

INFORM

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful

July 2026

Lotto Merthyr Tydfil - A new way to raise additional funds

Lotto Merthyr Tydfil is a new initiative from Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil. The purpose of the lottery is to help generate unrestricted income to support local 'good causes'.

On 15 June 2026 Lotto Merthyr Tydfil was launched with an event for member organisations. This new initiative will create a new funding stream for "good causes" in Merthyr. VAMT members can sign up via the Lotto website and add their group/organisation to the "good causes".

A number of good causes have already signed up to benefit from the new lottery but there's no limit on the number of causes that can join. This could be something that really makes a difference to you.

Each good cause will be given its own page on the website to direct their supporters to. Causes will receive 50p from every £1 ticket they sell, with a further 10p going into a Central Fund that will also be distributed to good causes. Any not-for-profit organisations that are interested can sign up here: www.lottomerthyrtudfil.co.uk

Nicola Hill, Chair of Trustees of Taff Rocks said, "We signed up to fundraise with the lottery because it will allow us to raise money online, all year round without needing to print tickets or source prizes. We're excited to give our supporters a fun way to boost our fundraising, and maybe even win a cash prize."

Supporters can now sign up too. Players will have the chance to win cash prizes of up to £25,000, whilst supporting the good cause of their choice. It's a win-win situation!



Are you a 'good cause'?

Your organisation must:

- Provide community activities or services in Merthyr Tydfil;
- Have a bank account with at least two unrelated signatories; and
- Be either a constituted group or registered charity.

How to apply to join as a 'good cause'

Go online to:

www.lottomerthyrtudfil.co.uk

or follow the QR code to sign up. All the instructions are on the website.



If you need assistance, the team at VAMT can help you with this.

Email: info@vamt.net Tel: 01685 353900

How it works?

Advertise that you've signed up. (You will have your own page on the website). For every **£1** lottery ticket sold, that have nominated you as their 'good cause', you will receive 50p.

Volunteering Recognition Awards 2026

Our Annual Volunteer Recognition Awards took place on Thursday 25 June at the Bessemer Hotel and formed an important part of our Volunteers' Week celebrations. Hosted by the fantastic Hannah Thomas, the event brought together volunteers, community organisations and supporters from across Merthyr Tydfil to celebrate the difference volunteers make to local communities. Awards were presented across a range of categories, recognising individuals and organisations whose dedication, commitment and hard work have made a positive difference to the lives of others.

The awards provided an opportunity to publicly thank and recognise those who give their time, skills and energy to support their communities. The evening showcased inspiring examples of volunteering and highlighted the vital role volunteers play in strengthening communities, supporting vulnerable people and improving wellbeing across the county borough. By celebrating these achievements, the event helped raise the profile of volunteering and demonstrated our appreciation for the invaluable contribution volunteers make throughout Merthyr Tydfil.



Volunteer of the Year

Sponsored by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council



Wendy Jones
Cefn Coed Over 60s Group

Group of the Year

Sponsored by Comtec



New Pathways

Young Volunteer of the Year

Sponsored by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council



Libby Ford
DART/Safer Merthyr Tydfil

Trustee of the Year

Sponsored by Eight One Digital

Outstanding Contribution to Volunteering

Sponsored by Melrose



Nicola Hill
Taff Rocks

Sport Volunteer of the Year

Sponsored by Active Merthyr Tydfil



Gareth Gulliford
Merthyr Primary Schools District Rugby

We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to all of our award winners, whose dedication, compassion and commitment continue to make a real difference to communities across Merthyr Tydfil.

Volunteering Fair

Annual Volunteering Fair

As part of our Volunteers' Week 2026 celebrations, we hosted our annual Volunteering Fair at St Tydfil Shopping Centre, bringing together a wide range of local voluntary and community organisations to promote volunteering opportunities across the county borough. The event provided an opportunity for local people to meet organisations face-to-face, learn more about the work they do, and discover how they can get involved in supporting their communities.

Our Volunteering Fair is an important part of our ongoing commitment to promoting and developing volunteering in Merthyr Tydfil. By creating a space where organisations and potential volunteers can connect, we help raise awareness of the many rewarding opportunities available and support local groups to recruit new volunteers.

Thankfully, the weather was on our side, and the day was filled with a positive atmosphere, with lots of members of the public stopping to chat with organisations, find out more about their work and discover ways to get involved in their local community.

We would like to thank all the organisations that attended and supported the event, as well as St Tydfil Shopping Centre for kindly hosting us and helping to make the day a success.





Roche & CTM UHB Supporting communities with digital equipment

Earlier this year, Fiona Thomas (CTM UHB Princess of Wales Hospital) and Simon Moore (Roche) contacted VAMT for support in progressing their plans to donate refurbished laptops previously used in the Pathology Service at Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to community organisations/groups.

The laptops were wiped of all previous data and new software installed in preparation for use in different settings. This generous offer was offered to VAMT's members and the following organisations responded:

YES (Ynysowen Events & Socials) – A group supporting community events and social opportunities which benefit local residents and aim to improve health, well-being independence and social connectedness.

Taff Rocks – A creative arts group who would benefit from a laptop to support the administration of their business.

Gellideg Foundation Group Youth Programme – Youth Programme that covers the areas of Gellideg, Trefechan and Twyncarmel. The laptops would be used either in the youth programme delivery or distributed to young people who have no equipment for homework.

Representatives of the three organisations attended the Voluntary Action Centre on 30 June 2026 to take receipt of the donated laptops.

No doubt the equipment is now enhancing the delivery of all three organisations. Many thanks to CTM UHB and Roche.



Adferiad

**Open access
'Tea & Toast morning'**



Beginning Tuesday 14 July from 10:00-12:45, and then every Tuesday moving forward.

Location: Voluntary Action, 89-90 High Street, Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil.



Come along and speak to staff about what else we offer and how we could support you with your mental health!

This is an open-access drop-in session for people aged over 18 living in the local community. Come along to a friendly atmosphere and relaxed setting, where you can take part in a range of arts and crafts activities, have a bite to eat and a cuppa, meet new people, or speak to staff about our free mental health advice and support.

Our service offers:



Therapeutic & Educational Activities



Community Building Workshops



Person-centred Support Sessions

To find out more, contact us at cwmtaf@adferiad.org or call 07760667619

**COULD YOU BE THE NEXT
Youth Mayor
OF MERTHYR TYDFIL?**

Youth Mayor Nominations

**Applications for the
2026 Youth Mayor Hustings
officially are now open!**

To help us reach as many young people as possible over the summer break, we kindly ask that this year's resources are shared widely through your usual communication channels and displayed within your setting.

This year's promotional materials include:

- Promotional video: <https://youtu.be/N96THVkJgRI>
- Promotional poster
- 2026 Getting Elected Pack

**The deadline for all candidate
applications is Thursday
17th September 2026.**

As always, Youth Mayor applications are open to all young people aged 11–23 who live or study in Merthyr Tydfil. As last year's 14 candidates felt overwhelming for many voters, this year the candidate limit is set at 10. If more than 10 applications are received, MTCBC Youth Services will provide support to ensure a fair selection process.



Halo Leisure – support for carers

Thanks to funding support from **MTUCP (Merthyr Tydfil Unpaid Carers Partnership)** we are pleased to announce that we will be running our **Halo's Carers Respite Programme in Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre** starting **Friday 17th July 2026 to Friday 21st August 2026**.

Our Carers Respite Programme offers **unpaid carers of people living with dementia and memory loss** the opportunity to take part in a range of **exercise, relaxation, and wellbeing sessions**, along with access to **Halo Leisure fitness facilities**.

The programme also includes **holistic therapy workshops**, led by an **Accredited Member of the Federation of Holistic Therapists**, where carers can learn practical stress-relief techniques to support their wellbeing.

In addition, carers will receive **information on carers' rights, benefits, and local support services** available within the area.

While carers are participating in these activities, **replacement care arrangements** can be made either **at the centre or in the carer's home**, where required.

The programme will run for **6 consecutive weeks**, from **10am - 12pm**

Calling Unpaid Carers
You **DESERVE** some down time so you can work out or wind down...

CARERS RESPITE PROGRAMME
for Unpaid Carers of People Living with Dementia or Memory Loss at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre

FREE
Thanks to funding support from Merthyr Tydfil Unpaid Carers Partnership (MTUCP).
HURRY LIMITED AVAILABILITY!

ENJOY:

- Free replacement care available
- Holistic therapy workshops
- Access to low-impact exercise
- Information on carers rights, entitlements and support system

HOW TO REGISTER:
For more information about the programme, email: activecommunities@haloleisure.org.uk
www.haloleisure.org.uk/carers-respite

Partnership Cefalwydd Ddi-dâl
MERTHYR TYDFIL
Unpaid Carers Partnership

Cyngor Bwrdeistref awd MERTHYR TYDFIL
Merthyr Tydfil
County Borough Council

halo

Carers who wish to participate are required to complete the online registration form via the link below.
haloleisure.org.uk/community/carers-respite-programme



Green Haven Retreat: Creating a Place of Hope, Support and Recovery

Green Haven Retreat is a community-led initiative with a vision to create a safe, inclusive and supportive retreat space for children, young people and families who need time to reconnect, recover and create positive memories.

Over the past year, we have been working hard to establish the foundations of the project. This has included community engagement, developing partnerships, raising awareness and delivering early outreach activities while continuing to secure the funding required to develop our permanent retreat centre.

Our long-term aim is to create a unique facility providing respite, wellbeing activities, outdoor experiences and support for families facing challenges, including disability, additional needs and social isolation. We want to provide a place where children can explore, grow in confidence and experience

opportunities they may not otherwise have.

Green Haven Retreat was founded by directors who share a passion for supporting others. Darren Jordan brings over 23 years of construction industry experience, alongside strong leadership, project delivery and health and safety expertise. Farida Begum brings years of experience in care and personal understanding of the challenges faced by families supporting loved ones with additional needs. Andrei supports the organisation's development and future growth.

Together, we are committed to creating a lasting community resource that brings people together, provides hope and makes a positive difference for future generations.

www.greenhavenretreat.org

Community trust awards grants to local groups

The Merthyr Tydfil Community Trust has recently awarded small grants to 9 local organisations totalling £4,000. The recipients were St David's Baby Bank, Cyfarthfa Gardening Club, Family Foxes School Partnership, Merthyr Wado Kai Karate Club, Ymlaen Merthyr Tydfil, Active Wheels, Aberfan Canoe Club, Park Second Youth and Treharris Welfare AFC.

You can follow the Merthyr Tydfil Community Trust Facebook page if you would like to be kept up to date. In addition, the Trust's website is <https://merthyrcommunitytrust.co.uk/>



The Trust is run by volunteers and given the annual income of the Trust it is unlikely that the Trust will be able to award more grants until 2028 unless donations are made to the Trust. If an individual or company would like to make a donation, please contact Ian Davy.

A quiz night will be held in November to raise funds for the Trust. If you would like to enter a team, please contact Ian Davy by email at ian.davy@hotmail.co.uk



Merthyr Men's Group: Good Company, New Skills and a Place to Belong

Sometimes, the hardest part of joining a new group is simply walking through the door for the first time. That is why Merthyr Men's Group has been created to be different: no pressure, no expectations and just come along and join us.

Based at Twyn Community Hub, the group offers men from across Merthyr a friendly, supportive and informal place to meet others, enjoy good company and get involved at their own pace.

The idea is simple: come along, have a cup of tea, enjoy a chat and see what you think.

The group is about companionship, conversation and doing things together. Activities can include practical projects, bike repairs, gardening, recycling and refurbishing items, sharing skills, guest speakers, board and card games — or simply tea, biscuits and a bit of banter.

But there is no fixed programme. The men who come along help shape what happens next. Have an idea for a new activity? Suggest it. Have a skill to share? Bring it along. Want to learn something new? Tell us. Prefer to sit, have a cuppa and join the conversation? That is absolutely fine too.

The group is built on a simple idea: men often connect best while doing something alongside others. Working on a project, sharing a skill, playing

a game or tackling a task together can make conversation feel natural and friendships easier to build.

Having a regular, informal place to meet can help men get out of the house, meet new people, build confidence and feel more connected to their community. Shared activities can bring a sense of purpose and achievement, while a friendly chat over a cup of tea can be just as valuable.

There is no pressure to talk about personal issues, take part in every activity or commit to anything. You do not need to be retired, lonely, practical or particularly outgoing. You do not need experience, special skills or even a hobby.

Whether you want to meet new people, learn something, share a skill, work on a project or simply have a laugh in good company, you will be warmly welcomed.

Merthyr Men's Group meets every Tuesday at 6pm at Twyn Community Hub.

Everyone is welcome. No need to book — just turn up, come as you are and help shape the group.

For more information contact Phil –
Phil@Twyncommunityhub.co.uk



Welfare Benefit Service from Care & Repair

Cwm Taf Care & Repair have a Welfare Benefit Service available for anyone aged 60+ who own their property or are privately renting. Brian, our Welfare Benefit Maximisation Officer, will visit you in your own home, discuss your current finances along with any illnesses or disabilities you may have, then identify if there is a benefit you are able to claim. He will assist you with the application and / or any appeals process, where necessary.

For further information or to make a referral, please call
Brian on 07514 607 301 or ring the main office on 01443 755696

Aberfan Aqua Young at Heart Swimming Club

Aberfan Aqua Young at Heart Swimming Club, started approximately 25 years ago. Our club is community-based, and dedicated to promoting health, well-being, and social inclusion and combats loneliness and social isolation through attendance at Aqua sessions at Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Community Centre for older adults held on Monday and Wednesday mornings.

The club provides a welcoming environment where members can improve their fitness, build confidence in the water, and enjoy the social benefits of regular activities, such as monthly meals and coach trips.

Thanks to a grant of **£18,944** from the **National Lottery Community Fund**, the club will be able to enhance its activities, support existing members, which is currently 74, 10 of which are committee members, and attract new members, ensuring the club continues to provide opportunities for the local community. His Worship The Mayor's attendance and that of other invited guests at this celebration recognises the dedication of the club's committee and members, whose hard work has helped create a thriving and supportive organisation that makes a positive difference to the lives of its members. The cheque presentation celebrates both this significant funding award and the continued success of the club in bringing people together.



Aberfan Aqua Young at Heart committee, club members, His Worship the Mayor, representatives from Plymouth Ward Councillors, Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil and Halo attending the celebration event held at Aberfan & Merthyr Vale on Wednesday 8th July 2006.

This is the latest update from the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (CTM PSB), and the PSB work across Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Bridgend.

If you would like to know more about the CTM PSB and what it does, please visit our website: <https://www.ctmpublicservicesboard.wales/>

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (CTM PSB) has recently published its 2025-2026 Annual Report, highlighting the progress made over the past year to improve well-being across Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

During the past year, the PSB has strengthened its governance arrangements and sharpened its focus on a number of priority areas where collaborative action can make the greatest difference for our communities.



At the heart of the Board's work is a shared commitment to tackling some of the region's biggest challenges through partnership working. During the past year, the PSB has strengthened its governance arrangements and sharpened its focus on a number of priority areas where collaborative action can make the greatest difference for our communities.

Improving health and reducing inequalities: Recognising the importance of preventing ill health and improving healthy life expectancy, the PSB has established a new workstream focused on reducing health inequalities. This work will bring partners together to take a place-based approach to improving health, community well-being and resilience, ensuring collective action is focused where it can have the greatest impact.

Responding to climate change: Building on the publication of the CTM Climate Change Risk Assessment, partners are now working together to address the challenges our communities face from a changing climate. Dedicated task groups are focusing on climate resilient communities, infrastructure pinch points and post-industrial landscapes, helping to strengthen regional resilience while working alongside communities to understand local risks and identify practical solutions.

Working together across the region: The report highlights the breadth of partnership activity taking place across the region. This includes the continued development of the Workforce Well-being Sub-board, supporting organisations to improve employee well-being through collaboration and shared learning; the launch of the CTM Healthy Travel Charter to encourage healthier and more sustainable travel; the establishment of the Food Resilience Sub-board; and the development of the Children and Young People's Engagement Network and Reverse Mentoring Project, ensuring young people's voices help shape strategic decision-making.

Looking ahead: Over the coming year, the PSB will be developing the next Well-being Assessment, which will help shape priorities for the future. By bringing together public services, the voluntary sector, communities and other partners, the Board aims to ensure that local knowledge, evidence and lived experience continue to inform decision-making and improve outcomes across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

We look forward to providing future updates where we will provide more detail on each of our projects. If you'd like to know more, or would like to talk to a member of the PSB support team, please get in touch at: CTMPSB@RCTCBC.GOV.UK

The Board has also continued to work closely with County Voluntary Councils across the region, supporting wider community engagement and recognising the important role that the voluntary and community sector plays in improving well-being and helping shape future priorities.



JOIN OUR TEAM

We're recruiting volunteer counsellors!

- ✓ Support survivors of sexual violence and work with real clients
- ✓ Gain experience and develop specialist counselling skills
- ✓ Join an experienced and supportive team
- ✓ Gain hours towards your counselling qualification and equivalent degrees



Online Info Evening
Mon 27th July 5:30-7:30
 Learn more and sign up at
volunteering@newpathways.org.uk



New Pathways
Life beyond sexual violence



VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

DO YOU HAVE A FEW HOURS TO SPARE EACH WEEK?

DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN CAR WITH MOT & INSURANCE?

ARE YOU LOOKING TO MEET OTHERS?

MILEAGE COSTS ARE REIMBURSED AT 45P A MILE.

Call 01685 379633 for more information



Volunteer Role Profile



Volunteer Role
Volunteer Manager
Where you will be based

Community Wish Maker
Community & Volunteering Team
Community

Why we want you

Help Make Wishes Come True

Nearly 1,000 children across the UK are currently waiting for a life-changing wish. As a Community Wish Maker, you'll help raise funds and bring your local community together to make those wishes happen.

Every pound you help raise goes directly towards granting wishes for children facing critical illnesses, creating hope, joy, and unforgettable memories for families who need it most.

What Makes This Role Different?

This is a flexible, ad hoc, volunteer-led role that fits around your lifestyle and commitments. There are no set fundraising targets or fixed weekly hours. You decide how you'd like to support Make-A-Wish and how much time you can give.

Fundraising is at the heart of this role and is driven by your own ideas, local connections, and enthusiasm. Whether it's organising a community event, engaging local businesses, securing donations, or encouraging others to get involved, you'll help generate the funds needed to grant wishes. We'll provide guidance, resources, and support along the way.

How You'll Get Started

Getting started as a Community Wish Maker is simple. Within your first few months, you'll choose a fundraising activity from our Community Fundraising Toolkit or create your own fundraising idea.

We'll provide resources, guidance and support to help you succeed.

Commitment

Aged 18 or over

Commitment of at least 12 months

If you're passionate about making a difference and enjoy bringing people together to raise funds for a great cause, we'd love to hear from you.

<https://volunteer.make-a-wish.org.uk/opportunities/110322-community-wish-maker-wales-cymru-2026-03-16>

**FREE Online gaming
and gambling
harm prevention
workshops
for Teachers and Youth
Workers in Wales**



Secure your
spot on
**Ygam's free
online
workshop**
now!



**"Thoroughly enjoyable
training. The workshop
delivery was very
professional and flowed
throughout."**
Headteacher, Cardiff



**FREE mindfulness course at
Dowlais Community Centre,**
Station Rd, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil CF48
3LP

Tuesdays 1.00PM - 2.15PM

Mindful
Meditations

**6 Weeks Mindfulness
course**

Starts 21st July 2026

Reduce
Stress and
Anxiety

Manage
thinking
patterns

No need to register!

Improve
focus

Emotional
regulation

Self-Awareness

Explore these
topics and more

info@valleysteps.org

01443 803048



**FREE wellbeing course at
Salvation Army Merthyr Tydfil,**
Glebeland Street, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8BH

Fridays 10:30AM - 11:45AM

Anxiety and
Panic

**6 Weeks Steps to
Wellbeing course**

Starts 17th July 2026

Stress
Management

Boost Low
Mood

Managing
Difficult
Thoughts

No need to register!

Improving
Sleep

Overcoming
Fear

Explore these
topics and more

Farewell Emily

Emily Whiteman-Cranston has bid farewell to Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil as she embarks on a new journey with Merthyr Valleys Homes as Development Engagement Assistant. Emily has been an integral part of our team developing the Children, Young People and Families Forum as well as supporting warm hubs and the Food Prosperity Forum. Emily has had a lasting impact on the community and will continue this with her new employer. On behalf of VAMT staff, trustees and members we wish Emily good luck with her new role.

Congratulations to our valued Trustee

Dr Victoria Winckler was awarded a CBE in the King's Birthday Honours in recognition of the years spent working to improve the lives of people in Wales.

A very well deserved honour.

Congratulations!

Introducing our new Third Sector Officer

Having joined Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil in April 2025 as a Volunteering Officer, I am delighted to now be stepping into the role of Third Sector Officer. Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to meet many dedicated volunteers, community groups and organisations, and I've seen first-hand the incredible impact the third sector has across Merthyr Tydfil.

While volunteering will very much remain at the heart of my work, this new role also gives me the opportunity to support community groups, charities and voluntary organisations more broadly. I will be working with organisations across the county borough, offering support around training, governance and sustainable funding, while helping to build connections and share opportunities that strengthen our local third sector.

I am looking forward to getting to know even more organisations and learning about the fantastic work taking place in our communities. Whether you're an established organisation or a newly formed group, I'd love to hear from you. Please feel free to get in touch for a chat about how VAMT can support you and your organisation's ambitions: lowri.hunt@vamt.net



Lowri Hunt - Third Sector Officer

Welcoming our new Business Support Officer

Kathryn Hay joined our team in May of this year. Before coming to Merthyr, Kathryn mostly worked in the education sector, planning and contributing to the delivery of an adult community learning programme. Kathryn is enjoying finding out more about the third sector and the member organisations and groups linked to Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil. If you wish to book a meeting or submit information for future newsletters, please email Kathryn.hay@vamt.net: kathryn.hay@vamt.net



Kathryn Hay - Business Support Officer

Engagement and Influencing

You said ... we did Consultation Newsletter

Feedback from members in 2025 highlighted that they wanted more information about consultations from our statutory partners and Welsh Government. The monthly Consultation Newsletter is available to members who express an interest in receiving it. It includes consultation information from Welsh Government, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, CTM University Health Board and other major partners such as Transport for Wales and Welsh Water.

Quote from a member *"Thanks for the info, I think that summary is really useful as there are so many consultations open at any one time."*

If you are interested in receiving the Consultation Newsletter, contact karen.vowles@vamt.net

Children, Young People and Families Forum

17 September 2026 10:00 at VAMT

The next meeting on 17th September 2026 at 10am will be a workshop delivered by the CTM Safeguarding Board regarding Exploitation. This issue impacts children, young people, families and those most vulnerable in our communities. Come along and understand more about how it impacts our communities, how to identify it and importantly what to do if you have any concerns.

10 December 2026 10:00 at VAMT

This will be our regular meeting with networking and presentations from Claire Short, National Manager (Wales), Lucy Faithfull Foundation Wales as well as Lauren Greenslade, Emotional Wellbeing Coordinator, CTM Connect.

If you would like to ensure you get more information about the Children, Young People and Families Forum contact karen.vowles@vamt.net and we can add you to the mail list

Because We Weren't There - a short film

'Because We Weren't There...' shines a light on the incredible work of voluntary organisations in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales - voiced by service users, volunteers and the sector employees themselves. From tackling loneliness and isolation to supporting the most vulnerable, volunteers and their organisations are vital to our communities.

But what would happen if they weren't there?

This film was developed with Merthyr Tydfil's Third Sector Leaders Forum - a group facilitated by Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT).

Feedback to the film has been incredibly positive. For example:

'Very powerful film showing a clear picture, bringing to life people's stories on how our support services improves people wellbeing, mental health, lifestyles and community care.'

'What a fantastic film so powerful and emotional, the message is loud and clear. A huge thank you to everyone involved in making this film highlighting what amazing services we are all providing.'

If you haven't already seen it, take a look on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJPw9I7c01Q>

English Audio - Welsh Subtitle

<https://youtu.be/Dtx8k8IJWoA>

Welsh Audio - Welsh Subtitles

<https://youtu.be/z8Cwnr1Wc3Y>

English Audio - English subtitles

If you want to know more about the Film or the Third Sector Leaders' Forum, please email sharon.richards@vamt.net

Sustainable Funding

You said ... we did

Feedback from our members last year, highlighted that having funding information available regularly to them would be beneficial. We developed a regular Funding Newsletter which is available in hard copy or electronically. We also invited a number of funders to deliver Meet the Funder sessions to ensure that you are able to access the information directly from the funder. These included Welsh Government Community Facilities Programme, Easy Fundraising, Sport Wales, Lloyds Foundation - Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation's Programme, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Merthyr Valley Homes, Coalfields Regeneration Trust – Breaking Barriers Fund, National Churches Trust, National Lottery & Awards for All.

Are You Signed Up to Our Funding Newsletter?

Keeping up with funding opportunities, training and sector updates can be challenging when you're busy delivering services and supporting your community. That's why our Funding Newsletter is designed to bring together the latest information in one easy-to-access resource.

Our newsletter includes information on current and upcoming funding opportunities, details of our popular Meet the Funder sessions, training opportunities and wider news relevant to the third sector. Whether you're a newly established community group or a larger voluntary organisation, the newsletter can help you stay informed and identify opportunities to support your work and future development.

If you would like to sign up to our Funding Newsletter and receive the latest funding opportunities and updates directly to your inbox, please contact our Third Sector Officer, Lowri Hunt, at lowri.hunt@vamt.net. We look forward to helping you stay connected and make the most of the support available to the third sector in Merthyr Tydfil.

Meet the Funder session

**Meet the Funder – SW Police Youth Trust
29th July 26 at VAMT**

South Wales Police Youth Trust's aim is that young people living in the South Wales Police area lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives and are diverted away from crime, anti-social behaviour or substance misuse. The Trust will seek to prioritise grants which support young people aged between 10 and 25 years. Grants typically range from £500 to £10,000 and are available for up to one year. To book your 30 minute appointment contact karen.vowles@vamt.net or lowri.hunt@vamt.net

Look out for further Meet the Funder Sessions through our website and social media.

New Welsh Government Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector

The Welsh Government has published the updated Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector. The Code sets out the principles and expectations for how public bodies should fund Third Sector organisations in Wales. It aims to strengthen partnership working, improve transparency, and ensure funding arrangements are fair and effective. Organisations are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the new Code to understand how funding processes should operate.

For more information and to access the full Code, visit: <https://www.gov.wales/third-sector-scheme-code-practice-funding-third-sector-html>

Lotto Merthyr Tydfil

Don't forget to sign up as a good cause. Tickets are now on sale and the first draw takes place on 18 July 2026. It's simple to get involved.



Just search www.lottomerthyrtudfil.co.uk and follow the step-by-step instructions.

Training and Development

You said ... we did

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

Safeguarding B, First Aid, Committee Skills, Directors Roles and Responsibilities, Young People and Gambling Awareness, Trauma Informed training, Bystander Intervention Training and Food safety. Over 157 individual members attended these sessions.

How can VAMT help you develop your organisations skills? Does your committee need refresher training? Do your volunteers or staff need Safeguarding training?

We have the following sessions scheduled but we're currently planning Safeguarding Group B and Group C sessions for the Autumn. Keep a look out for further training sessions on our website and social media.

A Good Thing – Introduction to AI training 19 August, 9:30 – 11:30 ONLINE ONLY

Our colleagues at "A Good Thing" are offering VAMT members an opportunity to link into their AI training session with Triceratops Training. It's free but there is a £5 refundable deposit needed. This session run by Triceratops Training looks at how small charities are appropriately and safely using AI.

For more information and register for your space on the training, click on the link

["Introduction to AI" online training course, 19 August | A Good Thing](#)

YGAM awareness training 10 September 10:00 – 12:00 Teams

The session will equip attendees with the skill to identify the signs of harm, the similarities between gambling and gaming, mental health and wellbeing and how to get support. To book your space on this excellent training click [here](#).

DBS Disclosure Eligibility Workshop 3 November 11:30 – 13:00 Teams

VAMT is working with our colleagues at Interlink and BAVO to offer a great opportunity to learn how DBS checks help protect vulnerable groups.

DBS Disclosure Eligibility Workshop

Working with staff or volunteers? Learn how DBS checks help protect vulnerable groups and support safe recruitment.

Join us for an informative 90-minute session delivered by Owain Rowlands the DBS Regional Outreach Advisor for Wales. The session is designed to help organisations understand how to work effectively with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to strengthen safe recruitment practices. This session will cover:

- The benefits of DBS and your organisation working together
- The different levels of DBS check
- Eligibility, when a volunteer or employee is eligible for a check
- What 'regulated activity' is
- What the DBS Update Service is
- Safe recruitment practices

To reserve your space at this event through Eventbrite click [here](#)

[DBS Disclosure Eligibility Workshop Tickets, Tuesday, November 3 • 11:30 - 13:00 GMT | Eventbrite](#)



Join the

BOARD OF VAMT!

Are you passionate about community, inclusion, and making a real difference? Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) is inviting nominations to join our Board of Trustees – and we'd love to hear from you!

As a Trustee, you'll play a **vital role** in guiding the strategic direction of VAMT, helping to ensure we remain a **strong, effective, and inclusive** organisation at the heart of Merthyr Tydfil's voluntary and community life.

WHAT DOES THE ROLE INVOLVE?



A THREE-YEAR TERM



ATTENDANCE AT 4 FORMAL BOARD MEETINGS PER YEAR



PARTICIPATION IN OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS



No previous Board experience is required — just commitment, enthusiasm, and a desire to support the voluntary sector.



WE WANT A DIVERSE BOARD

We strongly encourage nominations from all members – especially those from underrepresented or marginalised communities. Your voice matters, and we want it heard at the decision-making table.



Want to chat first?

Contact Sharon Richards, Company Secretary, for an informal conversation:

📞 01685 353900

✉️ sharon.richards@vamt.net



DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS:

FRIDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER AT 12 NOON



READY TO APPLY?

Download our Trustee Information Pack, which includes everything you need to know, including a role description and nomination form.

Scan me!



APPLY TODAY!

Be part of something that makes a real difference.

Join us and help shape a stronger third sector in Merthyr Tydfil.



**VOLUNTARY ACTION
MERTHYR TYDFIL**

ROOM HIRE FACILITIES

John Meredith Room

Ideal for large meetings, workshops and training sessions. Projector, screen and wifi access. Flip chart and use of OWL for hybrid meetings.

Ground Floor Room

Suits small meetings (max 4).

John Meredith Room	Half day	Full day
Tenants	25	50
Voluntary Organisations	40	70
Statutory/private orgs.	70	140
Ground Floor Room	Half day	Full day
Tenants	10	20
Voluntary Organisations	15	30
Statutory/private orgs	30	60

Refreshments included in room hire costs
(Tea, coffee, water)

LOCATION:



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



info@vamt.net



01685 353900



Third Sector Mental Health Forum

Date, time and venue to be confirmed

The forum brings together mental health third sector organisations, service users and carers to strengthen partnership working and co-production across Cwm Taf Morgannwg. Its aim is to influence positive change in the services provided for people experiencing mental health issues.

For more information contact sharon.jones@vamt.net

Volunteer Managers' Forum

**At the Voluntary Action Centre
Date/time tbc**

Established in 2008, the Forum serves to support third sector organisations managing volunteers to ensure they have a network, receive peer support, share best practice and access training and volunteer management development.

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

The Children, Young People & Families Forum

**At the Voluntary Action Centre,
9:30 – 12:00
Thursday 17 September 2026**

Initially established in 2004, the Forum has been running in its current format since 2022. It provides support to our member organisations delivering services for children, young people and families to come together on shared interests.

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

Health and Wellbeing Forum

**At the Voluntary Action Centre,
10:00 – 12:00
Wednesday 19 August 2026**

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

INFORM

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful

INFORM, BLOG AND BULLETIN

We are always delighted to showcase the voices, experiences and knowledge of our members and wider community.



Contributions are welcome for:

- *Inform* magazine
- Our blog
- The VAMT Bulletin

Whether your piece is short and practical or more detailed, your contribution could inspire and support colleagues across the sector.

How to Submit Articles

To add anything to our Blog our Bulletin as well as being featured in the next edition of *Inform*, please email your article to kathryn.hay@vamt.net. *Please note the closing date for July's Inform will be Friday 18th September 2026.*

That's all from VAMT for now.

We value your feedback and suggestions. If you have any comments about this newsletter or ideas for future editions, please send them 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



Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector Cymru
Third Sector
Support Wales

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

Third Sector Officer

Sharon Jones

Mental Health Involvement &
Development 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

Kathryn Hay

Business Support Officer

Board Members

Michael Ronan

Anne Roberts MBE

Kayleigh Nor-Val

Nicola Mahoney

Gareth Marshall

Julia Burgess

Ryan James

Dr Victoria Winckler CBE

Carol Evans

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.