



Connecting Communities in Wales Newsletter

Issue No. 3 | December 2019

Welcome to the December 2019 issue of the Connecting Communities in Wales Newsletter

Welcome to the third issue of the Connecting Communities in Wales (CCW) newsletter. As the year draws to a close, we are coming to the end of a very busy Phase 2 of the project which was primarily focussed on:

- Raising Awareness of CCW.
- Establishing a network of Transport Innovation Networks (TINs) across Wales.
- Developing robust project reporting and evaluation criteria.
- Facilitating Funding Applications from CTOs to appropriate Funding Streams, including Cooperation & Supply Chain Development Scheme (CSCDS).
- Moving to our new office in Neath.

On behalf of everyone at the Connecting Communities in Wales Team and the Community Transport Association, we'd like to wish all our partners a Merry Christmas and safe and prosperous 2020.



Updates from the team

Alison Owen, Project Manager

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“I would like to start by praising the Connecting Communities in Wales Team for the commitment and dedication they have shown, developing ideas, building partnerships and assisting with funding applications. Well done and a huge thank you for all your hard work and effort!

I also want to summarise some of the wonderful achievements, helping community transport providers to build capacity and further develop valuable services in Communities across Wales. Michelle and David supported Organisations to submit 24 Bids during 2018, 13 were successful to the value of almost £ 514,000.

We have done even better in 2019, with 29 bids having been submitted to date, 5 have been successful worth over £ 191,000 and we are still awaiting the outcomes of a further 17. In addition to this there are 20 bids at various stages, which are due to be submitted in the next couple of months. I am pleased to say the money has funded Core Activities, Employing Development Officers, Purchasing Vehicles, providing rurally isolated Individuals with access to services including healthcare and access to work.

In addition to the above, we have also supported organisations through our Driver Training Programme. Please speak to our Project Support Executive John Evans regarding this, we would love to support staff and volunteers to obtain their MiDAS qualification.

In September we facilitated a Training Pilot, engaging with the Alzheimer’s Society who delivered a “Dementia Awareness Training for Staff working in Transport Services”, this was a One Day “Train the Trainer” Cascade, supporting Members who are now able to Train their Staff and Volunteers.

Our plan is to facilitate further Training Days across Wales, please contact John to register your interest. The D1 Trainer Programme is in the early stages, we hope to have our First “D1 Trainers” in the New Year.

In other news, the CTA team in Wales, alongside some Welsh community transport providers, were nominated for a number of awards at the Wales Transport Awards in November! The Awards evening was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the importance of accessible and inclusive transport provision across Wales.



It was a fantastic achievement both for the team and a number of our members to be shortlisted for three separate awards

- **Driver of the Year** Eve Carter – Ffrindau Cerrig Friends
- **Services to the Transport Industry** CTA | Accessible Caring Transport (ACT)
- **Women in Transport** Christine Boston, Director for Wales and UK lead for research and policy campaigns, CTA.

We were pleased that Glyn and Eve from Cerrig Friends could join us at the awards, as well as Ellen and Pauline from ACT. We would also like to say a huge thanks to Anneessa Mahmood, CTA's new Director of Member Services, for travelling to Cardiff for the Awards - it was a great opportunity for us all to get together and engage with some lovely members!"



David Brooks, Project Co-ordinator South Wales

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“Having worked for CTA for a number of years my focus has been promoting the project to CTOs in my area, encouraging partnerships with other organisations whose clients depend on Community Transport. This has resulted in a number of projects being developed and funding applied for including:

- Working in partnership with the Connecting Communities in Wales team, **Dolen Teifi community transport** has successfully secured £80,000 over two years from the Brechfa Community Windfarm fund. The funding will enable Dolen Teifi to establish an electric community car scheme for individuals, families and small groups who need to get to essential services and opportunities, in and around, the Brechfa area (Carmarthenshire). The volunteer run scheme will provide bespoke journeys to destinations including local hospitals, GP surgeries, as well as, social appointments, using a local pool of volunteer drivers. Funding will provide an electric MPV and staff costs and it is anticipated that the project will get underway in Autumn 2019.
- Working in partnership with **Welsh Government, Department for Work and Pensions (Communities 4 Work team) and Village and Valleys Community Transport**, the Connecting Communities in Wales team have established a new transport to work pilot based in the Rhondda Fach. In May 2019 the Valleys to Work, one-year pilot, started to deliver a daily minibus service specifically designed to help job seekers to travel outside their usual locality to access employment opportunities. This bespoke service will also operate at times much more suited to shift working



patterns which some employers require, and which would otherwise be unachievable based on timetables delivered by existing public bus operators in the area. As a result of this work, the DWP are exploring replicating the pilot in other areas of Wales and the UK.

- Working in partnership with **Hay Dial a Ride**, the Connecting Communities team have supported Hay to apply for funding to deliver the 'Bank Bus' service. The unique scheme, which received funding through the Big Lottery 'Awards for All' programme, will support people to travel from Hay to Brecon in order to access over the counter banking facilities and other services which are no longer available in their local community.

The funding means that the service is free for passengers, and as well as accessing banking and other essential services, Hay Dial a Ride members can also enjoy each other's company, helping to reduce loneliness, isolation and build friendships. The team has also recently supported Hay Dial a Ride to submit an application for core costs to the Garfield Weston Foundation and are awaiting a funding decision.

The Connecting Communities team has recently supported **Ystradowen Community Centre** to submit a funding application to the Big Lottery Community Fund to help extend the existing luncheon club and associated community transport.

If successful, the funding will enable Ystradowen to provide greater accessible transport opportunities for people living in surrounding local communities – enabling them to better access the luncheon club and other activities that take place at the Ystradowen Centre.

The team has also supported **Neath Port Talbot Community Transport** to submit a funding bid to the Big Lottery Awards for All fund to enable the extended delivery of the 'Neath Town Rider' service to enable people living in the communities of Birchgrove, Glais and Lon las continue to access transport to get to Neath town Centre following the withdrawal of a local public bus service route.

If successful, this intervention will plug a vital gap in the transport network and ensure people can still access essential services and social opportunities.

Project development work including partnership building and bid writing is also taking place in Ystradgynlais, the Upper Amman Valley and in the Rhondda Valleys and we expect to see exciting projects being developed in these areas over the next few months!"



Michelle Clarke, Project Co-ordinator North Wales

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Working in North Wales, transport is a key topic of conversation wherever I go, and it is heartening to see the fantastic work community transport schemes do every day. There are obvious gaps in provision, however, and many rural communities need accessible and affordable community transport to help residents access employment opportunities, leisure and wellbeing activities, attend medical appointments, and do the weekly supermarket shop.

So my role involves working with groups and organisations to develop new services. Some highlights of the past months have been:

- Meeting the new Co-ordinator for **the Rural Conwy Community Car Scheme** managed by **Community and Voluntary Services Conwy**. We secured £150,000 funding for this new post and wheelchair accessible community car through the Lottery and Steven Morgan Foundation. The car will help people attend health appointments and wellbeing activities.
- Participating in a **Sustainable Transport** event with **AVOW and Renew Wales** at the Plas Madoc Splash Centre in **Wrexham** to discuss transport as residents reported difficulties getting to local sites of employment or to attend activities due to lack of private car ownership and limitations of public transport. The event is being followed by a meeting to agree priorities and develop an action plan.
- Having chaired meetings of an **Abergynolwyn and Tywyn Community Transport Partnership** over a period of months, with enthusiastic participation by community groups and stakeholders, it is great news that local group Egni Abergynolwyn will host an electric community car for 12 months. This pilot provides an opportunity to gather evidence of need for future funding applications.
- Assisting **Harlech Community Council** find funding to run a **Harlech Hoppa service** linking the lower and upper parts of the town for a time-limited period over summer. The area has some of the steepest streets in Wales and while the health centre is in the lower part of the town, the pharmacy is in the upper part, as are other services and facilities, such as the leisure centre. A small grant of £8,200 was secured and options are now being considered for the longer-term development of the scheme.
- Working alongside **Partneriaeth Ogwen in Bethesda** and **Friends of the Earth** to develop ideas and an Expression of Interest for a large Rural Lottery funding application, based around a 'Dyffryn Gwyrdd' / 'Green Valley' project that has electric community transport as a key element of the proposed project. Partneriaeth Ogwen has established a proactive Partnership Group which will work together to identify other sources of funding and develop additional, complementary, areas of work.



- Working with **O Ddrws i Ddrws in Nefyn** to consider funding applications to assist with both core and project costs. A small grant application was made initially, and O Ddrws i Ddrws contacted us to say: ‘We had a letter from Garfield Weston Foundation this morning –our application for funding was successful! We received a cheque for £10,000 – no more forms to fill. The follow up monitoring is basically an end of year report to say how the money was spent. Thanks again.’

Please do contact me if you would like to discuss community transport in your area. I can be contacted by phone on 01745 556751 (office) 07918 748260 (mobile), or by email michelle@ctauk.org.”

John Evans, Project Support Executive

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“I have been busy developing and implementing processes and systems to help the team accurately record their myriad of interactions with partner organisations and ensure that all KPIs are captured with robust supporting evidence. We also ran another round of Transport Innovation Networks – see below. My focus during the year has been helping identify training and development needs of our community transport providers to facilitate a successful Phase 2 of the Project.

Alison has already outlined some of the support we have been able to provide for MiDAS and driver support. In addition, we have also worked in partnership with Social Business Wales to provide mentoring support to a number of CTOs to help structure future development in three key areas: management, governance, and social accounting.

A Governance Questionnaire is available that is used to identify where the community transport providers are in terms of these key areas and what support is required to address areas of development. Please speak to me if you would like to access this support.”



Transport Innovation Networks

We have now run three rounds of Transport Innovation Networks (TINs) across Wales. The events brought together nearly 300 representatives from the public, private and third sectors to discuss transport gaps and opportunities for new initiatives that will ensure better connectivity for those who are isolated across Wales. The events were a huge success with 93% of attendees saying they thought the sessions were 'good' or 'excellent'.

The information gathered from the earlier rounds helped shape the agenda for the third round where:

- Dolen Teifi gave an overview of how the Connecting Communities in Wales Project has enabled his organisation to secure funding, train drivers and work with Social Business Wales to help Trustees structure Dolen Teifi and develop a Succession Planning Strategy.
- Dr. Kate Hamilton, Programme Director for Renew Wales illustrated how community transport providers are embracing the Green agenda and the positive partnerships and projects being developed.
- Mike Entwisle from PAVO explained D1 & MiDAS training and how community transport providers could apply for funding from CCIW Project. To date 45 individuals have committed to undertake D1 training in Wales and 197 have committed to MIDAS.

For 2020 we intend to refresh the structure of the TINs and would welcome any suggestions!

New South Wales Office Opening

In July, we opened our new South Wales office in Neath! The office, based at **119 London Road, Neath, SA11 1LF**, has more space, including a meeting room for partners to use, and is close to public transport links with Neath Railway Station only 10 minutes' walk away.

To celebrate the new office, we welcomed over 30 partners to Neath for our official opening! It was great to see so many members and partners gather for some lunch and great conversations. Thanks to everyone from the Wales team involved in organising the event and for making it so welcoming.



To share your stories and contribute to future editions of this newsletter, please contact:

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