

# INFORM

VOLUNTARY  
ACTION  
GWEITHREDU  
GWIRFODDOL

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • *Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful*

March 2023

## VAMT's Volunteer Recognition Awards are back for 2023!

Over the past few years communities all over the country have been presented with the extreme challenges of the global pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis.

As communities, organisations and individuals, resilience has been tested in response to those challenges.

Community organisations and individual volunteers have stepped forward to support the residents of Merthyr Tydfil in these challenging times and that's why this year VAMT will be reintroducing its annual Volunteer Recognition Awards so that we can formally acknowledge and celebrate the achievement of volunteers throughout our County Borough who give their time and effort for the benefit of others.

Please look under the [VAMT News](#) section of the newsletter for more information.



# Infoengine

If you are looking to further promote your organisation, then please register your organisation and services on infoengine, a free online directory of third sector services in Wales.

The logo for infoengine, featuring the word "infoengine" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

Registering your organisation takes no more than 10 minutes and it will allow you to promote your services to a wider audience and attract people in your community and beyond.

Infoengine highlights a wide variety of voluntary and community services that are able to provide information and support so that you can make an informed choice. It is provided by Third Sector Support Wales, a partnership of County Voluntary Councils and Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

## Are you New to Infoengine? Would you like help to register?

An information session is taking place on **Wednesday 19th April at 10am** at the Voluntary Action Centre AND via Teams, it will last for approximately an hour.

Louise Hardwick, County Development Officer at Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO), will be delivering the session and it is for anyone looking to use infoengine, she will talk you through the process and offer useful tips to make your registration stand out.

To book or if you need further information or help registering then please contact:

Frances Barry – Lead Officer,  
Volunteering and Communications on  
07958 132822 or  
email her at [infoengine@vamt.net](mailto:infoengine@vamt.net)

## Merthyr Tydfil Parks and Countryside Team – what's going on?



The Open Space Strategy and Parks Alive programmes have allowed us to work with volunteers within the Marsh Field Prince Charles Hospital, Nature's Gift Garden Troedyrhiw Park, Aberfan Park and Treharris Park. Much of the funding has come from the Welsh Government Local Nature Partnership Grant.

We are making positive interventions, improving the experience of users and providing opportunities for wildlife. We promote greenspace, history, nature and culture, make volunteering fun, encourage social interaction and facilitate improvements to physical and mental health.

Activities include:

- Controlling invasive species
- Planting orchards
- Managing woodlands and grasslands
- Planting trees and hedges
- Creating footpaths
- Installing signage
- Creating wetlands
- Introducing natural play
- Creating welcoming spaces
- Clearing litter
- Installing seating
- Planting for pollinators
- Experiencing wildlife at close hand



For more information contact **Gill Hampson** on **073550 10193** or email her at [Gillian.Hampson@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:Gillian.Hampson@merthyr.gov.uk) or **Tom Bramley** on **07355 010192** or email him at [Tom.Bramley@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:Tom.Bramley@merthyr.gov.uk)

### The Marsh Field Prince Charles Hospital

#### 'Shaping Landscapes, for Wildlife and Well-being'

The project brings local people, visitors and staff at the hospital, closer to nature and enhances opportunities for wildlife.

Three ephemeral wetlands have been created along with improved access points, a footpath link crossing wet meadows, an orchard small allotment plots, amenity tree planting, native tree and shrub wildflower areas and a welcoming entrance feature. Information panels tell of the cultural and natural history of the space. Local artist Andy O'Rourke worked with Pen Y Dre school creating an entrance feature. The orchard and wildflower plugs were planted with volunteers.

### Nature's Gift Garden

#### 'Changing grey to green through working with nature'

The disused tennis court in Troedyrhiw Park lacked floral diversity and educational opportunities and was transformed to a green oasis of useful plants.

The design based on physic garden layout with a twist, used poor quality ground and green waste to create a garden containing:

- Medicinal plants
- Culinary herbs
- Edible plants
- Drought tolerant plants
- Colour grouped native wildflowers for pollinators

Seating, sculpture and specialist plants were grown and sourced from across the UK. Volunteers stone picked, weeded, pruned and planted the selection of plants. Parks users can enjoy the additional features, hoverflies on the wild carrots and the bees on the borage while blackcurrants and raspberries are gobbled up! Aromatic herbs are enjoyed by old and young alike. Colour is never far away. The garden is bordered by rosemary and cistus that underplant the pleached hornbeams. We welcome interested local people to help look after the space.

*Come and join us for fun, friendship, health and mind!*







## The Rotary Club of Merthyr Tydfil - Working for Home and Abroad

In January the club had a visit from the District Governor who presented a certificate to the club in recognition of its continued support for the "End Polio Campaign".

Pictured is Wayne Morgan the District Governor presenting the certificate to Huw Williams, President of Merthyr Tydfil Rotary Club.



The Club will continue to maintain the gardens at the Macmillan Unit in P.C.H.

On the domestic front the Club progressed to round 3 of the District Quiz beating Aberdare and Crickhowell Clubs in previous rounds.



The Club continues to support the Merthyr & Cynon foodbank, with donations of food and finance totalling over £2500 in 2022.

Pictured is Peter Brill receiving the recognition certificate.



### Merthyr Cynon Foodbank

A massive thank you to the Merthyr Tydfil Rotary Club. Your ongoing kind donations benefit so many local people in crisis who come through our doors. We are very grateful for your generous support. God bless you. Well done Rotary Club members 🙏❤️🙏

Mobile uploads - Yesterday at 13:08 - [View full size](#) - [More options](#)

The Club also supported Shelter Box and Water Aid to the Disaster in Turkey & Syria. Pictured is a tent and other essentials for survival.



An interesting talk was given in February to the club by Johanne Smith and Robert Parker from Santander on how to avoid being scammed. Pictured above with Rotarians.

If you need more information or wish to join us contact the Secretary, **Ian Hopkins 01685 384413 or 07920131583**

## Egin – A New Programme which Aims to Unlock the Power of Communities in Wales to Tackle Climate Change



Cefnogi cymunedau i daclo newid hinsawdd  
Supporting communities to tackle climate change

**Communities in Wales are getting a helping hand to tackle the climate emergency with a new program called Egin, which will be running until 2029.**

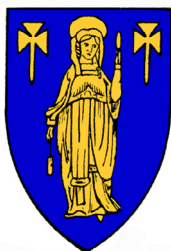
Community groups, organisations and charities will be matched with Peer Mentors, who can help them to focus on local solutions to the global problem of climate change. Eligible groups will be able to apply for up to £15,000 through The National Lottery Community Fund to bring their ideas to life.

Egin aims to focus on groups that are likely to be the most affected by climate change, yet are the least likely to feel included in conversations around climate. Everybody's voice will be heard and respected. The programme is run in both Welsh and English, with Facilitators located all over Wales ready to reach into existing communities and start discussions and make plans.

Groups who join the programme will be able to access up to 3 days of Peer Mentoring, selecting from a pool of experienced mentors across Wales with skills and expertise in topics such as setting up community gardens, renewable energy, community buildings and public transport. They will also gain access to a new online community where they can share ideas, discuss issues and connect with other groups.

Anybody interested in developing a potential programme can email the Facilitator for Merthyr Tydfil & Rhondda Cynon Taff, **Jamie Grundy**, [jamiegrundy@dtawales.org.uk](mailto:jamiegrundy@dtawales.org.uk)

For general information contact [egin@dtawales.org.uk](mailto:egin@dtawales.org.uk) or visit [www.egin.org.uk](http://www.egin.org.uk) to find out more.



## Merthyr Mendicants

Their AGM was held in Mayor's Parlour recently, the Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil is President and he presented the group with a certificate commemorating sixty years serving the community. If you're interested in being part of the Mendicants, please contact the Secretary at [merthymendicant@gmail.com](mailto:merthymendicant@gmail.com).







## Friends of Nant Llwynog Park

### Great visits by school and local groups

As the year warms, it gets better for night creatures, such as bats and moths. Local visits are good at working out number and species.

A small amount of equipment is needed to detect or attract the species and identify them. It is a great opportunity to learn and enjoy the open air.

School groups, such as Bishop Hedley High School, are able to visit the park at Nant Llwynog and gain an insight into the value and diversity of green open spaces. They explored the nature trails and were able to put names to unusual objects in the countryside. Health and Wellbeing is also important and sessions have brought people together to improve their disposition and enjoy good company.



Contact: [edawson1215@gmail.com](mailto:edawson1215@gmail.com) for more information



## Taff Rocks Keeps On Rocking ...

Taff Rocks was founded as a social enterprise in 2019 with the support of the Invest Local Ynysowen programme that operates primarily in Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and Mount Pleasant communities. It became a registered charity in December 2020.

Originally focused on rock painting and inter-generational activities relating to arts and crafts, Taff Rocks has broadened its interests towards being the 'go to' community venue for arts, crafts, cultural, leisure and creative activities. This includes wellbeing, Welsh language activities and celebrating the diversity of cultural interests within the communities that Taff Rocks operates in. Taff Rocks works collaboratively with other local stakeholders such as Wellbeing Merthyr, Trinity Childcare & Family Centre, Ynysowen Events & Socials (YES), Wellbeing & Health in Ynysowen (WHY) and with the Invest Local Ynysowen steering group.

Chair of Trustees, Nicola, says: "We are proud to serve our communities and, at this time, offer options to help them with tools for their own mental health toolbox. Collaborations with other groups and organisations enable us to help others gain knowledge and skills to add to their wellbeing, self-care toolkits."

We're keen to develop strategic partnerships with a range of organisations in Merthyr Tydfil and surrounding areas, particularly where promoting arts, culture and heritage are of mutual benefit. Aberfan has a dark and tragic history, but our local communities continue to survive, revive and strive for a more vibrant future, without ever forgetting the past. Taff Rocks wants to play a key role in this.

Part of playing a key role includes the management of the former Smyrna Chapel on Aberfan Road. This venue is used for our own activities but, to make the venue sustainable for future public benefit, it can also be hired by anyone that needs it for meetings and other gatherings etc as well as their own group and workshops. More information on this can be found at [www.smyrna-aberfan.org.uk](http://www.smyrna-aberfan.org.uk)



### Why not get in touch?

[info@taffrocks.org.uk](mailto:info@taffrocks.org.uk) | [www.taffrocks.org.uk](http://www.taffrocks.org.uk) | 01685 673740



## 4Tom

**#4Tom was set up after the death of our son Tomas Smerdon in March 2019.**

Tom was 22 and took his own life through suicide. His death deeply shocked our family and the local community, raising questions about the complexities of mental health in young people – particularly as Tom presented as a happy young man who was popular, funny, handsome and with a family who loved him dearly.

We decided to set up a charity in Tom's memory to help other young people suffering from anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and substance misuse causing mental health issues.

We aim to raise awareness of mental health issues caused by substance misuse, particularly cocaine, to reduce the stigma and encourage open conversations. We arrange free suicide intervention training workshops, arrange and fund 1-1 counselling for anyone experiencing suicidal thoughts, ideation or have made attempts, we educate communities on the issues surrounding suicide via a myriad of information outlets such as leaflets, social media, short films, podcasts and signposting and we run support groups and provide counselling for anyone bereaved by suicide.

We are also a co-founder of the co-alc alliance. The Co-alc Alliance is an independent task group set up in January 2021 to increase awareness of increased risk of suicide in persons taking alcohol and cocaine together and tackle the complex issues that currently prevent public health campaigns.

The alliance was set up with The Jacob Abraham Foundation and The Ginger Heart Foundation for the prevention of Cocaethylene related suicide/sudden deaths.

**For more information see below.**

<https://4tom.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/4tom96>

<https://www.co-alc.org/>

or email

[nicola@4tom.org](mailto:nicola@4tom.org).



## The Outdoor Partnership

SUMMIT Activity Centre in Merthyr have been running a very successful monthly Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) friendly climbing club for over a year. SUMMIT offers these sessions when the climbing wall is closed to the general public, there are no other people, there is no music, so less sensory overload and purely a focus on the participating individuals with ASD and neurodiverse conditions.

Last November saw The Outdoor Partnership organising a 'Climbing for all' course, held in the SUMMIT Centre, Merthyr. Climbing instructors came from all over Wales to attend this course. Boulders in Cardiff, Llangorse in Powys, Longtown in Gwent and Llangranog in Mid Wales. The Climbing for all course is a mountain training workshop led by Graeme Hill. These courses have been running for over 11 years and were developed by Adventure for All and Mountain Training England and Association of Mountaineering Instructors. The climbing for all course helps train the climbing staff in the rope work and other skills necessary to help children, young people and adults with a wide range of disabilities enjoy climbing.

We are excited to announce that Dan Bufton from Active Merthyr, who is also the Merthyr Disability Sports Officer has confirmed funding to continue this club for another year. In addition, they are funding to train up 2 volunteers to assist with the club, to allow it to become fully inclusive by Autumn 2023!



So you can expect to be seeing more inclusive climbing happening in Merthyr, with new opportunities for wheelchair hoisting sessions and individuals with complex needs and disabilities to be included in the climbing community.

For more information contact **Leila Connolly**, Outdoor Activity Development Officer for Central South Wales on **07872 851 395**





## The Heads of the Valleys Dyslexia Association

The Heads of the Valleys Dyslexia Association is a local charity run by a small number of dedicated volunteers. We are looking for people who have an interest in working with others in breaking the barriers that surround dyslexia and supporting those living locally to be acknowledged, accepted and empowered.

HVDA is affiliated with the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) which gives us access to support; training and a wealth of information. By being part of the BDA, we add greater weight to raising awareness and championing those with dyslexia on a local and national level. We are currently working closely with Tomorrow's Generation, a dyslexia learning centre, to provide small group sessions for secondary school pupils, to improve literacy within the local area.

### Benefits of membership include:

- Supporting those with dyslexia and their families at a local level
- Access to up-to-date research and information about dyslexia
- Expand your knowledge of dyslexia
- Be part of bigger organisation that campaigns for change, influences government policy and promotes resources.
- Dyslexia Contact magazine (Dyslexia Contact is a lively, visual publication written in a dyslexia-friendly style that aims to provide impartial, practical information and advice for issues related to dyslexia. It is suitable for all with an interest in dyslexia including dyslexic people, parents, professionals and organisations.)

Membership £10 annual fee.

For more information please email [Headsofthevalleysda@gmail.com](mailto:Headsofthevalleysda@gmail.com)

## Merthyr Valleys Veterans

Veterans are almost twice as likely as the general public to experience PTSD, and for those stationed in active combat in war zones, 30% experience a mental health condition (Kings College London, 2018). In Merthyr town's Labour club, every Tuesday morning at 10am until 12 noon, you'll find Merthyr Valley Veterans Breakfast Club. That coming together. The kettle on. Stories shared. Problems halved. When the brew's sunk, the veterans work to make the community better for everyone.

Like at the Parish Church Memorial Garden. You'll find them putting down new pathways, cutting grass, renewing benches and cleaning memorial stones. They have a project at Cyfartha Castle and will be working alongside Penydre High School to develop a remembrance garden and supporting other community groups in the community.

Merthyr Valley Veterans have just been successful in securing funding from Mabgwalia to support their work in the community. You can see more about the group here <https://mabgwalia.wales/portfolio/merthyr-valley-veterans/>



For more information contact **Errold**, [errold438@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:errold438@yahoo.co.uk)



## Tech Volunteer Support

**AbilityNet is a national charity that offers free tech support to older and disabled people.**

Volunteers are able to help with most computer systems, laptops, tablets, smartphones and other smart devices such as Smart TVs, Alexa speakers and Google Home devices.

Our volunteers are DBS checked and can assist you by phone, over the internet or at home. They offer one to one support tailored to you, at your pace.

For more information, please contact **Jacqui Breese**, Community Relationship Administrator Wales on **01646 216 024**

## 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



## We are looking for volunteers to help our activity groups for the over 75's in Wales!

Re-engage is a national charity dedicated to ending loneliness and social isolation. Our activity groups bring people over 75 together in local communities across Wales to help reduce loneliness, social isolation and improve physical wellbeing.

Our groups rely on the support of volunteers to bring together communities and engage in activities such as gentle exercise, tai chi, gardening, walking or a game of boules. Our groups are free to attend and we provide light refreshments to enjoy at our fortnightly or monthly groups.

Our groups are expanding all across Wales and we're looking for group coordinators to help launch a group in your area in Merthyr.

As a volunteer group coordinator, you will coordinate activity-based groups in community centres, pubs or church spaces. Groups host between 4 and 15 older people, along with our volunteer drivers who pick up and drop off our activity guests. As a volunteer group coordinator you can either set up a new group in your local community or help us facilitate an existing group.

Activities at our groups vary from chair fitness, dancing, yoga and boules to gardening, tai-chi or coming up with your own activity to get people moving.

To enable us to reach more older people across Wales, we need volunteers to help facilitate our groups.

Groups meet for around 2 hours every month and activities are inclusive for all older people.

## Do you think you could be our next volunteer?

To find our full list of roles or to have a chat through about our role, visit: <https://www.reengage.org.uk/volunteer/new-volunteers/social-activity-groups/>

or call us on 02922 801 802.



Marie Curie is the UK's leading end of life charity. We provide hands-on nursing and hospice care, a free support line and a wealth of information and support on all aspects of dying, death and bereavement. The charity is now looking for helpers and telephone volunteers all across Wales. The roles are open to anyone over 18 and you'll be given training and ongoing support throughout your time as a volunteer with us. No previous experience is required, so if you think you could provide reliable support with empathy and sensitivity, we'd love to hear from you.

## Find a fresh challenge and volunteer with Marie Curie

If you or someone you know could provide emotional support for people in Wales affected by terminal illness or bereavement, Marie Curie would love to hear from you.

There are three services that need volunteers:

- **Bereavement Service volunteer** – Home-based, by telephone
- **Helper volunteer** – In-person, in the community
- **Check in and Chat volunteer** – Home-based, by telephone

If you think volunteering might be for you, why not get started today?

To find out more, contact Kate Hounslow, Volunteer Services Coordinator on 07515 135543 or email her at [Kate.Hounslow@mariecurie.org.uk](mailto:Kate.Hounslow@mariecurie.org.uk)



Gwasanaeth Gwybodaeth a Chymorth Profedigaeth Cymru  
Wales Bereavement Information and Support Service

**Marie Curie**

*"It is so rewarding to be able to support people through these difficult periods and feel like you are making a genuine and positive difference to their bereavement experience; bringing a little bit of light or hope to what is usually an incredibly dark time. For what realistically, is quite a small amount of time each week, it's a wonderful feeling to know you can make such a difference to someone's bereavement journey."*



Bryony, Bereavement Service volunteer



Founded by HRH The Prince of Wales

## Become a Volunteer Mentor

**PRIME Cymru is on the lookout for Volunteer Mentors in Merthyr Tydfil to support their clients into work or set up in business.**

The charity, founded by His Majesty King Charles III (as HRH Prince of Wales) in 2001, supports people aged 50+ across Wales into employment, self-employment, volunteering and training.

Many of their clients lack confidence and require some guidance and encouragement. Volunteer Mentors give a few hours of their time each month to share their knowledge and experience with those who need a hand to secure a job or get their business off the ground.

Clients really appreciate having someone there as a listening ear to discuss ideas with and offer objective feedback. Mentors also find the process very rewarding, finding a sense of fulfilment from helping others to succeed.

Mentors are given free training (accredited by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs) and given access to Mentor Circle meetings, where they can exchange ideas and share experiences with other mentors.

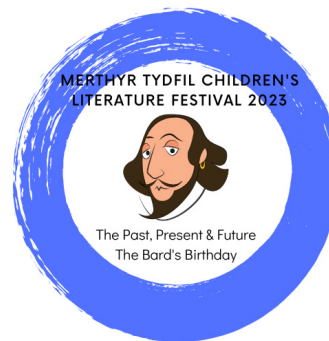
If you are interested in supporting aspiring business people and job seekers in and around Merthyr, please get in touch at [enquiries@primecymru.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@primecymru.co.uk) or call **01550 721813**.





STEPHENS AND GEORGE CENTENARY CHARITABLE TRUST

## Volunteers Wanted Merthyr Tydfil Children's Literature Festival



The Merthyr Tydfil Children's Literature Festival is the largest children's festival in the UK celebrating World Book Day and will be a cultural highlight of the year. We need volunteers to help the smooth running of the festival and ensure the event is a fun day for the young people of Merthyr Tydfil.

Hosted by Stephens and George Charitable Trust, the festival is taking place on **Thursday April 20th 2023** from **9am until 3pm** with over 4000 children in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales and is based in 21 town centre locations. The event is its 7th Year and is being opened 10am at St David's Church, Merthyr Tydfil. Many prominent figures from across the arts and youth field will be in attendance.

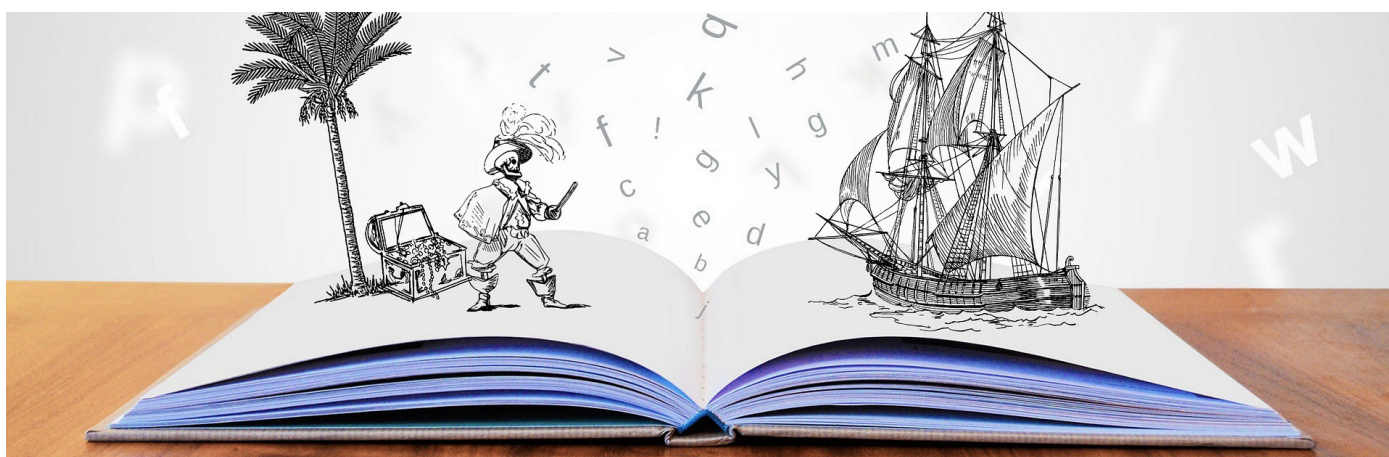
The whole ethos of the Festival is to inspire young people to read and write and this year the event theme is Shakespeare. Authors attending include Michael Rosen, Marica Williams, Christian Foley, Aneirin Karadog, Shakespeare Link, Shakespeare in Schools, Finding the Will and more.

The Festival will come alive with flash mobs, living statues, acts, music, animals, the Royal Court and traditional Tudor activities.

At 9.30am a parade of over 2000 children will see the town coming to standstill with all participants dressed as Shakespearean characters.

- Over 80 stalls selling books, foods, crafts and lots more.
- There will be 200 Workshops on the day in 24 venues across Merthyr Tydfil.

If you or your organisation can help by volunteering at the largest Children's Literature Festival celebrating World Book Day please get in touch via [charity1@stephensandgeorge.co.uk](mailto:charity1@stephensandgeorge.co.uk) or call us **01685 375331** for more information.





## Future dates of Forums and Networks

### Children, Young People & Families' Forum

**10 am to 12 Noon and will be held on MS Teams until further notice.**

The meetings for the new year will return to a Thursday and will be held on:

**Thursday 15th June**

**Thursday 14th September**

**Thursday 14th December**

For further information please contact  
**info@vamt.net**

### Health and Wellbeing Forum

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.

**Wednesday 17th May**

**Wednesday 16th August**

**Wednesday 15th November**

**Wednesday 21st February 2024**

**Meetings will take place 10am - 12pm at the Voluntary Action Centre.**

It's facilitated by Claire Williams, Health and Wellbeing Manager, contact  
**claire.williams@vamt.net** for further information.

### Volunteer Managers' Forum

**Wednesday 26th April**

**Wednesday 28th June**

**Wednesday 20th September**

**The Forums take place at the Voluntary Action Centre.**

The Volunteer Managers Forum is facilitated by Frances Barry, please contact her at  
**frances.barry@vamt.net** if you are a Volunteer Manager and would like to find out more.

### Food Prosperity Network

**via Teams at 10am**

**Tuesday 4th July**

**Monday 6th November**

Merthyr Tydfil Food Prosperity Network is an emerging coalition of organisations in Merthyr Tydfil with the aim to support residents and communities' access healthy affordable food. The Network is supported through Food Sense Wales and the South Wales Food Prosperity Network and registered with the Food Power Programme which offers financial assistance for local level action around the development of food poverty alliances. VAMT is currently providing the secretariat for the fledgling group, which was established in November 2018 and includes Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association, Merthyr Valleys Homes and Wales and West Housing Association.

For further information please contact Karen Vowles at **karen.vowles@vamt.net** under Food Prosperity and the environment green space networks.

### The Environment & Green Space Network

**via Teams at 10am**

**Tuesday 7th June**

**Tuesday 12th September**

**Tuesday 28th November**

The Environment and Green Spaces Network was established in 2017 and is primarily a virtual network, however it has held meetings to showcase projects and discuss issues such as the Valleys Regional Park. It is primarily a third sector network and is made up of organisations and community groups concerned with environmental and conservation issues. Events have been facilitated jointly with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

For further information please contact Karen Vowles at **karen.vowles@vamt.net** under Food Prosperity and the environment green space networks.



## What's coming up

### Mental Health Awareness Week (15th – 21st May)

This year's theme is Anxiety. Anxiety is a normal emotion in us all, but sometimes it can get out of control and become a mental health problem.

Many things can lead to feelings of anxiety, including exam pressures, relationships, starting a new job (or losing one) or other big life events. We can also get anxious when it comes to things to do with money and not being able to meet our basic needs, like heating our home or buying food.

Mental Health Awareness Week is an ideal time for us all to think about mental health, tackle stigma, and find out how we can create a community that prevents mental health problems from developing and protects our mental well-being.

As part of the week our Mental Health team will be promoting and sharing opportunities, groups, and activities available across the Merthyr Borough that can help to support your and others mental health and wellbeing.

Are you an organisation or group that runs activities, training or support for better mental health and wellbeing?

Contact Faye Johnson – Mental Health Development Officer to share how you are supporting people with their mental health and wellbeing and how we can all work together this Mental Health Awareness Week.



The next CTM Mental Health Forum meeting is **Wednesday 19th April** – in person, in Gilfach Goch, Porth. 10am – 12pm.

If you would like more information or would like to become a member of the forum please contact Faye on [faye.johnson@vamt.net](mailto:faye.johnson@vamt.net).

## "Meet the Funder" events

Following our previous very successful Meet the Funder events, VAMT wants to offer you an opportunity to meet two funders in April 2023. Don't miss out, booking your place is a must!

**19th April Community Foundation Wales at 11:30 in VAMT.** Learn more about their grants and how to apply.

**27th April Heritage Lottery Fund will be holding appointments at VAMT.** You can discuss your project before you make an application and learn more about what is needed to succeed. These appointments were snapped up very quickly at the last event. Book early!

To book your place at each event contact  
[karen.vowles@vamt.net](mailto:karen.vowles@vamt.net).

## How can we help your organisation?

**What do you want VAMT to help your organisation with?**

We can help with funding information, organisational policies, help new groups to develop, organise training and learning events for the Third Sector and help in volunteer recruitment.



Help us to help you.  
Please contact  
[karen.vowles@vamt.net](mailto:karen.vowles@vamt.net)





**VOLUNTEERS' WEEK**



# Volunteer Recognition Awards

**Thursday 1st June at 6.30pm  
Morlais Golf Club, Merthyr Tydfil**

**After what seems like forever, this year,  
VAMT's Volunteer Recognitions Awards are back.**

It will be an opportunity to recognise the contributions and achievements of volunteers, community groups and organisations for their hard work and for going above and beyond to support everyone in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.

Please click on this link  
<https://vamt.net/en/volunteering/volunteers-week-2023/>  
which will take you to the nomination form, award categories and guidance form.

Please note that the closing date for all applications is **Friday 21st April 2023**

## Volunteering Fair

**Tuesday 6th June 10am – 2pm  
at Merthyr Tydfil Precinct**

Last years event was such a success that VAMT have decided to again organise a Volunteering Fair at Merthyr Tydfil Precinct. If you're looking to recruit volunteers and promote your organisation then this is a great way to do so.

Due to Health and Safety reasons the maximum amount of groups that can attend on the day is 20.

Organisations will be allocated a table on a first come first served basis so if you are interested, can you confirm with Frances Barry on **07958 132822** or email her at [frances.barry@vamt.net](mailto:frances.barry@vamt.net) by Friday 14th April 2023

(Please note that the Fair is for Merthyr and Merthyr/RCT groups only).



# INFORM

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Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful

## Would you like to find out more about Bereavement Cafes in Merthyr Tydfil?

Our Community Coordinator, Lesley Hodgson, in partnership with Marie Curie would like to set up some Bereavement Cafes or support groups in Merthyr Tydfil. Full training will be provided via Marie Curie in two, three and a half hour sessions. Sharon, from Marie Curie explains *"Marie Curie supports people who have been bereaved by any terminal illness not just Cancer. I don't think people realise that"*.



Each café needs 2 or 3 volunteers. *"We would ideally love to have one in the North of the borough, one in the South and one in the town centre, if enough volunteers can be found"*, says Lesley.

To find out more about what would be involved.  
Contact Lesley on **07580866547**.

## BLOG AND BULLETIN UPDATE

Our new Blog is up and running, you are now able to subscribe which will keep you up to date with all the latest news that is happening in Merthyr Tydfil.

Please click <https://vamt.net/en/updates/> to access the blog and also the link which will allow you to subscribe.

We are now emailing our members with a new fortnightly bulletin, this is an extra way of keeping you up to date with news.

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](mailto:frances.barry@vamt.net)

**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.

## 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: [info@vamt.net](mailto:info@vamt.net).

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Community Co-ordinator – Merthyr

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Mental Health Service User Involvement Officer

**Faye Johnson**  
Mental Health Development Officer

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**Kayleigh Nor-Val**

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**Nicola Mahoney**

**Hefin Jones**

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The views expressed in this edition of Inform are not necessarily those of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.  
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