



Community Development Report

Date: October 2020

Produced by: Robert Venus

Well-being Act / Community Report

This report has now been finalised and submitted to the PSB following email circulation to all Councillors.

I would like to thank Councillors and Officers for their input into the report and to the 3rd sector/community groups who has provided information for inclusion.

The report will be considered by the PSB at a future meeting and I will provide feedback to Council following this.

To accompany the public release of the report I have also created an "ongoing consultation" form which will allow for both simple, qualitative, feedback from the community and the option to submit a more detailed qualitative and quantitative response. This has been designed to be universal and not limited to just feedback on the report. As such, it will be able to accumulate data continuously and is not time limited.

The data produced from the form can then be filtered by a range of inputs (date, query, keywords etc.) to allow us to drill down in the dataset for any given purpose.

As the form is digital it can be easily maintained, modified shared and completed with residents, in-person, using a tablet, smartphone or other device. We can also produce hardcopies of the form which would then require data entry into the digital form for inclusion of hardcopy data.

Amman United Rugby Club

Following the last meeting of the Council I have contacted the Club and requested a more detailed business/sustainability case be provided to Council for consideration. I have also conducted weekly funding searches for the club and have requested urgent update from Sports Wales when any eligible grants become available. The Clerk also forwarded through a trust fund opportunity which I have now shared with the Club.

Once the detailed business/sustainability case is received, I will arrange a follow-up meeting with the Club to discuss this and provide any necessary support with funding application writing.

Sylfaen Project

The full training schedule is as follows:

- 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

Any Councillor wishing to attend any of the above sessions, please email myself and Bethan (Cynnal Cymru) on: Bethan@cynnalcyrmru.com

Artisan Plastics Project

Steel stock has now been delivered and invoiced. Following the recent Parks/CDO meeting, the feasibility of placing the completed workspaces/containers at the Bowls Pavilion site (adjacent to existing recycling station) is being considered within the wider site plan. This will be made available for discussion at the next Parks meeting.

Covid restrictions are still having an impact of the ability to progress the project as planned and I will be making contact with the funder to discuss an extension to the outcomes reporting aspect of the project whilst allowing for completion of the financial/procurement and claims aspect within this calendar year. I hope this to be possible excluding certain works only possible once we reach project completion; e.g. electrical final install.

Community Energy Scheme

I have received communication from Carmarthenshire Energy informing me of their successful LEADER application to develop sustainable energy infrastructure across, primarily, the Ten Towns locations in Carmarthenshire. As a result, they have asked to meet with me to discuss our community, appropriate locations and the methodology to be used to roll out the opportunity to both private, residential and community venues. I will provide further updates on this as they come through and I hope to meet with them prior to the next CDO and Council meetings.

Green Infrastructure Project / Environmental Projects

Following the recent Parks and CDO committee meeting, it was agreed to propose dates and times for site visits for the following sites below. I would kindly ask that all Councillors wishing to attend these site visits, confirm availability to myself by Tuesday 20th of October 2020. Please note that these site visits are scheduled to take place during daylight hours and, in the case of Hen Fethel, on a Saturday.

- **Gelli Werdd and Golwg yr Aman:** Thursday 22nd October – meet at Community Centre Carpark for 1000hrs. Travel to Golwg yr Aman at 1100hrs – complete by 1230hrs.
- **Hen Fethel:** Saturday 24th October – meet at Hen Fethel for 1100hrs – expected completion 1230hrs. I am able to provide lifts to people as needed or meet at the Bowls Pavilion Carpark and carpool up to the chapel to reduce cars on site. Please contact me to arrange this.

Grant Funding Update:

Since the last CDO and Parks meeting I have met with all other members of the project partnership. We have all now agreed to escalate the issues of delays, poor communication from the funder and protracted application process. As such, I have now emailed the County Council and Senedd Members applicable to our area and the area of project delivery. This email requested support for moving the funding process forward, explained that the project meets Covid criteria currently used to prioritise grants and the issues faced as a result of the funding process. It also requested the arrangement of an online meeting with Senedd Members, and Councillors, to provide a wider and more detailed briefing on the current status.

I will inform all Councillors when I received any responses to this email.

In addition to the above, I have been working on addressing project queries as received from Welsh Government since the last meeting and reporting these back to the lead applicant at Neath Port Talbot.

A copy of the partnership briefing note outcomes sheet are included at the end of this report – this has been shared as part of the email package to County and Senedd Members.

Community Engagement and Consultation Methodology

Since the last meeting I have been consulting with counterparts in both local government and the 3rd sector to identify examples of best practice, and compliance, within policies and strategies for engagement and consultation. I am currently evaluating these and developing a draft strategy/policy for consideration by full Council. I hope to have this completed by the next main Council meeting.

Dyfed Powy Police – Participatory Budgeting

Following the agreement by Council to offer match funding towards any projects successful in Cwmaman, I have communicated this to the Neighbourhood Policing Team; to which they have asked me to express their thanks. I have also created a dedicated page on the community website and shared this across all social media pages/platforms.

Website – Community/Council Updates

Since the last meeting I have been working on the community website to include all updated documents and information under the Community Development service and created dedicated pages and structure for the Volunteer Hub. I have also reached out to a number of organisations for content to include within this section under “community organisations”. The aim is for each of these to have a dedicated information page which includes links to their volunteer listings, keyword searching and links/details back to their own site and contacts.

This facility will allow users to post volunteering opportunities and for prospective volunteers to express interest. To achieve this, I tested a range of “plugins” for the website and identified the one now live through recommendations from a number of WordPress specialists and volunteer organisations.

This facility is all “future proof” in that it allows for analysis of specific volunteer activity for use within any “time credit” or “time banking” scheme we may develop.

In addition to the above I have amended issues with the site and renders a bulk of images in storage for use now and in the future for various aspects of the Council’s work.

CDO Projects and Initiatives



Green Infrastructure Amman Valley

Celebrating our natural landscape and ensuring its beauty is enjoyed now and for future generations. [More info...](#)



Artisan Plastics Amman Valley

Creating long-life, artisan products from waste - cleaning up our community and promoting creativity and sustainability. [More info...](#)



Amman Valley Volunteer Hub

Providing & promoting meaningful, rewarding volunteer opportunities & supporting excellence in organisations appointing volunteers. [More info...](#)

Amman Valley Volunteer Hub



Supporting volunteers and organisations in need of volunteer support throughout the Amman Valley...

Cwmaman Town Council see community volunteering as a mutually beneficial experience. On the part of the volunteer it allows for increased socialising opportunities, skills development, employability and sense of well-being and achievement. Whilst also helping to increase and realise individual capacity for the benefit of the community as a whole.

When combined with the comparatively low number of 3rd sector organisations within our community, and the variety of issues where volunteers can make a real difference (environment, older people, children, disability groups etc), we hope to utilise volunteer action as a key component of our services going forward.

It is our intention to provide volunteering opportunities in each of the services above and allow those with skills in our community to realise this and develop themselves whilst supporting the development and enhancement of their community. In recognition of this we intend to support each volunteer through a package of training whilst ensuring we provide this in the best way possible through working towards the Investor in Volunteers Awards.

Cwmaman Town Council is also committed to collaboration with clubs, groups, organisation and individuals in our communities who feel they have an idea which would be supported through volunteer action. We will support such requests through advocacy, promotion of volunteer opportunities, support with volunteering policies and procedures and through connection to CAVS and other organisations which may be able to assist in ideas becoming a reality.

Below you can find information on live volunteering opportunities, register as a volunteer (we will notify you directly of opportunities that suit your interests), request support in sourcing volunteers and some useful links to external organisations.

[Opportunities](#)[Volunteer Registration](#)[Request Volunteers](#)[Useful Links](#)

Current Volunteer Opportunities



Meals on Wheels Volunteers – Amman Valley

- **When:** Monday to Friday
- **Where:** [Cwmaman Town Council, Cwmaman Community Centre, High Street, Glanamman, Carmarthenshire SA18 1DX](#)
- **Contact:** Robert Venus
- **Contact Email:** volunteer@cwmmamantc.org
- **Contact Phone:** 01269823299
- **Open Volunteer Spots:** Unlimited
- [More Information and Register Interest Here](#)



Cwmaman Foodbank – Volunteer Packers and Delivery Drivers

- **When:** Fridays
- **Where:** [Cwmaman Town Council, Cwmaman Community Centre, High Street, Glanamman, Carmarthenshire SA18 1DX](#)
- **Contact:** Marissa Sweeney
- **Contact Email:** volunteer@cwmmamantc.org
- **Contact Phone:** 01269822882
- **Open Volunteer Spots:** Unlimited
- [More Information and Register Interest Here](#)

[Volunteer Hub Home](#)[Volunteer Registration](#)[Request Volunteers](#)[Useful Links](#)

Green Infrastructure Project Briefing Note:

Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being (ENRaW) –GI Project

Background

NPT Council, on behalf of the SWW GI Partnership, submitted a grant application to the ENRaW WG fund on 3rd December, 2018 for a three-year, regional project, 'Connecting Green Infrastructure'. The partnership comprises NPT Council, Swansea Council, Carmarthenshire County Council, Cwmaman Town Council and Coed Lleol (Small Woods Association).

We were notified on 15th March, 2019 that the application was successful and issued with a 'proceed at risk' offer on 28th March, 2019, and were required to provide a delivery plan prior to being issued with a full offer. Over the following months we worked with the Environment Grants Team to provide the necessary information and by the end of August were told that we had submitted all necessary information and that WG were working through some internal processes and would get back to us as soon as possible.

On 1st October, we received notification that the offer for years 2 and 3 of the project had been withdrawn, whilst providing us with an offer for 19/20. The notification stated that, 'The problem has arisen because an internal review of the administration of the Rural Development Plan (RDP) has highlighted that there is sufficient difference between the Welsh Government compliant ENRaW process and EU requirements for the RDP, to give rise to a serious risk of non-compliance'. The letter goes on to state that should we wish to continue the project beyond March, 2020, we would need to reapply by means of an open application through WEFO On-line, using the standard RDP processes, with an application window being opened in November to facilitate the process. The letter goes on to indicate support for the project and a view to a resolution by March.

We have been informed that successful projects were split into those that would be funded through RDP funds and those that would be funded by WG funds directly. Furthermore, we were told verbally that the projects that scored highest in the decision making were pulled into the RDP category, with the remainder to be funded by WG funds. We understand therefore that our project was one of the higher scoring projects, adding to the disappointment of the situation. Subsequently, the projects to be funded directly from WG funds were provided with the offer letter for the full three years. Although the Partnership had some reservations about the security of this funding route, the decision was taken to progress with the RDP application.

RDP Application

We submitted an Expression of Interest for £2.4M for a further three-year project in November and were notified on 20th December, 2019, that we were successful. A full application was submitted on 26th February, with a proposed project start date of 1st April, 2020, until June, 2023.

Since this time, the Covid-19 pandemic has emerged, which has put immense pressure on WG budgets and staff resources. We understand the pressure facing WG to meet this budgetary requirement and it's our understanding that many budgets were being reprioritised in light of this need. We were asked to provide a project update form at the end of April (see attached – Project Update Form Connecting GI Case ID 82331), which outlined how the project would be able to progress in light of Covid-19. Following this, correspondence from WG was limited, outlining that no timescale could be provided to make a decision on our (and other organisations in the same situation) application.

From August, there has been increased communication and correspondence from WG, most significantly, an email on 12/8/20 confirming that the project could proceed 'at risk'. Furthermore, there have been two separate requests for further information, including detail on costs and the project partners, both of which have been provided to WG (the latest of which is 16/09/20). There has been no further communication on likely timescale for a formal offer to be issued.

This leaves the project applicants in a difficult position, particularly in relation to staff, five of whom are now classed as at risk, in terms of the new post to which they had been appointed and with a great deal of uncertainty on the future of the projects. Each of the partners have confirmed that they are not in a position to proceed 'at risk' on this project, particularly given the situation with the offer being withdrawn in 19/20. Whilst recognising the severity of the situation with Covid-19, we do urge for some progress on confirming the grant, for the following reasons:

- The climate and biodiversity crisis remains critical and whilst Covid-19 undoubtedly needs urgent attention, action must be taken now to put more sustainable solutions in place for the environment.
- Prior to the pandemic, there was an incredible rise of public and political interest in the environment and it felt like we were on the cusp of making the necessary changes to reverse biodiversity decline and address climate change.
- During the pandemic we have seen this interest increase exponentially as more and more people have begun to notice and appreciate the nature on their doorstep and increasingly value their local parks, gardens and greenspaces. It is clear that having local access to natural greenspace is a fundamental human need and should be provided equally across all of our communities.
- Failure to support this grant application at this time will prevent many measures being put in place that will deliver at a very local level, the necessary GI improvements that will be the building blocks of COVID recovery. Ultimately failing to progress the ENRaW grants may result in the environment slipping off the public and political agenda, and if this happens the momentum recently gained will be lost.
- This GI project has community well-being at its core and delivery of this project should be seen as part of Covid recovery. During lockdown, the relevance and importance of local green space has been very clear and concerns have been raised about mental health. The project will put measures in place to improve, and increase accessibility to, green space and green infrastructure, whilst delivering targeted support and engagement in the natural environment for health and well-being.
- In addition, the project will help to support a Green Recovery Plan by providing training and employment opportunities in a range of green Infrastructure and nature-based interventions such as green roofs, green walls, raingardens, tree planting and the creation of wildflower meadows
- The project has been developed as a three-year initiative, allowing us to put the appropriate framework and staffing structure in place to achieve such an ambitious programme of work. Whilst we have been told that we would be able to backdate costs to the beginning of the proposed project start, a reduction in length of the project does limit the scope and long-term sustainability of what we are trying to achieve, reducing the value to WG, communities and the environment.
- WG have already acknowledged that they recognise the project as a strategic and significant Initiative, helping deliver WG priorities and targets, particularly in relation to climate change, tree planting and nature recovery.
- The project will also be responding to a number of the recommendations for Welsh Government and other public bodies as set out in the Future Generations report. For example:
 - Implementation of accessible longer-term funding programmes to restore the natural environment that go beyond single government terms in Wales.
 - Increasing investment in nature-based solutions to alleviate flooding and other challenges.
 - Taking urgent action at a pace and scale to combat loss of biodiversity
 - Maintaining and enhancing the natural environment through managing land and sea appropriately to create healthy functioning biodiverse ecosystems
 - Investing in and valuing the important role biodiverse green and blue space plays in supporting people's health and community wellbeing
 - Increasing the proportion of funding spent on nature-based solutions.
 - Supporting local initiatives of stewardship of land and renewable energy, to help Wales' transition to a low carbon society and bring a wide range of benefits to local communities

There has already been a significant investment committed to this project in terms of the thousands of hours of collective staff time that has been spent in developing the bid. We very much hope the bid can soon be approved and that this investment will not be wasted.