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O Ddrws i Ddrws / From Door to Door

Ways to Wellbeing Project

The Ways to Wellbeing Project run by O Ddrws I Ddrws (from door to door), is a flexible, door to door community transport service which enables people to attend vital medical appointments, go to the hairdressers, visit their bank or building society, do the supermarket shop or attend activities and social groups. The project came to life after almost £100,000 of funding was secured with support from the Connecting Communities in Wales team.

“People using our service on a regular basis give such positive feedback,” said Wil Parry, Project Manager at O Ddrws i Ddrws. “It’s clear that passengers feel that they can rely on us and they value the friendly, reassuring service we provide.

There’s a big issue around transport poverty within our rural community. Due to the distances people have to travel to get to shops and services, there’s higher than average car ownership, but fuel prices are also higher, whilst Gwynedd has one of the lowest incomes in the whole of the UK. Another concern is isolation as people may live some distance from their nearest neighbour. We were concerned at how lonely many older people are – our community transport drivers said that their passengers often commented on how the driver was the only person they had spoken to that week.”

“Journeys on community transport are social settings,” Wil continued, “somewhere that passengers are able to meet up with people and make new friends. Particularly in rural areas, journey times can be long, and passengers are encouraged to chat to one another. This sense of community on the vehicle is an important element in helping people, particularly those who feel vulnerable and have few opportunities to interact with others. It’s important that our passengers feel safe on our vehicles, especially when the need for the service often stems from the loss of a partner or spouse. Our friendly and patient drivers and volunteers provide much needed reassurance and support for all our passengers.”

Although the majority of people who use O Ddrws I Ddrws are older, they’re also there to support younger people who need them.

“I couldn’t do anything without you! I’d literally be stranded” said one user who has epileptic seizures that prevent her from driving, and uses the service to get to work and to take her daughter to nursery. “Beore finding O Ddrws I Ddrws, I couldn’t get around to do anything normal like other mothers do – go to mother

and toddler groups and take children to events. It's difficult for those that have public transport nearby to realise how necessary a car becomes when you live in a rural area. People are totally dependent on their car, and when they are unable to drive, their lives come to a stop."

"Without community transport, so many groups set up to tackle loneliness and isolation would not be viable," Wil told us, "because their members wouldn't be able to access them. We also hold community activities and social events ourselves to reduce isolation, and want to encourage people to meet up for mutual support and friendship. We were also aware that people often struggle to get to local hospitals and other medical facilities, and could miss out on treatment they really needed as a result. For people of working age, it can be difficult to get to sites of employment due to limited public transport, and through our Ways to Wellbeing project, we wanted to help tackle these issues"

Working with the Connecting Communities in Wales team, O Ddrws I Ddrws, secured funding to develop their community transport services. As well as receiving £10,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation towards their core costs, O Ddrws I Ddrws also secure a People and Places Grant of £99,639 for their Ways to Wellbeing project, meaning they're able to develop more transport to health services, transport to community activities, and transport to work for those who need them the most.

About Connecting Communities in Wales

The Connecting Communities in Wales project is run by the Community Transport Association and funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government, and aims to support community transport in Wales through creating new partnerships, bringing funding into the sector and creating new transport networks.

You can find out more about Connecting Communities in Wales at ctauk.org/CCIW.

