



# Community Development Report

Date: 22/01/20

Produced by: Robert Venus

## Green Infrastructure Project

### **Year 1 (Welsh Government Direct Funded):**

Project partners Neath Port Talbot (Lead Applicant), Swansea and Small Woods have now commenced spend against the year 1 reprofiled project. In order to achieve similar outcomes and an ability to draw down the full sum for the community, it is my recommendation to commence accordingly. Given the prior agreement, in meeting, by Teri Thomas (Welsh Government) that the spend was agreed, this seems the most appropriate action at this time.

This is a total of £29,345.00 allocated as follows:

Salary and Costs - CDO (Project Management)	£1,000.00	Budget allocated to cover CDO time spent on the delivery of GI Project aspects. Evidenced via timesheets.
Consultancy - GI Charter/Foundation Setting	£5,000.00	Consultant to support the initial factfinding and establishment of the GI Project as a whole and GI Charter – includes cost of adverts.
Shipping Containers	£3,660.00	1 located at the Yard as a base for the project and 1 located at the foot of Gelli Werdd to provide storage for GI Project equipment.
Shipping Container Refurbishment	£2,343.00	Includes external and internal refurbishment and conversion as needed.
Container Space Furnishings	£1,000.00	Furnishings for the GI Project base and shelving for the storage container.
Office Equipment and Essential Tools	£1,200.00	Includes dedicated GI Project tablet for fieldwork and mapping, laptop for GI Project and hand tools.
Woodlands Engagement - Mill	£6,288.00	Bandsaw Mill for use in the Yard and out on location as needed – used to produce usable timber from waste trees.
Woodlands Management - Tools	£1,200.00	Includes project dedicated chainsaw, hand tools and safety equipment (as needed).
Office Supplies	£1,600.00	Cover for paper, printing and other office supplies as needed within the project delivery.
Larch Cladding	£554.00	For the cladding of the container to be located at the foot of Gelli Werdd.
Equipment Usage and Associated Overheads	£1,500.00	Costs incurred through use of equipment and space at the Hearth Workshop.
Room Rents and Fees	£1,000.00	Cover for room hire at Cwmaman Community Centre, Ammanford Pensioners Hall and other community venues.
Marketing and Promotion of GI Charter	£1,500.00	Production of hardcopy GI Charter package, dedicated website page and advertisements.
Multi-sector Engagement Events x 2	£1,500.00	Costs (including room hire as applicable) for the delivery of multi-sector meetings to present and discuss the GI Project.

This money must be spent, and claim submitted, by the middle of March. As such, this requires prioritisation and focus in order to avoid the risk of losing any unspent/claimed income for the community. Our claim will be to Neath Port Talbot who will then reclaim that sum from Welsh Government. As such, we must submit all evidence as if we were submitting directly to Welsh Government with an accompanying invoice.

Within a special meeting held with Cllr. Barker and Cllr. Walker it was agreed to follow the Welsh Government procurement rules and to seek a single quote for works under £5,000 in regards to the contracted works aspect of the project. This will not overrule the strive for value for money where possible and numerous quotes and competitive procurement will/is being undertaken in other areas or this project.

### **Year 2, 3 and 4 (RDP Funded):**

I am currently working with the partnership to complete the stage 2 application documents following a successful acceptance of the Expression of Interest by the funders. This requires completion by the beginning of February 2020 and all partners are prioritising this.

## Health Board Meeting – Mapping and Social Well-being

The Health Board have now confirmed the dates of the next engagement sessions as:

Tumble: Wednesday 22 January 2020 3pm – 6pm

Cwmaman: Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020 3pm – 6pm

I will be attending each of the above events to ensure I am able to promote our services and identify any possible collaborations. Within the Cwmaman event I am also approaching a number of community organisations and third sector bodies to have an attendance. Hopefully this will help to increase awareness of the event itself and promote local opportunities to those residents who attend.

## Developing relationship with the Probation Service (Dyfed Powys) and the Drugs and Alcohol Service (Hywel Dda)

In December I met with the senior manager for the Probation Service at the Hearth Workshop. During the meeting he explained that they have a Supervisor who may be able to hold weekly sessions, with up to 8 people on Community Service orders, using the workshop space. This would focus on the delivery of works required within the current projects (e.g. painting and decorating of the workshop or work on the Artisan Plastics project), general grounds maintenance/clean-up work where the Hearth would act as a base or the production of items required within the community or for sale under the “Community Product” banner; with income going to support further community activities and sustain current projects.

I am awaiting further communications from them and will update Council as soon as possible on any progress.

I also met with a senior member of the Drugs and Alcohol service within Hywel Dda. He had been made aware of the work and projects we’re undertaking and recognised potential under the social prescribing concept for their clients. Similar to the above, this would bring additional hands to support the development of projects but also provide much needed support for some of the most vulnerable people in the Amman Valley.

As above, I shall update Council as things progress.

## Christmas Food Hamper Appeal

Following the very generous donations of those who supported this initiative, we were able to provide food hampers to over 20 families in our community. Through both cash donations and the donation of hampers I was able to purchase food to create 20 hampers. These were further increased by the hampers donated by Cetma.

I would like to thank those who donated to this project, who have asked to remain anonymous, and the staff at Lidl Ammanford for their support during the late-night shop to purchase the food. Further thanks must go to the staff at Ysgol y Bedol for their support and to Cetma.

Given the success of this project, delivered at very short notice, I would like to propose that the “Cwmaman Hamper Appeal” become an annual initiative to take place before the Summer and Christmas school holidays. I kindly ask Council to consider this proposal.



## Artisan Plastics Amman Valley

I have now received confirmation that both funding applications (TFF and Welsh Church Fund) have been successful. As such, we have now purchased the container workspaces, I have produced and shared the procurement plan and begun discussions with stakeholders/project partners. We have received very positive coverage in the South Wales Guardian for the project and I have already received comments and engagement as a result. A copy of the article can be found on the next page. I have also had a meeting with the Morgan Academy, outside of my work for the Council, and they are interested in including the project within a planned Lottery funding bid. This will hopefully generate footfall and income through the centre, workshop and Artisan Plastics workspace itself. Further updates to follow on this.

Before the end of January, I intend to announce an open meeting for interested parties to attend and, at that point, share a schedule for the key stages of the project:

1. Container Space conversion.
2. Machinery Builds.
3. Prototype Product Development and Mould Making.
4. Community Clean-up Event Schedule
5. Schools Engagement

The breakdown of the funding received is as follows:

Funding Source		Value
Targeted Finance Fund	-	£10,000
Welsh Church Fund	-	£1,725.78
Cwmaman Town Council	-	£4,631.98
Amanwy Development Services	-	£900
<b>Total:</b>	-	<b>£17,257.76</b>

This funding will be spent as follows:

Capital Items	Net	VAT	Gross
Machinery Builds	£2,649.90	£529.98	£3,179.88
Container and Conversion	£5,002.15	£1,000.43	£6,002.58
Solar Panel System	£2,562.75	£512.55	£3,075.30
Electrical Works	£1,600.00	£0.00	£1,600.00
<b>Capital Total</b>	<b>£11,814.80</b>	<b>£2,042.96</b>	<b>£13,857.76</b>

Revenue Items	Net	VAT	Gross
Education Interpretation	£1,699.99	£0.00	£1,699.99
Project Management	£800.00	£0.00	£800.00
Transportation	£900.00	£0.00	£900.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>£3,399.99</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£3,399.99</b>



TO CREATE THE SPACE, MACHINES AND COMMUNITY TO...

TAKE THIS... INTO THIS... AND MAKE THIS... TO HELP SAVE THIS!

WITH YOUR HELP... FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR FUTURE.

**THE IDEA**

The shipping container workspaces have now been delivered and I would like to express my thanks to the Caretakers and volunteer M for their support in overseeing this in atrocious weather conditions. I would also like to express thanks, on behalf of the Council, to the haulier D. John Rees of Cross Hands for their flexibility and quality of service.

The next steps for the project, aside from social media and press promotion, will be to begin work on the conversion of the containers into functional workspaces. The machinery will then be produced using these new workspaces and will later be housed within them.

## Amman Valley project to tackle plastic waste is launched

By Clare Snowdon

A PROJECT aimed at tackling plastic waste has launched in the Amman Valley. Artisan Plastics is a community project developed by Rob Venus, the Community Development Officer of Cwmaman Town Council.

The idea is to create a micro-scale plastic recycling space which will encourage clean-up activities in the community as well as promote education and learning.

Thought to be a first for Wales, the concept will see volunteers build four machines which will be used to process plastic materials collected through community clean-up operations. The plastic will then be made into community products that can be sold to generate income to further develop the project and to support other community activities.

Speaking about the plans Rob said: “It’s about not sending plastic to waste but creating something new with it, something to cherish. Plastic has become a demon, and it can be when used and disposed of in the wrong way, but we want to create plastic sculptures and artwork for the community that will last a lifetime. There’s no getting rid of plastic altogether so let’s reuse it and do something good with it.”

The project, which will be part funded by Cwmaman Town Council, is open to all communities.

Rob explains, “It’s not just about the Amman Valley but the wider community too. This isn’t a closed-door project we are very keen to collaborate with different communities and organisations.”



The idea is to create a micro-scale plastic recycling space which will encourage clean-up activities in the community.

The team are now looking for volunteers to help kick-start the project.

“I would love to hear from engineers to help create the machines,” added Rob.

“We are also looking to work with the local schools and groups who will receive training to help produce the moulds. The children can get involved by collecting plastics and we can show the children the science behind it. It’s a project for all ages.”

Once the project is complete the aim is to support other communities and groups across Wales to develop their own, similar project, with workshops, courses and build sessions being delivered within Cwmaman.

Backing the idea, Dr Lizzie Wilberforce, Conservation Manager for the Wildlife Trust, said: “We are particularly supportive of the Artisan Plastic Amman Valley project because of the support and incentive it provides to collect plastics from the environment and create a more sustainable basis for reducing plastic waste in the community. It will help to change hearts and minds, to regard plastic as a resource instead of a disposable convenience. It will also help physically reduce existing plastic litter in the environment in Carmarthenshire, where it currently creates a hazard for wildlife in the landscape, particularly in rivers like the Amman.

“We wish you the very best of luck with the project”

If you would like to lend your skills to the project you can contact Rob Venus on email [robvenus@cwmamantc.org](mailto:robvenus@cwmamantc.org) or ring 01269 823299

More information on the project and a list of materials you can donate can be found on the Facebook page Artisan Plastic - Amman Valley

## “Planting for the Future” – Golwg y Aman Project

This project is proceeding and Rob Parry has been volunteering his knowledge to identify the best planting options/species to support local biodiversity.

It is hoped that now that the funding for the bandsaw mill has been secured, we will now be able to make use of the Ash impacted by disease in Golwg yr Aman to produce the timber required to create the raised planting spaces. This will allow the available funding to be focussed on plants, essential tools and other materials; hopefully allowing for a more developed project. This project will work alongside the GI Project and also benefit from the new assets procured under said project; in particular the bandsaw mill and general tools and equipment.

### Woodland Trust Trees:

Following my successful application to the Woodlands Trust for tree stock, I have received confirmation that these will be delivered between the 28<sup>th</sup> of February and the 13<sup>th</sup> of March. This will therefore allow us to replenish tree stock in Golwg yr Aman following the felling of those affected by disease.

This will also allow to deliver more community planting sessions and prolong the impact of the “Planting for the Future” project and funding.



Proposed design for raised planting space to compliment the war memorial. The timber retaining wall to be produced using timber sourced from site (where possible) and engraved with words proposed by community members.

This may be modified to a lower bed, to include small shrub/tree planting, with timber beam face running the curve of the path leading to the central mound in the park.



The proposed planting locations and site for raised planting space. The outdoor classroom, intended for development under the year 2, 3 and 4 GI Project funding, has also been included; this will be located atop the raised area at the centre of the park and act as both a space for interpretation, traditional teaching/learning and a space to view the meadow area of the park.

### Notes from most recent project meeting:

- Native Welsh meadow seed from Wyndrush to sow and speed up development of native meadows (best planting areas to be identified, but not in the existing wet meadow) £200
- Horticultural ‘pictorial meadow’ seed to sow in areas with low biodiversity value, to provide colour and resources for pollinators (best planting areas to be identified) £600
- Wildflower plugs from Celtic Wildflowers, as per previous email (best planting areas to be identified, but devil’s bit scabious for the wet meadow) £300 Rob P to cultivate a few plugs as stock plants to save seeds from and produce plugs for future planting
- Planting around memorial: horticultural herbaceous perennials and shrubs - £500
- Community planting day(s) to be organised as a team effort. All prep work to be carried out before. Rob V to liaise with caretaker and placements to support. Rob V to liaise with local schools and groups to arrange planting session involvement.
- General larger interpretation panel for the wet meadow area: Rob P to work on content. GTF to coordinate design and print. Rob V to develop and report back about ideas for a frame using local wood. Dai and Rob V to organise installation - £260
- A set of smaller interpretation panels for the wet meadow area about nice biodiversity found there. Rob V to look at design opportunities. Biodiversity content to be developed by Rob P - £400
- GTF to look at organising some training on management for biodiversity for ground staff.

## GI Project – Community Engagement and Woodcraft Sessions

In December I worked with Small Woods (GI Project Partner) to prepare and deliver the first woodland session with local residents. The feedback from this session was very positive and Small Woods have subsequently confirmed that the monthly accredited sessions are fully booked. They are also delivering monthly open sessions which are proving popular on social media and the most recent delivery on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of January.

I would like to thank the caretakers, Mick and our probation placements for their assistance in preparing the site in readiness for the delivery of these sessions. It wouldn't have been possible to provide this rewarding activity for local residents, and have the opportunity to discuss their needs and ideas for our community, without this support.

For your information, the future sessions planned are as follows:

**Accredited Monthly Session** – 24<sup>th</sup> January to the 18<sup>th</sup> of February: Delivered by Richard Manning with learners receiving an Agored qualification in coppiced products.

**Monthly Open Session** – February 10<sup>th</sup> and March the 9<sup>th</sup>.

These sessions will continue, with the hopeful addition of a Youth focused package delivered directly by ourselves through Richard Manning, into the next 3 years under the wider GI Project.



## MakerSpace Session – Canolfan Amanwy and INCC: Birdbox and Laser Cutter Session

In December I worked with Rob Parry (INCC) and Anthony Woods (Ysgol Dyffryn Aman) to deliver a MakerSpace session with pupils from the Conalfan Amanwy department at the school. Within the session pupils created 16 birdboxes for the community, received a demonstration on the use, operation and potential of the laser cutter and provided useful input on what we should do within existing projects to support access by young people.

It was a very rewarding day for all involved and I would like to thank the pupils, Anthony and Rob for their support in making it happen. It's this type of activity which benefits both those involved and the wider community that represents the ethos and potential of makerspace provisions within communities.



## Community Support

Since the last report I have met with and provided development advice to:

- **Hen Fethel** – works on site at the chapel to help restore and maintain the building. Connection to MakerSpace/Hearth Workshop provision and the developing relationship with the Probation Service.
- **Garnant Golf Club** – grant and project development support to improve access to the course, improve community engagement and greater recognition by the whole community that the club, and course, are for everyone. Ongoing support to be provided with grant searches, writing and evidence of need.
- **Garnant Family Centre** – support with grant funding applications, local data from my consultations and connection to existing/planned Community Development projects. Greater collaborative working planned going forward with specific support with funding to maintain staff and grow the Family Centre's provision.
- **Local Woodlands/Nature Volunteer Group** – integration within the wider GI project and support with access to tools, advocacy and navigation of legal and volunteer issues.
- **Amman United Rugby Club** – support for the Youth in refurbishing the existing storage containers at the pitch to create a more visually pleasing space and additional capacity to provide services through their café to park users. Possible funding support to finance the refurbishment of the container spaces with return support in-kind with works required in wider CDO projects.

## Council Vision for Community Development in 2020

With the duty to produce our annual report on Well-being fast approaching I would kindly ask Council to agree and express a short mission statement on what they see as the priority for Community Development for the coming year. This will then represent the voice of Councillors within the report and be the leading statement underpinning the remainder of the report. I would kindly request that Council provide this before the end of February 2020 based upon previous reports circulated, consultation to-date and priorities identified.

## Sylfaen Project – Successful Application

Following an email share from the Clerk I was able to submit an application over the Christmas break to Cynnal Cymru for us to be one of the 6 organisations involved in the phase 1 aspect of the Sylfaen project; an all Wales initiative.

I have provided an overview of this project below for your information. The fact that we are delivering the Green Infrastructure, Artisan Plastics, MakerSpace (sustainable materials aspect) and other related projects was pivotal in the success of the application. This opportunity will help us to both develop and promote these projects whilst gaining support in the development of key pieces of work to help make us a more sustainable organisation; such as the Place Plan, Sustainability Policies and reduce waste/improve efficiencies. Needless to say, this compliments our current direction brilliantly and will provide additional knowledge capacity to help us move forward.

I would like to thank the Clerk for making me aware of this opportunity and will provide regular progress updates to Council as they become available. I will also make Councillors aware of any opportunities for them and as leaders within the Council as soon as they begin.

### **Confirmation email received on January the 9<sup>th</sup>:**

“I am pleased to tell you that your project will be one of the six phase 1 projects.

I have BCC'd you all for now but in time you will all get to know each other and we want to pair you.

I will be sending out a formal letter in the next two weeks and this will include a sign and return agreement from you.

After that, the next step will be for a Wales Co-op advisor to come and do a business needs diagnostic. That will be followed by a report which I will discuss with you and from that point on you will start to receive bespoke advice and support as appropriate to your needs.

Early on in the process we want to hold a Skype or Webinar so that you can all meet each other (remotely) and discuss with us the detailed aims of Sylfaen.

I will be sending out a timeline with the formal letter so that you can start planning your interaction with us.

I look forward immensely to working with you and seeing your projects flourish.

Best wishes

**Rhodri Hugh Thomas**

Principal Sustainability Consultant

Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales

### **About the Sylfaen Project (from the Cynnal Cymru website):**

“Organisations working with natural assets need to balance the interests of the environment and local communities with achieving long-term financial security.

Cynnal Cymru and the Wales Co-operative Centre are looking for six community-based environmental organisations in Wales to undertake a development journey that will ensure they have strong financial, governance and management foundations.

With funding from the Co-op Foundation, we are offering a free support programme that will focus on building capacity and confidence in the areas of forward planning, financial management, human resources, legal compliance, Board governance, public accountability, marketing and communications, and environmental responsibility.

Successful applicants will receive a root and branch review of their development needs whilst also exploring local and national pressures and opportunities.

This will be followed by a bespoke support programme designed to increase their effectiveness and capacity to deliver their objectives and meet community needs. Topics may include Board duties and recruitment, Business Planning, Stakeholder Engagement, Partnership and Collaboration, Annual Reporting, Asset Transfer or others that are identified as relevant.

Techniques will include mentoring, training, one-to-one advice sessions, networking and shared learning. Applicants will typically receive between 5 and 8 days of free support each.

Peer learning and disseminating new skills and techniques are important aspects of this programme. Applicants will need to be willing to join a peer-learning and support process. They will need to be able to cascade knowledge and new techniques to others in the sector by engaging with at least 3 other local organisations to share in some of the training and support sessions.

A small budget will be provided to successful applicants to cover the costs associated with these aspects.

This is a Wales-wide programme that will run from November 2019 to March 2021 and is open to all environmentally-focused community-based organisations. We particularly want to hear from organisations that are managing green spaces or other natural assets.”



## **New Phone System and Adoption of “Google Business” Proposal**

I am pleased to say that the newly acquired BT Cloud Phone system is now installed and operational. This new system allows for far greater functionality than previously possible and I will be investigating and sharing these with colleagues over coming weeks. Already the system has allowed us to receive an urgent voicemail notifying us of a potentially dangerous issue via email with the message attached. It will also allow for call handling and forwarding to allow us to send batch messages for marketing, receive calls to the main offices on our laptops and mobiles when off site and provide automated messages on key issues.

To compliment this, and further improve efficiencies, I would like to propose that we adopt the Google Business suite for both data storage, calendar management, app development and full data integration. The cost of this would be £33.12 per month for 4 users. I have provided a synopsis of each aspect of the service below for your reference.

This service would greatly improve our document storage and security (removing the need to store documents locally on laptops), improve collaboration on report writing and data sharing, access to a more cost-effective Word/Excel etc. alternative, allow maintenance issues to be tracked on a community map, allow us to develop bespoke apps for internal tasks, provide a fully integrated calendar.

This service would replace the existing costs for:

- Microsoft Office Licenses
- OneDrive data storage
- Office 365 subscription

### **INCLUDED APPLICATIONS**

- Gmail Business email
- Calendar Shared calendars
- Drive Unlimited cloud storage
- Hangouts Chat Secure team messaging
- Hangouts Meet Video and voice conferencing
- Docs Word processing
- Sheets Spreadsheets
- Slides Presentation builder
- Forms Professional surveys builder
- Sites Website builder
- Keep Shared notes
- Currents Engage employees
- App Maker Create custom apps
- Cloud Search across G Suite

### **SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT**

- 24/7 support by phone, email and online
- Mobile Management Remotely manage your mobile fleet
- Admin Security and administration controls
- Archive and set retention policies for emails and chats
- Data regions for G Suite
- Vault Retain, archive and search data
- eDiscovery for emails, chat and files
- Audit reports to track user activity

## **Community Development Budget**

A meeting was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January with Cllr. Barker and Cllr. Walker. Within this meeting the breakdown of the proposed Community Development Budget for 2020/21 was explained along with explanation of how “income” from funded projects can be used to reduce/offset the real costs/increase outlined within the budget proposal.

The rationalisation behind additional support for the CDO service was also explained and highlighted the potential for greater sustainability through funded projects as a result of the increased CDO capacity.

A full breakdown report was produced and shared at the meeting and this report is available for Councillors if they wish.