

# INVOLVE

**BAVO's newsletter for the third sector  
throughout Bridgend County Borough**

**WINTER 2021**



# BAVO

**Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations**  
Cymdeithas Sefydliadau Gwirfoddol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr



**[www.bavo.org.uk](http://www.bavo.org.uk)**

## Welcome to our WINTER newsletter 2021

### Happy New Year, and let's hope it's a better one!

We keep hearing about the 'new normal', but I am not sure what that is or whether we have arrived there yet. Our BAVO team has mostly been working from home like many voluntary sector staff, for almost a year now. We have relied on computers to see one another, communicate and fulfil our roles. We hope this isn't the new normal because it doesn't suit us at all. We want to be out and about in communities, meeting members, hosting events and having those face-to-face interactions that we used to do.

On an individual level, many of us are struggling with feelings of isolation and we know this is a massive issue for a high percentage of the population. That's why we are still looking for volunteer telephone befrienders and welfare callers to connect to those who are vulnerable and struggling alone.

We know access and ability to use I.T. can be a life changer at this time, so we are currently re-launching 'Get Bridgend Online', a county wide network which is seeking PC/tablet donations (to be wiped and refurbished) and donated to schools to support children's learning, community groups and older people to help access the various online opportunities that are now sprouting up. We are seeking donations, tech volunteers and corporate support to help us get this off the ground too, so if you can help or have some contacts, please give Tracy a ring on 01656 810400.

We are also helping to develop a 'Bridgend County Food Network'. We are at the early stages of bringing together a wide range of organisations who access Fairshare and/or provide help to tackle food poverty such as community pantries, community kitchens and meals and Foodbanks. If you are an organisation that is interested in supporting food sufficiency in your community, then please get in touch with us and we will invite you to the first session when it is set.

Another big piece of work for us has been the roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccine. It will get us to that 'new normal' as quickly as possible and that's why we are following Public Health Wales and Welsh Government guidance in advocating the message to get vaccinated when your appointment arrives.

I have been proud to act as Vice Chair of the CTM Vaccination Stakeholder group. We have worked with Public Health Wales, Welsh Ambulance, St Johns Ambulance, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, South Wales Police, the Military and Bridgend County Borough Council to try and get the vaccine rolled out as quickly as possible to front line staff in health and social care (including those in the voluntary sector), as well as setting up the mass vaccination centres across the region. I am in awe of the massive programme of work involved behind the scenes to get things up and running, including security, identifying and training vaccinators and recruiting volunteers. St John's Ambulance has done an amazing job in supporting the volunteering efforts and we are so proud of their work.

In terms of our day-to-day work, we have dealt with over 7,000 calls already and we have helped local groups access over £1m of funding. Members aren't always aware that grant-making bodies often ask us for local information and references in support of members' activities, which we then work quickly to provide. We have also already distributed over £150,000 worth of grants to support members to buy equipment, secure their services during lock down, tackle food poverty and support children and young people.

We are doing our very best to influence and advocate for our sector at all levels of local and national government, but we can't do it alone, we need your support too. Send us your case studies and stories. Please keep us updated, fill in our members survey which will be coming out to you soon and if you would like to be showcased in one of our future films or publications, give Jane a call.

If you, or anyone you know needs support at any time, remember we can point you in the right direction – you are not alone in this!

Until next time, please only spread kindness and keep safe!

**Heidi Bennett, Chief Executive**



# What did we achieve in 2019/20?



**2,862**  
enquiries responded to



**£306,288** awarded through BAVO managed grant schemes  
**£444,000** received by groups further to BAVO funding advice



**9,642**  
Community Companions volunteer hours were provided across project



**60** Community Companions volunteers supported in their befriending role  
**85** individuals benefitted from befriending support



**198**  
groups received tailored BAVO support



**252** volunteers placed and **48** organisations helped with issues relating to good practice in volunteering  
**85** trustees received guidance in good governance, policy development, funding, partnership working and tendering

Chief Executive of BAVO Heidi Bennett, says: "Our ultimate aim is to strengthen voluntary and community groups and help them to flourish. We work hard to recruit and place volunteers with local groups so that they can continue delivering their excellent work and activities in communities.

"We also offer one-to-one support to community groups and charities when they need help, but we can only do this because we have a number of partners and funders who invest in us to do so. We are extremely grateful to Welsh Government, Bridgend County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board who provide us with some core funding."

As the umbrella organisation set up to develop and promote voluntary and community action throughout Bridgend County Borough, we have remained committed to delivering a wide range of high-quality support services to local voluntary and community organisations.

BAVO's Chair Steve Curry added: "We'd like to thank the whole team at BAVO, our funders and all third sector organisations in Bridgend County Borough who simply make life better for all of us."

Full details of all our past year's achievements can be found by reading our latest Annual Impact Report 2019-20 at [www.bavo.org.uk/about-us/impact-reports](http://www.bavo.org.uk/about-us/impact-reports)

"We'd like to thank the whole team at BAVO, our funders and all third sector organisations in Bridgend County Borough who simply make life better for all of us."



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## New free tool to help ensure volunteers have best possible experience

Investing in Volunteers (iIV) Essentials, is a free online tool designed especially for volunteer-involving groups and organisations to do a basic health check on volunteer practice.

It will help you to think about volunteers' experiences and how volunteers can help make the biggest difference to your cause.

For further details visit [www.knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/tools-resources/investing-in-volunteers-iiv-essentials](http://www.knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/tools-resources/investing-in-volunteers-iiv-essentials)



## Snapshot of some of our volunteer opportunities

Our Volunteer Team offers a one-stop resource on all aspects of volunteering with registered local voluntary organisations, which offer a wide range of opportunities to match people's skills and interests.

### STEER looking for volunteers to look after animals and woodlands

Set in 37-acres, STEER is based at the edge of the Llynfi Valley. Volunteers are needed who have the free time and experience in beekeeping, ponies, gardening, dry stone walls and woodlands.

### Become a volunteer Community Companions telephone befriender...it's good to talk!

Befriending by phone helps you and the person you call, as a weekly chat can help you both reconnect with the world!

### Theo's charity shop in Kenfig Hill need volunteers when allowed to re-open

Theo's has experienced a shortage of volunteers as some decided to leave them because of age, health conditions or because they were shielding, so they would love to hear from you!

### Leonard Cheshire Cymru have a range of volunteering opportunities near you (currently online)

Volunteers are needed to share their skills, offer training, mentoring or support the teams with marketing, fundraising, promotion or events.

You can find all the latest volunteering opportunities by visiting [Bridgend.volunteering-wales.net](http://Bridgend.volunteering-wales.net)

For further details, contact BAVO, T: 01656 810400, E: [volunteering@bavo.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@bavo.org.uk) visit our volunteering pages at [www.bavo.org.uk](http://www.bavo.org.uk) or read our latest volunteering news at [www.bavo.org.uk/news-events/latest-news](http://www.bavo.org.uk/news-events/latest-news)

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## Safety and compliance for volunteering

As we are all aware, volunteers around the country have helped serve their local communities through the recent lockdowns and this has provided a crucial part of the national response to the pandemic.

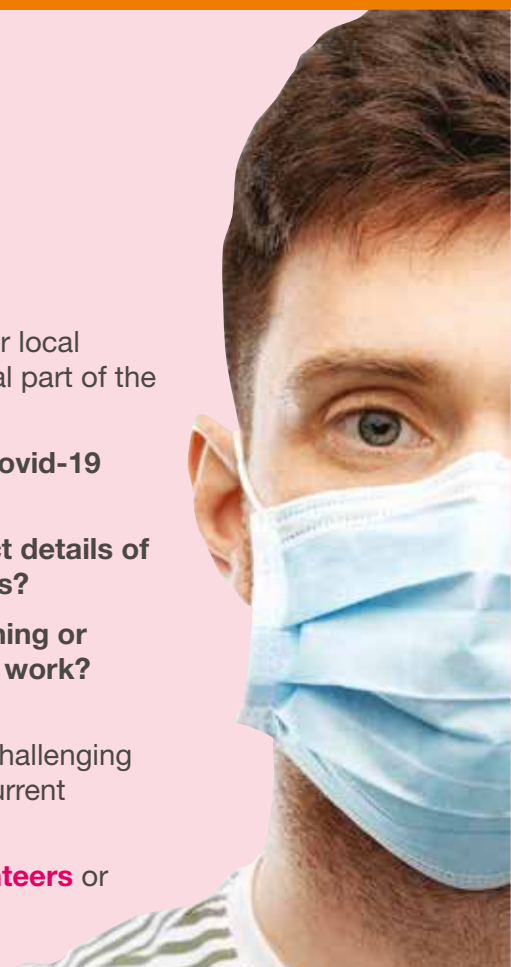
**Are you aware of your liability as a committee member/trustee of a Covid-19 Response Group to protect your volunteers, staff and beneficiaries?**

**Are you complying with the law regarding protecting data and contact details of beneficiaries (especially those who may be vulnerable) and volunteers?**

**Are you protecting your volunteers, beneficiaries and staff from catching or spreading Covid-19? Does your current insurance cover your current work? Should your volunteers have DBS checks?**

As we all continue to work to meet the needs of the community in these challenging times, it is vitally important that we ensure we are all working within the current guidance and legislation.

For further guidance, visit [www.bavo.org.uk/volunteering/finding-volunteers](http://www.bavo.org.uk/volunteering/finding-volunteers) or contact our Development Officers at BAVO.



## Pat and Jill become first volunteers to run sessions for Bridgend Superagers!

Twin sisters Pat and Jill have a long history of enjoying sports and physical activity, so jumped at the chance to be part of our Bridgend Superagers physical activity programme, funded by Welsh Government for adults aged 50+.

When lockdown was eased last summer, the sisters enjoyed getting out of their homes to take part in weekly outdoor sessions of Tai Chi and Yoga at Maesteg Welfare Park. Pat explained: "The sessions were well led and I felt well supported by the instructors, a camaraderie was encouraged with the other participants and it was fun to meet new people!"

A new walking session in Maesteg was set up in autumn 2020, with Pat and Jill at the helm. Making use of the of the many walking routes, Jill said: "It was rewarding to see others benefitting from the walking group and to see them enjoying themselves and the fresh air." Pat added: "I really enjoy being able to encourage and motivate others to confidently take part in getting active, improving their physical and mental health."

Over 50 and want to keep active? Would you like to volunteer some of your time to run some sessions? Join Bridgend Superagers! For further details contact Fiona at BAVO, T: 07923 212 737 or E: [bavo@bavo.org.uk](mailto:bavo@bavo.org.uk)



## Don't miss BAVO's February online Funding Fayre 2021!



We want our members to come to events to share experiences and connect with other fundraisers in Bridgend County Borough Third Sector – unfortunately, you'll have to provide your own tea and cake!

In these challenging times, there is a great need for organisations to get together and share knowledge and experience, particularly regarding fundraising to maintain the valuable services the third sector provides to our communities.

Many local voluntary organisations are responding to the current Covid-19 outbreak which is constantly changing. We want to offer support by bringing people (virtually) together through networking events, discussing funding and other relevant issues, as well as providing opportunities to hear from funders.

You will have the opportunity to take part in discussions about how the funding world is changing in response to the current Covid-19 crisis and what opportunities and challenges this presents to you as funding applicants.

There will also be a chance to tell us what you need and how we can continue to support you.

**Register for our briefing and Q&A sessions including the Moondance Foundation Covid-19 Relief Fund, National Lottery Community Fund, Localgiving and The Waterloo Foundation.**

**Book a 20 minute appointment with BBC Children in Need to discuss the funding eligibility of your proposed project and enjoy case studies and Top Tips for successful funding applications workshops run by our BAVO Development Officers.**

For further information on dates and times of all our events throughout February, visit [www.bavo.org.uk/dont-miss-bavos-online-funding-fayre-2021-throughout-february](http://www.bavo.org.uk/dont-miss-bavos-online-funding-fayre-2021-throughout-february)

For further details, call Angela Davies at BAVO, T: 07710 067718 or E: [angeladavies@bavo.org.uk](mailto:angeladavies@bavo.org.uk)





## St Tyfodwg's Church awarded £100,000 funding from National Lottery Community Fund

The small rural village of Glynogwr had lost their primary school, coaching inn and shop many years ago and there was nowhere for the community to meet for activities and outreach services. This much-needed funding will be used to install a disabled toilet, kitchen and community facility in the church.

Church committee member Gill Morgan said: "A discussion took place with a number of the church members to see if a source of funding could be found to undertake the necessary installations that was necessary to provide a much-needed facility for the community.

"With the church being a Listed II Building, the costs would be extremely high as any alterations had to comply with the age of the building. The community were also approached as to what they thought of the idea and to have their support for the project. It was very important to involve the community to realise what their needs were."

**"Thanks must be given to both BAVO and Reach for the much needed assistance that they provided"**

In autumn 2019, BAVO held various funding surgeries which offered Gill the opportunity to meet funders to discuss their project and find out if they would be eligible for funding. She also met our BAVO Development Officer at the surgeries and has continued to benefit from our support with funding applications.

Support was also provided by REACH the Rural Development Programme of Bridgend County Borough Council, which enabled St Tyfodwg's project to be included in a Sustainable Communities Programme to assist with any problems that may be encountered.

The church's attendance at our funding surgery in September 2019 with the National Lottery Community Fund, resulted in an application being forwarded which was successful this year!

Gill Morgan added: "Thanks must be given to both BAVO and Reach for the much needed assistance that they provided. We can now go forward with more confidence that the aim of having a community facility in the small rural village will one day be met."

## Just under £86,000 awarded through recent BAVO managed grant schemes!

We have continued to work hard to negotiate funding opportunities and bring them to Bridgend County Borough.

Since August 2020, 26 local organisations have been awarded just under £86,000 through the following BAVO administered grants schemes:

- Food Poverty Small Grants Scheme;
- Integrated Care Fund (ICF): Children and Young People Revenue Grant;
- Comic Relief Local Grants;
- Youth Led Grants.

Never let a funding opportunity slip by again because you are not confident in your skills and contact our Development Officers at BAVO. We aim to ensure organisations don't miss out on accessing appropriate government funding and are aware of local grants.

**Did you know in 2019/20, local organisations were awarded over £306,000 through BAVO managed grant schemes and received £444,000 following BAVO funding support?**

We know most voluntary and community groups are heavily dependent on grant funding in order to keep their services running or to develop new projects. Applying for funding can be complicated, confusing and difficult to understand but we can help you through it!

We share our insight, knowledge and experience as bid writers, grant assessors and panel members so that you have the best chance of success. Call us at BAVO and don't miss out on funding again!





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## Investing in the Future for Caerau

Invest Local Caerau (ILC) is part of a programme giving funding and support for the most disadvantaged communities across Wales.

One of the highlights has seen job creation and the seeds for longer term sustainability, trying to survive through difficult times.

Luke Sinnott is aged 19 and lives in the Llynfi Valley. He joined Caerau Development Trust as a volunteer three years ago, choosing this community project as his host placement for his Itec (Jobs Growth Wales) Employability Skills course.

Luke was well supported and learnt valuable skills in Business Administration. Luke says: "I learnt a lot of new skills and loved meeting all the people there."

However, Luke was thinking about his future and had to work part-time in a local shop to make sure he had enough money: "I was worried that I'd have to leave Caerau Development Trust at the end of my training programme."

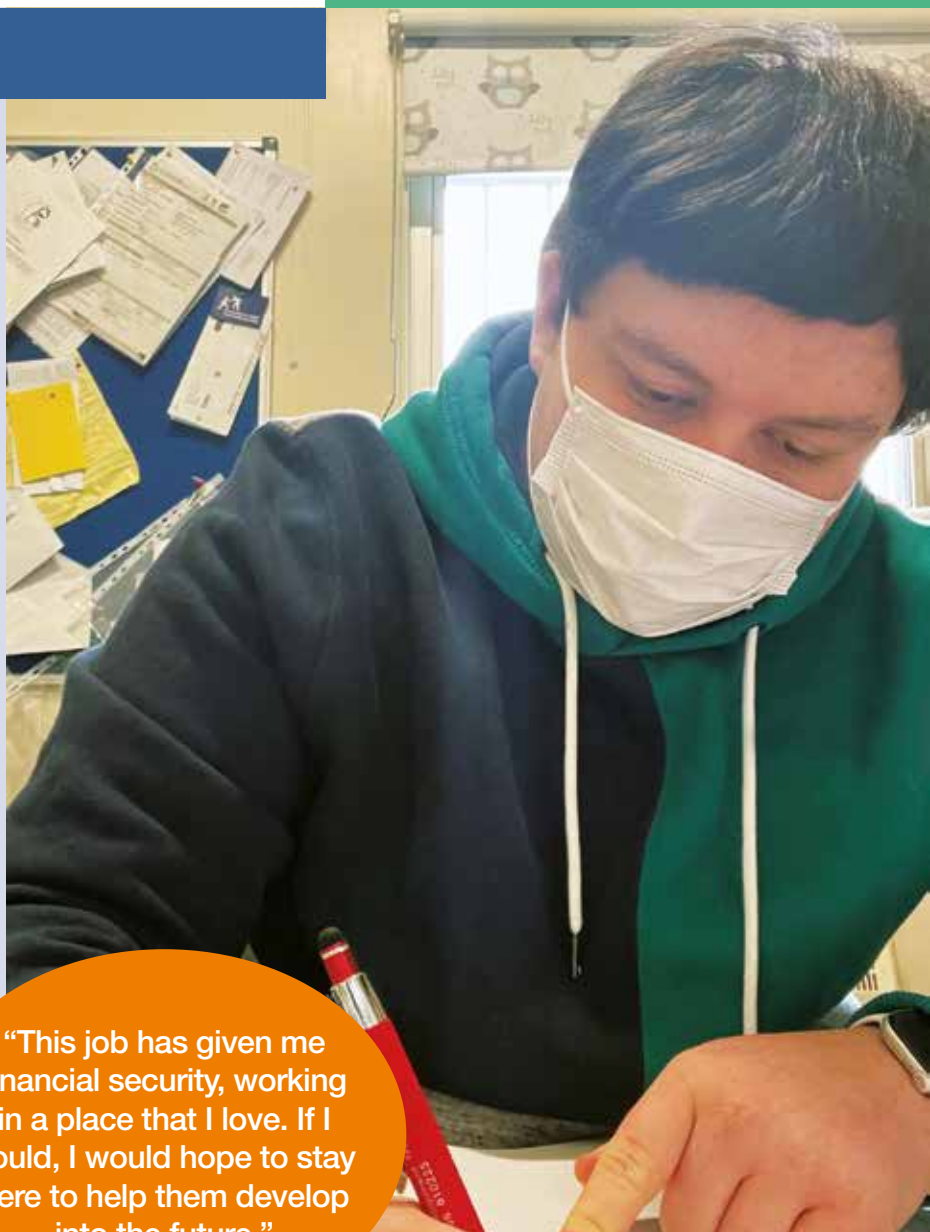
"This job has given me financial security, working in a place that I love. If I could, I would hope to stay here to help them develop into the future."

With help from BAVO's Invest Local Caerau Funding Support Worker, Luke learnt how to develop his bid writing skills, and made a successful application to the National Community Lottery Fund last year, helping to create two employed posts for the centre in administration and for their community café/shop food service.

Luke is now employed full-time by Caerau Development Trust because of this funding and is enjoying his life. He says: "This job has given me financial security, working in a place that I love. If I could, I would hope to stay here to help them develop into the future."

When asked what was the best thing about Caerau Development Trust, Luke said: "They make the best cooked dinner!"

If you need funding support or advice to develop your group, project or idea in Caerau, contact Alex Bowen, T: 07719 523842 or E: alexbowen@bavo.org.uk





## Funding helps Splice to adapt to changing needs due to pandemic

Splice Child and Family Project Ltd is a small charity based in Pyle, which under normal circumstances offers a family centred service supporting parents and carers play and learn with their children, helping to develop their confidence and self-esteem. However, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, they have needed to adapt their services to expanding their Baby Bank Service.

Tracey Morgan, Child and Family Organiser at Splice said: "We actually started our Baby Bank two years ago. It started mainly by a conversation with our local foodbank who asked if we could make use of some surplus baby items that they had and were wondering if our families could use them."

"In March 2020 when it was announced we were to go into lockdown, this didn't stop the need for our service and in fact we experienced a surge in demand. We then found that some of our regular families had to self-isolate so we started doorstep drop-offs."

"Word soon spread and we started to get requests and referrals from all over Bridgend County Borough. It was at this point that we

decided to put our service on the road and our service became mobile."

Splice was able to secure over £12,600 of funding from various sources including BAVO administered funds, which helped them purchase much needed baby essentials such as nappies, wipes, formula and food.

Manager of Splice, Elaine Davis added: "The funding we received from BAVO has helped us purchase storage items to become more organised and allowed us to purchase milk and food items

"We are proud that up to December 2020, our baby bank has supported over 120 families. Our Baby Bank Service is still needed, in fact we are expecting a surge in demand as more people are pushed towards poverty due to the effects of Coronavirus."

"If anyone is struggling due to the effects of Coronavirus and needs a bit of extra help please contact us on 01656 503141 or email: [splice\\_childandfamily@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:splice_childandfamily@yahoo.co.uk)

"We also accept donations of baby essentials such as nappies, milk, wipes etc. and would love to hear from you."

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### Snapshot of funding available...



#### Volunteering Wales grants scheme reopens

Administered by WCVA and designed to deliver Welsh Government's commitment to identifying opportunities for more people to volunteer through grants up to £20,000. This year, it will focus on 10-month interventions that tackle barriers to volunteering, giving a positive experience for the volunteer and a long-lasting impact on the community. Deadline: by 12 April 2021.

[www.wcva.cymru/funding/vwg](http://www.wcva.cymru/funding/vwg)

#### Ironmongers' Company

Funds projects that provide opportunities for disadvantaged children and young people to fulfil their potential. The average grant awarded is £4,000 and must be spent within 12 months from the date of the award. Next deadline is 31 July 2021.

[www.ironmongers.org/charitable-grants](http://www.ironmongers.org/charitable-grants)

#### Deadline extended for Resilience and Recovery Loan Fund

Deadline has been extended to 31 March 2021. This is a £25m emergency fund for social enterprises and charities that are improving people's lives across the UK. The fund is for those experiencing disruption to their normal business model as a result of COVID-19.

[www.wcva.cymru/deadline-approaching-for-resilience-and-recovery-loan-fund](http://www.wcva.cymru/deadline-approaching-for-resilience-and-recovery-loan-fund)

#### Help the Homeless

Funding is available for organisations whose aim is to help homeless people return to the community and enabling them to resume a normal life. They don't make grants to individuals. They fund capital costs with grants of up to £5,000. Quarterly deadlines each year are: 15 March, 15 June, 15 September, 15 December.

[www.help-the-homeless.org.uk](http://www.help-the-homeless.org.uk)

As members are aware, BAVO circulates monthly funding updates, however please don't forget to check our website regularly for new funding opportunities at [www.bavo.org.uk](http://www.bavo.org.uk)

**Remember to also register FREE with [www.funding.cymru](http://www.funding.cymru) to do your own funding search!**



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### Knowledge Hub gives easy access to a range of online information, networking and learning

Third Sector Support Wales partners have launched a new bank of online information and learning resources for the voluntary sector in Wales. Knowledge Hub is an easy to use tool to help voluntary organisations upskill, learn and access high quality information on key areas such as running your organisation, volunteering, funding and influencing.

As well as a selection of information sheets and online courses, Knowledge Hub also gives you the opportunity to network with peers and have discussions on topics that are important to you. It is completely free to use for anyone working or volunteering in the voluntary sector in Wales, or for those wanting to get involved in the third sector for the first time.

To take advantage of the new Knowledge Hub, register at [www.thirdsectorsupport.wales](http://www.thirdsectorsupport.wales)

### WCVA produces safeguarding resource to help update policies and procedures in light of Covid-19

This easy to read information for third sector organisations will help protect beneficiaries, volunteers and staff. We usually think of our beneficiaries when we think about safeguarding, but now more than ever before we need to think about our volunteers and staff too.

Most importantly, make sure to include in the policy and procedure the name and contact details of at least one 'Safeguarding Officer' or 'Safeguarding Lead' for your group.

**You can download WCVA's safeguarding checklist [here](#).**

### Can you have your AGM during Covid-19?

The question of how and when to hold an AGM during a pandemic is a challenging one for charity trustees. This is a new and rapidly changing situation, so there is a lack of guidance and practical examples, but the information put together by WCVA about the options for charities may be helpful.

Go to [www.wcva.cymru/covid-19-can-we-hold-our-charity-agm](http://www.wcva.cymru/covid-19-can-we-hold-our-charity-agm) to get the full picture.



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## Link Up news and legacy

Our Link Up project supported by the National Lottery Community Fund will be working until the end of March 2021 to make sure charities in Bridgend County get the maximum possible benefit from it.

Link Up has been successful in several areas. We have:

- recruited new trustees with a variety of different skills and experience and matched them to organisations who were searching for new committee/board members;
- helped trustee boards learn new ways of running their organisations and individual trustees, to improve their skills in strategic and operational planning and financial management;
- supported new and existing trustees by matching them with a skilled and experienced advisor (called a mentor) to help them carry out their role more effectively or with greater confidence;
- helped improve diversity of charities in Bridgend County by attracting women and young people to become trustees;
- set up and supported an informal trustee network to share concerns frustrations and ideas;
- listened to what Link Up trustees and mentors told us about ways in which BAVO could continue to support them and responded to your ideas and suggestions.

During the last nine months we have done all of this in the midst of the pandemic, working exclusively online to keep us all safe!

We need to make sure that after Link Up, we can continue to support our members to be strong, secure, confident and capable of providing the maximum support to people and communities wherever they are across Bridgend County Borough.

If you think Link Up and its legacy may be able to help your organisation, please contact Suzanne at BAVO, T: 01656 810400 or E: [bavo@bavo.org.uk](mailto:bavo@bavo.org.uk)

**Don't forget, you can also register all your trustee vacancies free of charge by visiting [Bridgend.volunteering-wales.net](https://Bridgend.volunteering-wales.net)**

For organisations working with volunteers, this system will help you to recruit and manage volunteers, log volunteer hours, plan rotas and events, record training and experience and produce reports.

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## BAVO training 2021

From April to July we will be offering a number of free short online workshops designed to help you run your organisation more effectively, efficiently and safely. As well as safeguarding we will be covering a number of other topics, subject to demand, including:

- Chairing effective meetings;
- Teamwork and delegation;
- Strategic planning /operational planning;
- Financial planning;
- Fundraising /income generation;
- Finance and accounting;
- Marketing and using social media;
- Volunteer management.

If what you need isn't on the list above, please let us know, we may still be able to help!



## Join our emergency bank of volunteers!

During the Covid-19 pandemic, BAVO is holding a pool of emergency community volunteers that can be linked up with people that are struggling.

Volunteers will be called to help with a range of support including shopping, pharmacy, volunteer driving and anything else that could arise within reason.

For further details, contact Sharon at BAVO, T: 01656 810400 or email: [volunteering@bavo.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@bavo.org.uk)

## Sustainable Wales offering FREE lockdown online training to BAVO members!

Sustainable Wales is offering free group workshops that will help upgrade your organisation's environmental/sustainable development policies and active daily practices.

This will be in line with the Senedd's 'Well-Being of Future Generations Act'. Supported by Renew Wales, discussions will be tailored to your group's particular circumstances, project activities, abilities and timetable.

For more details contact Margaret Minhinick by emailing: [mm@sustainablewales.org.uk](mailto:mm@sustainablewales.org.uk)





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## Adferiad Recovery: A new era in delivering recovery services across Wales!



Established charities CAIS, Hafal and WCADA are to officially merge with Adferiad Recovery on 1 April 2021.

They are confident that their merger plan will not affect delivery of services, including those located within Bridgend County Borough. You can still contact Hafal and WCADA and access their services as usual:

Hafal's services in Bridgend include:

- Signposting service;
- Breaks for carers (Seibiant);
- Family Support and Advocacy Service;
- Service User and Carer Participation Service.

Contact Theresa Griffiths, Service Manager  
(Bridgend), T: 07970 436385 or  
E: [theresa.griffiths@hafal.org](mailto:theresa.griffiths@hafal.org)

WCADA's services in Bridgend include:

- Needle exchange;
- Telephone and online support;
- Outreach support;
- Face-to-face support.

Contact the team at Celtic Court on  
T: 01656 667717 or E: [adminbridgend@wcada.org](mailto:adminbridgend@wcada.org)



## COVID-19 vaccination



The people most at risk of COVID-19 will be prioritised first. If you are eligible for the vaccine, please wait to be contacted.

### The priority list for having the Coronavirus vaccine is:

- 1 residents and staff in a care home for older adults**
- 2 all those 80 years of age and over, and frontline health and social care workers**
- 3 all those 75 years of age and over**
- 4 all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals**
- 5 all those 65 years of age and over**
- 6 all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk**
- 7 all those 60 years of age and over**
- 8 all those 55 years of age and over**
- 9 all those 50 years of age and over**



**Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau**  
**Vaccination saves lives**

For more information visit:  
[phw.nhs.wales/covid-19-vaccination](https://phw.nhs.wales/covid-19-vaccination)



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## **Bridgend organisations awarded over £79,000 of Mental Health Covid-19 Recovery Grant funding**

2020 provided challenging times for everyone, with the Covid-19 pandemic taking its toll on the population's mental health, causing a notable increase in demand on mental health services.

As part of the Welsh Government's Covid-19 response, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board was allocated £200,000 to commission new or extend existing support given by voluntary sector providers in their area to support changing mental health needs caused by the pandemic. BAVO, Interlink RCT and Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil were approached to support with the process.

An overwhelming number of applications were received from across the region and the grant panel found it very hard to choose between so many valuable and diverse projects. Ultimately, over £79,000 was awarded to organisations based in Bridgend County alone, who will be delivering services such as eating disorder support, emotional wellbeing in children and young people and mental health recovery through access to the outdoors and the arts.

The successful grant recipients will be working independently and as part of a newly-formed Covid-19 Recovery subgroup of the Regional Together for Mental Health Partnership Board. The subgroup will feedback to Welsh Government about the challenges that third sector mental health and wellbeing providers in our region are currently facing during the Covid-19 pandemic.



## **Bridgend Voice and Choice Helpline: business as usual**

With the uncertainty at the moment with Covid-19, Bridgend Voice and Choice Hub want to re-assure you that they are running business as usual and following all government advice.

They are the first port of call if you need help to be heard, understand social services, or if you feel you're not getting the right support to stay independent.

Their team of helpline advisor advocates can work remotely and are still available to support you Monday to Friday from 10am to 3pm.

They can help anyone aged over 18, living in Bridgend County Borough and are eligible to access social services; or if you are a professional, a carer, or someone else with a concern for someone's welfare.

This free telephone helpline can be contacted on 0808 8010 330 for advocacy-related information, advice and assistance. You can find out more by visiting [www.bridgendvoiceandchoice.cymru](http://www.bridgendvoiceandchoice.cymru)



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## ‘Connecting carers’ across Bridgend

Are you looking after someone in your family, a friend or a neighbour? Would you like to meet others in your community to share your experiences and help support each other?

‘Connecting Carers’ is a project involving Bridgend County Borough Council and Wales Co-operative Centre, which aims to use co-operation and collaboration to put carers in charge of improving opportunities for greater wellbeing.

‘Connecting Carers’ can help you to:

- meet new people who also have caring responsibilities;
- arrange fun social activities;
- use technology to meet, chat and stay in touch;
- set-up your own small group to help you look after yourself and each other.

To find out more, call Paula at the Wales Co-operative Centre on 07776 961253 or email: [paula.lunnon@wales.coop](mailto:paula.lunnon@wales.coop)



## Bridgend Carers Centre achieve Carer Friendly advanced accreditation

Bridgend Carers Centre’s mission is ‘to make a positive difference to carers’ lives in Bridgend County Borough by providing information and support and to reduce isolation.

Centre Manager Helen Pitt said: “As an organisation whose sole purpose is to support unpaid carers and families, we were delighted to be given the public recognition of the excellent service that Bridgend Carers Centre delivers to carers of all ages.

“It is important now, more than ever, that we live in a society that works to become ‘carer friendly’ and to give carers the recognition they deserve. Carers look after family and friends through illness and disability, their role can be very stressful and demanding often juggling work and education with caring for a loved one.

“It is therefore important that all organisations understand the impact of a caring role whether that’s as an employer, a college, a school, a hospital or GP surgery and offer support or signposting to them. One person in four will become a carer at some time - carers are everyone’s business.”

For further details on Bridgend Carers Centre and how to contact them, visit [www.bridgendcarers.co.uk](http://www.bridgendcarers.co.uk)







## Regional helpline supports those in self-isolation

Wales' first regional helpline to support people in Bridgend County Borough who are self-isolating has been launched in Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM). The new seven days a week service has been set up in partnership by the CTM local authorities, County Voluntary Councils, the CTM Regional Partnership Board, CTM University Health Board and Public Health Wales.

People living in Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf or Bridgend County Borough can call the helpline with their worries and concerns if they are asked to self-isolate by NHS Wales' Test, Trace and Protect.

A contact number for the 'CTM Self-Isolation helpline' will be sent by text, letter, or given out over the phone to anybody who is contact traced or tests positive for Covid-19. When people call the phone number, a member of the friendly helpline team will talk to them to find out what support they need.

This could include advice around the latest Covid-19 guidance; links to relevant information or signposting to Bridgend County Borough Council who will seek local support for them.

BAVO's Chief Executive Heidi Bennett said: "During the first lockdown and firebreak, Bridgend County Borough had a fantastic support system in place for people in need. BAVO and Bridgend County Borough Council redeployed staff and worked in partnership with local community and voluntary groups and volunteers to make sure local residents got the help they needed as quickly and seamlessly as possible.

"We are continuing to support this approach and encourage anyone who needs help to contact our Community Navigator Team at BAVO, T: 01656 810400 or email: [bavo@bavo.org.uk](mailto:bavo@bavo.org.uk)"

### 'Making Relationships Count'

Age Cymru has launched their new helpful guide for families, unpaid carers, and care staff supporting a person moving to live in a care home.

You can [download a copy here](#) to publicise through your networks.

## Community Navigators providing crucial support and signposting to vulnerable people

Our Community Navigators encourage individuals to access community-based activities, information and advice that has a positive impact on their lives to prevent their circumstances from deteriorating to a point where they might need higher level health or social care support.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns, our Navigators' role has changed to meet the needs of the community, providing crucial individual support and signposting to vulnerable people.

### **"I have been coping much better – I'm not crying all the time..."**

Our Community Navigator met with SB who lives in Pyle with her dogs. She suffers with severe depression, anxiety and personality problems. She also has cervical spondylitis which causes severe pain and affects her mobility.

"I was struggling with my mental health and finances when I first contacted BAVO and spoke to Gail. A recent change in my medication had left me with very low mood and I was struggling on a day to day basis. I found it really difficult to leave the house.

"The foodbank parcels that Gail was able to access for me and deliver were a godsend. It was lovely to see someone on the doorstep and knowing that there was someone to call if I had a problem that I couldn't deal with.

"I use my computer to shop online and stay in touch with my God-daughter a lot and over the summer it stopped working, which put me in a bit of a panic if I'm honest. Gail found me a repair shop that could pick up and return the repaired computer. The repair was done in a

couple of days, which was great and meant that I wasn't out of touch for very long and I wouldn't have to ask for any extra help with things.

"Gail has kept in touch with me over the phone – checking how I am every now and again. It's nice to have someone at the end of the phone, even if I don't answer it's good to hear a message from someone.

"My spondylitis affects my hands and legs and I am starting to struggle to get up and down stairs and jobs around the house are getting really difficult. It was a relief when Gail suggested she get in touch with Social Services to see if they could help by making changes to my house. Social Services got in touch the same morning and I am now in touch with Care & Repair and waiting for some work to be done.

"Over the past couple of months, I have been coping much better – I'm not crying all the time, my benefits have been sorted and I am budgeting for the Bedroom Tax and bills.

"Gail has supported me by talking through practical ideas to solve any problems I'm having – she always gives me an option no matter the problem."

**You can contact our Community Navigators at BAVO  
by calling 01656 810400 or emailing: [bavo@bavo.org.uk](mailto:bavo@bavo.org.uk)**



WINTER newsletter 2021

## Building Resilient and Connected Communities

Our Community Resilience Officer works with community members to develop new initiatives that they feel make a positive difference to their local area. We have recently been working with Chatter Box Hen Shed Ogmores Vale.

Cheryl Dowd, who is one of the founders of Hen Shed alongside Kath Davies, said: "Hen Shed was set up during a difficult year for everyone. We felt it important that women in our community felt supported and they had someone to turn to for a chat; a place where they felt safe to be themselves and make new friends.

"BAVO's Resilient Communities Development Officer has been involved from the start; offering support and guidance. One of the main challenges for us was getting members. People were isolating at home and afraid or unable to go out because of the pandemic. BAVO helped me to market the group and spread the word and linked us in with existing groups with similar mind sets.

"During the time when we were able to meet as a group, BAVO helped us to do so safely and advised us of the relevant steps necessary to open, ensuring we understood the rules for community centres and any queries we had, we would just give them a ring. It was brilliant being able to meet face to face and really helped lift all of our spirits!

"The Development Officers at BAVO also supported us with the relevant steps to become an official group and helped us develop a constitution. They also helped us source grants, informed us of any pots of money we were eligible for and supported us with the completion of grant applications where needed.

"BAVO have been so supportive and always at the end of the phone for advice and guidance. Without them the group would not have been a success. We are hoping 2021 will see us able to meet once more as a group and welcome new members."

Make a difference to your community! If you have any ideas that would improve where you live and need support to get it off the ground, contact BAVO. You can find out more by visiting

[www.bavo.org.uk/get-help/help-for-individuals/community-resilience](http://www.bavo.org.uk/get-help/help-for-individuals/community-resilience)



Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
Bwrdd Partneriaeth  
Rhanbarthol | Regional  
Partnership Board



## Community Companions begin new pen pal project

We recently received a letter in the post from a lady in her 90s thanking us for the support she received from our Community Companions befrienders during the Covid-19 pandemic. This really touched us and made us aware of how important it was for that lady to write that letter and how it made our day receiving it!

We are always interested in improving and expanding our befriending service, so this got us thinking how nice it would be for people to receive and write letters during this difficult time, as another way of keeping in touch with the outside world.

Community Companions therefore piloted a pen pal project for three months. The idea of the project being that volunteers are linked up with older people in the community that are possibly shielding and would like to receive a letter whether it be via post or email from one of our pen pals.

We had a great response and 27 volunteers came forward wanting to offer their support.

**“The project has gone very well with my pen pal. She has replied quite a few times to my letters although she finds writing difficult. We had a lovely Christmas Card and letter from her daughter in England thanking us for keeping in touch with her mother. I hope our correspondence will continue in the New Year.”**

People involved in the pen pal project said that it has helped to improve their wellbeing and they felt less lonely and isolated as it has increased their opportunities to socialise with others in a difficult time.

If you are interested in taking part or want to find out more, please contact Tracy at BAVO, T: 01656 810400 or email: [tracybeall@bavo.org.uk](mailto:tracybeall@bavo.org.uk)



**“The project has gone very well with my pen pal. She has replied quite a few times to my letters.”**





## BAVO awarded prestigious quality award

We have successfully renewed our Trusted Charity Quality Mark in recognition of our excellent work as the County Voluntary Council for Bridgend County Borough!

Our aim is to provide support, guidance, practical assistance and information to local voluntary and community groups to develop skills, services and activities, ensuring they are represented across a wide range of issues locally, regionally and nationally.

Heidi Bennett, BAVO's Chief Executive says: "It's increasingly important for voluntary organisations in Wales to demonstrate their performance, effectiveness and impact to funders, commissioners and users.

"BAVO was assessed against the 11 standards of effective practice in Trusted Charity, including governance, leadership and management, managing staff and volunteers and managing money. Our staff always work really hard to ensure they deliver the highest standards of service to our members and the wider voluntary sector, achieving the quality mark for the second time."

This prestigious award is part of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and is the only UK quality standard designed to help voluntary organisations operate more effectively and efficiently.

Nick Snow, Trusted Charity Programme Manager from NCVO, said: "We are delighted for the trustees, staff and volunteers of BAVO that they have achieved the Trusted Charity Mark.

"We know that organisations using the Trusted Charity standard benefit by having better governance, better systems and procedures and better quality of services for their users and it is great that the community of Trusted Charity users in Wales is growing."







### BAVO helps Hi Tide distribute free Christmas lunches

In the week leading up to Christmas, the Hi Tide in Porthcawl provided hundreds of free Christmas lunches to vulnerable and isolated local residents which were distributed by a team of volunteers coordinated by BAVO and Porthcawl Covid Strategy Group.

Fran Dower said: "The Hi-Tide wanted to just do something positive, as we have all had such challenging times since March. We are well aware how isolated and lonely the elderly and vulnerable may be feeling and wanted to just convey to them some Christmas cheer and hopefully a better 2021."

Volunteers and staff from BAVO joined Porthcawl Covid Strategy Group to deliver meals to isolated people living in Porthcawl, which included beneficiaries from our Community Companions Befriending Project.

Kerry Marlow from the Strategy Group said: "We would like to thank the Hi Tide and BAVO for

providing this fantastic opportunity to lift the spirits of our shielded Porthcawl residents, The Print Centre for the Christmas cards and our local B&M and Co Op for giving us free Christmas crackers to accompany each meal and last but not least to all our volunteers who have given up their valuable time to help spread some festive cheer to our community, especially during these difficult times."

BAVO's Chief Executive Heidi Bennett added: "The Hi-Tide has been cooking up a storm donating Christmas meals to the elderly, housebound and isolated. How FANTASTIC they are! It's local businesses like the Hi Tide that really step in to help our communities in times of need and we are so grateful and proud of the community spirit that is out there in Bridgend County!



Photo credit: Stel Anthony (including front page photo)

### Princess of Wales Children's Ward thank you!

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our local community, who answered our call to help create a magical Winter Wonderland for the patients that sadly stayed in hospital over the Christmas and New Year period.

In response to BAVO's appeal, many people bought or donated Christmas decorations and delivered them to the ward. Local company donations included window decals by the Crafty G's and money received from public fundraising was used to purchase Christmas lights, decorations and bedding plants.

Sian Townsend, Matron of Children's Services and Special Care Bay Unit said: "The Children's Ward always pride themselves with trying to make the experience in hospital over the Christmas period as enjoyable as possible in unexpected circumstances. Unfortunately, this year we were unable to decorate the ward as festively as we would like due to infection prevention control during Covid 19.

"We are eternally grateful for the support of BAVO in coordinating kind donations, allowing us to create a winter wonderland in the outdoor play area. The decorations could be seen by neighbouring wards as well as the Children's Ward. Adult colleagues also visited and enjoyed the winter wonderland when taking a well-earned break from their ward environment. Many thanks from the bottom of our heart."







# BAVO

Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations  
Cymdeithas Sefydliadau Gwirfoddol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

## Not a member of BAVO yet?!

Are you a community group or charity, or do you want to start one? Are you looking for funding?

Do you need more volunteers? Do you want to meet like minded groups? Do you need help sorting a problem?

We provide FREE support and assistance to all member community and voluntary groups, not-for-profit and social enterprises in our area. We also provide some consultancy services. We are just a telephone call away and can help with just about anything you need.

Our BAVO membership form and further information can be found by visiting [www.bavo.org.uk/get-involved/bavo-membership](http://www.bavo.org.uk/get-involved/bavo-membership)

**BAVO would like to thank all contributors to our winter newsletter. If you would like to include an article in our next edition, T: 01656 810400 or E: [bavo.org.uk](mailto:bavo.org.uk)**



Follow us on Twitter and Facebook for daily news and updates!

We retain the right to edit material or omit articles where they are deemed inappropriate or resources do not permit inclusion. We apologise if you have sent an article that has not been included in this edition. Views expressed in articles in this newsletter may not represent the views of BAVO.

Fersiwn Cymraeg ar gael yma  
February 2021 ©BAVO

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