

INFORM

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful

July 2023



Volunteers' Week 2023

We've had a busy few months at VAMT and this edition of Inform will bring you up to speed.

We held two significant and successful events in June as part of our Volunteers' Week celebrations - an in-person Volunteer Recognition Awards Event at Morlais Castle Golf Club on 1st June which was compèred by the wonderful Steve Speirs (below with Award winners). The second event was our Volunteering Fair (see pages 3 & 4)



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
Nicola Smerdon, 4Tom

Accepted on behalf of Nicola by Richard Jones, 4Tom Trustee
(sponsored by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)



OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO VOLUNTEERING
Carole Thomas, the Friends Wednesday Club
(sponsored by Melrose IT Solutions)



TRUSTEE OF THE YEAR
Alison Smith, New Pathways
(sponsored by Tydfil Training)



GROUP OF THE YEAR
Hope Pantry Merthyr Tydfil
(sponsored by Comtec)



YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
**Samee Furreed, Snakes 'N' Ladders
(the other Pandemic)**
(sponsored by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)



Volunteer Recognition Awards

We are extremely grateful to our compère for the evening Steve Speirs, who was thrilled to present awards in his hometown. Thanks also to all who attended to show support including the Leader, Mayor, Youth Mayor and Chief Executive of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

Volunteering Fair

Our second Volunteering Fair took place on 6th June in the Town Centre, and gave member organisations a chance to promote themselves and their volunteering opportunities. We had excellent feedback and have committed to organising a Volunteering Fair every year as part of our Volunteers' Week celebrations.



"really good event for voluntary organisations, it was good to be seen out in public"



"The level of support throughout the day was wonderful. It was well thought out and you could see the plan was to provide maximum exposure to the organisations who benefit the clients. We gave so much information to people I hope we helped in many ways"

Volunteering Fair



Celebrating 100 years

To celebrate 100 years, MTIB hosted their first celebratory event at Morlais Castle Golf club on 19th May. There was a great local focus so the teams who took part have worked with MTIB previously. Tydfil Training won the tournament and was awarded a slate plaque designed and produced by MTIB's production team. Special thanks goes to Gold, Bronze and Silver sponsors Case UK, KDM, Ply-Tek, ALS, ITEC, Taff Containers, Gofal Cymru Care, Angeni and Thomas Davies. There was a huge local support and wonderful turn out. Overall a fantastic day with lots of raffle prizes, once again donated by local businesses.



MTIB's Offer – Current and Future

MTIB currently run Restart as a supply chain partner of Serco getting all referrals from DWP.

They also run a project called Job Sense. JobSense West Wales and the Valleys (WWV) is a collaboration of four leading disability employment providers, offering specialist employment support services to people with sight and/or hearing loss, with the aim to help people, aged over 25, to secure volunteering and/or employment. The project works with local employers to ensure that they receive the relevant support to be able to successfully recruit people in an accessible and sustainable way.



They have an exciting new project with MTCBC levelling up (UKSPF) – It is a government funded program, providing bespoke support to individuals both unemployed and in employment. The purpose of the program is to improve the participants life and employability skills following the COVID pandemic. They support individuals to gain sustainable employment with hands on tailored support. For those who are currently in employment they can provide training opportunities and support to help them develop and upskill to their full potential.

Special thanks

MTIB are so proud to continue to support people with Disabilities into sustainable employment as they have done for the last 100 years. They have accomplished so much during this time and have evolved with the times. But they couldn't have achieved as much as they have without all the support received from everyone they've been privileged to work with. They hope to continue working in this way as they continue to grow.



Mental Health Awareness Week 2023

This year's campaign focused in part on Anxiety and the impacts this has on people's mental health.

During a time of increased stress and worry from the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, anxiety, stress, and their impacts, are significant.

Across the Borough of Merthyr Tydfil groups and organisations were supporting the week through activities, events and awareness raising.

A variety of things were taking place from willow weaving with Coed Lleol, candle making at Calon Las, coffee and crafting with Bridging the Gap Youth and the beginnings of an inclusive social running group from Sole Mate running.

Here at Voluntary Action, we held a networking event for people working within organisations, community centres and local projects to come together and talk all things mental health and wellbeing.

Discussions included where gaps and improvements could be made to support mental health and wellbeing locally, as well as how we as individuals deal with stress and anxiety.

"Thank you for the invite. It was great to meet lovely people and of course to network and make those vital connections."
Tracey Roberts. GP Support Officer.

Supporting mental health and wellbeing comes in many different forms and as a result the variety of activities and support that goes on within the Merthyr Borough is vast.

VAMT will continue to work with third sector partners and statutory organisations to help develop and improve services and support for those in the community.

If you would like to discuss anything around mental health, you can always contact our Mental Health Development Officer – Faye on **07553 147616** or email faye.johnson@vamt.net



Knowledge Hub can give your charity the tools you need

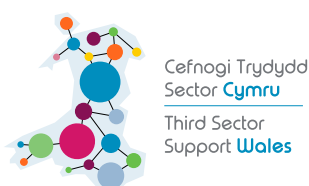
The Knowledge Hub, a free online resource for voluntary organisations in Wales, has been updated with more information than ever in time for Small Charity Week.

Managed by Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW), the Knowledge Hub is a platform for people working or volunteering in the Welsh voluntary sector. Here you can access information and guidance, as well as online learning courses on a range of topics that are vital to running a successful organisation.

Click on this link for more information: thirdsectorsupport.wales

A big help for small organisations

A big part of the voluntary sector in Wales is made up of smaller organisations, which face their own unique challenges. With this in mind TSSW has launched **new guidance and information aimed specifically at small organisations** to coincide with **Small Charity Week** (19 – 23 June 2023).



From guidance on governance and safeguarding, to sustainable funding, working with volunteers and more, all of this has been designed with the aim of helping you run your organisation.

This won't just benefit smaller organisations though. TSSW, a network of support organisations comprising of WCVA and County Voluntary Councils (CVCs), can help all sorts of organisations in the Welsh voluntary sector, with learning and information as well as help with finding funding, safeguarding advice and more.

A resource for learning

As well as new advice and guidance pages, there are also free online courses on a number of subjects, from developing a fundraising strategy to explaining the safeguarding responsibilities of your staff – all of which you're free to complete at your own pace, anywhere, any time.

The Your Networks section of the website also lets you connect with people working all throughout the sector in Wales, and is a place where you can start conversations, ask questions and share ideas to help and learn from each other.

This all comes with improvements to the site and updates to content that make it easier to find the information you're looking for.

Register for free today and you can stay informed, improve your knowledge and connect with others.

ABOUT THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT WALES



[Watch the video >](#)

Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales. The network consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). TSSW is improving how it provides services digitally, and is committed to ensuring its digital platforms are inclusive and bi-lingual.

Other TSSW digital platforms include:

[Funding Wales](#)

Funding Wales is a free tool to help voluntary organisations find funding for their cause. You can search hundreds of grant and loan finance opportunities from local, national and international sources, from small grants to large capital projects.

[infoengine](#)

infoengine is the directory of third sector services in Wales. infoengine highlights a wide variety of excellent voluntary and community services that are able to provide information and support so that you can make an informed choice.

[Volunteering Wales](#)

Volunteering Wales is a digital volunteering platform. The platform hosts hundreds of volunteering opportunities from across Wales in one place, making it easy to find and recruit volunteers – or start on your own volunteering journey.

Bullies Out – Step into September

Help us support those who struggle with the impact of bullying behaviour by taking part in our Step into September challenge and walking or running up to 220,000 steps throughout September.



You can take part wherever you live! We want this to be a challenge for individuals, families, colleagues, for all ages and all abilities, so whether you want to achieve 55,000 steps (25 miles), 110,000 steps (50 miles), or 220,000 steps (100 miles), this is the event for you! Steps calculated with the miles to steps online calculator.

Whether you want to walk so many miles a day for 30 days or take on your own walks and hikes throughout the month, you set the pace and help us to support those impacted by bullying behaviour.

We believe that young people have the power to Inspire Change and Make a Difference. However, we know that when a person is bullied, it impacts on their dreams and aspirations, their academic ability, and their overall emotional well-being and this can have a major impact on their mental health.

Established in May 2006, we are one of the most dedicated and ambitious anti-bullying charities. Through our award-winning work with individuals,

schools, youth and community settings and the workplace, we provide counselling, education, training, and support to thousands of people.

Through our innovative, interactive workshops and training programmes, we use our experience, energy, and passion to focus on awareness, prevention, building empathy and positive peer relationships all of which are crucial in creating a nurturing environment in which young people and adults can thrive.

Our Vision is to empower and inspire children, young people, and adults to overcome bullying behaviour, recognise their self-worth and achieve their full potential.

We are a self-funded charity with a huge workload. This is our first campaign so please join us and help us to help those who need us.

Register now: <https://bulliesout.com/events/step-into-september/>

EASY FUNDRAISING – Free funding for your good cause

Over £1.2million in free, unrestricted funding has just been paid to third-sector organisations via funding platform easyfundraising.

In times like these, when individual giving has reduced or even halted, easyfundraising provides an alternative funding option by turning online shopping into monetary donations for third sector organisations.

How does it work?

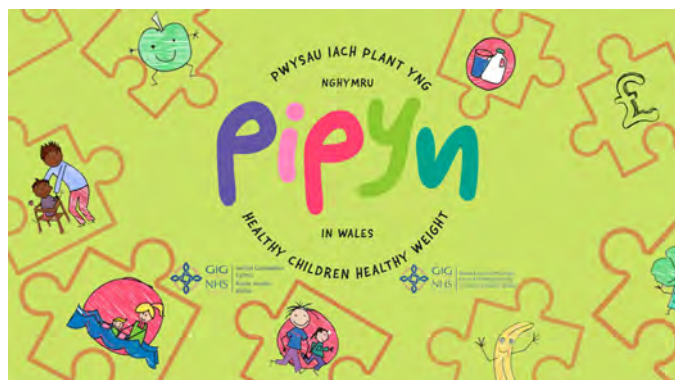
Through easyfundraising, 7,500 online retailers will donate part of what your volunteers, trustees, staff and supporters spend with them back to your organisation. There is no cost as it's the retailer that makes the donation, not the shopper. It's their way of giving back to our local groups and communities.

What can you spend it on?

Monies raised through easyfundraising are helping third-sector organisations to fund projects, maintain facilities, pay for day-to-day running costs, and more. As unrestricted funding, you have the ease and flexibility to spend your funds on whatever your organisation sees fit.



How to register – The next payment round is August so get started now to be part of it. Visit: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/community/>



MERTHYR PIPYN

The Merthyr PIPYN pilot project aims to support children (aged 3-7 years) and their families achieve a healthy weight in Merthyr Tydfil. Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board's Public Health Dietetics team have received funding for the project from Public Health Wales to support the Welsh Government's Health Weight Healthy Wales Strategy. Merthyr Tydfil along with Cardiff and Anglesey has been selected as a trial region for the nationally led initiative due to the high prevalence of children being above a healthy weight in these areas.

Last month, the Merthyr PIPYN team celebrated the launch of this new children and families programme by climbing Pen Y Fan and accessing the free local services for families at Cyfarthfa Park. They were joined by families, key stakeholders for the programme and their local project ambassador Kerry Morgan, from Active Merthyr. The team hopes to help as many young children and families in the Merthyr area to access free support around the 10 steps to a healthy weight.

PIPYN families will be offered a package of interactive, fun family sessions tailored to each family's unique circumstances. Merthyr PIPYN will even come and help at the supermarket, guiding families through a budget friendly healthy food shop. Families can sign up easily by scanning the below QR code:



SNAKES 'N' LADDERS (the other Pandemic)

Project update:

There is an exciting new mental health and wellbeing project in Merthyr Tydfil Snakes 'N' Ladders the Other Pandemic. This Lottery funded project is a partnership project hosted by the Local Authority. This coproduced project is led by passionate committed young people 11 to 25 years of age who are members of the Youth Advisory panel.

A key focus of recent work has been on carrying out focus groups within primary schools, secondary schools, and youth provisions, offering young people an opportunity to share their views and experiences of mental health, wellbeing, and resilience.

We need the views and experiences of young people so that we can ensure that the mental health and wellbeing services and opportunities for young people meet their needs.

If you are 11 to 25 years of age; then we need you to share your experiences and ideas about what you think can make a difference to mental health and wellbeing for young people in Merthyr Tydfil.

To have your voices, experiences and ideas listened to then please complete our online questionnaire, the closing date is the 7th July 2023.



ENGLISH



WELSH

The youth advisory panel are always recruiting, if you live in Merthyr Tydfil, and are interested in mental health and wellbeing, get in touch with them now!

You can also stay up to date with the Snakes 'N' Ladders – The Other Pandemic project via following their social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

**For further information contact –
Project Coordinator Janice Watkins**

Email: jw3@smt.org.uk or Mobile: 07949 684130



Active Wheels – A social, inclusive cycling group in Merthyr

Active Wheels was set up in 2019 by Tom Evans with the support of Active Merthyr Tydfil and Disability Sport Merthyr. Through the pandemic it largely focussed on supporting a small number of referrals. Since we emerged from the COVID restrictions the group has gone from strength to strength. All activities are led by volunteers and are free.

The aim of the group is to support people of all backgrounds and abilities to cycle. It now organises several activities every week including social group rides on Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings, sessions riding trikes on the John Sellwood Community Track at Afon Taf High School and shorter rides from Rhydycar to Aberfan along the Taff Trail specifically for those new or returning to cycling. We also offer one to one ride support to build confidence.

The group own 3 trikes and has recently acquired a storage container and 10 brand new high quality bikes through funding from the Sport Wales Be Active Fund. These bikes and trikes together with helmets are completely free to use with the aim of supporting people without access to a bike to ride.

Through sponsorship from the Principality Building Society, the group will soon have a brand new side by side bike designed to allow people with more limited ability to experience cycling with a ride partner.

The group has an extremely friendly WhatsApp group with over 50 members supporting each other. Contact us if you want to be added. Rides will always have a refreshment stop and are at a pace which allows the group to chat, laugh and have fun along the way. The focus is very much on meeting people and including people of all backgrounds, experience and abilities. It is as much about mental wellbeing and supporting each other as it is about physical fitness.

We are always open to suggestions and ideas on how we can support as many people as possible to cycle. Please contact us to discuss how we can help you. We post regular activities on Facebook and Twitter and the videos on YouTube show how friendly the group is and the fun that we all have.

With the increase riders, the need for additional rides and the offer of one to one support we are also looking for experienced cyclists to help us as volunteers. Full training and group branded kit will be provided (It won't be Lycra).

YouTube link - <https://youtube.com/@ActivewheelsMerthyr>

Twitter link - https://twitter.com/active_wheels?lang=en

Facebook link - <https://www.facebook.com/actifwheelz>

Email – contact@activewheels.wales





BRIDGING THE GAP YOUTH

Bridging the Gap Youth - Merthyr is a registered charity that offers a fully inclusive afterschool and holiday club for young people aged 3-19 with additional learning needs. Our afterschool sessions run from 3pm to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. Our holiday club runs from 10.30-4pm, Monday to Friday, throughout all school holidays. For children attending Greenfields Special School, we offer a school collection service and escort the children to club.

Our focus as a charity is to provide play opportunities for children with additional needs. Our club2 programme is designed to capture the imagination of our youth, promote independence and encourage our youth to try new and different things! We focus on fun by delivering crafts, cookery, gardening and sports, daily. We work with other organisations and youth groups to provide unique opportunities for the children attending our setting e.g. Dowlais Engine House, Merthyr Library, Disability Sport, PIPPYN and Coed LLeol(Small Woods)- to name but a few!



This year we have visited the Mayor's Parlour, where the children presented our book of Remembrance for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Mayor then presented us with our own awards for the staff and children of Bridging the Gap Youth. We came together with other youth settings by attending The Willows & Twyn Community Hubs own family fun days. We are regular visitors at Dowlais Engine House. They kindly share access to their facilities, and offer a lot of support to our project.



**Bridging the Gap
is growing and we are
looking to do more than ever!**

If you are interested in volunteering, registering your child, or want to offer support please get in touch by emailing bgyouth@hotmail.com or call us on **07852766928**.



Codi @ SOAR: Canolfan a Theatr Merthyr Tudful

On Sunday, the 21st of May we had an afternoon to remember as the Codi @ Soar project, in collaboration with Tŷ Cerdd, reached the culmination of a series of workshops with composer Richard Baker and organist James McVinnie.

Six musicians met over several weekends sharing their ideas and vision while creating pieces of work that reflected their understanding of the Merthyr area and of the south-east valleys.

There was a feast of music with contributions from:

- **Owain Hughes:** A piece called 'Valley Talk', by the musician from Aberfan, which was inspired by spoken language; the rhythms and melodic expressions of the local dialect.
- **Andrew Cosworth:** A piece called 'Esgyn Soar' which plays on the English word 'soar' and is a piece which is 'part meditation and part toccata, part prayer, part humour, part quiet anger at the ravaging exploitation of the town' – with the hope for its cultural future.
- **Hannah Paloma:** A piece called 'August 1831' inspired by the story of the Merthyr Rebellion and the hanging of Dic Penderyn. The music paid tribute to the respect and strength of the community whilst shedding light on battles that continue to be fought.
- **Dafydd Dabson:** A piece called 'Daw Golau i'r Dyffryn' which portrays the two sides of Merthyr, the mines and the iron works and the people who live and work there.
- **Heledd Evans:** An experimental, magical piece called 'Afon 1' which gave the organ a chance to resonate in the space of Theatr Soar ensuring that the performance, the composition and the listening intertwined to be part of the musical experience.
- **David John Roche:** A piece entitled 'Sing to the Lord All the Earth', which is the verse above the Soar organ, looked to the past but was also inspired by bands such as Manic Street Preachers and the local music scene at the beginning of this century.

Richard Baker and James McVinnie themselves, along with numerous guest speakers, were an inspiration to everyone who was part of the project and their feedback and support facilitated the composers' understanding of the instrument, of the significance of Canolfan Soar and of the wider community.

If you would like to arrange a visit Soar to see the organ or be involved in any volunteering opportunities, please contact: dilwyn@merthytudful.org



**This summer will
see the first ever
Merthyr Pride
celebration!**

**Would you like
to volunteer ??**

Pride is a safe space where the local LGBTQ+ community and allies can come together to celebrate diversity and equality.

On Saturday 19th August, Merthyr Pride will kick off with a lively parade through the town centre. It finishes at The College Merthyr Tydfil, which will be hosting the event.

There's a packed programme of entertainment and activities to enjoy throughout the day, with two stages showcasing live music, drag queens and dance acts. There'll also be food and drink, market stalls, and organisations who can support the LGBTQ+ community through their services.

If you want to keep up with what's happening on the day, search for '**Merthyr Pride**' on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, and hit the follow button.



We all belong.

**Saturday 19 August
The College Merthyr Tydfil**

This community event is not-for-profit and relies on the support of funding, local businesses and individuals, without whom the event couldn't happen. This year's corporate sponsors of Merthyr Pride are Merthyr Valleys Homes and EE, who have worked generously to help shape the event.

VAMT is coordinating the volunteers for this event and we have a varied range of volunteering opportunities such as, marshalling the parade, helping with the acts, backstage work, supporting the running of activities, taking photos and so on.

If you would like to volunteer on the day – please contact Sharon Jones at Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil. Email address is sharon.jones@vamt.net or call **07553 102266**




Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil Volunteer for us

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 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"*.

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.

What's on, Summer 2023 Edition

- Transport services operate daily providing a door to door transport service for any cancer related appointments.
- Complementary therapy available by appointment only Monday & Wednesdays
- Face to face counselling with a qualified counsellor by appointment only
- Daily drop in centre open from 10.00am – 4.00pm for information, support and advice without the need for an appointment.
- Podiatry sessions for cancer patients available by appointment
- Group sessions – see our Facebook page for up to date information
- Coffee Mornings held the 1st Friday of every month between 10.00am to 1.00pm



The Furniture Revival is a charity owned social enterprise specialising in the reuse and recycling of household furniture and electricals, with the aim of alleviating poverty in its operational areas, whilst supporting individuals to increase their skills through the social enterprise to support employability locally.

If you would like to volunteer with us, contact **Byron James** or **Rachael Smith** on **01685 846830** or email info@thefurniturerevival.co.uk.

Various Volunteer roles include:

- Warehouse Assistant / Drivers Mate
- Upcycling Volunteer
- Marketing Assistant
- Retail and Administration Assistant

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

welcome
friends
cyfeillion
croesawgar

Our Welcome Friends project urgently needs volunteers in Merthyr. Could you spare an hour a week to visit and befriend a lonely, isolated elderly person? We provide training and regular support as well as travel expenses.



“We both look forward to meeting each other and having a chat and a good laugh!”

— Evelyn, 93

Get in touch!

☎ 01495 366062 || 07377 692404

✉ welcome.friends@volunteeringmatters.org.uk

VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

Volunteering. It's Good For You.



#GoodForYou

We rely on people like you playing their part to give the young people the opportunities they need.

But volunteering isn't just about giving something back. It's also about doing something that's good for you.

Volunteering gives you career-boosting skills, improves your wellbeing and helps you make connections with friends, family and your local community.

So what are you waiting for? Get in touch!

merthyrscouts@btinternet.com
scouts.org.uk/join

Scouts
Merthyr Tydfil

We are recruiting independent members



Join the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner's Police Accountability and Legitimacy Group (PALG)

What is PALG?



PALG is made up of public and voluntary partner organisations and independent community members like yourself!



PALG members work together to hold South Wales Police to account and provide an outside view on policing issues and its impact on the community.



PALG members provide recommendations to reduce inequality in policing.

Request further information by emailing:
volunteer@south-wales.police.uk
or call us on:
01656 869366

We welcome applications from those who feel strongly about equality, diversity and advocating for the community



PALG: Making a positive difference to policing in South Wales



We are recruiting volunteers

The South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner is recruiting new Independent Custody Visitors



What does it involve?

As an Independent Custody Visitor you will make visits to police custody suites, day or night and check detainees have been treated fairly and given their rights and entitlements.

Where would I be based?

There are 4 custody suites in South Wales; Cardiff Bay, Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend and Swansea.

Volunteers will visit the custody suite closest to where they live.

Can I apply?

Any person over the age of 18, living, working or studying in South Wales can apply!

Join us!

If you'd like to apply, visit our website:
www.southwalescommissioner.org.uk
or send us an email:
Volunteer@south-wales.pnn.police.uk



CTM Mental Health Third Sector Forum

September meeting - on Teams.

December meeting - in person.

Dates to be confirmed

To join the Forum or for more information contact faye.johnson@vamt.net

Health and Wellbeing Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre, 10am - 12pm

Wednesday 16th August

Wednesday 15th November

Wednesday 21st February 2024

This Forum is open to third sector colleagues and aims to provide a platform for providing third sector services operating locally and regionally. It further serves to ensure engagement with the sector around strategic developments within both Merthyr Tydfil County Borough and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board area.

To join the Forum or for more information contact claire.williams@vamt.net

The Children, Young People & Families Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre, 10am - 12pm

Thursday 14th September

Thursday 12th December

Thursday 14th March 2024

To join the Forum or for more information contact info@vamt.net

Volunteer Managers' Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre, 10am - 12pm

Wednesday 20th September

Wednesday 13th December

Wednesday 20th March

To join the Forum or for more information contact frances.barry@vamt.net

Merthyr Tydfil Food Prosperity Network

via Teams at 10am

Tuesday 4th July

Monday 6th November

VAMT approached in Autumn 2018 by Food Sense Wales to establish a network, focused on food poverty in Merthyr Tydfil, a partnership approach involving third and statutory sectors.

The Network has gone from strength to strength supporting affordable food provision such as Food Pantries and Food Banks to develop, support each other, share good practice and ensure a co-ordinated approach to supporting communities and families. This was particularly evident during the pandemic and now during the ongoing cost of living crisis.

To join the Network or for more information contact karen.vowles@vamt.net

The Environment & Green Prescribing Network

Tuesday 12th September, in-person network meeting at Rock UK Summit Centre, Trelewis CF46 6RD. Further details to follow closer to the time.

Tuesday 28th November on Teams.

A network which invites organisations and community-based groups working in and supporting the Merthyr Tydfil Borough, around environmental, conservation and outdoor based activity, engagement and education. Sharing and developing opportunities for green social prescribing activities for the benefit of people's health and wellbeing across the Borough. A network which invites organisations and community-based groups working in and supporting the Merthyr Tydfil Borough, around environmental, conservation and outdoor based activity, engagement and education. Sharing and developing opportunities for green social prescribing activities for the benefit of people's health and wellbeing across the Borough.

To join the Network or for more information contact faye.johnson@vamt.net

Groundwork Wales is promoting the Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund which is now open!

Aviva, in partnership with WWF and the RSPB, is giving £1 million to support community groups across the UK to protect and restore nature in their local area. We all have the power to make a real difference and help bring nature back to life. That's why WWF, the RSPB and Aviva have come together to launch the Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund to make it easier for communities to take action for nature.

From creating community gardens and replanting wildflower meadows, to protecting local wildlife and promoting community connection to nature – together we can help communities around the UK bring nature back to life and make our isles wilder.

How does the fund work?

Projects that are accepted to the Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund will receive 2:1 match funding from Aviva. From 30 March 2023 until £1 million of funding has been allocated, pledges will be matched at a rate of £2 to every £1 donated. 2:1 match funding will apply to pledges of up to £250. The maximum value of 2:1 match funding a project can receive is £5,000.

<https://www.saveourwildisles.org.uk/community/fund>

For support to apply email:
wales@groundwork.org.uk
Apply [here](#)

Meet the Funder Event



15th August 10:30 via Teams

Postcode Community Trust supports smaller charities and good causes in Wales to make a difference to their community for the benefit of people and planet.

The Trust will be accepting applications from eligible organisations **from the 4th of September for a period of 24 hours.**

To find out more about this great opportunity and book your place contact karen.vowles@vamt.net

Connected Communities: Loneliness and Isolation Fund 2023 – 2024

The investment can be used, for example, to help small organisations scale up existing activities, re-establish themselves after the pandemic, promote themselves more widely and help fund the use of suitable venues.

The funding can be used for revenue costs only associated with these types of activities. It cannot be used for capital costs and cannot duplicate any existing funding.

Who can apply?

You can apply if your organisation is a:

- voluntary or community organisation, registered charity, constituted group or club, delivering a service in Merthyr Tydfil, not-for-profit company or Community Interest Company
- organisations with an income of less than £400k

Maximum award of up to £2500

Closing date – 12 noon on 10th July 2023

All funding must be spent by 31st March 2024

For more information and to request an application pack contact karen.vowles@vamt.net



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

INFORM

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful

Date for your diary VAMT's Annual General Meeting



28th September 2023, 11:00 am @
Merthyr Tydfil Football Club

We are busy lining up an exciting agenda for you, so be sure
to keep the date free.

Further details to follow.

BLOG AND BULLETIN UPDATE

Keep up to date with all the latest news via our Blog and Bulletins.

New Blog is up and running, have you subscribed yet?

Enter vamt.net/en/updates/ into your search engine, scroll to the bottom of the
page, enter your email address and click "subscribe".

If there is anything you would like to share on our Blog or in the Bulletin then
please email Fran at frances.barry@vamt.net

That's all from VAMT for now. We welcome any comments on this newsletter,
they can be submitted to info@vamt.net

YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS MAGAZINE TOO!

To feature in the next edition of Inform please submit your articles to
frances.barry@vamt.net by Friday 29th September.

Merthyr Tydfil Voluntary Action Centre

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

Tel: 01685 353900

email: info@vamt.net

www.vamt.net

VAMT Team

Sharon Richards
Chief Officer

Laura Johnson
Business & Finance Manager

Claire Williams
Health and Wellbeing Manager

Frances Barry
Lead Officer – Volunteering and
Communications

Karen Vowles
Lead Officer – Community
Development

Susan Jones
Community Zone Development
Officer

Lesley Hodgson
Community Co-ordinator

Ellie Luke
Business Support Officer

Sharon Jones
Mental Health Service User
Involvement Officer

Faye Johnson
Mental Health Development
Officer

Board Members

Dr Hefin Jones OBE

Anne Roberts MBE

Kayleigh Nor-Val

Michael Ronan

Nicola Mahoney

Tanya Edwards



Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector Cymru
Third Sector
Support Wales

Registered Charity No: 1118403 • Company No: 6058360.

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.