

VOLUNTARY  
ACTION  
GWEITHREDU  
GWIRFODDOL

VOLUNTARY ACTION  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
GWEITHREDU GWIRFODDOL  
MERTHYR TUDFUL

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2021-2022



All of this has only been possible  
through support from you, the  
Voluntary Sector, for the people of  
Merthyr Tydfil

# Our Impact across the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil

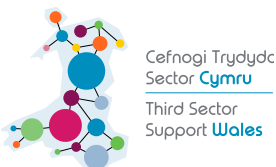
This Annual Impact Report demonstrates the difference we have made in communities across Merthyr Tydfil during the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) is an umbrella organisation for third sector organisations. We strive 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. We work with the sector and partners to effect change by enhancing the wellbeing of individuals, organisations and communities.

None of our work would be possible without the support of our funders to whom we are extremely grateful:



VAMT has 297 members and is connected with many more through local, regional and national partnerships/networks. We are part of Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW), a partnership between Wales Council for Voluntary Action, County Voluntary Councils and Volunteer Centres throughout Wales. The collective endeavour of TSSW is to support the third sector via four key pillars of activity themed around volunteering; good governance; engagement and influencing; and sustainable funding.



Visit [www.vamt.net](http://www.vamt.net) for more information or to become a member.  
You may follow us on the following social media:

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"Thank you for letting us know about the grant success. This will make such a difference to our members, getting them back out and meeting people again. Wonderful news, lots of smiling faces here!"

Society of Recycled Teenagers

"... thank you for helping me to apply for the winter fuel grant, I have received the money and it has now gone up to £200 which is going to help me a lot, brilliant thanks again"



# Foreword by Chair and Chief Officer

**We are incredibly proud to present this, the twenty-fifth Annual Report of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil, for the year 2021-2022.**

Our thanks go to all VAMT staff for their incredible effort throughout the year, and for also undertaking volunteering opportunities with member organisations as part of our employee volunteering scheme. We would also like to recognise and thank our Board of Trustees who remain committed to the organisation and its purpose.

Throughout the year we witnessed a reduction in the number of people volunteering as people returned to work following furlough; a very slow reopening of community venues and a cautious return to face to face meetings. We introduced a hybrid system where staff work both from home and our offices and continued to utilise digital solutions as a means of connecting with members and partners.

The year was also one of opportunity and with new service agreements via Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and Public Health Team, and also Lloyds Bank Foundation (England & Wales) we were able to expand our Team and support locally. Also, we were able to work with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and bring forward an innovative grant scheme for our members which set about recognising and rewarding the extreme effort of staff, volunteers and Trustees during the pandemic.

We have been actively involved in supporting the development of a new Population Needs Assessment and Wellbeing Plan in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region; working with WCVA colleagues towards a new 5 year Business Plan for TSSW and reviewed and revised our own Strategic Plan for the next 3 years.

This has again been a year of significance and challenge for VAMT, our members, partners and communities; a year of adjustment to 'a new normal' following the impact and effect of the pandemic in the previous year. Yet before the year is over a completely new set of challenges are about to rear their head as war between Ukraine and Russia breaks out and we enter a nationwide cost-of-living crisis. Despite this we are confident that with the support of our members and partners we will endeavour to overcome these challenges for the benefit of the County Borough and those who live and work within it.



**Suzanne Davies**  
Chair



**Sharon Richards**  
Chief Officer



# The Year at a Glance

**1,339**

instances of advice /  
support to  
stakeholders

*"Thank you for all your help. I'm really impressed with the Forum and am looking forward to the next meeting already".*

**524**

attendees  
at VAMT fora /  
learning events

*"Thank you for recognising the need to support staff well-being and enabling us to provide this opportunity through funding that is not always available".*

**87** grant  
awards

via **8** grant schemes  
administered  
by VAMT

totalling

**£376,595**

**99.7%**

member  
retention rate

A membership of

**297**

third sector  
organisations/  
community groups

*"Really positive learning environment with lots of shared best practice. Excellent!"*

**4**

new service  
agreements

*"Volunteering was a fantastic opportunity for [daughter] to gain confidence and experience"*

**295**

third sector  
organisations supported  
with 1:1 advice

**3,403**

Users accessed  
VAMT blog  
= **↑ 905**

**17,564**

page views on VAMT  
website

Facebook followers

**↑ 57%**

Supported 36  
organisations to secure

**£1,193,609**

*"... its fantastic to see how we can work closely together to connect members of the community to research opportunities"*

**53**

Network /  
Learning Events  
held

# Volunteering

Providing individuals and organisations with information and advice on volunteering and good practice is an essential area of our support. The demand for volunteers to support activities such as befriending remained high, whilst a reduction in volunteers was experienced as people returned to work following furlough. We supported a range of organisations as part of their corporate volunteering policies which was mutually beneficial for their staff and our member organisations.

## Our Achievements:

- **98** volunteers received 1:1 support, information and advice in relation to volunteering.
- Helped local organisations to engage **53** volunteers in a variety of roles.
- **38** local people registered for opportunities via the Volunteering Wales website.
- **3** Volunteer Managers' Forum meetings attended by **34** members.  
*"The event was really well managed and it gave me the opportunity to listen to other volunteer providers/coordinators".*
- **9** organisations advised on volunteer recruitment, good practice and volunteering policies.
- Administered a **Youth Led Grants** programme, supporting a panel of young people who awarded **£5450** to **5** organisations.
- Coordinated the development of a film to highlight community response to Covid and demonstrate how volunteers, groups and schools benefitted from additional grants/ funding sourced and awarded via VAMT: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0B-o7WDjMJU>  
*"Following retirement, I became interested in part time volunteering opportunities but really did not know where to look until I was put in touch with Volunteer Centre in Merthyr Tydfil, I discussed various opportunities, what I was really interested in doing and was referred to a few organisations. I am grateful for their assistance and hopefully both myself and service users have benefitted".*
- Extensive promotion of volunteering across the County Borough as part of **Volunteers' Week**.
- Supported staff at EE, People Plus and Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB to undertake **corporate volunteering** opportunities at a variety of third sector organisations.

"... It has been wonderful to establish closer links within our community and to provide some support in the way of volunteering. Thank you to the Volunteer Centre at VAMT who provided us with assistance to make this possible"

Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB

"Volunteering plays a critical role for many third sector organisations. By working in partnership with agencies such as VAMT we can support the community in a variety of ways..."

Stephens & George Charitable Trust

# Good Governance

Providing information, guidance and development support on governance issues is an essential part of what we do and helps improve the skills, knowledge and expertise of those who lead community groups and voluntary organisations within Merthyr Tydfil.

Since the onset of the pandemic we have increasingly used our social media platforms as a way of disseminating information. We have a dedicated "Good Governance" section on the VAMT website which provides supportive information and tools for Trustees, and we actively promote the TSSW Knowledge Hub and its resources to benefit our members.

## Our Achievements:

- **78** electronic briefings issued.
- Supporting one group to access specialist guidance.
- **9** organisations supported with setting up formally.
- One group assisted in dissolution and transfer of assets
- 1:1 support to a group on a recovery/development plan.
- **19** attendees at **4** digital workshops for building relationships between small organisations and businesses as a non-transactional relationship.

"...I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for everything you have done to support the group - from helping us to acquire funding, supporting us with the guidelines for opening the hall and helping us find a new venue for the group, we really do appreciate that you're always on the end of the phone if we need help with anything."





# Engagement and Influencing

We are involved in over 35 partnerships and planning groups at a local or regional level including the Regional Partnership Board and Public Service Board. We also influence national developments via TSSW.

A primary source of our engagement with members is via the range of Fora that we organise. They are themed around Health & Wellbeing; Children, Young People & Families; Volunteer Management; Befriending; Environment & Green Spaces; Food Prosperity and Funding. The Fora are identified as platforms for engaging with third sector and for influencing strategic developments.

## Our Achievements:

- We arranged **53** networks/forums/learning events locally which **541** individuals attended.
- We actively supported transition of ICF funded projects to year one of the Regional Integration Fund.
- **3** sessions organised and **23** wellbeing engagement toolkits completed as part of 100 Days of Engagement to inform the Regional Population Needs Assessment and Wellbeing Plan.
- Our **Community Coordinator** received 266 referrals for people aged 50+ to access services and activities in the community to benefit their health and wellbeing; made 230 referrals and 293 signposts to additional community support.
- Community engagement/mapping and subsequent development of 'drop-in' advice/ support sessions for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic community members from October 2021. **8** sessions held with **41** instances of support.
- Worked with PSB partners to introduce '**Loneliness Champions**' across public service organisations and created pathways of support to Community / Wellbeing Coordinators within CVCs.
- **3** editions of our 'Inform' newsletter with thematic approaches including volunteering and anti-poverty initiatives.
- We continue to develop our online presence via a range of social media platforms.
- Supporting local groups and community members to access information and advice via our dedicated officer at Calon Las Community Hub.
- We connected with the Feeding Britain coalition and agreed to develop the local Food Prosperity Network into a wider "**Feeding Merthyr Tydfil**" network with the emphasis on ensuring that by working together nobody has to go hungry or without basic essentials during the recovery from the pandemic. The Feeding Merthyr Tydfil network is the first of "Feeding Britain" developments in Wales.
- VAMT continues to lead on the **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Social Value Forum** together with BAVO and Interlink and in collaboration with the Regional Commissioning Unit, commissioned the Social Effectiveness Research Centre to undertake research into social value and measuring social value impact. The findings will be available in 2022-23.





# Sustainable Funding

We continue to prioritise support for our members to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and capacity to sustain their organisations in the recovery period. It is essential that we continue to develop strong relationships and connections with funders and statutory partners in order that our members are resilient and continue to thrive during such uncertain times.

## Our Achievements:

- Following our support 36 organisations secured **£1,193,609 of funding** (increase of **£573k** on the previous year).
- VAMT administered the following **8** grant schemes, making **87** awards totalling **£376,595**
  - **Loneliness & Isolation Grant** – in collaboration with MTCBC this grant will be available annually for 3 years
  - **Wellbeing for Staff, Trustees and Volunteers Grant Scheme** – in collaboration with MTCBC and via Recovery Funding
  - **Dementia Care Grant Scheme** – via ICF to support people living with Dementia and their Carers.
  - **Community Capacity Grant Scheme** – via ICF to support priority groups including children and young people / disabilities
  - **Coronavirus Recovery Grant for Volunteering** – via Welsh Government to enhance volunteering in the recovery phase of the pandemic
  - **Mental Health Grant Scheme** – supporting positive mental health within the community
  - **Befriending Services** - ICF funding secured to retain services across Cwm Taf
  - **Third Sector Winter Pressures Fund** – via WCVA. Opportunity to increase capacity / services across third sector and/CVCs.
- Coordinated **Quarterly Funders' Forum meetings** with local and national funding bodies. Support also provided for the annual **funding surgery** of local MP and Senedd Member, with **40** people attending.
- Provided a range of one-to-one finance support to **4** members. We also provided an accounts and payroll service for another organisation and agreed a new contract with them for 2022-23.

"I'm so glad you are able to support these lovely groups. We really appreciate it; these are certainly challenging times and bringing people back together out of isolation for so long is a challenge".  
Artis Community



"Thank you so much for this it has really helped all the staff with their mental health".  
Cylch Meithrin Treharris



## New/Future Developments:

- From funding received via Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Health Team, we hosted a 10 month full-time **Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) Engagement Officer** from June 2021. The purpose of the role was to influence Covid-19 safe behaviours in local BAME communities.
- In Quarter 3 we signed a new **Service Agreement with Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB** to support the implementation of a new regional service model supporting mental health development and service user involvement. Additional funding was secured by a separate, but related, Agreement to implement the recommendations of research into Service User and Carer experiences commissioned by the UHB in 2020.
- In Quarter 3 we appointed a **Local Implementation Lead Officer** via a new 12 month fixed term funding opportunity with Lloyds Bank Foundation (LBF). This post is part of their People & Communities Programme, which is delivered in 6 areas of the UK, with Merthyr Tydfil being the only Welsh area.
- VAMT worked with a number of young people and local partners to develop an application to the National Lottery Community Fund "**Mind Our Future**" funding aimed at supporting mental health of Children and Young People. The local application, project name Snakes & Ladders, was successful and will be led by third sector organisations, commencing in 2022-23.
- VAMT secured **funding to support local social enterprises** via Community Renewal Funding and sub-contracted Cwmpas (formerly Wales Co-op) to conduct the work. This included supporting **5** social enterprises within the Borough to develop their plans. The work links directly to the 15 year Economic Recovery Plan for MTCBC.
- A collaborative bid to Welsh Government, co-written by VAMT, MTCBC and Merthyr Valleys Homes was successful. It benefits a wide range of organisations including members of the Food Prosperity Network, pre-schools and other third sector groups with financial support and will fund wider research into further sustainability for food provision. **£100k** secured and research will be completed in the year ahead.



"We are very thankful for this grant as it has been very beneficial for staff, trustees and volunteers during this highly stressful time".

Gellideg Foundation Group

# Statement of Financial Activities

## for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

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

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Charitable activities	235,445	736,093	971,538	1,132,647
Other activities	39,594		39,594	49,096
Investment income	2,435		2,435	2,484
Other income	3,037		3,037	2,661
Total income	280,511	736,093	1,016,604	1,186,888
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Charitable activities	(266,592)	(601,282)	(867,874)	(928,708)
Total expenditure	(266,592)	(601,282)	(867,874)	(928,708)
Gains/losses on investment assets	6,886		6,886	13,780
Net income	20,805	134,811	155,616	271,960
Transfers between funds	129,876	(129,876)		
Net movement in funds	150,681	4,935	155,616	271,960
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward	600,812	204,635	805,447	533,487
Total funds carried forward	751,493	209,570	961,063	805,447

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

# Balance Sheet

## as at 31 March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	81,731	86,269
Investments	87,293	80,407
	169,024	166,676
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	164,965	122,931
Cash at bank and in hand	668,755	565,835
	833,720	688,766
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	(41,681)	(49,995)
<b>Net current assets</b>	792,039	638,771
<b>Net assets</b>	961,063	805,447
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>		
<b>Restricted income funds</b>		
Restricted	209,570	204,635
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>		
Unrestricted	751,493	600,812
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>961,063</b>	<b>805,447</b>

## Trustees and Charity Administration

### Board of Trustees 2021 - 2022

Paul Gray  
Suzanne Davies  
Nicola Mahoney  
Michael Ronan  
Anne Roberts MBE  
Kayleigh Nor-Val  
Dr Hefin Jones OBE  
Mark Ward  
Michelle Jones  
Edward Dawson  
Brian Lewis

### Banker

HSBC, 127-128 High Street,  
Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8DN

### Auditors

Mitchell Meredith Limited,  
St David's House, 48 Free Street,  
Brecon, Powys LD3 7BN

### Charity & Company Name

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil

### Charity Registration Number

1118403

### Company Registration Number

6058360

### Registered Address

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

### Company Secretary

Sharon Richards