

# INFORM

VOLUNTARY  
ACTION  
GWEITHREDU  
GWIRFODDOL

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful

February 2024

## VAMT's Volunteer Recognition Awards Ceremony returns for 2024

**Nominations  
will be open from  
Monday 4th March!**

**Apply by  
Friday 12th  
April!**

The event is taking place on:

**Thursday 27th June 7.30pm at Morlais Castle Golf Club  
and will be hosted by ITV Wales Newsreader, Andrea Byrne.**

This year there are 6 categories:

- **Young Volunteer of the Year (25 and under Award)**
- **Volunteer of the Year (26 and over Award)**
- **Community Group/Charity of the Year**
- **Trustee Award**
- **Outstanding Contribution Award**
- **Sports Volunteer of the Year**

(This year Active Merthyr Tydfil launched their new Volunteer of the Month programme, designed to recognise and reward those volunteers across Merthyr Tydfil who are the backbone of community sport. Nominated by

the general public, winners are chosen by a panel each month and presented with their award in the settings in which the volunteer. **This new award, in partnership with VAMT, will be a closed nomination** with each of the monthly Active Merthyr Volunteer of the Month winners put forward automatically for the award).

Application and guidance forms for each of the categories can be found on the VAMT website, [www.vamt.net](http://www.vamt.net)

**Closing date for applications is  
Friday 12th April**

# Focus On Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil

Following a successful grant application, we were delighted to be awarded a small grant from Welsh Government and Carers Trust to deliver support to carers in our community between October 2023 –

**March 2024. If you are caring for someone with cancer, we have a range of short break opportunities for you to access.**



Join one of our friendly support groups to meet others, have a chat and a cuppa. We also have opportunities for you to attend a group theatre trip, days out, or enjoy a short break, alone or with your loved one to relax and recharge. As well as days out, and social events this project is also able to provide up to 6 sessions of complementary therapy for carers, just one hour a week to relax and help ease stress and tension in the body. For more information, please contact us on 01685379633.

After an incredibly busy year, it was great to celebrate with our volunteers and patients at Christmas at one of our many events. Last year our volunteers donated 15,300 hours of their time to help the charity, which would have been a cost to the organisation of nearly £160,000.

In addition to our new services – our core services remain at the heart of what we do.

- Transport – a free door to door transport service to all cancer related hospital appointments.
- Counselling – one to one counselling with a qualified counsellor.
- Complementary therapy – one hour of relaxation offering services including reflexology, aromatherapy, Indian head massage
- Foot Health Clinic – includes nail cutting, hard skin removal, and footcare advice available for patients.
- Drop in or telephone support – available without appointment, simply drop into our centre in Dowlais or call us for information, support and advice. You can register for services or simply find out more about us.

**If you would like further information then please contact us on 01685 379633.**



## Merthyr Tydfil Community Trust

### SMALL GRANTS SCHEME



This fund is available to small voluntary and community groups for any charitable purpose (excluding religious activities).

Grants awarded will not normally exceed £300. However, grants can be made up to £500 at the discretion of the trustees.

The application must be for an activity based in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.

Applications can only be considered from organisations whose income in the last financial year was less than £10,000.

Application forms are available from **Ian Davy**, email [ian.davy@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ian.davy@hotmail.co.uk) or phone **07966 698017**.

**The deadline for applications is 22nd March 2024.**

## Elite training solutions



### Attention all Employers and Staff!

Are you ready to transform lives, unlock potential and make a meaningful impact in the supported employment and disability sector? Then look no further, ELITE Training Solutions (ETS) is your partner in professional development and empowerment. ETS was set up in 2018, and is a premier provider of professional, specialised training within the employment sector. Originally an integral part of ELITE Supported Employment, we have grown into a separate training enterprise, thanks to the exceptional quality of training delivered by tutors with over 20 years in the industry.

We are able to offer and design bespoke training sessions to meet the needs of your organisation. Our comprehensive curriculum covers a wide range of topics, see some of the topics below:

- Disability Awareness Training
- Training In Systematic Instruction
- Mental Health First Aid
- Conflict Management
- Certificate For Supported Employment Practitioners
- Overview Of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Core Values Of Supported Employment



You'll gain a deep understanding of the sector, enhancing your ability to make a positive impact. ELITE Training Solutions is not just about training; it's about achieving results. We believe in the power of every individual to achieve their full potential.

Join the ELITE Training Solutions community and be the change that the supported employment and disability sector needs. Together we can build a more inclusive, empowering future.

Please visit our website on <https://elitetrainingsolutions.org/> or contact **Chris English** on [info@elitetrainingsolutions.org](mailto:info@elitetrainingsolutions.org) if you have any queries.

## Stepping out into Nature Geocache Trail

If you love a treasure hunt and also love Cyfarthfa Park then you are in for a treat. As part of Cwm Taf People First Stepping out into Nature Project and supported by VAMT's loneliness and isolation grant a Geocache trail has been set up around Cyfarthfa Park.



Geocaching is available by signing up on <https://www.geocaching.com> and can be done using a smart phone or through using a GPS enabled device. Geocaching is a bit like a treasure hunt using your phone instead of a map and is available worldwide for free. The trail is spread throughout the Park and gives basic information about some of the interesting things in the Park. The information is also in an easy read format so is available to everyone. There are 5 Geocaches to find around the Park and should take around an hour depending on how long it takes you to find each cache and also how long it takes you to walk up the hills!

The Stepping out into Nature Project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and gives adults with a learning disability the chance to learn about nature, the environment and climate change whilst also having fun and making new friends. Activities run on most Fridays

though not all activities take place in Merthyr but anyone over the age of 18 with a learning disability is welcome to join us wherever we are. The best part about the project is what we do is based on what our members want to do. We have learned about our local wildlife, made our own Christmas wreaths and Reindeer and even made our very own elderflower champagne! This is just a small amount of the activities we have done so get in touch and come and join the fun.

There is a weekly email list that you can join that gives you more information on the activity that week, for more information about the project please get in touch with:

**Lee Jones** - Stepping out into Nature Project  
Co-ordinator Email: [leejones@rctpeoplefirst.org.uk](mailto:leejones@rctpeoplefirst.org.uk)  
**Telephone: 07496883553**



## Free Digital Help For Third Sector Organisations in Wales

Are you a third sector organisation in Wales looking for a digital solution to your problem?



ProMo Cymru offers free one-to-one digital support through their [Third Sector Digital Support project](#), thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund.

If you're a charity, non-profit organisation, social enterprise, or community or voluntary group, you're eligible for free help through [DigiCymru](#). DigiCymru will match you with one of ProMo's experts to help find a solution to your digital challenge or issue, and if they can't help, they'll find someone who can.

ProMo helped over 60 third sector organisations in Wales in the project's first year.

Find out more about all these, case studies (and more) [here](#).

If you need help finding a digital solution for your organisation, book your free one-to-one session through the [booking system](#) here or visit the ProMo Cymru website for [more information](#).



## Cymryd Rhan

**Cymryd Rhan is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation, a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. We have nearly forty years experience supporting citizens across Wales.**

Our purpose is to support people to live their lives the way they want to. We work across Wales and the borders supporting people to live in their own homes and be part of their communities. We provide support to individuals and families, supporting them with their mental health and wellbeing, and reducing social isolation. We have childcare facilities in Merthyr and a team providing business support and training to childcare providers and settings.

**Our new Just Bee project supports individuals and families in the Galon Uchaf area with various services available:**

- **Financial resilience** – if you're worried about money you can talk to someone about debt, managing your money, benefits, savings and how to save money
- **Getting back into work or finding a new job** – support with creating or updating your CV, job searches, job applications, and preparing for an interview
- **Wellbeing support** – if you would like someone to talk to, support with coping with stress, emotions, low self esteem, health related concerns

To find out how we could help you, contact the team on **01597 828050** or email: [info@cymryd-rhan.org](mailto:info@cymryd-rhan.org)

## SOAR

Mae Canolfan a Theatr Soar yn ganolfan Gymraeg sydd ar agor i bob ymwelydd. Bydd unrhyw rai sydd wedi mynychu un o'r perfformiadau neu ddigwyddiadau yno neu wedi ymweld â'r caffi neu'r siop yn achlysurol yn gwybod bod croeso cynnes i bawb bob amser, os ydych yn siarad Cymraeg neu beidio.

Mae gweithgareddau yn Soar yn amrywio o jamiau acwstig anffurfiol rheolaidd yn y caffi neu'r cwrt, i lansiadau llyfrau; digwyddiadau barddoniaeth; digwyddiadau hanesyddol a diwylliannol; gweithdai a gweithgareddau gan gynnwys drama, cerddoriaeth a chelf; ac wrth gwrs cynyrchiadau cerdd a drama mwy yn y theatr wrth i ni groesawu cwmnïau, cerddorion a pherfformwyr cenedlaethol a rhyngwladol. Yn ddiweddar mae'r digwyddiadau wedi cynnwys: Theatr na nOg, gyda'u cynhyrchiad o Y Fenyw Mewn Du; y band gwerin o fri rhyngwladol Calan; ac Annie Cwrt Mawr, drama un fenyw yn seiliedig ar fywyd yr Annie Jane Hughes Griffith ysbrydoledig a'r grŵp Khamira sy'n cyfuno cerddoriaeth Indiaidd a Chymreig; gan enwi dim ond rhai. Mae Soar hefyd yn cynnal nifer o ddsbarthiadau, gweithgareddau a grwpiau anffurfiol gan gynnwys dosbarthiadau Cymraeg (lefelau amrywiol), dosbarthiadau ESOL (Saesneg i Siaradwyr leithoedd Eraill), loga, Bale ac amryw o weithgareddau eraill yn ogystal.

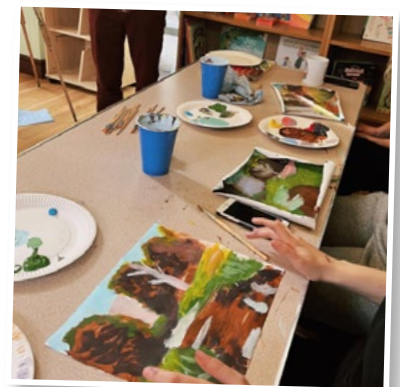


Ail agorodd Siop Soar fis Hydref diwethaf gan werthu llyfrau Cymraeg a llyfrau o ddi-ddordeb Cymreig. Mae'n rhedeg grŵp y Grŵp Celf, ar brynhawn dydd Mawrth, gan gyflwyno ychydig o Gymraeg i'r rhai sy'n newydd i'r iaith a mwy i'r rhai sy'n fwy hyderus neu'n rhugl, sy'n gallu trafod eu gwaith a'u syniadau gydag arweinydd y sesiynau - yr artist Gus Payne. Bydd Siop Soar hefyd yn cynnal Grŵp Darllen wythnosol, gan ddechrau ym mis Mawrth (gyda lefel Mynediad - ond gobeithio y bydd yn ehangu yn y dyfodol i gynnwys lefelau eraill hefyd).

Diolch i gyllid gan y Cynllun Grant Etifeddiaeth Bentrefi Byd-eang, fis Ebrill eleni bydd Soar yn cynnal cyfres o sesiynau gweithdy cerddoriaeth, canu ac ysgrifennu caneuon i greu cyfansoddiad amlddiwylliannol newydd fydd yn defnyddio elfennau o draddodiadau Cymreig a diwylliannol eraill. Bydd y prosiect yn dathlu'r gwahaniaethau a'r tebygrwydd rhwng gwahanol ddiwylliannau byd-eang a geir ym Merthyr Tudful heddiw a bydd yn gweithredu fel catalydd i gychwyn grŵp amlddiwylliannol, yn canolbwyntio ar gân a cherddoriaeth. (Gweler y wefan neu dudalennau cyfryngau cymdeithasol am ddyddiadau ac amseroedd).

Bydd 2024 yn flwyddyn bwysig i Theatr Soar, ar ôl bod yn llwyddiannus gyda chais sylweddol i Gyngor Celfyddydau Cymru i adeiladu a datblygu'r rhaglen theatr hyd yn oed ymhellach.

Mae Soar yn chwilio am wirfoddolwyr a all fod yn rhan o'r cam nesaf yn ei ddatblygiad.



**Canolfan a Theatr Soar is a Welsh language centre open to all visitors. Anyone who's attended one of the performances or events or casually visited the café or shop will know that there is always a warm welcome for all, Welsh speaker or not.**



Activities at Soar vary from regular informal acoustic jams in the café or courtyard, to book launches; poetry events; historical and cultural events; workshops and activities including drama, music and art; and of course larger music and drama productions in the theatre, welcoming national and international companies, musicians and performers, recently including: Theatr na nOg, with their production of Y Fenyw Mewn Du (the Woman In Black); the internationally acclaimed folk band Calan; Annie Cwrt Mawr, a one woman play based on the life of the inspiring Annie Jane Hughes Griffith and the Khamira group which combines Indian and Welsh music; to name just a few. Soar also hosts a number of classes, activities and informal groups including Welsh classes (various levels), ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, Yoga, Ballet and various others too.

Siop Soar, selling Welsh language and Welsh interest books, reopened last October and runs an art group, Grŵp Celf, on Tuesday afternoons, introducing a little Welsh for those new to the language and more for those who are more proficient or fluent, who can discuss their work and ideas with artist Gus Payne who leads the sessions. Siop Soar will also be hosting a weekly reading group, Grŵp Darllen, beginning in March (beginning with entry level (Mynediad) but hopefully expanding in the future to include other levels too).

Thanks to funding from the Global Village Legacy Grant Scheme, this April, Soar will be running a series of music, song and songwriting workshop sessions to create a new multi-cultural composition using elements from Welsh and other cultural traditions. The project will celebrate both the differences and similarities between different global cultures found in Merthyr Tydfil today and will act as a catalyst to start a multi-cultural collective, focused on song and music. (Please see the website or social media pages for dates and times).

2024 will be an important year for Theatr Soar, having been successful with a major application to the Arts Council of Wales to build and develop the theatre programme even further.



Bringing generations together

## Make a difference and volunteer



**Re-engage is looking for volunteers to give some of their time every month to make isolated older people in their community feel connected and valued.**

At Re-engage we organise social groups that bring real pleasure to people through conversation, laughter and, crucially, giving them something to look forward to. But we can't do it without you.

We are looking for volunteer drivers, venue hosts and group coordinators to help us organise monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties for people aged 75 and over who are lonely, isolated or in need of companionship.

Our volunteers make cherished relationships and 90% of them say that volunteering with us has had a positive impact on their lives.



Bringing generations together

## Activity groups for the over 75s



**Could you support older people to be more active?**

**Would you like to get a group of older people active and engaged with their local community? We can support you to launch an activity group in your area.**

At Re-engage we organise activity groups for people aged 75 and over to help reduce loneliness, social isolation and improve physical wellbeing.

Our groups host a range of activities including dance, chair yoga, tai chi, light fitness, singing and boules.

We are looking for volunteer activity group leads to run a local Re-engage group in their area.

Please get in touch.  
Call 020 7240 0630, email [info@reengage.org.uk](mailto:info@reengage.org.uk)  
or visit [www.reengage.org.uk](http://www.reengage.org.uk)

Re-engage is a registered charity in England and Wales (1146149) and in Scotland (SC039377). Company Number (07869142)  
Registered office: 7 Bell Yard, London WC2A 2JR

## Merthyr Valley Veterans

Merthyr Valley Veterans are a veteran based group who meet up to support each other and the local community. They formed back in 2022 and meet locally at Merthyr Labour Club on a Tuesday morning for a brew, sandwich and banter. This is a weekly coffee morning where they can enjoy the military banter and conversations with like-minded veterans, although anyone is welcome. They have been very lucky to welcome new faces, councillors and The High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan.

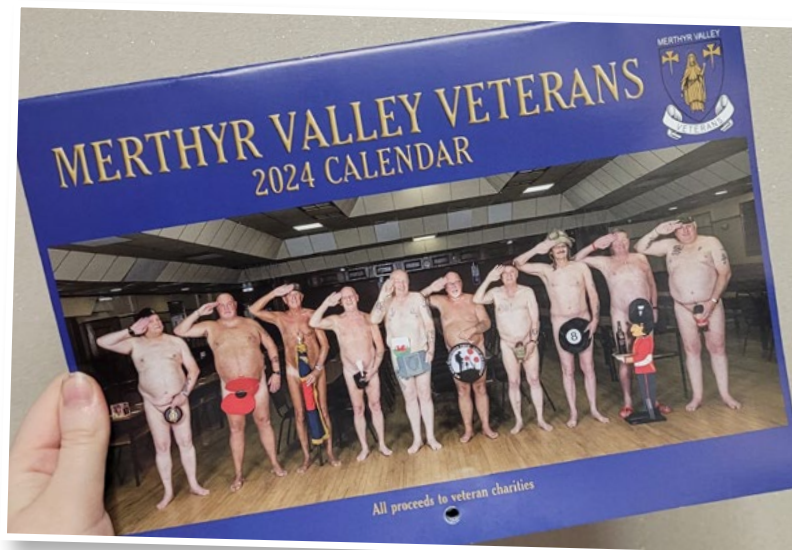
MERTHYR VALLEY



Improving the mental and physical health of veterans throughout Merthyr and the Valley

They raise money and support the local community in many different ways such as :-

- Helping a local high school by creating and completing a memorial area and raising money for their sponsored run.
- Supporting a local dementia unit by creating a lovely outdoor space for the patients to utilise
- Cleaned and tidied up local cap badge stones at a local cemetery and previously organised fundraising nights, raffles, auctions and two Santa Grotto's to help raise money. They will continue to do what they can to raise more for the community and to support Veteran families.
- They recently had great success with the fundraising naked calendars, all money raised from these will be donated to other veteran based charities in Wales.



**Why not pop along on a Tuesday morning, pull up a sandbag and join them for a brew?**

For more information on upcoming events and projects check out their Facebook Page, Merthyr Valley Veterans <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092532167580>





## Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil Needs Your Help!

If you have spare time on your hands and would like to make a difference to your community then please volunteer for your local cancer charity. Sparing a few hours every week really does make a big difference, and by supporting our charity you are also supporting your community.

### BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING:

- You can gain new skills, make new friends and increase self-confidence.
- Volunteering also gives you the feel-good factor and a sense of purpose.

Anyone can become a volunteer, so why not make a difference today and join our volunteering community at Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil.

Volunteers are vital in ensuring that our charity is able to deliver its aims and objectives covering a variety of roles including retail, receptionists, gardeners, fundraisers & drivers.

If you would like to volunteer or would like more information, please call us on: Tel. **01685 379633**



### Volunteering really does make a huge difference to your local charity.

The volunteers hours delivered in the following year Oct 22 / Sept 23

- Retail – **4,320 hrs**
- Reception – **864 hrs**
- Drivers – **3640 hrs**
- Ad hoc volunteering – **210 hrs**
- **Total volunteering hours completed by our volunteers 9,034**
- **The total cost of volunteering based on national living wage - £94,134.28p**



### The Trust is seeking a volunteer to conduct basic ground work at its site.

The work will involve cutting our hedge down the driveway, cutting back some trees and strimming grass sections at the centre. The work will need to be conducted a couple of times each month from April or May, and up to around October.

We simply need a responsible person who may enjoy the outdoor work.

We will provide the tools and PPE required.

For more information please contact Howard Jackson via [enquiries@tbdtd.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@tbdtd.co.uk).



**Make the difference in your community, become a volunteer at Stephens and George Charitable Trust.**



Stephens and George Charitable Trust is currently looking for volunteers to help us with several projects, these include home shopping for those isolated, helping at our #nophonesorcomputers afterschool clubs and holiday discovery club and Baby Bookworm programme. Other opportunities include volunteering at our Book Shop, Gardens, Café and Admin/ Reception.

Do you have a little free time or want to gain experience as well as the opportunity to meet new people.

To thank volunteers for their time we offer benefits such as free gym membership for the on-site community gym as well as opportunities to attend trips and training which will grow skills and experiences.

If you would like to find out more about these opportunities, please contact us on **01685 377688** or email [charity1@stephensandgeorge.co.uk](mailto:charity1@stephensandgeorge.co.uk)

## COULD YOU BEE A SUPERHERO?



**JOIN OUR HIVE OF VOLUNTEERS AND MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE**



### WE OFFER VARIOUS ROLES:

- **BECOME A TRUSTEE,**
- **FUNDRAISING & EVENTS,**
- **PHONE COMPANION,**
- **LOOSE LIMBS GROUP LEADER**



### WHO ARE WE?

**CYMRYD RHAN** ARE A CHARITY WITH NEARLY 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE SUPPORTING CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES IN WALES.

WE'RE INCREASING OUR CHARITABLE WORK AND STRENGTHENING OUR ROOTS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR COMMUNITIES IN WALES.

WE'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT PEOPLE HAVING THEIR VOICES HEARD, AND THEIR CHOICE TO LIVE THE WAY THEY WANT TO.

**CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE**



### WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

WHEN PEOPLE TELL ME HOW IT HAS HELPED THEM IN SOME WAY IT MAKE ME HAPPY.



I HIGHLY RECOMMEND VOLUNTEERING AS A PHONE COMPANION, MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN A MASSIVELY POSITIVE ONE

MY MANAGER MADE ME FEEL VERY WELCOME AND IT OFFERED FLEXIBLE COMMITMENTS THAT I CAN FIT AROUND MY BUSY SCHEDULE

### JOIN THE TEAM!

CONTACT OUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR  
**HELEN BAYNHAM - 07785 457146**  
OR EMAIL: [INFO@CYMRYD-RHAN.ORG](mailto:INFO@CYMRYD-RHAN.ORG)

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:  
[WWW.CYMRYD-RHAN.ORG](http://WWW.CYMRYD-RHAN.ORG)





Founded by HRH The Prince of Wales

## Helping the over 50s into work - become a Volunteer Mentor for PRIME Cymru!

**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 our 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.



Mentor, Julie Grabham, said: "Mentoring gave [my mentee] the confidence she needed to forge ahead with her business and seeing how she has flourished has given me huge satisfaction and pride.

Dawn said: "Julie has such a motivating, positive and can-do attitude. I used to be like that, and I lost it – but now I've got it back! I'm so grateful to Julie."

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**.



## CTM Mental Health Forum

Dates to be confirmed

To join the Forum or for more information contact [sharon.jones@vamt.net](mailto:sharon.jones@vamt.net)

## Health and Wellbeing Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre, 10am - 12pm  
**Wednesday 15th May**  
**Wednesday 21st August**  
**Wednesday 20th November**

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 [lesley.hodgson@vamt.net](mailto:lesley.hodgson@vamt.net)

## The Children, Young People & Families Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre, 10am - 12pm  
**Thursday 14th March**  
**Thursday 13th June**  
**Thursday 12th September**  
**Thursday 12th December**

To join the Forum or for more information contact [emily.whiteman-cranston@vamt.net](mailto:emily.whiteman-cranston@vamt.net)

## Volunteer Managers' Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre, 10am - 12pm  
**Wednesday 29th May**  
**Wednesday 18th September**

To join the Forum or for more information contact [frances.barry@vamt.net](mailto:frances.barry@vamt.net)

## Food Prosperity Network

VAMT was 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.

All meetings are via Teams at 10am, dates are below.

**April 10th 2024**

**July 10th 2024**

**November 6th 2024**

For more information on how to become part of this vibrant Network contact [karen.vowles@vamt.net](mailto:karen.vowles@vamt.net)

## The Environment & Green Prescribing Network

Dates to be confirmed

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

## Are you interested in being a Voluntary Sector representative at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils Scrutiny Committees?



**Be vocal and help make a difference... Become a Co-opted Member on one of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Scrutiny Committees.**

Scrutiny is an umbrella term covering a wide range of roles with key legislative responsibility for:

- Holding the Cabinet to account
- Policy Review and Development
- Reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Council and help drive improvements in services.
- External scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Committees help ensure local public services are delivered effectively and efficiently and have wide ranging powers to investigate areas of local interest.

Scrutiny can question decision takers, call in expert witnesses or hear evidence from other local stakeholders. Investigations are not restricted to Council run services, any area of interest to the local community may be investigated by scrutiny.

The Council has five scrutiny committees:

- Corporate Support and Resources
- Neighbourhood Services, Countryside and Planning Scrutiny Committee
- Learning and LGES (Local Government Education Service) Scrutiny Committee
- Social Services Scrutiny Committee
- Regeneration and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee

There are currently vacancies for Voluntary Sector Co-opted representatives on Social Services and Corporate Support and Resources Committees.

If you are interested in learning more about the role and responsibilities of Scrutiny Committee members, Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil will be holding an awareness session on **11th April 2024 at 10am at VAMT.**

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


 NEED HELP?

### 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, help in volunteer recruitment.

**Help us to help you.**

Please contact [karen.vowles@vamt.net](mailto:karen.vowles@vamt.net)

## Third Sector Support Wales



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

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

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.

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.

### A BIG HELP FOR SMALL ORGANISATIONS

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.

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

## From April onwards - "Meet the Funder"

These sessions give you an opportunity to meet with the Funder directly.

Hear what the criterion for their funding is and how to ensure your application meets the criteria. Sessions are being planned with Welsh Government, Community Foundation for Wales and many others.

Look out for more information and session dates via our website **Blog** from April 2024 onwards!

## The Benefits of Writing a Business Plan

Wednesday 6th March 2024 10am-12pm  
At Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil  
89-90 High Street, Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8UH.

VAMT are hosting Huw Francis from Cwmpass, who will be delivering this training.

This will include:

- Characteristics of a Good Business Plan
- Executive Summary
- Business Background
- Business Objectives & Goals
- Management and Organisational Structure
- Delivery of Products and Services
- Premises
- Equipment
- The Market & Market Research
- Marketing & Sales
- Policies and Procedures
- Finance
- Appendices

You will have the opportunity to ask questions and share your experiences too.

For more information and book your place at the event contact [Emily.whiteman-cranston@vamt.net](mailto:Emily.whiteman-cranston@vamt.net)

# INFORM

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## Staff Update

Our Health & Wellbeing team has expanded:



### Lesley Hodgson – Lead Officer – Health & Wellbeing

Lesley has been with VAMT since 2021 and has recently taken over a new role. She will be leading the Community Coordinator Team, alongside facilitating the Health & Wellbeing Forum. You can connect with Lesley via email:

[Lesley.hodgson@vamt.net](mailto:Lesley.hodgson@vamt.net)

Joining Lesley will be **Ian Howell-Morgan** and **Susan Jones**, our Community Coordinators work with individuals over the age of 50 and / or their carers, groups and communities to reduce loneliness & isolation by providing information, advice, support and signposting to activities and services in Merthyr Tydfil.



You can contact Susan via email: [susan.jones@vamt.net](mailto:susan.jones@vamt.net) and Ian via email: [Ian.Howell-Morgan@vamt.net](mailto:Ian.Howell-Morgan@vamt.net)

## 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?

Click [vamt.net/en/updates/](http://vamt.net/en/updates/) 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:frances.barry@vamt.net) by Friday 10th May 2024

### Voluntary Action Centre

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

Tel: 01685 353900

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

[www.vamt.net](http://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

#### Lesley Hodgson

Lead Officer –  
Health & Wellbeing

#### Susan Jones

Community Co-ordinator

#### Ellie Luke

Business Support Officer

#### Sharon Jones

Mental Health Service User  
Involvement Officer

#### Emily Whiteman-Cranston

Resilience Officer

#### Ian Howell-Morgan

Community Co-ordinator

### Board Members

Dr Hefin Jones OBE

Anne Roberts MBE

Kayleigh Nor-Val

Michael Ronan

Nicola Mahoney

David Hughes



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

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The views expressed in this edition of Inform are not necessarily those of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.  
Croesawir erthyglau nail ai'n ddwyieithog neu'n uniaith Gymraeg.