

PORTHCRAWL HARBOUR

SUMMARY

- Credu Charity Ltd.
- Started in 2013 (as Porthcawl Harbour Community Interest Company)
- 25 employees
- 10-15 volunteers (although over 350 from April 2020 as Credu provided support for the volunteer effort in the local community through the Covid-19 crisis)

PRODUCT/SERVICE

The prime purpose of the Credu Charity is the economic regeneration of Porthcawl, establishing it as an all-weather, year-round haven for residents and visitors, bringing educational, cultural, water sports, business, employment and health and wellbeing benefits to the South Wales coast.

They aim for sustainable development of a harbour quarter which will restore and enhance Porthcawl's rich maritime heritage as a premier seaside resort, increase footfall to the town and contribute to the overall regeneration of the area, while nurturing an ethos of community engagement and economic growth.

The new Harbour Quarter development will provide accommodation, a health and wellbeing facility, restaurant, café, visitor centre and more.

Adding to their diversity of their work, the Credu Charity also provides essential marina services, such as boat lifting and, during the Covid-19 crisis, provided support for a network of 340 volunteers delivering prescriptions and essential goods to members of the local community.

Another important strand of the charity's work is their education programme, SeaQuest, which employs 16 people. This provides an outdoor learning programme, aligned to the Curriculum for Wales and aimed at primary and secondary schools.

Credu's second company, experience-porthcawl.com, is focused on promoting Porthcawl as a visitor destination to an international audience. It does this through its digital marketing strategy, promoting the facilities and attractions of Porthcawl as well as advertising forthcoming events and providing local information for visitors and locals.

HISTORY

Credu Charity (initially Porthcawl Harbourside CIC) was concerned with the redevelopment of Porthcawl and was originally set up in 2013.

The work of the company built on a viability study which they had commissioned from Cardiff University in 2014 which highlighted the potential economic benefits to be gained from the redevelopment of the Harbour Quarter in Porthcawl.

A crucial part of the development was to obtain a long-term lease of the land from the local authority, Bridgend County Borough Council. This process was started in 2014 and eventually completed in 2019.

The organisation became a charity in 2018.

The Sea Quest education programme was established in 2018 with one employee and has grown to its current level of 16 employees in 2020.

The groundworks for the redevelopment of the Harbour Quarter were started in late 2019 with a view to facilities being fully operational for Summer 2021. However, delays are expected due to the challenges faced with the effects of the Coronavirus outbreak.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Credu have established a clear vision of what they want to achieve and have begun to build it. Very often this has entailed overcoming resistance from key stakeholders and driving through detailed and lengthy bureaucratic processes. However, crucial to the success of the development has been securing significant grant funding from the Big Lottery and Visit Wales and establishing strong working relationships with the relevant officers from those organisations.

Providing employment for the local area is a key objective for Credu and this has already been achieved through the employment of 25 people in the provision of a community maintenance programme, delivery of the SeaQuest education programme and the Marine Services division. The ultimate aim is for the development to provide additional employment for up to 120 people.

The volunteer programme has provided the opportunity to get local people invested and engaged in their local community as well as providing the opportunity for the development of skills and relationships, leading to the opportunity for employment.

The fact that Credu were asked to provide support for the 340 additional volunteers providing support for local residents during the Covid-19 crisis highlights the faith in their work that they have managed to build amongst the local community.

The SeaQuest educational programme has been well received as shown by positive testimonials from parents of children who have attended sessions and the expansion of the programme.

CHALLENGES

One of the major challenges, was the perceived capability of what started out as a volunteer organisation, particularly during the early years.

Allied to that what was the process of agreeing a long-term lease on the land with the local council, which turned into a long process taking 4 years which incurred additional cost.

Securing sufficient funding to take forward the development was also a significant challenge and, in particular, securing loans from banks. Credu found that many of the banks did not have the appetite to loan to a start-up business and it took some time to find a bank (NatWest Community Finance and Social Enterprise) that would provide the necessary loan.

The aim of Credu is to remain sustainable without having to rely on grant funding – through income from the new development and other trading activities.

WHAT COULD BE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

Establishing a way, with the local authority, of speeding up and simplifying the process of arranging the long-term lease of the land would have meant that the development would be in place at an earlier date and would have saved the additional costs incurred by ongoing land rental. This raises the question of whether there is a case for a national approach to support local authorities and organisations in such large-scale transfers of assets.

The move to becoming a charity rather than a community interest company was positive in developing greater credence and attracting additional funding.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Establishing a clear vision of the purpose of the development and how it can be achieved, and adhering to it.
- Establishing a high-quality team to take forward the work with extensive experience and expertise on all the required areas, and, in particular, legislation and finance. This includes the operating officers as well as members of the Board. Membership of the Board is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
- Significant grants from major organisations and the development of strong relationships with these.
- The provision of a diverse range of services and flexibility in responding to requests for these. This helped developed relationships in the local community.
- Becoming a charity led to Credu having more credence with their stakeholders as well as providing greater opportunity for securing vital funding.

MAPPING COMMUNITY ASSETS IN WALES: CASE STUDY

