



Community Development Report

Date: July 2020

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Local Covid19 Support Measures

Although we are seeing a move to reduced measures from both Welsh and UK government, there are still high levels of need within the local area. These are increasing in some ways with the employment impact of Covid now coming through with people reporting job losses and changes to their contracts; hours and rates of pay.

As such the following services are being maintained at present:

- **Volunteer phone befriending and check-in calls**
- **Prescription Collection Volunteers**
- **Community Shoppers**
- **Online Support**
- **Meals on Wheels and Food Support Services**
- **Public and Professional Queries**
- **Information Accuracy**
- **Mental Health Support**
- **Community Grants**
- **Community Association Development Support**
- **Referral/Signposting Support**

In addition, I am scheduling the development of an assessment of local post-Covid needs. This will be a combination of both primary consultation with local residents and the use of data shared by external agencies and partners. This will be used to both highlight local needs and to support any direct delivery activities and funding applications submitted under the Community Development service.

Green Infrastructure Project

Communication from Welsh Government to the GI Partners has been very limited since February. This caused a great deal of concern among all that there was a move underway to reallocate funds towards the Covid response work which would have meant the end of numerous projects. Many of these projects, our own included, address many of those issues and priorities identified by Welsh Government for the post-Covid recovery funds.

Earlier this month we received a communication from Welsh Government requesting simplified costings for the new posts created under the project; not usually something asked of applicants unless funding is forthcoming. That said, it is also not a guarantee that the funding is approved and we're in a position to push ahead with confidence. It is a good sign though and one which we will follow and work to provide the required information.

I will keep all members updated on any significant changes as they arise.

Year 1 Outcomes:

I have attached to this report the key findings of the local delivery survey for your information along with the Small Woods report produced as part of their delivery.

Please see report **Annex Document 1** and **Annex Document 2**.

Well-being Act / Community Report

I have been working on the report for the Council as a whole in-line with our duties under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. This report will then be provided to the PSB for review in the order set for town and community councils to attend the PSB meetings. I am compiling this year's report in a very different way to the previous year in that I am designing and writing it in a way which both meets the needs of the duty and the needs of a report to the community updating on Council work over the past 3 years.

This has meant a large amount of design work, data analysis and going back through existing documents to collate the salient points within them. In addition, I am including content from fellow officers and have asked the Mayor and 2 County Councillors to provide a statement to be presented at the front of the report.

I am also developing sections under 2 new headings:

- **"You Said... We Did"** – identifying where we have responded to community consultation and data within the projects and actions we've undertaken.
- **"In Depth"** – sections which cover in more detail specific Council projects and external groups/organisations operating within our community. These will include main projects, the community centre and, it is hoped, INCC, Shadows and Garnant Family Centre. From the private sector, and in-line with the environmental focus of current projects, I have also approached the Garnant Eco-Village development.

Please see the next 2 pages for an example of the new report layout and content.

"More activities for children in the community, particularly boys" and "alternative and more varied activities for young people not interested in sport"

In addition to the Amman Valley MakerSpace "MiniMaker" activity sessions, we have also reached out to create partnerships with other providers. These have led to the Formula 3D Race Car challenge which introduced primary aged children to 3D printing, electronics and design.

We have also worked in collaboration with "Mess Up the Mess" theatre group to provide training days, prop and scenery building session and theatre performances for the local community.

Children and young people also sit at the heart of the Artisan Plastics project and the Green Infrastructure project with both having related educational resources as well as scheduled activity days planned. We have already provided 3 workshops with children from the community to build nesting boxes for local birds and 3 sessions to introduce them to laser cutting and design software.

Improved access to arts, crafts and creative activities for children and young people and "experiences for children that make them more motivated and "job ready""



Children involved in one of the MakerSpace MiniMaker sessions.

Young people, family and staff from the Mess Up the Mess theatre group involved in a sharing session at Golwg yr Aman park in Garnant.

The stage should be used more too. Plays, comedy, music... and building props and learning other stage skills.

Seeing the local demand for theatre and stage related events, along with the desire to learn the associated skills, the Centre Staff and Community Development Officer have worked to provide a range of opportunities over the past 12 months.

These have included a number of stage performances, costume and prop building workshops and the delivery, in partnership with Mess Up the Mess theatre company, a series of theatrical light and sound engineer workshops.

Going forward we intend to continue to provide more of these opportunities whilst also investigating the potential to establish work-spaces for creatives with prop making and costume making being among those disciplines catered for.

"costume and prop builders, theatre productions and set building"
"theatre productions"
"Dance and drama classes"

To improve the exterior of the centre we have also been working with a mosaic artist to produce series of honeycomb panels, each representing a different group within the community, that will be installed as a large mosaic mural"

"The outside of the centre looks quite dull"
"Maybe a mural could be added to the building to welcome people"

In Depth.... Green Infrastructure Amman Valley

The Green Infrastructure Amman Valley project is the Cwmaman Town Council aspect of the larger "Connecting Green Infrastructure - South West" project; a partnership between Cwmaman Town Council, Carmarthenshire County Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Swansea Council and Small Woods.

Within the first year of the project, administered by the Community Development Officer, the project has drawn down £29,095.77 of funding to support workshops, research, purchase of equipment and staffing costs.



So far the project has:

- Delivered of 4 x cross-sector engagement events.
- Delivered of positive volunteering opportunities for 26 community members previously not engaged with.
- Delivered of 4 x child and young person workshops to improve the local habitat.
- Delivered and development of a dedicated module of work with Dyffryn Aman secondary school.
- Integrated GI within the Council's Environment Policy and Well-being of Future Generation Plan.
- Developed new community groups dedicated to woodlands and nature-based activities.
- Provided a social and eco-active group opportunity for 32 local residents.
- Provided a new opportunity to 62 local children to engage with their natural environment and wider community.
- Improved the sense of ability to inform local decision making for 26 community members.
- Improved sense of happiness with the community in which they live for 26 community members.
- Undertaken a wide range of engagement and information gathering activities to help inform the future progression of the GI Charter for the Amman Valley.
- Secured additional community ecology improvement grants as a result of the data gathered.
- Received excellent feedback from community members which reflects improvement against sense of place, pride of place, happiness with community and other associated Well-being of Future Generations Act National Indicators.



Children engaged in producing plaster moulds for making "woodcrete" Swift nesting cups.

Community members involved in the Small Woods workshops delivered in Golwg yr Aman park. A range of single themes sessions were delivered along with a 6 week certified course.

Sylfaen Project

We're pleased to be one of the organisations involved in this project which seeks to improve both the skills and capacity of organisations with an environmental focus or duty. Based on the principle that natural assets need to balance the interests of the environment and local communities with achieving long-term financial security, the project looks to improve; forward planning, financial management, human resources, legal compliance, Board governance, public accountability, marketing and communications, and environmental responsibility. This learning is open to other organisations that we work with in the community and we recognise that through the development of the Council the community as a whole can benefit.

To date we have benefitted from training on Safeguarding and Entrepreneurial Leadership. The full training schedule is as follows:

- Tues 28 July - **Nailing your Vision and your Values** - 90 mins
- August - **Weekly drop-in coffee mornings on themes agreed by participants**
- Tues 1 Sept - **Future Proof Planning (Introduction to Business Planning)** - 2 x 90mins
- Tues 15 Sept - **Maximising your Community Engagement** (Introduction to Marketing and Social Media) - 2 x 90mins
- Tues 29 Sept - **Maximising Strengths: For You and Your organisation** (Strengths Mapping for you and your organisation) - 2 x 90mins
- Tues 13 Oct - **Basic finance and record keeping** - TBC
- Tues 20 Oct - **Virtual coffee morning** - 90 mins
- Tues 27 Oct - **Techniques for Getting Great Ideas and Diversification** (Ideas and Diversification) - 2 x 90mins
- Tues 10 Nov - **Top Tips for Great Funding and Tender Applications** (Fundraising) - 90 mins
- Tues 17 Nov - **Virtual coffee morning** - 90 mins

Artisan Plastics Projects

Although the Artisan Plastics project was significantly delayed as a result of the Covid measures, it is one project which has developed potential gains through the networking, collaborations and awareness raising undertaken during the Covid response works. As such, I am currently discussing how this project can benefit local schools to a far greater extent than planned, support the Probation Service collaboration and potentially be taken forward as an all Wales project with Cwmaman being the hub location/facility.

I have submitted interim project progress reports to the funders and have subsequently received 2 claim payments under the Targeted Finance Fund and Welsh Church Fund to the values of £4,978.09 and £677.14 respectively. The breakdown of project budget sources is included below for your information.

	Total Project Cost	TFF Funding	WCF Funding	Match Funding
Value (£)	£17,257.75	£10,000.00	£1,725.78	£5,801.97
% of project cost	100%	58%	10%	32%

Work has restarted on the creation of the workspaces and updated quotes have now been requested from the selected steel supplier. It's hoped that this can be purchased at the same time as other items required for the "Yard" area to streamline delivery.

Probation Service

The Probation Service have been in contact with me throughout the lockdown to ensure the previous progress made on this collaboration wasn't lost. They have now appointed 3 x "Unpaid Work Supervisors" that cover the area we're located in. These Supervisors can each work with up to 7 people on community service orders at any one time. This equates to a potential for 21 additional workers within the community under the previously reported arrangement for the Probation Service to make use of the Hearth Workshop, support with projects and undertake other activities in the community such as litter picking, groundwork etc.

At present they are having to work with reduced numbers due to the social distancing measures required. They have developed their risk assessments and safe operating procedures accordingly and are now a public sector organisation. As such, the work they undertake for us places very little duty upon us beyond communication, task setting and, where needed, inducting on specific tools or equipment; which will be delivered under the existing Amman Valley MakerSpace induction frameworks.

Other Activities

In addition to the above, and my general duties, I have undertaken the following pieces of work since the last report:

- **"The Yard"**: Produced layout designs and sourced costings for works required at the Yard/Workshop space.
- **Foodbank**: Secured **£4,800** to provide food hampers and **£2,500** for other essential items to community members in need.
- **"Community Association"**: Provided support and guidance on production of constitution documents and provides support through 4 online meetings, ongoing via group chat and social media.
- **National Lottery Grants**: Attended an online session to identify best practice for Lottery grants and subsequent meeting with CAVS to discuss possible Heritage Lottery Fund and People and Places grant applications.
- **Google Suite**: Began work on developing the Council's G-Suite system.
- **Website Development**: Produced pages, and page updates, for the GI Project partners, the MakerSpace, the Artisan Plastics project and council finance audit information.
- **Play Area Safety Posters**: Produced Covid specific play area posters for use across our sites.
- **Private Sector Engagement**: Arranged for CR Clarke to produce items for INCC nature project and liaised with the Future Generations department at Welsh Government to discuss the writing of case studies showing how local private sector partners have supported us within the Act.
- **Cwmaman Woodland/Future Funding**: Supported GI project partner in the creation of a feasibility brief to support future funding activity within our community – See **Annex document 3**.
- **Places for Nature Project**: I continue to liaise with Keep Wales Tidy to arrange the installation of the Butterfly Garden at Garnant Park and the potential receipt of a water runoff management scheme for placement at the Community Garden.