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association

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Dolen Teifi Community Transport

Our Opportunity to Travel Project

In the summer of 2018, after delivering a MiDAS training course for a group of volunteer drivers, the trainer and development manager of Dolen Teifi Community Transport, Rod Bowen, was approached regarding the lack of affordable and accessible community group transport in Ammanford, South Wales.

Rod was told that the main barrier people in the Ammanford area faced when trying to access social and other opportunities was not just the lack of a community transport service, but that there was a lack of affordable and accessible public transport in the first place, which only increased the need for community transport.

From there, Dolen Teifi began to consult with key individuals, community groups and other stakeholders in Ammanford, as well as the CTA's Connecting Communities in Wales team. We were able to support Dolen Teifi to scope out a project which would fill a gap in community transport provision in Ammanford, as well as, help develop and write an application for funding to the Big Lottery People and Places grant scheme.

In November 2018, the Our Opportunity to Travel project was awarded £98,000 over an 18 month period which enabled the purchase of a fully accessible minibuss and also enabled Dolen Teifi to employ a part time development officer to oversee and develop the project.

Since then, the project has made a hugely positive difference for community groups and organisations from across the Ammanford region. Groups for younger people such as the Scouts and Brownies have benefited from the project, as well as groups aimed towards supporting older people such as residential homes, sheltered housing and care homes, as well as the local W.I., Stroke Society and Deaf Blind Club to name a few.

The project has made group travel affordable by having a dedicated minibuss for the community in Ammanford, helping people to travel together in a way that wasn't possible before. It's also meant that Dolen Teifi hasn't had to bring in minibusses from other areas where they deliver projects, such as Carmarthen and Llanelli, for example, which in the past, hasn't proved to be viable due to the significant distances involved.

Having an affordable and accessible minibus within easy reach means that groups are not hindered by a lack of transport and this has enabled vastly more journeys to take place, enabling community groups to visit events, attractions and to reach the people and places they love. This, in turn, has reduced loneliness and isolation and made a real difference for service users.

Dolen Teifi Community Transport has an excellent track record of developing a strong network of volunteer drivers who continue to be engaged with the groups and communities they support. The Our Opportunity to Travel project has taken this approach once again by working with individuals, organisations and local community leaders, identifying, training and encouraging volunteers to come forward to drive. Dolen Teifi has also provided MiDAS training to all new drivers involved in the project.

“The Our Opportunity to Travel project is important to Dolen Teifi,” said Rod, “because it fits with the mission of the organisation by ensuring that local community groups and the individuals who make up those groups have equality of access to transport and can get to events, attractions and opportunities in an affordable and accessible way”.

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.

