to help somebody else in your community to socialise and enjoy new experiences. 'Gigs' can be anything from concerts, festivals and nightclubs to sports matches, museums, or a countryside walk.

Gig Buddies is about fun, friendship, and enjoying new experiences. But it also addresses serious issues such as loneliness and isolation, whilst improving people's confidence, independence and wellbeing.

Gerome Jackson has had a Gig Buddy for nearly a year, and in this time they have enjoyed trips together to the British Motor Museum, Shakespeare's Birthplace, visits to garden centres and nights out at Cardiff's LGBTQ+ bars.

Gerome said: *"Gig Buddies is good because it helps me to access things that I previously didn't do before I had a Gig Buddy".*

To find out more and apply to be a Gig Buddy visit www.ffrindiaugigiau.org.uk. You can also email Kai Jones at gigbuddies@ldw.org.uk or phone 07538 886509.



Being a Gig Buddy is summed up well by volunteer Gareth Pahl: *"Volunteering as a Gig Buddy doesn't feel like volunteering at all. It's like being given a new friend!"*

Cancer Aid

Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil was one of the organisations nominated for the Queen's Award in 2012. This is in recognition of the outstanding commitment and dedication that our volunteers give to their local cancer charity. At present we have over 60 volunteers, whose age ranges from 20 to 84.



Volunteers make such an important contribution to their communities, so often without any recognition for the outstanding work that they do. In such difficult economic times that the country is facing now due to the pandemic, their volunteering efforts are even more valuable. Tracey Burke, Principal Manager of Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil said "the amazing work that all our volunteers give to the organisation to help those whose lives have been touched by cancer and their families is outstanding they have stood by us through the most difficult times the country has faced. They truly are a lifeline to some of the most vulnerable people in our community. We are so grateful for their on-going support and cannot thank them enough. We hope that 2022 will shine a light on all aspects of volunteering so organisations like us can recruit more for volunteers to help us to help our community".

If you would like to join us as a volunteer driver, volunteer receptionist, charity shop volunteer or a volunteer who likes to fundraise, we would love to hear from you please contact us on:

Tel: 01685 379633 Email info@canceraidmerthyr.co.uk

You can also keep up to date with us via our face book page  Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil.

Hope Pantry

Hope Pantry is a food pantry based in the centre of Merthyr Tydfil. We provide a membership-based service for people who live in the borough of Merthyr Tydfil who need to make tight budgets stretch further.

Members pay £3.50 per week and shop in the pantry, on average having £15-£20 worth of items each week.

We rely on volunteers to help run the pantry, volunteers can offer anything from 2 hours per week, and would go on a rota to volunteer.

Volunteering roles currently on a Monday and Friday can include any of the following:

- Collecting food from local supermarkets
- Receiving delivery of food and stocking items
- Checking stock levels and rotating stock
- Labelling stock

On our Pantry days (Tuesday and Friday) volunteers may assist with the running of pantry by:

- Doing pre and post pantry checks – (Temperature of fridges/freezers)
- Checking people in – use of the computer system.
- Handling money
- Making tea/coffee for members and having a general chat
- Supporting members to choose their items
- Restocking shelves
- Asking pantry members to comply with any relevant covid measures



What do we offer?

- A friendly and supportive place to volunteer, where the kettle is always on!
- Flexibility – rota basis, we will work with you for a time that suits.
- The opportunity to build your skills and knowledge in a wide area of activities.
- Volunteer hours can be logged, and assist with your CV for further development opportunities
- Tempo time credit system to earn rewards for volunteering.
- Mileage paid (where appropriate) for collection of food from supermarkets.

All volunteers will need to complete an application form and full training will be provided.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Heidi who would love to chat, on:
07790 801686 or
hopepantry@hopemerthyr.org.uk

Amanda's Story

I previously volunteered for the Foodbank at the Salvation Army but that closed at the start of the pandemic, I found out that they needed volunteers for the Pantry so I've been volunteering here since May 2021.

When I first started at Pantry I was helping people check what they products they had in their bags and that they understood the way the Pantry worked but now I am doing the computer work so logging people into the system and taking payments.

I feel like I'm doing something worthwhile and it's very much needed in the Community.

I feel I make a difference to the people coming into the Pantry as I make sure they are made to feel welcome and as a team of volunteers we make sure that we provide a service that is very much needed in Merthyr. Volunteering makes me feel useful and happy.

Hope Pantry (continued)

Debra's Story

I do a bit of everything, I welcome people, ask them to fill in questionnaires, introduce them to pantry if they are first time visitors.

I was previously a teacher but finished due to ill health. I registered as a Pantry member 2 years ago at the start of the pandemic, my volunteering followed on from me being a pantry member.

I'm quite new to volunteering and started approx. 3 weeks ago. I suffer with anxiety and depression and I felt that I needed something to try and encourage me to build up my confidence again.

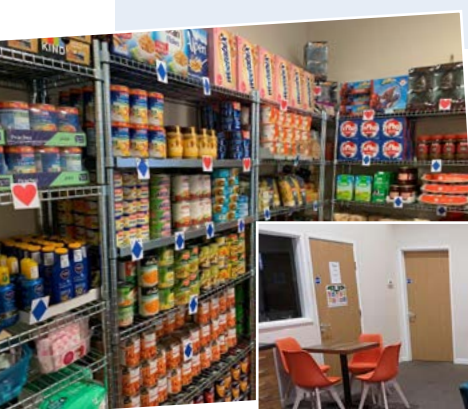
Because I have been coming to Pantry regularly, I felt so at ease here, I was comfortable and the staff made me feel so welcome, volunteering felt like the next step for me.

I also serve tea and coffee, help out in the 'free' room which is a room that allows pantry members to have free fruit, veg, bread and other products. I also help people to bag their items and clean the baskets after they have been used.

It's getting me out of the house as I wouldn't go out otherwise. I can now come out of the house on my own, I few months ago I wouldn't have been able to do this.

I enjoy being a volunteer as I can share my experience to others that use the Pantry. I can tell them about the products and what they can cook with them which is huge help as some members have never cooked with fresh produce.

Volunteering helps me to help others.



Judy's story

I moved to Merthyr from Wilshire in 2019 just before the start of the Pandemic so volunteering has been a great way for me to make friends. It's got me out of the house and it's given me a focus.

I attend Hope Church and it was mentioned that they needed volunteers. I wanted to help others especially those who are struggling and needed some support.

I welcome people, make tea and coffee and also volunteer in the general pantry as well as the 'free' room where free fresh produce is given to members, I also help out with the computer work so I fit in wherever I am needed,

I like helping and supporting the members who use the Pantry, people are struggling and with limited jobs on offer and those in employment but on low wages, the Pantry is helping people in very difficulty circumstances.

Volunteering helps both community members and also the volunteers who provide that support.



Theresa's Story

I started with the Food Pantry in June 2021, I got involved as I heard that they needed volunteers and I wanted to be part of it.

I like the social aspect of it as I struggle with talking to others and it was nice to be listened to and encouraged as a volunteer. I feel my confidence has grown and my self esteem has improved, I feel part of a team.

I think for the people using the Pantry it can sometimes be daunting, my role is to make sure the shelves are stacked accordingly so things are easier to see for people using the Pantry.

It gets me out the house and makes me feel good helping others



News from Trinity

Trinity Childcare & Family Centre (Aberfan) continues to support the National Lottery Community Fund funded 'Invest Local Ynysowen' (ILY) programme, delivered through Building Communities Trust (BCT).

This is only made possible because volunteers give of their precious time to contribute to making a difference in the community of Ynysowen. As the fundholder for the ILY programme, Trinity strives to ensure that the various investments and activities delivered by the ILY projects contribute to the community's 'Driving Change' plan, which includes value for money and realising intended benefits.

The projects currently up and running with the support of ILY funding include:

- Taff Rocks
- Afon-Gwreiddiau
- Tackling Loneliness and Isolation
- Family Engagement/Play
- Youth Factor
- Ad hoc requests for support from Ynysowen community groups



We are always looking for more volunteers! This year will see the return of the Ynysowen Community Carnival to coincide with HM The Queen's platinum jubilee celebrations. Individuals or groups willing to be a part of this should look out for more details on the Invest Local Ynysowen page on Facebook, or contact us for more information at ILYnysowen@gmail.com

In addition, Trinity Childcare & Family Centre is looking for more volunteer trustees to help the charity deliver on its charitable objectives and long-term aspirations. For more information and a trustee application pack, please contact us at info@trinitychildcare.wales

News from our Osteoporosis Support Group

Well! 2 years have passed since our last meeting. For most of our members, it has been an overwhelming, anxious, and isolated time, with a strange mix of sadness, disappointments, and, for some, new discoveries. We have certainly been forced to think about what really matters in life, conclusion being how much we need each other.

I always feel that setting goals can bring a sense of control when things seem chaotic and have given a lot of thought to our new beginnings in the Spring of 2022.



More than ever, we need to reach out to as many as possible, and our planning for the year ahead must be consistent with our aims and objectives. My committee work hard (we are all volunteers), and we will continue to try to combat the isolation and loneliness so many of us feel, when suffering with debilitating chronic conditions.

We have done an extensive survey of all our members, and the results show that our members not only suffer with Osteoporosis, but an array of other conditions as well.

News from our Osteoporosis Support Group (continued)

To this end we hope to open up the group to include a variety of other conditions, so that our annual programme can be inclusive, and reach a wider audience, thus making our hard work more accessible and relevant.

We have experienced what has been described as *"the worst public health crisis for a generation"*. We must now look onward and upward to better times ahead, and can resume our pro-active approach to our own wellbeing.

We will need many hands to the pump if we are to continue to be the efficient, effective voice we have been in the past.

I reiterate my mantra. *"Volunteers are not paid because they are worthless, they are not paid because they are priceless."*

Watch this space! More information will be circulated in February, until then stay safe and take care.

Judith Smallwood Chair, Merthyr Tydfil Support Group.



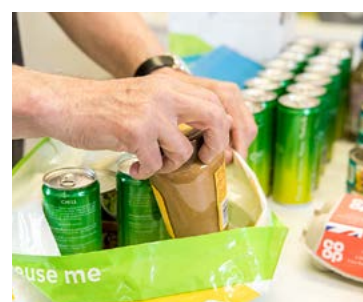
VOLUNTEERS WANTED



HOME
SHOPPING
VOLUNTEER



ADMIN, BOOK
SHOP, GYM,
CAFE, GARDEN
VOLUNTEERS



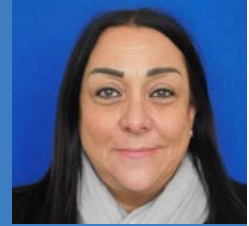
STEPHENS AND GEORGE CHARITABLE TRUST
NEED VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE A FEW HOURS
TO SPARE TO HELP OTHERS, MEET NEW
PEOPLE AND GIVE BACK TO THE
COMMUNITY.



IF YOU CAN HELP US PLEASE CALL
01685 375331 FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you are interested in finding out more about any of these roles contact Frances Barry at Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
frances.barry@vamt.net or telephone 07958132822.

Fran can offer a friendly chat and give you much more information about opportunities which are out there – why not give her a call?



Volunteering Wales is a digital volunteering platform from Third Sector Support Wales.

The website link for Merthyr Tydfil is

<https://merthirtydfil.volunteering-wales.net>



Whether your organisation is looking to recruit volunteers or if you are thinking of volunteering and would like more information around registering on the website, Fran can also help you.

If you're a Volunteer Manager, or have responsibilities for volunteers within your organisation why not join the **Volunteer Managers' Forum**? The Forum was previously run jointly between VAMT and Interlink but from April, VAMT will be hosting the Volunteer Managers' Forum purposely for third sector organisations in the Merthyr Tydfil area. If your organisation covers both Merthyr and RCT then you are still more than welcome to come along.

The Forum is a friendly, informal group that provides peer support and discusses issues and themes of mutual interest around Volunteer management. The Forum will run 3 times a year with the first meeting to be held in June, to mark Volunteers' Week.

If you are interested in attending this Forum or would like more information then please contact Frances Barry on **07958 132822** or email frances.barry@vamt.net



Volunteers Needed in Merthyr Tydfil!

Do you have what it takes to be a Home-Start Volunteer? Are you keen to help parents and children in your community?

Please contact us to start your journey and start transforming lives in Merthyr Tydfil.

Contact us today to find out more.

info@homestartcymru.org.uk

Charity no. Rhif elusen 1105577
Suite A, Crown Buildings, Hall Street, AMMANFORD, SA18 3BW

Angen Gwirfoddolwyr ym Merthyr Tudful!

Oes gennych chi'r hyn sydd ei angen i fod yn wirfoddolwr Home-Start? Ydych chi'n awyddus i helpu rhieni a phlant yn eich cymuned?

Cysylltwch â ni i gychwyn ar eich taith gan drawsnewid bywydau ym Merthyr Tudful.

Cysylltwch â ni heddiw i gael gwybod mwy.

**HOME
START**
Cymru



Mentor Volunteer Role – Reaching Out Project

Mentor Befriending - in this role you will support an older person on a one to one basis. They will be someone who has identified as being socially isolated or emotionally lonely or need chaperoning into the community.

Volunteer Drivers

In this vital role to our communities we are looking for volunteers that want to make a difference to the lives of people that live in RCT & Merthyr Tydfil to a range of different appointments and activities. The role involves supporting local residents to get out and about to the following:

- Trips for food or shopping
- Social outings
- Health related trips
- Community groups or clubs
- Recreational or sports activities
- Visits to friends or relatives



We're looking for **volunteers** to join our new **telephone befriending service**, Friend in Need. By volunteering for 30 minutes a week, you can make a **real difference** to a lonely and isolated older person's day.

For further information, please contact:
www.agecymru.org.uk/befriender
volunteer@agecymru.org.uk
 0300 303 44 98

Rydym yn chwilio am **wirfoddolwyr** i ymuno â'n gwasanaeth **cyfeillio ffôn newydd**, Ffrind mewn Angen. Drwy wirfoddoli am 30 munud yr wythnos, gallwch wneud **gwahaniaeth gwirioneddol** i ddiwrnod person hyn unig ac ynysig.

I gael rhagor o wybodaeth, cysylltwch:
www.agecymru.org.uk/befriender
volunteer@agecymru.org.uk
 0300 303 44 98

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Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil

Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil is looking for volunteers who can help us deliver remote advice.

We can help build your skills and train you to give advice via various remote channels.



Volunteer from Home with Tenovus

Role Title: Volunteer Content Creator

To creatively promote working and volunteering at Tenovus Cancer Care through our people by capturing and producing their stories, photos, videos, quotes, blogs and case studies. We need you if you have a genuine interest in talking to people to find out their stories and can translate that into appropriate copy, messaging and creative writing through your editing and video skills.

Role Title: Volunteer Admin Assistant

We are looking for someone to help develop our Tele-friend service, by identifying, connecting with and developing relationships with contacts such as local cancer support groups. Tele-friend helps combat loneliness and connect people affected by cancer with a friendly volunteer for a relaxed weekly phone call where they can chat about anything – from gardening, fashion, or the weather!

Llamau

Imagine a World Without Homelessness

Llamau Seeks Volunteers from across Wales

Llamau is seeking volunteers for its freephone helpline providing information and advocacy to young people across Wales who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Volunteers would be home/flexibly based and respond to incoming helpline calls. Training, support, expenses are available.

welcome
friends
cyfeillion
croesawgar

VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

Could you support someone over 50 who is feeling isolated and lonely?

Our Welcome Friends project urgently needs telephone befriending volunteers. Could you spare an hour a week to telephone a lonely, isolated elderly person? We provide training and regular support.



“

“I can't wait for my volunteer to ring and I always feel brighter after our chat!”

”

- Jeffrey, 86

For more information email:
Diane.Matheson
@volunteeringmatters.org.uk
or call 07788 310445

Hospice of the Valleys

SHOP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Flexible Hours and Days

Can you spare a few hours a week to help in our Merthyr Tydfil Shop?

Volunteering can help with:

- Getting work experience
- Improve your CV
- Building confidence and self-esteem
- Being part of the local community

HOSBIS Y CYMOEDD
Hospice of the Valleys
Registered Charity Number 511724

Age 16 Years and over

Call Justin the Volunteer Co-ordinator on 01495 717277 or email justin@hospiceofthevalleys.com
www.hospiceofthevalleys.org.uk

E-Commerce Volunteer

A good knowledge of online selling platforms such as eBay and Depop plus use of social media would be an advantage but full training is given.

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WAMES
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Cymdeithas Cefnogi
ME a CFS Cymru

Welsh Association of
ME & CFS Support

Opportunities at WAMES

WAMeS is the Welsh association of ME and CFS Support. They are looking for volunteers to carry out a wide variety of administrative tasks working from home. As well as helping WAMES support approximately 13,000 families in Wales, these vacancies provide an opportunity for volunteers aged 16+ to gain a wide variety of administrative skills and experiences.



Side by Side Volunteers

Volunteers may:

Participate in activities you share an interest in with a person with dementia to help them keep doing the things they love - or pick up new ones!

Give advice to people living with dementia and their families, and signpost them to services to enable them to live well.



Cruse

Is seeking volunteers to help support bereaved people who are having difficulty coping with their loss, though death, of a significant person in their lives.

A full course of 9 weeks training is offered via Zoom.



Twyn Community Hub have volunteer vacancies for:

Meals on wheels delivery drivers

7 days a week 11.15am – 14.00pm, mileage paid.

Gardeners: We need volunteers interested in gardening and food growth to sustain our community cooking project and fresh food stalls and general grounds up keep.

SMT 50+
Supporting Safe and Confident Communities
Cefnogi Cymunedau Diogel a Hyderus

RECONNECT

VOLUNTEER

... and make a difference!

Connecting with and improving lifestyles for anyone 50+ living in Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf

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 8LH

Greyhound Rescue Wales

are looking for volunteers in their Merthyr Tydfil shop.

No experience necessary, just a willingness to help.



RVS – From Clients and Volunteers

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have focussed on providing a telephone befriending service for the vulnerable and isolated over 50s. This takes the form of a weekly check in and chat with one of our volunteers, and in some cases was the only social contact our clients had - and were greatly appreciated by our clients. As restrictions have eased, we have since been able to expand to accompanied walks, and recently home visits too.

ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE

QUOTES....

“

'This is what I'm missing because my family isn't anywhere near. Your lady was lovely – I've never known someone so young to be so caring. I haven't walked so far in years, and it was very pleasant, we chatted all the way. When you can't see well like me, you're worried to go out alone, so it's a real relief to have someone to go with you, and she did give me back an awful lot of confidence. Thank you again, I've been telling a few friends about you!'

-Client B

'She says she's been so grateful for all the calls, they've really cheered her up, so she wants to give me a cutting from one of her blossoms when we can finally meet. She remembered that I'd been trying to get hold of one but couldn't find anything in the garden centre. It made my day as well!'

-Volunteer H



ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE

QUOTES....

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'I couldn't hope for any better than Volunteer Y. It feels like I've known her for years – we don't need to think about what to say, it just comes natural. She's a beautiful soul, inside and out. I feel like I've lost one sister and found another'

-Client J

'Volunteer O who calls is such a lovely girl – she always brightens my day. I'm not able to walk at the moment, with my foot as it is, so it makes such a difference having someone so nice give me a call.'

-Client V



ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE

QUOTES....

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'I think it's amazing that you've taken all this time today to help me, and even sorted out that home assessment I've been going back and forward with forever. I'm so glad that there are people who care enough to be bothered about my problems. I'm a lot more positive now, I needed a bit of a cheer up.'

-Client G

'I definitely feel appreciated with the Royal Voluntary Service and this is why I'll always stay with the service. Thanks again. I've always said that the service has given me a lot. I'll always be grateful.'

-Volunteer A

'The lady who calls every Wednesday, she's the best you can have, she's so kind. I've missed her calls so much, could you tell her I'm feeling better now? I know she'll have been worried.'

-Client N



ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE

Quotes....

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'What a lovely surprise to receive a parcel in the post last week and to discover it was a 'thank you' gift... I have enjoyed "working" for the RVS for the past 52 years and wish I could do more at the moment than make a few phone calls! I was deeply touched by this gift.'

-Volunteer S

'I just wanted to say THANK YOU for the delicious box of brownies I received! Such a nice surprise. I shared them with the rest of my family!

I called [my client] today, she told me about the parcel you sent her last week too – she was thrilled!'

-Volunteer B



ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE



New Staff at VAMT



Ellie Luke

Ellie is the new **Business Support Officer** at VAMT. Her role will be to provide essential and practical support to VAMT and she'll undertake a variety of finance, personnel, health and safety and general administrative tasks to keep VAMT running smoothly.

Faye Johnson

Faye Johnson started in the role of **Mental Health Development Officer** on 4th January. The role will be playing a part in promoting partnership working to contribute to local and regional plans to improve mental health and wellbeing for people of all ages, supporting Third sector organisations to work together to identify and address any gaps in provisions and take any opportunities forward to develop new services. Faye will also be supporting and contributing to the work of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Mental Health forum, working to promote co-productive and collaborative approaches and opportunities across the health board region.

Currently Faye is familiarising herself with the services available in Merthyr as well as attending some of the established forums such as the Health and Wellbeing forum.

You can connect with Faye either via email faye.johnson@vamt.net or by phone on **07553 147616**



Sharon Jones

Sharon Jones started as the **Mental Health Service User Involvement Officer** on 24 January to lead on the involvement of people and relevant others, such as unpaid carers / relevant family members, who are receiving or who have recently received mental health services, working with partners in the public and third sector to co-design mental health services

As Sharon is very new in post (at the time of going to print), she is spending time familiarising herself with the current services in Merthyr Tydfil. If you'd like to connect with her, either email Sharon.jones@vamt.net or ring **07553 102266**.

INFORM



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Board Changes at VAMT

At VAMT's January Board meeting, the first since the AGM took place in November 2021, **Paul Gray** stood down as Interim Chair, a role he had taken on for the last 12 months. Paul also stood down as Trustee/Director, following many years of service, together with a significant amount of time as VAMT's Treasurer. His fellow trustees, together with VAMT staff would like to thank him for his time and commitment over a significant period and wish him well.



At the same meeting, **Nicola Mahoney** stood down as Interim Treasurer, a role which she had taken on for the last year. Nicola remains as a Trustee/Director.

Also at the AGM, **Brian Lewis** stood down as a Trustee after many, many years of involvement in the organisation. He will be well remembered as VAMT's Chair, a role from which he retired in 2019. **Mark Ward** and **Michelle Jones** also stood down at the AGM.

Congratulations go to **Suzanne Davies**, who was elected as Chair of the organisation and **Michael Ronan** who takes up the role of Treasurer. Welcome, also, to **Dr Hefin Jones OBE**, as a new Trustee. Dr Jones is currently Chair of Merthyr Tydfil Borough Credit Union and Vice-Chair of Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society.



That's all from VAMT for now. Tell us what you think of this way of keeping you up to date with what others are doing.

Don't forget, if your organisation is not a member, why not join us and keep up to date with all the latest news, funding opportunities, and other opportunities that are out there.

Why not subscribe to our blog?? <http://vamtnetworknews.blogspot.com/>

YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS MAGAZINE TOO!

If you would 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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Officer

Lesley Hodgson
Community Co-ordinator –
Merthyr

Karen Vowles
Loneliness and Isolation
Development Officer

Bravon Mushiringani
BAME Engagement Officer

Tim Carter
Local Implementation Lead

Ellie Luke
Business Support Officer

Sharon Jones
Mental Health Service User
Involvement Officer

Faye Johnson
Mental Health Development
Officer



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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.