

INFORM

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful

July 2025

VAMT's Volunteer Recognition Awards 2025

We've had a very busy June at VAMT, two significant and successful events took place, an in-person Volunteer Recognition Awards Event at Morlais Castle Golf Club which was compèred by the fabulous Andrea Byrne (below with Award winners).

The second event was our Volunteering Fair (see pages 3 and 4).

Volunteer of the Year



Ryan Phillips

(Ryan was unable to attend the evening so Ian Thomas, Manager at Elite Paper Solutions accepted the award on Ryan's behalf).

Sponsored by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

[Link to Im](#)

Group of the Year



Merthyr Valley Veterans

Sponsored by Comtec

[Link to Im](#)

Young Volunteer of the Year



Jacob Bridges

Sponsored by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

[Link to Im](#)

Trustee of the Year



Bill Smith

Sponsored by Eight One Digital

[Link to Im](#)

Sport Volunteer of the Year



Ronnie Walton

Sponsored by Active Merthyr Tydfil

[Link to Im](#)

Outstanding Contribution to Volunteering

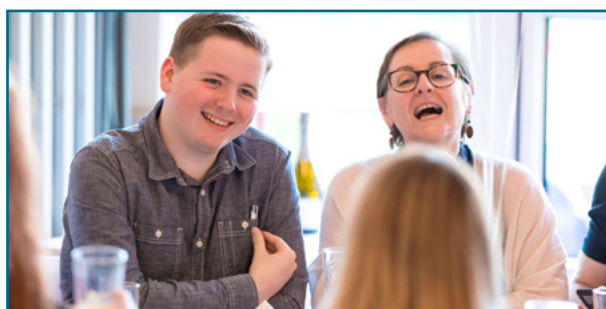


Tom Browne

Sponsored by Melrose IT Solutions

[Link to Im](#)

VAMT's Volunteer Recognition Awards 2025



Volunteering Fair

Our 5th Volunteering Fair took place on 3rd June in the Town Centre, and gave organisations a chance to promote themselves and their volunteering opportunities.



Volunteering Fair



VOLUNTEERS' WEEK

Focus on Merthyr Tydfil and District Osteoporosis Support Group

An update from Judith Smallwood, Chair of the Merthyr Tydfil and District Osteoporosis Support Group.

Anyone with osteoporosis, or osteopenia, knows what a debilitating and distressing condition it can be. It is known as the "silent disease".

Our group was formed in 2007, with just a few people willing to volunteer. We still meet every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 1:30pm at the Indoor Bowls Centre, Rhydycar. Our membership now exceeds 50 in numbers, with an age range between 68 and 90 years of age. We recently had a lovely afternoon celebrating the 90th birthday of 2 of our members.



Three of the founder members:- Mrs Ann Gibbs, Mrs Mary Adlam and Mrs Lolita Davies, still hold office as Secretary Treasurer, and "Meeter AND Greeter", with help from a committee of ladies, who together make up my 'A' Team. As Chair, over the past 13 years with Mrs Eira Fforest as Deputy, we have enjoyed being a happy band of workers.



**Royal
Osteoporosis
Society**

Better bone health for everybody

This year in our September meeting, we will celebrate our 18th Birthday. We intend it to be a nostalgic, happy, exciting celebration, where we will show our thanks to all who have encouraged us to keep going, and display what we've achieved. We make a big difference in our district, raising awareness, influencing policy makers, whilst supporting financially ROS, in our fundraising. Donating each year substantial amounts to the helpline. They in turn keep us on trend, with research etc, and help when we need it. We are hoping a representative can visit us soon!

We take a theme each year, and invite speakers and physios too, for example; Tai Chi, armchair yoga, clock cricket, cooking for healthy bones, as well as immersing ourselves in a Sound Bath.

I have attended Forums, VAMT meetings, national conferences and talked to many groups, taken part in surveys, and raising awareness within the NHS, lobbying etc. The Government has committed to 100% rollout of F.L.S (Fracture Liaison Services), and in Wales we have seen our own local Osteoporosis nurse in P.C.H. To end inequalities in care throughout Wales we still campaign until patients can get an early diagnosis and the care they need.

"Join us for a cuppa:- I can promise a laugh!" Judith (Chair)

Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil

Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil Unveils Private Hair Salon and Expands Carer Support Services

In a stride towards providing new and first of its kind services locally, Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil has launched a private hair salon exclusively for individuals undergoing cancer treatment. Officially opened in April 2025 at the Charity's Centre of Excellence on Upper Union Street, the salon offers a safe, serene space where patients can receive haircuts, scalp care, wig support and styling in privacy and dignity.

"This salon is about more than appearance—it's about restoring confidence and offering comfort during a difficult time for patients," said Tracey Burke, the centre's principal manager.

The salon is staffed by a professional hairdresser trained in the sensitivities of cancer-related hair loss, offering services tailored to each individual's needs. Appointments are available by booking, ensuring a private and supportive environment for every visitor.

Support for carers

Recognising the vital role of carers, Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil has also expanded its services to include:

- **Monthly Complementary Therapy Days:** Carers can enjoy massage, reflexology, and holistic treatments to ease stress and fatigue.
- **Monthly Hair Salon Days:** A one to one, one hour appointment ensuring that carers can enjoy some me time to focus on their own needs.
- **Weekly Connection Café:** A warm, welcoming space where carers and patients can gather for conversation, coffee, and peer support. Running every Tuesday 10am to 1pm. No need to book, simply turn up and be supported and connect with others in your community.

These initiatives are part of the charity's mission to support not just those living with cancer, but the entire network of care that surrounds them. If you feel you, or someone you support could benefit from these services, please contact us on **01685 379633** or drop in to our centre in Dowlais.





Inauguration of the New Youth Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil

On Friday 9th May 2025, the Civic Centre in Merthyr Tydfil hosted the inauguration of

the new Youth Mayor. Jacob Bridges, a 22-year-old currently employed full-time, was appointed as the 15th Youth Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil. Cian Evans, an 18-year-old student at Greenfield School, was appointed the Deputy Youth Mayor.

During his acceptance speech, the new Youth Mayor outlined three key pledges for his term:

- Support those within the youth community who are struggling with poor mental health.
- Combat ignorance and discrimination in all forms.
- Create pathways for young people to confidently enter the workforce with understanding and dignity.

Jacob expressed his gratitude to the youth of Merthyr Tydfil for the opportunity to represent them. He recognised the hard work of his predecessors, as well as the commitment of the current youth cabinet in making sure that young voices are heard and fairly

represented across the borough. Jacob's ability to articulate the concerns of young people has already been demonstrated through his previous role within the LAESCYP (Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People) Scrutiny panel. His dedication to inclusion and democracy has already earned him well-deserved respect both among his peers and in the wider community.

The Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF) and Youth Mayor initiative empowers young people in Merthyr Tydfil to develop and voice issues affecting them. With both community and council support, these projects ensure that every young person feels seen and heard allowing them to influence their future. Inclusive elections for the Youth Mayor promote participation in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), aiming to enhance community life and support youth potential.

If you would like further information about how to get involved then please contact, Youth Support Participation Officers, **Emma Bagnall** or **Morgan Ellis** at Safer Merthyr Tydfil on **01685 353999** or contact us via our Facebook, Instagram or Twitter @ **MTYouthforum**.

MS Society Community Connections Project

Supporting people with MS, their families, friends, and unpaid carers to feel more informed, connected, and confident.



How we can support you:

- Practical advice on money matters, energy efficiency, and the rising cost of living.
- Help with referrals to MS Society services, Citizens Advice, and local health or care providers.
- Wellbeing support, including links to benefits, social activities, and specialist organisations.
- Free awareness sessions on Carbon Monoxide safety and the Priority Services Register (PSR).



- Friendly, personalised support from our team, who take the time to understand your needs and connect you with the right help.

Get in touch • Email: MSconnections@mssociety.org.uk Call our MS Helpline: 0808 800 8000

Merthyr Valleys Homes Youth Academy of Success 2025 – Young Volunteer of the Year Winner & Runner Up

MVH Youth (Merthyr Valleys Homes Youth) are very proud to announce that our Young Volunteers won two awards this Year at the Academy of Success.

Laci Roberts aged 17 won the Young Volunteer Award aged 17-25

Ebonie Leigh came runner up In the 11-16 category.

We are all extremely proud of both who give up their spare time to support the youth team & provide positive experiences for young people aged 11-25 living in the Gurnos & Galon Uchaf areas.

Both are positive role models, with extremely enthusiastic attitudes & have been part of the youth team for the last year. Not only do they support staff they have taken part in various learning opportunities & between them have gained qualifications in Coaching, Safeguarding, First Aid & Food Safety.



All of the staff & Young People at MVH Youth would like to say a huge well done and thank both Laci & Ebonie for their dedication and commitment.

We would also like to thank Merthyr Tydfil Borough-wide Youth Forum & Safer Merthyr Tydfil for organising another fantastic event & extend our congratulations to all of the winners, runners up & nominees.

Merthyr Tydfil is full of incredible young people

Fighting Food Waste, Feeding Communities – FareShare Cymru in Merthyr Tydfil



FareShare Cymru is tackling food waste and supporting communities by redistributing good-to-eat surplus food to charities and community groups across Wales – including right here in Merthyr Tydfil.

We collect surplus food from farms, manufacturers, and retailers that would otherwise go to waste – due to overproduction, short shelf life, or minor packaging errors and get it to the organisations that can use it to make a real difference. That includes local schools, pantries, and community projects offering vital food support.

In Merthyr, we're proud to already support a number of brilliant local organisations – from schools and community pantries to projects offering meals and food parcels. By providing regular deliveries of surplus food, we help these groups reduce costs, expand their services, and offer more consistent support to those who need it.

FareShare Cymru is about more than just moving food from A to B. We take the time to understand each organisation's unique needs, building lasting partnerships that allow us to provide the right kind of food, at the right time, in the right quantities. Whether

it's a small grassroots group or a larger service reaching hundreds, we tailor our support to help them do what they do best – serve their communities.

Across Wales in the past year, we redistributed enough surplus food to provide over 2 million meals. With more partners and support, we're keen to increase our impact in Merthyr and the surrounding areas.

We're looking to grow our network in the Merthyr Tydfil area. If your organisation includes food as part of its service (especially running a cooking project) – or would like to – we'd love to hear from you. Becoming a FareShare Cymru member gives you access to regular, low-cost surplus food, along with guidance from a team that understands the third sector.

Together, we can reduce waste, support community resilience, and help create a more sustainable and fair food system for all.

To find out more, visit www.fareshare.cymru or email info@fareshare.cymru

Let's make sure no good food goes to waste – and everyone has access to the food they need.



Merthyr Credit Union Council Tax Debt Scheme goes LIVE

Merthyr Tydfil Credit Union is pleased to announce that we have been chosen by Welsh Government to take part in an innovative pilot scheme to combat Council Tax arrears in the Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.

The Council Tax Debt Rescue Scheme began on 1st May 2025 and if you have Council Tax Debt or are struggling to pay your Council Tax this scheme could help.

Help is available with an INTEREST FREE payment plan from A NEW COUNCIL TAX DEBT RESCUE SCHEME.

There are NO hidden fees, NO interest and it can improve your credit score.

If you or someone you know would benefit from the scheme, please contact Merthyr Tydfil Borough Credit Union on 01685 377888 or info@mtbcu.org.uk

Mark Drakeford MS, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language said: "The scheme is designed for people in council tax arrears who are in financial hardship and who would otherwise be at risk of using either high-interest payday lenders or illegal money lenders to make ends meet. Under the scheme they will be offered bespoke assistance and affordable interest-free payment plans to

help them to both repay the council tax debt and to begin to build savings at the same time. The Welsh Government will support credit unions to provide plans which will be available initially to tackle up to £2,000 of council tax arrears over a maximum pay-back period of two years. I anticipate the pilot phase will run until March 2026."

Delyth Shearing, Chief Executive, Merthyr Tydfil Borough Credit Union said "We are pleased to be part of this pilot scheme, Credit Union's support some of the most financially vulnerable in our communities and any additional support we can offer to help them manage their debts and reduce financial anxiety is welcome."

As the Cabinet Secretary said "Credit unions are ideally placed to work with people and families to help improve their financial resilience over the longer term, to help them improve their credit scores and to build savings while working to clear their council tax debt' and we are looking forward to helping as many people in Merthyr Tydfil as possible in the coming months."

Success across the board for Merthyr Tydfil at High Sheriff Youth Community Awards!

In April, Treharris Boys & Girls Club (TBGC), Greenfield School and Merthyr Tydfil's Youth Cabinet all took home prizes at the 2025 Mid-Glamorgan High Sheriff Youth Community awards.

The club's Centenary Heritage Programme was awarded joint-second place in the group category, a prestigious acknowledgement of the youth-led heritage initiative that marked Treharris Boys and Girl's Club 100th anniversary. The project culminated in the creation of a permanent community museum, curated with the involvement of over 125 local young people, and featuring oral histories, murals, replica monuments, and archival materials.



The celebrations continued with Calum Davies, 16, taking home the top award in the individual category. Calum, a long-standing club member, was recognised for his inspiring personal growth, leadership and community contributions. Overcoming significant personal challenges, Calum has become a mentor to younger members, led positive behaviour campaigns, and even secured funding to support the club's Community Café, which served over 70 hot meals a week to local people.



Youth & Community Officer Noah Shepherd said: "We are unbelievably proud of our young people. The heritage programme showed just how passionate and capable they are, and Calum's journey is a testament to resilience, responsibility and the power of youth work. These awards are not just wins for the club—they're wins for the whole community."

Greenfield School pupils, Amelia Bates, Kian Rupert and Katie Balsom-Evans secured first prize in the group category for their exciting project called, "Helping Others". The overall aim of their "Feed the Homeless" project at Greenfield School is to provide healthy, nutritious meals for individuals experiencing homelessness in the local community.



Merthyr Tydfil's Youth Cabinet were delighted to be successful recipients of a joint second place award, tied with Treharris Boys and Girls Club, following the successful launch of their "Lockdown Through Our Eyes" documentary.

Their documentary captured the unique perspectives of young people in Merthyr Tydfil as we reflect on the five-year anniversary of the first Covid-19 lockdown. Through personal stories and footage, the youth cabinet explored the impact these unprecedented times had on their lives, education and mental well-being.

This project became a beacon of empowerment, inspiring members of the Youth Cabinet to engage deeply in the creative process while overcoming personal challenges amid a global crisis. Through the efforts of all those involved, a valuable historical document was created, which will serve both as an educational tool for future generations and a reminder of the strength found in community and perseverance.

Community Voices: A Brighter Future for Merthyr Tydfil!

Over the last 18 months, the Healthy Weights team at CTM Public Health has been deep in learning and exploring how Human Learning Systems can transform the way we work. It's all about creating services that truly listen and respond to community needs, building strong relationships, and leading change with empathy. By continuously learning, adapting, and working together, we're shaping a system where collaboration drives better outcomes.

Between September and December 2024, community members from groups like Gellideg Dementia Café, toddler groups, Hope Pantry and Café, shared their invaluable insights through Appreciative Enquiry (AE) - a strength-based conversation approach that amplifies voices and influences change. This uncovered key strengths and improvements that can guide us and our partners in making a real impact. We heard that:

- The relocation of the police station has led to feelings of insecurity within the town centre, indicating a need for enhanced community policing and safety measures
- Bus services are perceived as unreliable, with poor routes to key locations like Cyfarthfa Park and Pentrebach shops. The new town bus stop has also received negative feedback and is poorly utilised.
- The Hope Pantry is a vital resource, providing affordable food and essentials to residents. Members appreciate the ability to choose their own produce, enhancing dignity and choice.



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board

- There is a real strength amongst friends and family networks within local communities creating friendly neighbourhoods.
- Local parks, such as Cyfarthfa Park and Thomastown are well-loved, although there is preference for the cafe and toilets at Cyfarthfa Park to be open for longer time periods.

We want to get more people involved in Appreciative Enquiry. This approach has the power to transform services, and we're inviting you to be part of this! Join us through the VAMT partnership networks over the coming months to hear more.

Children, Young people & Families Forum 18th September 2025

Food Prosperity Forum 8th July 2025

Health and Wellbeing Forum 19th November 2025

Let's work together to reshape our community for the better.

Real change starts with listening. Let's keep the conversations going!

For more information, please email

CTM.ShapingEnvironments@wales.nhs.uk

or visit our webpage: [Healthy Weight - Cwm](#)

[Taf Morgannwg University Health Board](#)

Could you help reduce loneliness and isolation?

Volunteer with our Welcome Friends project as a Befriender




Who we are

Volunteering Matters is a charity that brings people together through volunteering. We create projects with local people, for local people to build stronger communities and tackling real-life challenges.

How you can help?

You would telephone or visit an older, isolated person in their home for a chat and a cup of tea or coffee. Calls or visits would take place regularly, at a time and day that's convenient for both you and the beneficiary.

VOLUNTEERING MATTERS CYMRU

- ✓ Travel expenses paid
- ✓ No experience required
- ✓ 1-2 hours commitment a week

“ Visiting Tom every week has been great. I help him with IT sometimes, we chat about sports and get out for a short walk if the weather is good **”**

Could you be one of our next volunteers?

For Rhondda or Taf area, call Jayne

☎ 07377 692404

For Merthyr or Cynon area, call Jennifer

☎ 07983 946463

✉ welcomefriends@volunteeringmatters.org.uk

Volunteering Matters is a registered charity in Wales no. 291222

WELCOME FRIENDS

How can you help?

You would telephone or visit an older, isolated person in their home for a chat and a cup of tea or coffee. Calls or visits would take place regularly, at a time and day that's convenient for both you and the beneficiary.

Could you be a friendly voice for someone who needs one?

Brighten someone's day with a simple chat over a cuppa. As a Befriender, you'll regularly call or visit an older person who may be feeling lonely. You'll agree a time that suits you both, helping to build a meaningful connection.

Find out more online and please share this with friends or family who might like to get involved.

No experience required

1-2 hours commitment a week

Travel expenses paid



TWYN COMMUNITY HUB NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!!



Gardening Volunteers

Help us maintain our community garden space – we're looking for people who enjoy being outdoors and can help with planting, weeding, and keeping the area tidy.



Admin Support Volunteers

Assist with simple office tasks such as data entry, phone calls, filing, and supporting our team with general administration.



Fundraising Volunteers

Creative thinkers and go-getters needed to help us plan, promote, and run small fundraising activities and events to support the hub's projects.



Housekeeping Volunteers

Help us keep the hub clean and welcoming by supporting with light cleaning, tidying, and ensuring community spaces are ready for activities.



Community Engagement Volunteers

Friendly, chatty individuals who can help us welcome visitors, support events, and connect with local residents to build relationships and promote what we do.

Please contact **Louise Goodman** for more information on **01685 706430** or email Louise@twyncommunityhub.co.uk

The Mendicants

The Mendicants is one of Merthyr's longest established charities, who for more than six decades have been raising public funds, primarily over the Christmas period in order to help local people in need. Our dedicated team of men and women gladly give of their time to help the growing number of people who approach us for help. However, in line with other charities we have experienced a decline in membership since Covid and in order to continue providing this essential public service we need a few more volunteers!

Despite numerous poster and online campaigns and attendances at recruitment fairs in town and at the college, there seems to be a decline on the part of society to support local charities! In an effort to encourage more people to lend a hand especially at Christmas, the Mendicants will be launching a 'Buddy' campaign designed to encourage trusted family members or friends to help us out for just a few hours at weekends in November and December without the requirement to become a full member of the committee.



The majority of our fundraising takes place outside Tesco Extra using the sleigh and in the shopping centre adjacent to the Christmas grotto. Supporting the Mendicants is an enjoyable and rewarding event leading up to Christmas and the public donations collected from the generous folk in Merthyr really does make a difference to the lives of those we help.

If you are able to spare a few hours supporting our 'Buddy' campaign or even consider taking on the role of Santa, please contact the charity secretary on **07766 710765** or contact us via our Facebook page.

Thank you

Meet the Funder sessions

At VAMT we like to bring funders to you! The following sessions are available free to our members.

5th August 10am – 11:30am via Teams

Postcode Lottery will be highlighting how to access their funding in the new round.

10th September 10 – 3pm in person 30 minute appointments

National Lottery Community Fund will discuss your possible projects and give you an overview of both the Community Fund and Awards for All.

23rd Sept 9:30 – 1pm in person drop in session

Merthyr Valleys Homes will be available to discuss your project and how to apply for their small grant and their sponsorship.

If you would like to meet any of these funders to find out more about their funding streams and discuss if your project would be eligible for funding, contact karen.vowles@vamt.net or emily.whiteman-cranston@vamt.net to book your place.

Youth Led Grant

You can Apply for up to £2,000!

**THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS
FRIDAY 8TH AUGUST 2025.**

THE PURPOSE OF THE YOUTH LED GRANT SCHEME IS TO FUND EXCITING AND WORTHWHILE PROJECTS THAT CREATE MORE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 14-25 WITHIN THE MERTHYR TYDFIL AREA.

THE FUNDING WILL ONLY BE ALLOCATED TO PROJECTS THAT WILL BE LED BY YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 14-25 AND IT WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE, WITH THE HELP OF THE ORGANISATION TO FILL IN THE APPLICATION FORM.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE YOUTH LED GRANTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO FUND PROJECTS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE SEVEN WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT (2015) GOALS.

ALL COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS ARE TO BE EMAILED TO
FRANCES.BARRY@VAMT.NET





Welcome to Karen

Hello, I'm Karen Powell and I have recently joined VAMT as the Lead Officer for Health and Wellbeing. I will be supporting the Community Coordinators in all aspects of their role and to promote health and wellbeing initiatives across the area. I am so thrilled to be leading on the team of amazing Community Coordinators working within Merthyr Tydfil, who give help and support for those over the age of 50 and/or their carers.



I have worked in the voluntary sector for over 15 years and was myself a Community Coordinator when the roles were first introduced in Cwm Taf back in 2014. I am very passionate about working in the voluntary sector and how supportive it is to communities and individuals alike.

I am looking forward to continuing working with VAMT and the Community Coordinators, helping to promote the sector, including the health and wellbeing of our communities.

You can contact Karen at karen.powell@vamt.net or 07766 428763

Welcome to Lowri

Hi everyone! My name is Lowri, and I'm delighted to have recently joined VAMT as the new Volunteering Officer. It's a role I'm incredibly excited about, and I'm really looking forward to working alongside our amazing local organisations, volunteers, and communities across Merthyr Tydfil.



My background is in football coaching and education, where I've spent the last few years supporting people of all ages to build confidence, learn new skills, and achieve their personal goals – both on and off the pitch. That experience taught me just how important strong communities are, and how much of a difference it makes when people come together to support one another.

Volunteering is a powerful way to do just that. Whether it's helping out at a local event, offering your time to support a charity, or just lending a hand in your community, volunteering has the ability to change lives – including your own. It can open doors, build friendships, and give you a real sense of purpose.

In this new role, I'm here to support both individuals who are looking to get involved in volunteering, and organisations who are looking for volunteers. My aim is to make volunteering accessible, rewarding, and welcoming for everyone – no matter your background, experience, or how much time you can offer.

I'm really excited to get started, meet lots of new faces, and help make a positive difference here in Merthyr Tydfil. Please feel free to get in touch – whether you're an experienced volunteer, just thinking about getting involved, or representing a group in need of support. I'm always happy to have a chat!

Lowri can be contacted at lowri.hunt@vamt.net or 07586 692304. Her post is funded for 12 months via UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)

Date for your diary:

VAMT's Annual General Meeting

SEPTEMBER
25th

**25th September 2025,
11:00 am @ Voluntary Action Centre**

We always appreciate your presence, and this year we will be offering attendees the opportunity to join remotely via Teams.

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

Further details to follow.

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.

There are currently vacancies for Voluntary Sector Co-opted representative on three Scrutiny Committees.

- Sustainable Scrutiny
- Aspirational Scrutiny
- Healthier Scrutiny

For further information regarding the role of each scrutiny committee or wish to join the online event on 14th August at 10am to discuss further please contact karen.vowles@vamt.net

Are you looking for a friendly and affordable place to base your community group?

We are offering members the rare opportunity to rent office space within the Voluntary Action Centre, and our annual cost is extremely competitive in order to support the Third Sector.



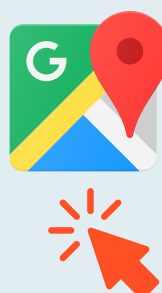
What we offer:

- Bright, accessible office space in the heart of the town centre
- Competitive rental terms
- High-speed internet available
- Utilities and cleaning included
- Meeting rooms available at discounted rate
- Shared kitchen facilities
- Welcoming reception area
- Networking opportunities with other voluntary and community organisations



Make your organisation feel at home in a space designed to support the third sector!

Location:



The space itself is 43 m2, offering a large office with a small office/meeting room and storage cupboard.

To find out more or arrange a viewing contact Laura Johnson on **07340 055617** or email her at laura.johnson@vamt.net

CTM Mental Health Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre
1pm-3pm
Dates to be confirmed

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

Health and Wellbeing Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre
10am - 12pm
Wednesday 20th August
Wednesday 19th 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 Ian.Howell-Morgan@vamt.net

The Children, Young People & Families Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre
9.30am – 12pm
Thursday 18th September
Thursday 11th December
Thursday 12th March 2026

To join the Forum or for more information contact emily.whiteman-cranston@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 - 11am
Wednesday 12th November
Wednesday 11th February 2026

For more information on how to become part of this vibrant Network contact emily.whiteman-cranston@vamt.net

Volunteer Managers' Forum

At the Voluntary Action Centre
Wednesday 10th September 1pm - 3pm
Wednesday 3rd December 10am - 12pm
Wednesday 18th March 2026 10am - 12pm

The Forum is a supportive network for volunteer managers, providing a space to share best practices, build partnerships, and access professional development. Meetings are held quarterly and remain informal, with agendas shaped by the members. The Forum is independent and member-led, with support from VAMT.

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

INFORM

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful



Training and development

You said.....we did !

Last year our members asked us to co-ordinate and deliver training sessions including the following:

Safeguarding A & B, First Aid, Committee Skills, Business Planning Training, Paediatric First Aid, Directors Roles and Responsibilities and Food safety.

In total these sessions were attended by **55 people** from across the area.

How can VAMT help you develop your organisations skills?

Does your committee need refresher training?

Do your volunteers or staff need Safeguarding training?

We will be sending a training needs questionnaire out to members very soon.

Let us know how we can help !

Contact karen.vowles@vamt.net or emily.whiteman-cranston@vamt.net

INFORM, BLOG AND BULLETIN

Share
your
story!

If there is anything you would like to share in Inform or on our blog, or in the Bulletin then please email Fran at frances.barry@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 19th September 2025

That's all from VAMT for now.

We welcome any comments on this newsletter, they can be submitted to info@vamt.net

Voluntary Action Centre

89-90 Pontmorlais, High Street,

Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8UH

Tel: 01685 353900

email: info@vamt.net

www.vamt.net

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.

VAMT Team

Sharon Richards
Chief Officer

Laura Johnson
Business & Finance Manager

Claire Williams
Operations Manager

Frances Barry
Lead Officer – Volunteering and Communications

Karen Vowles
Lead Officer – Community Development

Karen Powell
Lead Officer - Health and Wellbeing

Lowri Hunt
Volunteering Officer

Sharon Jones
Mental Health Service User Involvement Officer

Emily Whiteman-Cranston
Community Resilience Officer

Susan Jones
Community Co-ordinator

Ian Howell-Morgan
Community Co-ordinator

Laura Brosnan-James
Community Development Officer – Invest Local Ynysowen Programme

Verity Lewis
Community Rail Partnership Officer

Diane Lewis
Business Support Officer

Board Members

Michael Ronan
Anne Roberts MBE
Kayleigh Nor-Val
Nicola Mahoney
Howard Jackson
Je Evans



Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector Cymru
Third Sector
Support Wales