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South Denbighshire Community Partnership

Food Van

South Denbighshire Community Partnership (SDCP) was set up to provide affordable community transport and improve access to services for local residents of all ages, including those who are older or disabled, in the Edeyrnion area of Denbighshire.

“Over time, our service has developed and we are now a ‘one-stop shop’ for the local community,” said Margaret Sutherland, Chief Officer. “We provide a dial-a-ride service, flexi bus service, meals-on-wheels service, and an electric car hiring scheme, alongside a wide range of activities delivered through the our centre. To expand our work, we wanted to purchase a new vehicle that we could use as a food van, taking meals out to other community hubs as well as extending our capacity for the meals-on-wheels service.”

South Denbighshire Community Partnership’s meals on wheels service is of great benefit to the community, providing people nutritious meals as they recover from illness or recuperate after being discharged home from hospital. “The wider distribution of food to community hubs as part of our outreach activities to some of the outlying villages,” said Margaret, “also helps people who may not have access to shops and supermarkets nearby. Through providing access to wholesome meals we can contribute towards people’s physical health and wellbeing, which in turn could make the difference between being able to remain living independently at home and having to enter residential care.”

Living in a rural area, transport is one of the critical factors that help people feel connected and part of their wider community. SDCP’s community transport service gets people from A to B but is much more than that. “We want to look after the whole person,” said Margaret, “so we provide counselling, health and wellbeing activities, social support to reduce isolation, practical support such as food preparation and delivery, and we also link people up with other relevant organisations whenever needed.

We see the difference our work makes on a daily basis. One disabled gentleman we have supported first came to us via his social worker. He hadn’t left his house for 6 months. Since we started supporting him, he has been coming to lunch groups and support groups at the centre and there has been a noticeable change in his appearance, smarter clothing, beard and hair trimmed. He says that he was depressed before and could never go out. It has made a huge difference to his state of mind and his wellbeing.”

“The food van project was developed in Summer 2019,” continues Margaret. “We had lots of vehicles in our community transport fleet but did not have a food van that could keep hot meals warm and cold meals cool, to help extend our delivery service to a wider area. SDCP is a member of CTA, so I heard about the Connecting Communities in Wales team through them. The team did a funding search and realised that Morrisons had previously contributed towards the costs of a food van in another area, so it was agreed that we would develop a similar application for the purchase of a vehicle.

Without this support we wouldn't have known that the Morrisons Foundation had funded similar projects. With this knowledge we realised our proposal had a good chance of success, and were awarded over £23,000. We have since worked together on an application for core costs, which recently brought in £7,500 from the Garfield Weston Foundation.”

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.

