

Invest Local Ynysowen

Driving Change Plan

2023



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1. Overview

Welcome Invest Local Ynysowens second Driving Change Plan.

Who are Invest Local Ynysowen?

We are a group of local residents and local organisations that form a steering group to oversee the Invest Local Programme across Ynysowen.

What is Invest Local?

Invest Local is a programme of funding and support for thirteen communities across Wales one of which is Ynysowen. It provides £1m over 10 years to spend on the projects and priorities that our community thinks are the most important.

What was in the first Driving change plan?

Our Vision	Our Priorities	Our Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will help to make Ynysowen a thriving place where a range of organisations and community groups work together to benefit the community. • We will help people from within and around Ynysowen to appreciate, enjoy and look after our green spaces whilst making use of our existing buildings as much as possible, alongside new developments. • We will value our children, young people, older people, and the wider community by creating opportunities for their wellbeing and development. • We will ensure that as many people as possible in our community can get to where they need to go via affordable, regular transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more active and inter-generational opportunities for children, young people, and older people in our community. • Enable better transport options for a wide range of community members. • Improve communication and engagement across the community. • Better utilise existing buildings and facilities in the community • Establish opportunities to sustain a safer, cleaner, and greener community environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taff Rocks Community Art Workshops. • Afon Gwreiddiau Community Growing Initiative. • Tackling Loneliness and Isolation • Family Engagement – Learning and Playing Together. • Mount Pleasant Community Hub Feasibility Study. • Invest Local Ynysowen Steering Group Communication, Events and Small Grants Scheme. <p>Following a review in 2021 it was agreed to extend the current Driving Change Plan with two additional projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ynysowen Christmas lights • Taff Rocks – Smyrna Chapel

2. How have the Projects gone?

Trinity Childcare & Family Centre - Family Engagement Learning and Playing

The delivery of the project was impacted by the Covid. However, as Trinity remained open as a hub, we continued to engage with those we could. Our main form of communication was through our social media groups and in particular the community page.

As we began to return to some normality it was evident that there was a push from many of the LA agency to provide activities throughout the communities – which is great for our families! However, we felt the need to identify and map out what was being delivered within the Merthyr Vale Ward rather than duplicate and waste resources including funding which we did over a series of events and consultations with families, agencies, and the wider community.

One of the biggest identified gaps was activities and events to safely bring people together once Covid restrictions had eased. We noticed during conversations with our families that several children particularly those under three had developed attachment issues as they had not socialised outside of their home for large parts of their lives. We were also made aware through our work with ILY partners and others that many people were still socially isolated and working together we wanted to provide events that allowed the community to come together in a Covid safe way.

Despite the delay and barriers, we have delivered engagement activities and events as follows: -

- **Halloween 2021** - pumpkins given along with activity packs and a range of leaflets sign posting to various agencies to families within the Merthyr Vale Ward.
- **Christmas 2021 – Santa Dash** – Covid prevented us from delivering our annual Santa Grotto, so we decided to take Santa and his elves out into the community to allow people to enjoy Christmas in a socially distanced way. This was one of the most magical, emotional, and wonderful experiences we have ever delivered. Travelling from Trinity covering the whole of Aberfan, Troedyrhiw, Merthyr Vale and Mount Pleasant on the back of a lorry playing music, singing along with Santa and the elves. Children, families, community members met us with cheers, tears, bells, saucepans and singing voices as we passed along. Feedback was unbelievable. Delivered by staff who volunteered their time – 5 staff x 11 hours each, and we get to do it all again in December 2022!
- **Jubilee Carnival** – a key partner in organising and delivering this event. Funding from ILY contributed to engagement activities. Delivered by staff who volunteered their time – 7 staff giving over 40 hours.
- **Parent and Toddler Groups** – Aberfan Community Centre – delivering a range of activities to families with children under two. We have invited agencies in to meet with parents as well as provided learning opportunities for children and parents.
- **First Aid Paediatric**
- **Playing on a budget** – parents provided with a range of activities that are cost effective – foil blankets – sensory / homemade playdough.
- **Rhymes and stories together** - developing language and communication.

Funding from ILY / Engagement Project contributes to events that we would not be able to source by Trinity alone.

Taff Rocks – Smyrna Chapel

Taff Rocks, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, has secured the former Smyrna Chapel building and has brought it back into use for the benefit of the community and themselves to deliver their art workshops.

Taff Rocks runs our own workshops, with a greater focus on wellbeing, as well as hire out the space for community members, organisations, groups, and businesses. Taff Rocks have been delivering a range of art workshops from Smyrna Chapel, although the take up of these activities has been slower compared to pre-covid times. Taff Rocks continue to diversify the workshops running and the use of Smyrna Chapel, offering the chapel as a community space for hire with a sliding scale of charges with reduced rates for community members/organisations. They continue to work on their marketing recently delivering fliers to every house in Ynysowen. As this project was agreed as an additional project only one year of a two-year project has been delivered and therefore year two will be incorporated into this Driving Change Plan.

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

The Tackling Loneliness and Isolation project was set to target the following activities: -

- The Development of activities to connect older people to benefit their overall wellbeing including low impact physical activity e.g., walking football, yoga, Pilates, etc.
- Development of inter-generational activities where children and younger people can interact with older people to the benefit of both.
- Development of activities to provide support networks that enable target groups to interact with each other such as men's sheds, knit and natter, book/film clubs, gaming clubs, coffee clubs, befriending, etc.
- Events to raise awareness of the problems caused/effected by loneliness and isolation including risks to families from the use and abuse of modern technologies, dementia awareness, poor physical and mental health.

The Covid pandemic delayed or prevented some initiatives from getting off the ground, and there is still some reticence to pick up on these as recovery is an ongoing process. This has meant that TLI funding was not entirely spent, but it has not been wasted. It can therefore be deployed in other ways as part of the next Driving Change plan.

There is now a clear understanding resulting from the project that *Loneliness and Isolation* are symptoms of a much bigger challenge, which is linked to community mental and physical wellbeing. This was supported by the findings of Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board's 'Wellbeing' and 'Population Needs' assessments that were undertaken to comply with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) and applicable social care legislation.

Joining things up locally, regionally, and nationally in a way that supports better social proscribing is a critical need for this community, although various community groups and statutory agencies are currently trying to signpost what is available. The biggest challenge has been finding the most

vulnerable beneficiaries – *the lonely and the isolated*. It is hoped that communication enhancements within the community (such as community noticeboards) will improve things, and that what has been started will not just stop, to the detriment of everybody who has been involved.

The project has not spent all the 'Activity Fund' that was allocated to it, primarily because of restrictions that were in place during the Covid pandemic meaning that some activities could not be pursued. However, what has been delivered has been successful to help pump prime future activity, and it is time to close this project and focus on collaboratively delivering a new set of objectives linked to Wellbeing & Health in Ynysowen (WHY) and through re-alignment with the next Driving Change plan for Ynysowen. Formulating that endeavour is current work in progress, also informed by engaging with the learning from the CTM 'Population Needs' assessment.

The project can therefore be considered as complete even though not all objectives have been delivered (such as Men's Dens and Repair Café). However, all objectives have been considered in terms of viability for ongoing development that can be picked up by WHY or other ILY groups.

Afon Gwreiddiau – Community Growing Initiative

The project outline was to provide the following: -

- Community Growing Initiative:

To develop a group where community members undertake the management of land and communal buildings as a community asset, and mutually benefit from the physical and mental wellbeing from gardening & growing activities and the financial benefits of land management.

- Green Spaces

To create green spaces for the community utilising unused & unloved community land. The use of the green space is to promote intergenerational activities and increase community engagement.

- Reuse and recycle

To adopt a move to a zero-waste method to develop the green spaces along with low impact, ethical, horticultural, and agricultural processes.

- Community Collaboration

To encourage and engage with local groups and initiatives to collaborate with projects for further intergenerational integration, community engagement and participation, such as school workshops, youth holiday clubs, art projects, cookery, etc.

- Retail Sustainability

The project aims to provide revenues from sale of food and food produce enabling our community growing aim to expand through sales thus creating local jobs and sustaining the project long term.

Progress

The project transformed an unused and unloved facilities within the community was the reclamation of the land at the Ambulance Hall and at Nixon House Plot.

Nixon House is used for a nursery and training centre. We have licenses agreed by MTCBC Estates that enable us to use and maintain these areas. Ambulance Hall Garden & surrounding grounds was transformed from an overgrown wilderness to a community garden with extensive fruit & veg

provided for community use. It contains a log cabin for events and an attractive meeting area for volunteers and paid placements. The garden trials SUDS planters that take water directly from the drainage. Benches made from hard plastic that require no maintenance. A commercial polytunnel and training polytunnel providing year-long planting. Over a 2-year period numerous community events and seasonal activities have taken place.

Unfortunately, it is apparent that the work on the community garden is no longer taking place, this has resulted in some of the invest Local funds being returned to the fundholder and no projects being submitted for the next driving change plan by Afon Gwreiddiau.

Ynysowen Events & Socials (YES) - Ynysowen Christmas Lights

The original Idea and request were for funding to supply Christmas lights throughout the community. The aim was to bring the community together and bring back a feeling of togetherness after isolation. A group was set up with requests for volunteers to push this project through.

The initial idea was to provide Christmas lights and event within the Ynysowen Community, after the success of this it grew to reinstating the Community Carnival. From this a new community group has been developed into "Ynysowen Events & Socials," so that we can incorporate all community events in a place where it is more accessible to the whole community and have encouraged other groups to join so that it is a far more cohesive project. The project although not a money-making project, hopes to become sustainable.

This project started from an idea of bringing joy to the community during covid and isolation, so that the lights could be seen and incorporated throughout the three villages of Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and Mount Pleasant, at the time the expectation was no more than that. It is now more of a community led project and a fully constituted group.

Mount Pleasant Community Hub Feasibility Study.

Unfortunately, the group in Mount Pleasant did not take this project any further so no progress was made on this project.

Invest Local Ynysowen Steering Group Communication, Events and Small Grants Scheme.

Invest Local Ynysowen have used the funds designated within this project to produce and deliver a community newsletter, run community carnivals, afternoon teas, and other community events as well as covering the costs of steering group meetings and other associated costs. Our small grants fund has funded several small grants including: - Ynysowen Primary School, Ynysowen Choir, Aberfan Wado-Kai Karate, Taff Rocks, Stephens & George Charitable Trust, Scouts, Aberfan FC

3. Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

What Has gone well since the start of the current plan?

- Formation and development of new groups – Taff Rocks, YES, WHY
- Collaboration on big events and now owned by community.
- Steering group more productive than previously
- Increase in community activities compared to previously and aligned with national initiatives.
- More buildings have increased and beneficial use in the community.

- Community response has been collective and coordinated with other agencies in MTCBC.
- Small grants funding has helped several local projects and initiatives.
- Better understanding of local need, networks, and resources (social capital)
- AGE growing.
- AGE Factor – Pantry and Veg boxes.
- Better communication * still work needed to be done.
- Job creation via funding and training
- Permanent grotto – the age factor express – attendance 205.

What have the challenges been?

- Covid – not everyone comfortable with “back to normal” – still some resistance
- Some people have come, made promises, then disappeared to detriment of ILY projects and objectives.
- Closure of Bridge has created separate communities.
- Not taking agreed “projects” in the plan forward
- Engagement – groups engage when they want things rather than involving their groups on the board.
- Lost engagement – groups moved on.
- People have come and gone from ILY due to lack of managing expectations and negative experiences.
- Clashing events have been detrimental to ILY community events and activities.
- Lack of advance planning on some events – resources lacking, communication, stakeholder engagement and buy in
- Lack of youth club/youth venue – somewhere just to hang out.
- Youth isolation
- Lack of free things
- Community communication “sucks” – no more newsletter, social media good but excludes many groups, no noticeboards, contributes to lack of ILY recognition.
- Lack of calendar of community events
- Vested Interests
- Transport – no buses after a certain time in the evening – no buses between Merthyr vale and Aberfan
- No progress on our transport objective. Previous community transport scheme folded.
- Independent Panel YES Split view
- Recognition of what ILY has done is still lacking with some negative aspects being highlighted.
- Communications – some improvements however hard to know how to engage – leaflets/flyers or internet – gaps either way.

What are the threats?

- Communication – people not knowing what is going on.
- Meeting times of the subgroup – evenings not the best for everyone especially in the winter
- Risk of creating new projects that are not sustainable whilst at risk of not supporting existing groups.
- Duplicating activities – create new things but not supporting existing groups.
- Financial pressures on community organisations (and individuals who rely on them)

- Not having support to do things – lack of trust.
- Staff shortages and deficits in community. Impact on community provision
- Cost of living, existing groups pressures
- Covid recovery still work in progress.
- Managing expectations. Community, steering group, local authority, local agencies and third sector
- Sustainability. Financial, people/volunteers, groups, resources
- See comments from previous threats – still valid.
- Lack of steering group members to represent wider interests.
- Miscommunication, misunderstandings, misinterpretations – community perceptions
- Consistency in the steering group. People not feeling comfortable/confident attending meetings. Not engaging with certain groups in the community.
- People expect things for free – not valued and not sustainable.

What are opportunities should you be thinking of?

- Community transport scheme
- Working with groups outside of Ynysowen. Willows, Treharris G club, Merthyr walking football
- AF covenant and work with veterans in our community
- Helping people with the cost-of-living challenges
- Tackle antisocial behaviour and substance abuse problems and property destruction/crime.
- Raise community aspirations starting with younger people and families.
- Community dynamic is changing – both a threat and an opportunity – how to provide access to health and wellbeing locally.
- Paid development worker or volunteer coordination role in the community to support ILY activities.
- New blood, new ideas, new faces, new voices
- Promote Welsh language and cultural events via Taff Rocks and theatre Soar.
- Social enterprises for the community e.g., the pantry
- Cost of living – help the community – assisting people to access funds etc.
- Solar benches and shelters for community use
- Developing and supporting current groups in the community
- Support community buildings with renewable energy
- Ysgol Rhyd-Y-Grug, community centre

4. Our Vision for Ynysowen in 2025

During the review of our Driving Change Plan, we revisited the vision and priorities and agreed that the vision should remain the same as it clearly sets out what our vision for Ynysowen in 2025 is. However, we have made changes to our priorities to better represent what we are trying to achieve and to recognise some of the previous priorities have been achieved.

- We will help to make Ynysowen a thriving place where a range of organisations and community groups work together to benefit the community.

- We will help people from within and around Ynysowen to appreciate, enjoy and look after our green spaces whilst making use of our existing buildings as much as possible, alongside new developments.
- We will value our children, young people, older people, and the wider community by creating opportunities for their wellbeing and development.
- We will ensure that as many people as possible in our community can get to where they need to go via affordable, regular transport.

5. Our Priorities

1. Continue to provide coordinated intergenerational opportunities for children, young people, and older people in our community, avoiding duplication.
2. Explore and where possible, improve better access to transport options to support a wide range of community members.
3. Improve communication, collaboration, and engagement across all areas of the community.
4. Make Ynysowen a safer, cleaner, and greener community.
5. Support opportunities to improve people's health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

6. Our Projects

Project	Activities
Trinity Engagement	<p>Utilising Trinity Childcare & Family Centre staff and resources to engage and work with families in a range of ways which will include delivering a series of activity-driven play sessions for children, as well as family development sessions, direct engagement and support relating to ages and stages of development and the challenges parents face. Our key focus will be on promoting health and wellbeing as well as providing learning opportunities that benefit both parents and children. This will be achieved through the delivery of a series of developmental sessions for parents / carers / families which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paediatric First Aid and dealing with childhood illnesses. • Playing on a budget • Terrible Tantrums • Rhymes and stories together - developing language and communication. • Starting school together - developing cognitive learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastfeeding and weaning <p>During these developmental sessions, the adult participants will receive leaflets and free resources to further support activities and learning opportunities. Resources provided could include materials to make play dough (playing on a budget) or fresh fruit (promoting healthy eating). We will also share free resources from supporting agencies i.e., potties, toothbrushes / toothpaste.</p>
Taff Rocks	It remains our intention to continue to use a previously disused building in the community, hire out the space for community members, organisations, groups, businesses and increase Taff Rocks' repertoire of art-based activities.
Mental Wellbeing	A series of activities linked to mental wellbeing – these activities will build on activities that we are currently running, explore new innovative ways to engage with the community and bring the community together tackling isolation, loneliness, and a chance to connect with others in the community. We aim to continue the Women's wellness journaling group, which has been set up for over a year, and develop a young person's group. We also aim to run community lunches which we trialled at the centre last Christmas which resulted in fantastic feedback from the people who attended.
Community Development inc Community Development Officer	We will employ a community development officer 18 hrs per week for two years. They will be responsible for developing areas of the plan that we have struggled with in the past. They will work to improve the engagement within the community and develop new projects to meet our priorities. We have identified VAMT who will become the employing body and will take on the line management of the community development worker.
Grove Field Sport and Recreational Facilities	We plan to explore options of improving the outdated astroturf pitch and changing facilities. We will work alongside sport Merthyr who will also put in match funding to look at the options for the site and undertake focused consultation to ensure what is provided is a benefit to the community.
Youth	Youth is still a priority for us, earlier attempts at tackling this priority have not been successful. However, it remains a priority and we are committed to providing for the young people within the community. We will be exploring the options of how we tackle this priority. This will form an objective for the community development officer.
Transport	To understand the needs of the local community around transport we will undertake a transport survey so we can have a better understanding of the needs and design any project to address the needs once this survey has taken place.
Communication	We will continue our work of communicating the Invest Local Programme within the community. As part of this we will install community notice boards throughout the community, we will

	produce a short film to highlight the work that is going on in the community. We will continue to communicate through social media and other avenues to promote the work of Invest Local.
Environment	We would like to see new projects and initiatives created to focus on the environment to meet our priority, at present we do not have a clear project.
Small Grants Funding	We will continue to run a small grants fund to offer opportunities for small organisations within the community to provide additional opportunities for the community, therefore increasing the benefit of activities in the community.
Events	We will continue to run community events as important methods of bringing the community together and publicising the work that Invest Local Ynysowen is doing.

Ongoing items for the Invest Local Ynysowen Steering Group will include:

1. Regular steering group meetings
2. Recruiting new steering group members and extending the engagement of Invest Local Ynysowen.
3. Continuing to involve the community in delivering our projects.

7. Links between vision priorities and projects

	Priorities	Linked to which part of the vision	What are we going to do?
A	Continue to provide coordinated intergenerational opportunities for children, young people, and older people in our community, avoiding duplication.	1,2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taff Rocks • Family Engagement • Events and Small Grants scheme • Wellbeing Trust - Improving Wellbeing & Loneliness • Community development
B	Explore and where possible, improve better access to transport options to support a wide range of community members.	2,4	Undertake consultation to see what the needs are from the community and design and develop a project following the consultation.
C	Improve communication, collaboration, and engagement across all areas of the community.	1,2,3	All projects
D	Make Ynysowen a safer, cleaner, and greener community.	1,2,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taff Rocks • Develop new environmental projects.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community development
E	Support opportunities to improve people's health, wellbeing, and quality of life.	1,2,3,4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taff Rocks • Events and Small Grants Scheme • Wellbeing Trust - Improving Wellbeing & Loneliness • Grove Field – Sport and recreation • Community development.

8. Budget

Activity/Project	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Trinity Engagement Project*	43,862	47,569	91,431
Taff Rocks	8,864	9,751	18,615
Wellbeing Trust – Mental Wellbeing	4,250	4,250	8,500
Community Development Officer	24,725.16	24321.26	49046.42
Community Development Budget	3,000	3,000	6,000
Grove Field Sport and Recreation facilities	75,000	0	75,000
Youth	5,000	5,000	10,000
Transport Survey	1,000	0	1,000
Communication	6,500	3,500	10,000
Environment	2,500	2,500	5,000
Steering Group expenses	1,500	1,500	3,000
Small Grants Fund	5,000	5,000	10,000
Events	5,000	5,000	10,000
Fundholder fee (10% excluding Trinity led projects*)	14233.92	6,382.22	20,616.14
Total	200,435.08	117,773.48	318,208.56

9. How will we know if we are being successful?

Throughout the next two years period of the driving change plan, we will be collecting data to assess the change that we are making, in the table below each project has specified the intended change it hopes to make and the methods of recording this change.

Project/ Activity	What change will this lead to?	How will we know?	How will it be measured?
Family Engagement	Families engaging in activities within the community	Number of families attending sessions	Register taken at events. Record of events
	Families signposted to organisations and agencies who provide specific support: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help Hub • Barnardo's • SALT • CAB • Henry 	Number of families referred to third party organisations	Record of agencies
	Families feel there are more opportunities for them locally.	Increase in number of people attended events. Number of families feel better engaged.	Register taken at events. Survey data
	Children taking part in new activities and provided with new opportunities.	Number of children influenced by the sessions.	Record of attendance Simple surveys completed

Taff Rocks	Increased usage of Smyrna, leading to a greater sense of community	Increased number of people attending sessions at Smyrna	Register of users, bookings diary
	the number of events can increase, beneficiaries can increase, and a greater number of volunteers can be sought	Increased number of events, increased number of people attending events	Events calendar, register of users
	Wide range of art-based activities running from Smyrna	Programme of art-based sessions developed and publicised.	Number of sessions, number of people attending sessions.
	Community facilities available for hire to the local community	Increased amount of bookings/hire.	Register of users. Bookings diary
Small Grant Fund	Increased opportunities in the community	Number of groups/orgs supported	Records of grant fund
	More activities for community members	Increased opportunities in the community	Mapping of services
Community Development	Increased Engagement within the community	Number of people taking part in meetings, activities, and events	Registers, Minutes of meetings
	Increased development of new projects	Number of new projects developed	Mapping of community projects
	Increased membership of Invest Local Ynysowen Steering group	Number of new members on ILY steering group	Minutes of meetings
	Improved coordination of services	Improved awareness of all services in the community	Mapping of existing services
Improving Communications	More People informed of what is happening	Number of people attending community meetings, activities, and events	Registers, monitoring data

	Increased social media presence	Number of social media interactions	Social media engagement software
	Increased membership of ILY steering Group	Numbers attending meetings	Register and minutes of meetings
Transport survey	Awareness of the community transport needs	Results of the survey	Number of surveys completed/analysis of survey results
Youth	Addressing the needs of young people within the community	New young people's project/s developed	Number of projects for young people.
			Number of young people attending
		Increased opportunities for young people	Mapping of services
Environment	Improved wellbeing through engaging in environmental projects	Number of community members feel happier by being involved in environmental projects.	Feedback questionnaires
Running regular community events	Reducing social isolation	Number of community members feel happier by being involved in community events	Social media feedback, register of attendees, feedback questionnaires
	Increased community participation	Number of people attending community events	Number of individuals attending
Improving Wellbeing & Loneliness Mental Health & Resilience - Women's Wellness Journaling Group	An improvement in Health & Mental Resilience	Group Leader will use questionnaires and feedback to evaluate changes in outlook of women attending sessions.	Number of individuals attending
	An increase in social connections which would	Feedback questionnaires	As Above

	help friendships and a sense of community to form.		
	Involving the group with local events and activities by providing a showcase / exhibition of artwork produced during the sessions.	Number of participants in exhibition	Exhibition
Improving Wellbeing & Loneliness Mental Health & Resilience – Young People	An improvement in mental health and resilience of young people attending sessions.	Group Leader will use questionnaires and feedback to evaluate changes in outlook of young people attending sessions.	Number of individuals attending
	Providing social, structured activities for young people to reduce antisocial behaviour, while providing a safe way to express their feelings.	Feedback questionnaires	As Above
	Involving the group with local events and activities by providing a showcase / exhibition of artwork produced during the sessions.	Number of participants in exhibition	Exhibition

Improving Wellbeing & Loneliness	Community Lunches for housebound and socially isolated to provide an increase in social connections which would help friendships and a sense of community to form.	Feedback questionnaires to assess mood before and after community lunches	Number of community lunches taking place. Number of attendees
Mental Health & Resilience – Community Lunches	Involving the group with activities from other local organisations during the lunch.	Feedback questionnaires	Number of community lunch attendees using other local activities.

10. Annex

Community Profile

Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and Mount Pleasant form the ward Merthyr Vale and are located to the south of Merthyr Tydfil with a population of approximately 3675.

There are several groups running within the area which include:

Groups running in Ynysowen.

Group	New/Existing/no longer running	Funded by Invest Local	Involved with ILY
Darby and Joan Club	Existing	No	No
Aberfan Wives	Existing	No	No
The Lighthouse Programme	no longer running		
Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Youth and Community Project	no longer running		
St John Ambulance	no longer running		
Ynysowen Rugby Club	Existing	Yes – Small grant	No
Aberfan Football Club	Existing	Yes – Small grant	No
Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Scouts	Existing	Yes	Yes
Old People’s Welfare	??	No	No
Ysgol Rhyd-y-Grug PTA	Existing	Yes – Small grant	No
Ynysowen Primary School PTA	Existing		No
Aberfan Choir	Existing	Yes – Small grant	No
Taff Rocks/Smyrna	New	Yes	Yes

Trinity Childcare and Family Centre	Existing	Yes	Yes
Ynysowen Events and Social	New	Yes	Yes
Afon Gwreiddiau	New	Yes	Yes
H-Factor	New	No	Yes
Bethania	New	No	Yes
Youth Factor	New	Yes	Yes
Karate	Existing	Yes – Small grant	No
Windsor Community Hotel and Bar	New	No	Yes

Groups activities running from Aberfan Community Centre

- Library – Job clubs, Parent, and toddler
- Computer club
- Canoe club
- Aqua Tots
- Swimming club
- GP referral
- Badminton club
- Beauty salon
- Cylch Meithrin
- Little legends
- Little cyclers
- Baby yoga
- Yoga
- KLJ personal trainer
- Dog grooming parlour
- Trinity tots
- Book club
- Kick boxing
- Tri Club
- Café

Key Facts about Ynysowen

- Of the 3675 population it is made up of 20% 0-15, 63% 16-64, 18% 65 and over. 97% describe themselves as white British. 10% can speak Welsh.
- Local house prices are lower than the Welsh average for all type of housing (£111,354 compared to £220,900)
- 69% of people live in terraced housing compared to 28% Welsh average. Houses are also more likely to have been built before 1900 (51% of housing)

- The overall crime rate in Ynysowen is lower (69.1 per 1000 population) compared to the Welsh average (98.2 per 1000 population).
- 20% of people are universal credit claimants (this includes people in work). This is compared to the Welsh average of 15%.
- 12% of people claim housing benefits compared to the Welsh average of 10%.
- 34% of children aged 0-19 are in relative low-income families compared to 26% across Wales.
- 35% of all families with children that depend on them are lone parent families (161 families in total). This is compared to the Welsh average of 29%.
- 29% of people (1037) living in Ynysowen are classed as living in one of the top 20% most deprived areas in Wales. 64% of people (473) living in the most deprived 20% of areas in Wales on the Child Index compared to the Welsh average of 23%.
- 44% of (private) pensioner households have no car or van compared to the Welsh average of 39%
- 35% of households have no car or van compared to the Welsh average of 23%
- Healthy life expectancy is 5 years less than the Welsh average.
- 25% of people aged 16-64 have a limiting long-term illness in Ynysowen compared with 17% across Wales.
- 39% of people have no qualifications in Ynysowen compared the Welsh average of 26%
- The top three most popular types of employed work that people in Ynysowen do are in retail, manufacturing and health and social work.
- 19% of households (295) living in 'fuel poverty' compared with the Welsh average of 14%.

Projects Funded as part of the Driving Change Plan

Name of Orgainsation	Active Merthyr Tydfil (MTCBC Sport Development department)
Name of project	Grove Field Sport and Recreation Facilities
Total Project Cost	£165,000
Amount funded from Invest Local	£75,000

Please provide a brief outline of your project.

We are looking to replace the current three-quarter length Astroturf on the Grove field with a 3G surface. The surface would be the same as that found at Merthyr Town FC, Merthyr RFC and Penydarren FC and will be an all-weather surface.

The Astro turf in Aberfan is not in great condition, only three-quarter size and overdue for refurbishment. To replace the astroturf like for like would be costly for the limited value it would bring to community sport. A 3G pitch, whilst more expensive, will provide far greater opportunities for sports clubs, community groups and schools. We are exploring options of refurbishing the changing rooms to make the whole facility fit for purpose to benefit the local community.

How does your project contribute to each of the priorities within the plan? (Please expand on all priorities that are relevant to your project)

Priority A: Continue to provide coordinated intergenerational opportunities for children, young people, and older people in our community, avoiding duplication.

Whilst the 3G will not directly develop intergenerational opportunities, it will be used by a range of age groups. It will be able to host senior clubs, particularly those from the south of Merthyr who often go out of borough to access such facilities, as well as provision such as walking football which we are hoping to develop in the south of the borough.

As well as this it will be a key venue for the hosting of mini and junior provision. Whilst the grove fields are sometimes used for this, a 3G will allow more regular hosting in the area.

We are also engaging with youth groups and schools in the area to ensure young people can access it. We are particularly keen to explore how we can ensure young people from the local area can utilise it through recreational community sessions.

Priority B: Explore and where possible, improve better access to transport options to support a wide range of community members.

The project will not improve transport; however, it will negate some of the transport issues local clubs have to tackle when looking to use these types of facilities. We know through consultation that many of the clubs in the south will go out of borough to use a 3G facility or must travel up to the north of the borough. This increases the time it takes to get to a venue and the cost in petrol or public transport. By having a 3G facility in the area this will allow clubs and groups to remain local and ensure opportunities are less impacted by transport issues.

Priority C: Improve communication, collaboration, and engagement across all areas of the community.

The development of a new 3G surface in the area can support this in several ways. We will be seeking to engage with the local clubs to develop and coordinate usage, ensuring that ongoing communication and relationships between them maximises the opportunity.

Linked to this we are also seeking to work with a number of local community groups, supporting them to embed physical activity into their programmes by collaborating with local sport providers and utilising local facilities like the recently refurbished track and tennis courts in Afon Taf High School and hopefully this 3G also.

Whilst Football will be the main usage of this site, we very much are looking to develop community wellbeing projects in the area to maximise the opportunity it can bring. We have budgets and measures against women and girls, over sixties and disabled people and we hope to develop projects in the area that can support this.

Priority D: Make Ynysowen a safer, cleaner, and greener community.

One issue that can often be faced when using grass pitches and open spaces for Football is the issues with littering and dog fouling, with clubs often having to check for, and clear, such things prior to using a space. A fenced 3G which will be locked when not being used will ensure children can play in a safe, clean space.

Should the facility go ahead, the floodlights on site will be upgraded to LED lighting, which last a lot longer and have less need for bulb replacements and ongoing maintenance, ensuring the site is more cost effective.

In terms of the area being safer, we are keen to explore how the site can be used at times not traditionally used by sports clubs such as Friday evenings. The opportunity to run facilitated, affordable sessions for young people in the area can ensure there are opportunities to keep them active and engaged whilst diverting them from other potential activities.

Priority E: Support opportunities to improve people's health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

We know that Merthyr currently has an issue with childhood obesity, with the borough well over the national average. As such, the LA is engaged with Cwm Taf Health Board on a programme called PIPYN, which aims to help families be active and healthy.

Through family consultation in this programme, as well as Merthyr responses in the National School Sport Survey (a nationwide survey of school pupils which generated LA specific reports) we know that a barrier to being active is affordable and good quality facilities. The recent development of the track and Tennis courts at Afon Taf have brought new opportunities to the neighbouring area and a potential 3G in Aberfan would be a further development to ensure people do not have to travel to far to use good facilities. As mentioned previously, a new development also allows us the opportunity to explore several engagement projects for local people to become or remain active.

Name of Orgainsation

Trinity Childcare and Family Centre

Name of project	Family Engagement (continuation)
Total Project Cost	£91431
Amount of Invest Local Funding Awarded	£91431

Please provide a brief outline of your project.

Utilising Trinity Childcare & Family Centre staff and resources to engage and work with families in a range of ways which will include delivering a series of activity-driven play sessions for children, as well as family development sessions, direct engagement and support relating to ages and stages of development and the challenges parents face. Our key focus will be on promoting health and wellbeing as well as providing learning opportunities that benefit both parents and children.

This will be achieved through the delivery of a series of developmental sessions for parents / carers / families which will include:

- *Paediatric First Aid and dealing with childhood illnesses.*
- *Playing on a budget*
- *Terrible Tantrums*
- *Rhymes and stories together - developing language and communication.*
- *Starting school together - developing cognitive learning*
- *Breastfeeding and weaning*

During these developmental sessions, the adult participants will receive leaflets and free resources to further support activities and learning opportunities. Resources provided could include materials to make play dough (playing on a budget) or fresh fruit (promoting healthy eating). We will also share free resources from supporting agencies i.e., potties, toothbrushes / toothpaste.

Early engagement and intervention are key to developing positive relationships not only with the child / children but families too. Our initial engagement often begins within the community / in our engagement events, through signposting or referrals. Many of our families have not experienced 'childcare' or indeed any form of 'separation' from their child or vice versa - this has become more evident post Covid.

This project will employ a key childcare post within our setting working with our younger children. They will support visits, meetings and discussions relating to transition, separation and settling in. Overseeing our younger children with their developmental needs and engaging with the families, promoting, wellbeing, child development, weaning and nutrition.

Evidence shows that early intervention is far more effective than trying to compensate later in a child's development. The objective will be to build up early relationships between the parents / family and professionals where support and involvement means positive outcomes are more likely to be achieved (Welsh Government Parenting Action Plan, 2005).

The attachment that develops during the early years with parents/families is linked to a child's mental and physical health, behaviour, self-worth, social skills, resilience, and educational attainment. Family members who talk with their children, value learning, and encourage their children to read can significantly influence their child's language and literacy skills and support them to become better prepared for school (Welsh Government - Early Years and Childcare Plan).

In so doing we will:

- *Ensure that parents feel better able to cope with the demands of parenting.*
- *Raise parental self-esteem, improve emotional wellbeing and to aim for a more positive lifestyle.*
- *Support parents / carers to actively engage in their child's learning and development.*
- *Raise awareness of early years support and in particular the need for families to have as much information, support, and involvement in the process as possible.*
- *Create links between the parents and supporting agencies ensuring that support is available to remove the barriers that impact on child development and achievement.*
- *Prepare families, and in particular children for the transition from home to preschool and preschool to nursery and provide a link to statutory education to enable a smooth transition and improved outcomes for children.*
- *Ensure that children can gain the right foundations to allow them to engage in learning and therefore to reach their full potential, Early Language Development.*
- *Promote general health & wellbeing and provide enjoyable shared learning experiences.*
- *Promotion of key Public Health messages to parents.*

Trinity Childcare & Family Centre will work in partnership with Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust and Library service, to promote and deliver activities. This will be delivered jointly and will promote language development and opportunities for play along with arts and crafts, rhymes, songs, healthy eating, and sensory opportunities.

We will work in partnership with a number of complementary agencies / stakeholders including Flying Start, health visitors, education providers such as nursery classes / schools, Ynysowen Community Primary School, and Ysgol Rhyd-y-Grug Welsh Community School and Invest Local Ynysowen.

How does your project contribute to each of the priorities within the plan? (Please expand on all priorities that are relevant to your project)

Priority A: Continue to provide coordinated intergenerational opportunities for children, young people, and older people in our community, avoiding duplication.

The project aligns with the inter-generational activity and community engagement themes identified by Invest Local Ynysowen research. We will work in partnership with agencies within health and education such as Flying Start, health visitors, nursery class teachers, Primary headteachers, CAB and the 'parenting team'.

It also follows on from the earlier identification of need and gaps in service through a range of consultation meetings.

Priority B: Explore and where possible, improve better access to transport options to support a wide range of community members.

NA

Priority C: Improve communication, collaboration, and engagement across all areas of the community.

Recognised as the 'community hub' and key partners in many initiatives, advocating not only for children and families but the early years / childcare sector throughout Merthyr Tydfil. We represent all childcare settings on the MTCBC Early Years Partnership.

We assist in discussions, planning and events effecting early years, preschool, out of school provisions, families as well as our community. We will continue to do this as part of our project.

Whilst our core service is based around the childcare element, we provide an additional support .to families – families do not need to be registered to access our support or advice.

We lead on the Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and Mount Pleasant Community Page, ILY page and several closed family groups that all serve the community, thus sharing a range of information, sign posting opportunities, activities, and events.

We appreciate that not all community member access social media, therefore have developed, posters, leaflets and verbally share information with parents etc. We will continue to do this as part of our project.

Within Trinity grounds we have notice boards – one that holds 'community' information and the other shares information on Trinity and its service. We will continue to do this as part of our project.

Most recent evaluations and feedback on our services have reported that the guidance, support, and information has been most valuable. We will continue to evaluate and gain feedback as part of this project.

Priority D: Make Ynysowen a safer, cleaner, and greener community.

We will continue to promote this priority through our holiday clubs. For example, by holding litter picks with families.

Through our signposting and links, we will signpost, advertise local PACT meetings, and advise community members on appropriate services to report to.

Priority E: Support opportunities to improve people's health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

Early engagement is key to building positive relationships. Through our childcare services we will focus on positive learning experiences, children's health, and wellbeing.

We are registered as a 'MECC' (making every contact count) partner an initiative that promotes appropriate sign posting or referrals to relevant agencies.

We refer to the 'MTCBC Early Help Hub' not only for families attending Trinity but our support is available to all community members.

We refer families to the 'Parenting Team' for information, guidance, and support.

Many of our families are in need of 'additional support' – this can be signposting to relevant agencies, guidance on specific areas such as, potty training, managing behaviour, weaning, transitioning, financial (Universal Credit / 30 Hour Childcare / Flying Start) – staff are appropriately trained, experienced and have the knowledge to assist in all of these areas.

Merthyr Vale ward is recognised has a deprived area; however, we have also seen an increase in families needing additional support with regards their children. Post Covid we have seen an increase in 'attachment' issues both from children and their parents. We have a high number of children requiring additional support with speech and language, complex needs and managing difficult behaviour.

Many families are unsure of services or help that can be available to them – Trinity advocates for the children, the parents, and families.

Name of Orgainsation	Taff Rocks
Name of project	Smyrna Chapel
Total Project Cost	£
Amount funded from Invest Local	£18,615

Please provide a brief outline of your project.

It remains our intention to continue to use a previously disused building in the community, hire out the space for community members, organisations, groups, businesses and increase Taff Rocks' repertoire of art-based activities.

How does your project contribute to each of the priorities within the plan? (Please expand on all priorities that are relevant to your project)

Priority A: Continue to provide coordinated intergenerational opportunities for children, young people, and older people in our community, avoiding duplication.

- Having a safe, accessible, and welcoming space in the community means we are able to offer more coordinated activities, including 'classes' to the whole community and those further afield.
- We are able can offer open access to young people (to start in September 2023) that will enable young people to attend, with or without a 'suitable adult' and access a variety of activities in a safe environment.
- We have increased our collaboration with others and undertake activities with them for their beneficiaries. These collaborations have reached out of the ILY 'catchment' area into the borough. This could not have happened had we not had the based to work from.
- Smyrna offers a monthly coffee / tea afternoon where anyone can attend. This enables those who are usually alone to have company.

- Footfall is increasing at the venue.

Whilst having a venue for hire, this does not imply duplication. It was always agreed and understood that Smyrna would be the 'medium' size venue in the area with the Community Centre being the 'large' and Trinity being the 'small.' We have redirected some to the other venues if they offer better space or facilities.

Priority B: Explore and where possible, improve better access to transport options to support a wide range of community members.

Does not apply

Priority C: Improve communication, collaboration, and engagement across all areas of the community.

- By using the community building with an indoor notice board, we can and have advertised more events and public information, not just for ourselves but others too.
- Social media plays an integral part of advertising and encouraging engagement. However, as not all are using social media, we have a e-newsletter of news and upcoming events, but this is only sent only to those that subscribe (in accordance with appropriate rules and guidance).
- Regarding the venue, we work with a variety of organisations, businesses and individuals that enable them to bring activities (not necessarily art-based) to our community using a more appropriately sized venue.

Priority D: Make Ynysowen a safer, cleaner, and greener community.

- Having brought a building back into use, Taff Rocks has a space with greater and permanent safe storage.
- Since acquiring the venue, we have been able to offer monthly recycling of small household items, including ink cartridges, batteries, cans, writing implements as well as conduct our own recycling of easily recyclable items i.e., plastic, paper, card with appropriate storage.
- Some seasonal projects call for 'junk' that can be used to create artworks. Most recent being pop bottle bottoms for poppies.

- By preventing the lack of use and neglect of a community building, we can maintain it, keep it safe, ensure the surrounding public environment is maintained and give the area a more positive 'feel'.
- Regarding the condition of the 'garden' area (outside of our lease) we continue to lobby the Local Authority to make it safe and clean. This currently continues to be neglected.

Priority E: Support opportunities to improve people's health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

- By offering a 'cozy' and welcoming building to the community, this instantly aids with wellbeing and quality of life.
- The venue is extensively used by more than one business / organisation that aids vulnerable families to access a safe, non-threatening and suitable environment for their own wellbeing and quality of family life. *
- We have increased our repertoire of activities that enables self-expression, through art, in a safe, non-threatening environment.
- Smyrna is used regularly by a statutory body for community-based education. *

* We are not 'privy' to the content of these activities due to confidentiality.

Name of Orgainsation	Wellbeing Merthyr
Name of project	Aberfan Community Centre
Total Project Cost	£10,000
Amount Requested from Invest Local Ynysowen	£8,500

1. Please provide a brief outline of your project.

A series of activities linked to mental Wellbeing – these activities will build on activities that we are currently running, explore new innovative ways to engage with the community and bring the community together tackling isolation, loneliness, and a chance to connect with others in the community. We aim to continue with the Women's Wellness Journaling group, which has been established for over a year, and develop a Young People's group. We also aim to run community lunches which we trialed at the centre last Christmas which resulted in fantastic feedback from the people who attended.

2. How does your project contribute to each of the priorities within the plan? (Please expand on all priorities that are relevant to your project)

Priority A: Continue to provide coordinated intergenerational opportunities for children, young people and older people in our community, avoiding duplication.

- Expanding on our established Women's Wellness group we aim to fund this group for a further year and set-up a new group aimed at Young People during the school holidays. The group is run by a Journaling guide and expert and provides spaces for creation, connection, empowerment, self-discovery, and self-care. The Women's Wellness Group is open to anyone over the age of eighteen and current members range between; 24-68.
- Re-launch lunch clubs for housebound / socially isolated individuals – activity was run over Christmas as a trial and was hugely successful – providing transport to and from the centre along with a lunch and activity. The aim is to run two sessions a year – summer and winter.
- Community Lunches which were run at Aberfan Community Centre last year – we would look at expanding this years and work with the local schools to take part in the activities.

Priority B: Explore and where possible, improve better access to transport options to support a wide range of community members.

- Community lunches – transport will be provided for those unable to travel to the centre.
- Wellbeing workshops – although there is no transport for this, means that members of the community would not need to travel outside of the community to access top of the range wellbeing workshops.

Priority C: Improve communication, collaboration, and engagement across all areas of the community.

- We will be providing the community with the chance to connect and for friendships to develop.
- Reducing social isolation
- A chance to catch up with community activities and events

Priority D: Make Ynysowen a safer, cleaner, and greener community.

- No transport needed outside of the village for professional mental health sessions.
- Safe place to explore emotions / mental turmoil

Priority E: Support opportunities to improve people's health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

Forty percent or people in Wales have suffered from undiagnosed depression with 16% of the Welsh workforce suffering from Mental Health problems. 1 in 6 children and young people have

been diagnosed with Mental Health issues. With the funding towards the Journaling workshops this will continue help the current Women's Wellness group in the village and help to develop new groups aimed at Young People.

- Journaling creates a space for people to talk, share and access work and ideas.
- Art journaling creates a deeper sense of self-awareness, empowers, inspires, encourages, and move people in powerful ways. It eases the stresses of life by getting the chaos inside people's minds down on paper.
- It enables people to review life experiences, it helps plan or envision goals and further develops creativity. It also provided health, stress benefits such as reducing heart rate, increasing serotonin flow, and decreases stress responses.

Community Lunches create a warm welcoming space where people can socialise, make new friends, and enjoy a healthy warm meal.

- It increases social bonding and feelings of wellbeing and enhances a sense of community.
- Helps promote physical, social, and behavioural health.
- Will provide activities during the visit such as sharing circles, armchair aerobics to encourage mental and physical wellbeing.

Consultation

What do the people in Ynysowen think?

Between 2018 to 2020 a number of consultation events took place in Ynysowen to make sure that as many people as possible have had their chance to put their views across.

A number of consultations have taken place including:

- a questionnaire hand delivered to people's houses
- a community engagement event
- questionnaires collected from Trinity Carnival
- a piece of work commissioned by the steering group and carried out by Promocymru
- door-to-door surveys in Mount Pleasant
- asked Dynamix to run an interactive session at a community day in Aberfan Community Centre to check that our vision and priorities were the right ones focus on

Results from the Questionnaires

What's good about living in Ynysowen

- **Community spirit** (51 out of 95 responses)
- **The natural environment** (32 out of 95 responses)
- **Schools and community facilities** (20 out of 95 responses).

What is not so good about living in Ynysowen

- **Lack of facilities and activities for children** (50 out of 95 responses)
- **Untidy and unclean environment** (27 out of 95 responses)
- **Transport and road safety issues** such as speeding, parking, lack of transport (15 out of 95 responses).

What is important to the you and the community you live in:

Community spirit and social activities (29 responses out of 95

A clean and tidy environment (13 out of 95 responses) and
Good transport and road safety (8 out of 95 responses).

When asked “what was important to you?”, the top answers were **activities to bring people together** (18 out of 95 responses) and **safety** (10 out of 95 responses).

From Promocymru’s consultations

What’s good about Ynysowen:

- Schools, nurseries, childcare facilities (63%, 62 responses)
- Community spirit (62%, 61 responses)
- Parks, trails and open spaces (47%, 46 responses)

What would make Ynysowen a better place to live in:

- Activities for young people (60%, 61 responses)
- Cleaner, tidier environment (54%, 53 responses)
- More local job opportunities (49%, 48 responses)
- Community activities (42%, 41 responses)

28% (18 out of 64 responses) felt **cultivating a sense of community spirit** was important. (Answers include: bringing people together, together we can make things happen for the future, rebuilding community spirit, community involvement making sure their voice is heard and involved with projects etc).

• **20%** (13 out of 64 responses) felt **a sense of safety within the community** was important. (Answers include: everyone to be involved in neighbourhood watch, more policing or PCSO, it is important to keep the community a safer place etc).

• **17%** (11 out of 64 responses) felt **activities for children and young people** were important. (Answers include: things for teenagers to do, more children’s clubs, more opportunities for disabled children, help with childcare cost, classes for children of all ages etc).

• **12%** (8 out of 64 responses) felt **a clean and tidy community** was important (Answers include: stop destroying the older buildings within the village of Merthyr Vale, look after community gardens or green spaces, general cleanliness of the village, keep community clean with more bins around etc).