

# the link



Issue 54 Summer 2011

## ***Volunteers Celebrate!***

The Newsletter for voluntary organisations and community groups in Rhondda Cynon Taff

## Welcome

..... to the Summer edition of Interlink's Newsletter. If you would like to contribute to the next issue please send your articles, information, job vacancies or advertisements by:

**19 August 2011 to**

**Cara Jordan-Evans**

at Interlink by E-mail:

[cjordan-evans@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:cjordan-evans@interlinkrct.org.uk)

If you require any articles translated into Welsh or any other format please get in touch.

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#### Office opening times are:

Monday - Thursday:

9.00am - 5.00pm

Friday: 9.00am - 4.30pm

## Training for Communities



Since the last issue, the See CHANGE project has got into action with its training programme, as well as a road show and talking about the project at events such as the VOICE conference to raise awareness.

At the Cynon Learning Festival, taster sessions were delivered in community development, participation and an introduction to government. The sessions sparked off some great discussions like 'what would you do if you were prime Minister for the day?' in the government session. Those already involved in community work learnt some great new skills from the participation session which they could put into action immediately! The taster gave some learners an appetite to sign up for an accredited Community Development OCN starting in Abercwmboi in June - result!



Abercwmboi receiving certificates for completing an Introduction to Community Development course



Abercwmboi community / youth workers taking part in an activity that helps to break down the barriers that prevent some people from getting involved.

In the run up to the election, the team held an awareness-raising road show, summarising the key points of each manifesto into colourful fliers that cut out jargon used by politicians. By visiting groups including an art class, a mother and toddlers group, a coffee morning and a Communities First meeting, they spoke to over 50 people about issues surrounding whether they had ever voted and how to decide which party stood for what mattered to them. The alternative voting system had clearly caused a lot of confusion too so explaining it was another priority. However, with around 70% of people voting against it, it seems it wasn't a very popular alternative!

**Training dates for autumn are out already with an OCN Level 2 Community Development course being held on 13, 20 and 27 of September.**

***Spaces are available to book now!***

**To book a place contact Interlink on 01443 846200 or for more information about the See CHANGE project contact Kelly Daniel by E-mail: [kdaniel@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:kdaniel@interlinkrct.org.uk) or Helen Green by E-mail: [hgreen@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:hgreen@interlinkrct.org.uk)**

## ROOTS Forum

The ROOTS forum for disabled children and young people, are proud to present their first newsletter. The theme of this first issue is 'bullying' and includes personal experiences and information on how to get help.

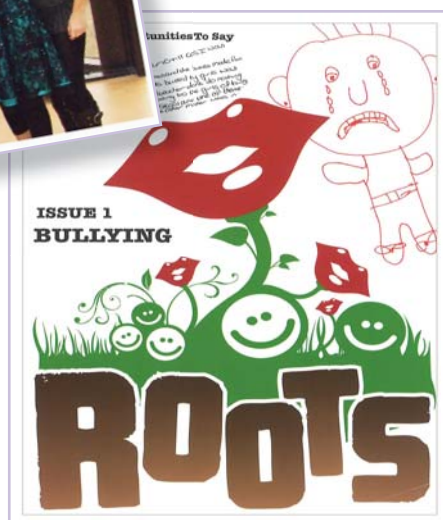
The young people from ROOTS (Raising Our Opportunities To Say) are very proud of their work in producing this newsletter and two of the members, Ashley Tucker and Hayley Gilbert, presented it to Fframwaith, the Children and Young People's Partnership for RCT.

Simon James, Chief Executive of Interlink, was really impressed, *'The bullying poster is just fantastic, the group are really helping schools to understand the root causes and affects of bullying to young people, it is a great piece of work.'*

The ROOTS forum was established to give children and young people with disabilities the opportunity to have their voices heard on issues that affect them. The forum was officially launched in Ystrad Sports Centre at the Disability Conference in October 2009 by the young people.

The aim of the forum from the young people's perspective:

- Socialise with others
- Increase confidence
- Be yourself and relax
- Learn new skills and opportunities
- Meet new people



The next step for the young people will be to raise awareness of bullying in the schools themselves, with the young people presenting their own work and experiences.

The ROOTS forum is based at the VIVA! Wales project in Pontypridd and if you would like more information or want to be involved in the forum, please contact **Sarah Slye on 01443 480297.**

## Dates for your Diary

### Money and Advice Market

**24 June 2011**

10.00am - 1.00pm

YMCA Pontypridd

Contact Kath Price

### Cooperative Communities and Care Event

**30 June 2011**

9.00am - 1.00pm

Abercwmboi Rugby Club

Contact Anne Morris

### Joint CYD Network and Health Social Care and Wellbeing Forum

**7 July 2011**

9.00am - 1.00pm

at The Rhondda Heritage Park

Contact Anne Morris /

Maria Prosser

### Mental Health Forum

**12 July 2011**

10.00am - 12.00pm

Contact Maria Abson

### RCT Social Enterprise Conference

**21 July 2011**

9.00am - 3.00pm

Fedw Hir, Llwydcoed, Aberdare

Contact Kath Price

### Mental Health Forum

**13 September 2011**

10.00am - 12.00pm

Contact Maria Abson

For more 'dates for your diary' check out the 'What's On' section on our website

[www.interlinkrct.org.uk](http://www.interlinkrct.org.uk)

# A Bright Future for Social Enterprises

Interlink has been awarded a contract to deliver Social Enterprise Support in Rhondda Cynon Taff after winning a successful tender for Community Economic Development from Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

**These are exciting times** - it is such great news for us and for social enterprises in RCT and will help Interlink to continue to build on the support already available. There is a huge amount of work to be done as people start to get to grips with trading and generating income as organisations look to develop greater financial sustainability in these challenging times.

**Social Enterprise Day** - Interlink has also secured a grant from the European Convergence programme for an additional Community Economic Development programme working with WCVA, this has enabled us to recruit two Social Enterprise Officers. Things will really start to get moving on the Social Enterprise Day later in July working with our partners on the RCT Social Enterprise Forum.

**Working together** - I am really pleased with developments in RCT, we now have a growing support network working with some great partners and special people with the knowledge and resources to support and develop social enterprises in RCT. Key partners are Coalfields Regeneration Trust, the Wales Cooperative Centre and the Pre-incubation Unit offered by Social Enterprise Solutions. Social enterprise is a bottom-up community-led approach, commitment and support from Communities First Partnerships and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council is essential, which is one of our strengths in RCT.

**Got an idea?** For more information on social enterprise support or to express an interest in attending the Social Enterprise Day (21 July), call **01443 846200** or E-mail: [sjames@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:sjames@interlinkrct.org.uk)



# Pathfinder – calling all community climate change projects

Are you reducing your community's carbon footprint? Are you changing behaviour in Wales around food, transport, energy or water? Would you like to develop a project in these areas? If so, we want to hear from you! Pathfinder is a new Welsh Assembly funded programme to support communities across Wales to take action on climate change. Six Pathfinder Officers are now in post, each covering different areas of Wales.

### The Pathfinder Officers are here to:

- Support and encourage community groups / organisations to take action on climate change, through advice, sign posting and helping share ideas and good practice.
- Identify ongoing and potential climate action and sustainable development work carried out by communities, so that their work is shared with others in Wales.
- Gather evidence of what works when communities lead on climate action. This will be focussed on lowering community carbon footprints by changing behaviour around transport, energy, water saving and food.

As well as providing support for groups across Wales, we are looking to find 18 communities across Wales, who will take part in a research project through the programme. These will work together with the Pathfinder Officers to build on existing climate change initiatives or develop new ones. At this initial stage of the Pathfinder programme, we would like to get in touch with as many groups and organisations as possible. You don't have to be active on climate change to be involved – as long as you are interested in developing community projects in this area we want to hear from you!

**Contact details for your local Pathfinder Officer and more information on the programme is available here [www.wag-pathfinder.co.uk](http://www.wag-pathfinder.co.uk).**



## Broaden your horizons ..... with Interlink training

### Introduction to Project Management

23 June 2011  
9.30am - 12.30pm

### Trustee and Management Committee Training - Roles and Responsibilities

28 June 2011  
9.30am - 1.00pm

### Dyslexia Action Training

7 July 2011  
9.00am - 1.00pm

### Change Through Leadership

15, 22 and 29 July 2011  
9.30am - 4.00pm

### RCT Local Safeguarding Child Protection

20 July 2011  
9.30am - 12.30pm

### First Aid

9 September 2011  
9.30am - 4.00pm

### Community Development

13, 20 and 27 September 2011  
9.30am - 4.00pm

### Introduction to Project Management

15 September 2011  
10.00am - 4.00pm

We have some courses we offer by popular demand, but please tell us what courses you and your organisation need.

For more information call **01443 846200** or visit [www.interlinkrct.org.uk](http://www.interlinkrct.org.uk) to download a training programme and booking form.

## Expert Patients Programme Courses

	Day	Time	Start Date	End Date
<b>Treherbert /Treorchy</b> –Treherbert CEC/Youth Club, Dumfries Street, Treherbert, CF42 5PN	Wednesday	10:30am-1.00pm	22 June	27 July
<b>Maerdy</b> – Teify House, Station Terrace, Maerdy CF43 4BE	Thursday	10.00am-12:30pm	23 June	28 July

Expert Patients Programme is a **Free** Self-help course for anyone living with any long-term health condition or for Carers – designed to improve quality of life – in just 2 ½ hours per week for 6 weeks you can learn to deal with Pain, Fatigue, Tense Muscles, Difficult Emotions, Stress/Anxiety and Depression.

Dates subject to change if courses postponed due to low numbers.

For more information contact: Minu Mandora at Interlink on 01443 846200 or

E-mail: [mmandora@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:mmandora@interlinkrct.org.uk) [www.eppwales.org](http://www.eppwales.org)



## Volunteering Stars of RCT Shine at Awards Ceremony

Stan Stennett joined forces with representatives from the voluntary, statutory and private sector recently to honour almost 150 volunteers and let them know just how much their time, skills, dedication and commitment are appreciated in RCT.

The Celebration evening took place on Friday 10 June 2011. Volunteers were presented with awards before being treated to an evening of entertainment, dining and dancing.

Jill Malpas a volunteer at New Horizons Mental Health Resource Centre said *'It's wonderful to see so many volunteers together. It's easy to forget that while you're doing your little bit every week, that thousands of volunteers are out there helping so many people in so many different ways. This is a wonderful evening.'*

**Three groups that the judges felt achieved outstanding results from their volunteering were:-** Glyntaff Residents Association, Bethlehem View Residents Panel and Cwm Cynon Women's Aid.

**Selected as overall winners by an audience of their peers and awarded The Norah Huxley Award for outstanding achievement was Glyntaff Residents Association.**



**GTRA (Glyntaff Residents Association)** were nominated by Ruth Barclay of Coleg Morgannwg for their commitment and dedication to their community.

Of the many attributes which this group has, there is one that stands out above all others - Commitment. This group not only consists of volunteers who happily run the GTRA, but they also find time to complete courses, such as this year; NVQ level 2 community development.



**Bethlehem View Residents Panel**, were nominated by Lisa Greening of Rhondda Housing Association.

This group has worked extremely hard to create a community garden for the local area. In the past they have also organised trips for the residents. The group has worked extremely hard over the past two years to develop a waste plot of land into a community garden for all to enjoy. The garden is now a lovely space in which old and young can experience the great outdoors. The garden is a shining example of the groups dedication and hard work.



**Cwm Cynon Women's Aid** were nominated by Eirlys Whitney, of Cwm Cynon Women's Aid.

One volunteer who stood out is Judith Langdon who has helped the organisation greatly. Eirlys said *'Judith is always pleasant and nothing is too much trouble. She has been invaluable to us over the past two years.'* Another shining example is Beverley Murphy *'Beverley can be relied upon to help our organisation whenever she is needed. She is trustworthy and has excellent empathy with our service users. She is always ready to help and is invaluable to our work.'*

## Community Arts and Community Education

*Matthew Cox, Jacky Yeo, Calam Boldin, Alyson Rees-Jones, Rachel Yeo, David Yeo, Mellony Heels, Martin Heels, Tim Yeo, Jannine Fletcher, Claire Davies, Julie Bushell, Damien Slocombe, Brian Slocombe, Liam Slocombe, Jenny Slocombe*

## Volunteering with Children and Young People

*Roy Edwards, Maria Edwards, Shaun Phillips, Keiron Montague, Jackie Holly*

## Young Volunteer Awards



*Matthew Cox, Ashley Richards, Emma Roberts, Sammy Jo Phibben, Chris Horton, Symon Hughes, Richard Willis, Tanya Phibben*

## Environmental Action



*Rose Williams, Brian Williams, Kyle Jones, Wendy Cook, Nigel Cook, Gloria Evans, James Evans, Mike Thomas, Sarah Thomas, Sandra Charlesworth, Terry Charlesworth, Chris Shepherd*

## Millennium Volunteers

*Ceri Llewellyn, Claire Buckland, Gavin Wyatt, Jamie Organ, Kris Ratcliffe, Jamie Easley, Nathan Tucker*

## New Voluntary Organisation of the Year

*Newydd Youth Challenge*

## Health Social Care and Well-being



*Laura Williams, Diane Hipkiss, Michelle Stead, Sarah Morris, Sarah Davies, Lorraine Parker, Helen Hughes, Gerald Evans, Delia Powell, Gill Malpas, Jozanne Hughes, Marynyas Zilinskas, Ainsley Temudo, Joanne Davies, Naomi Bossley, Susan Griffiths, Stuart Lewis, Violet Evans, Mustafa Ahdimalik, Gareth Morgan, David Owen, Pauline Thomas, Vicky Clarke, Gareth Jones, Amy Jones,*

## Community Safety

*Andrea Flemming, Dawn Blackall, Jill Roswell, Rachel Sparks, Judith Langdon, Beverly Murphy, Margaret Abraham, Claire Hodges*

## Older Volunteer

*Jean Francis, Linda Gough, David Duncan, Alan Wiffen, Sue Shaddock, Hannah Davies and Charlotte Taylor*

## Trustees

*Anita Thomas*

**Stan Stennet and John Pockett**

**Photographs by John Rees Photography available on [www.JohnReesPhotography.com](http://www.JohnReesPhotography.com)**



**Our thanks and appreciation go to our supporters who sponsored us at this years Awards Ceremony:**

Groundwork Merthyr and RCT, RCT Homes, The University of Glamorgan, L'Oreal, RCT Social Care Workforce Development Partnership, Cwm Taf Health Board Community and Mental Health, Cynon Valley Crime Reduction Services Ltd, Rhondda Housing Association, Cynon Taf Community Housing Group, GE Healthcare, Interlink, Cwm Taf Health Board Planning and Partnerships.

# Learning for Future Employment– Communicating with Confidence!

The RCT People First's Engagement Gateway project is about providing training to:

- Improve confidence, self esteem and motivation of people with a work limiting health condition and or disability who are economically inactive or unemployed.
- Improve their skills and knowledge for them to compete within society and achieve their goal of moving into employment opportunities. The project will be working with 49 people from Rhondda Cynon Taff and will finish in June 2012.

The project activities will focus on: Communication, Listening, Money Management, Employment, Office Skills, Health Eating, Exercise, Problem Solving, Employment Law, Anger Management, Family Responsibilities, Relationships and Sexuality.

The project is currently taking place at Maesnewydd Garden Centre in Trecynon, Llwynypia Day Centre and RCT People First Offices in Porth, the participants are enjoying the experiences and new friendships the project brings them.

**Cheryl Allsopp** from Glenboi has taken part in litter picking and a communication skills workshop *'I am now more confident than I used to be. I would like to get a job; I am aware of my disability but would like my own house in the future. I am hoping this project will take us swimming and do things that will keep me fit, I would like to do more things with technology!'*



**Ellie Wall** from Aberdare has enjoyed texting and making new friends.

**Vicky Clarke** is from Aberdare *'I've enjoyed texting and sending e-mails, I've made new friends on this project.'*

**Ryan Meek** is from Cwmaman *'Today we learnt about texting and e-mails – I do these every day! I'm pretty good at IT – I enjoy computers very much and use my PC to talk to my girl friend in America – I am hoping this course will help me get a job!'*

**David Reynolds** is from Penderyn-onn near Aberdare *'I've enjoyed the communication stuff we've been doing today'*

**Stuart Williams** is from Cwmdare *'I've enjoyed Chinese whispers and making phone calls today! The course has made me more confident; it's nice to do things with my friends! I would like to do more swimming, riding my mountain bike, walking and reading on this course – I'd like my friends to come to this course – I will ask them!'*

RCT People First Engagement Gateway project is looking for more participants.  
Are you economically inactive or unemployed, living in RCT, have a learning disability and would like to join this project?

Contact Dawn at RCT People First, The Old Bank Buildings, The Square, Porth, RCT CF39 9NP  
Telephone 01443 683037 or E-mail: [rctpeoplefirst@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rctpeoplefirst@yahoo.co.uk)



# What is the RCT and Merthyr Tydfil Joint Planning Group?

The Mental Health Joint Planning Group meets once every 3 months at the Cwm Taf Local Health Board at Abercynon. Some of the responsibilities of the group include:

- Approving major changes to mental health services
- Monitoring how well mental health services are performing
- Focusing on particular services or issues when required

## Who attends the Joint Planning group?

The group consists of senior managers from Cwm Taf Local Health Board, service user and carer representatives, and representatives from local mental health organisations, RCT County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

## Would you like to become involved?

To ensure the views of Service Users are properly represented at the Joint Planning Group, a Service User Planning group can meet up before the Joint Planning meeting to discuss mental health services and issues affecting service users in RCT and/or Merthyr Tydfil. Two members of the Service User group can then, if they wish, present the issues raised in the Service User planning meeting to the Joint Planning Group. We can offer support to any service user who wishes to become involved, to ensure that you feel comfortable to put forward your views on local services. We also cover your travelling expenses.

**Please let us know if you are interested in joining the Service User Planning group.**

**Our contact details are Rachel Wyatt or Helen Rees, Service User Involvement Officers on 01443 846200,**

**E-mail: [rw Wyatt@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:rw Wyatt@interlinkrct.org.uk) or [hrees@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:hrees@interlinkrct.org.uk)**

## New Mental Health Project



Stepping forward will offer 22 participants the opportunity to learn new work skills using a fun and flexible approach. The project can offer tailor made learning at the individual's own pace via a range of activities including soft skills, team building and problem solving through creative learning. The course also provides a broad based qualification which helps participants prepare for a number of work related activities. Support and guidance is on hand throughout with mentors helping participants to decide on their goals, qualification and type of work experience they would like to gain through the project when the 8 week course ends.

These work placements will allow participants to put into practice what they have learnt during the 8 weeks, as well as continue to take those positive steps forward in developing further skills and making connections within a workplace. By successfully completing the Stepping Forward programme, participants will not only be able to display relevant knowledge, skills and understanding to an employer but also that they are able to manage time effectively, that they are self-motivated and already have a good work ethic, all of which will give participants the edge needed to find success in the world of work.

Why not come along and join the fun at the Stepping Forward taster sessions at:

**New Horizons**  
8 September 2011  
10.00am - 12.30pm

**Pontypridd YMCA**  
8 September 2011  
1.30pm - 4.00pm

**To book a place contact Interlink on 01443 846200 or to find out more information contact Maria Abson, Mental Health Development Officer, Interlink by E-mail: [mabson@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:mabson@interlinkrct.org.uk)**

***A Web Directory of all local mental health services is live [www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk) and a PDF downloadable version of the directory is now available.***

# Rhondda Breast Friends - *Bringing Cancer Issues to light*



RBF's petition to the Welsh Assembly Government had its 14th reading on 29 March. The Assembly is one of just two UK legislatures (the other being Scotland) to have a petitions system and, since launching in 2007, its Petitions Committee has considered 215 petitions.

The system was set up to enable members of the public who feel strongly about an issue to gather support and submit a petition to the Assembly, in person or online. And it has had some demonstrable success stories such as Rhondda Breast Friends' petition submitted in June 2008 calling for all Local Health Boards to meet the National Cancer Standards by 2009.

This petition has been highlighted in a publication reflecting on the Petitions Committee's first four years in operation and is one of the longest standing petitions. The publication called '**Petitioning: bringing your issues to light**' was launched by Presiding Officer, Lord Dafydd Thomas and Committee Chair, Christine Chapman AM for Cynon Valley, in the Senedd following the last meeting of the Petitions Committee before the elections. Members of Rhondda Breast Friends were invited to the launch and to receive copies of the publication on 29 March 2011.



Veronica German AM, Sally Stoat - Vice Chair RBF, Christine Chapman AM - Chair, Diane Raybould - Vice chair RBF, Tamara Morriss and Rachel Holland - Admin Assistants RBF and Andrew R.T.Davies AM

**Lead petitioner, Diane Raybould, Chair of RBF said of their petition, 'It helped raise political and public awareness about our issue when no-one was listening to us. At each reading the committee have been in regular correspondence with the Minister for Health and Social Services, as well as each local health board. Much of their consideration has focused on areas of non-compliance and the factors causing this; the work that's being done to address non-compliance and public information. Even though the petition aims have not yet been met, the committee have continued to pursue the petition to try to ensure that the Standards are met by all local health boards as a matter of priority. I believe that compliance with the Standards has really been given its rightful importance with the enthusiasm and tenacity of the Petitions Committee in pursuing this.'**

**Christine Chapman AM** spoke of her enjoyment of chairing the Petitions Committee, hearing the issues which the public feel passionate about and helping them to get their voice heard at all levels of the Assembly. In conclusion she said, '*Most of all though, I would like to thank all our petitioners, members of the public who felt strongly about an issue and submitted a petition. They have given their time and energy in collecting signatures, responding to our many questions and even in some cases, coming and giving evidence to the Committee. Without you, we would have nothing to celebrate. Thank you.*'

RBF's petition will now be kept open and responses from RBF, the Local Health Boards and Macmillan will be taken forward to the new Assembly following the elections in May. RBF launched its new Cancer Centre in Porth, Rhondda last October and if you would like to find out more about activities and support provided contact **01443 687556**.

## Interlink Success with the Small Workplace Health Award



Interlink has been successful in achieving the Small Workplace Health Award, which is the national mark of quality for health and wellbeing for organisations employing fewer than fifty people. The award is a developmental process with three levels of award, based on good practice and improvement and is used to support the creation of activities that promote the health and wellbeing of employees. The award has been developed to target key preventable ill-health issues in the workplace, which also helps to increase organisational performance and productivity.

Interlink was successful in gaining the silver award reflecting a range of actions taken to promote the health and wellbeing of staff. As an organisation we focussed on three lifestyle topics of physical activity, nutrition and alcohol awareness.

A variety of activities were undertaken including the formation of a Walking After Work group for lunchtime and after work walks, participation in the UK Cancer Research Fund's Fruity Friday campaign and awareness raising workshops on salt, sugar and alcohol intake.



Interlink staff participating in an alcohol awareness raising workshop for the Small Workplace Health Award

**To find out how your organisation could become involved contact the Regional Workplace Health Advisor [www.healthyworkingwales.com](http://www.healthyworkingwales.com)**

## Co-operative Communities and Care Event

**30 June 2011**

**9.00am - 3.30pm**

**Abercwmbol Rugby Club**

The challenges facing people with social care needs are growing and growing.  
But are they also part of the solution?

Are we ignoring how much older people and people with disabilities have to offer communities?

Are we ignoring how much communities can do for themselves, for mutual benefit?

Without in any way undermining the vital role that democratically accountable health and social services must play, this event will encourage local citizens and organisations to explore the opportunities for innovative social care to be found in cooperative values and community-focused social enterprises.

**For more information contact Anne Morris at Interlink on 01443 846200 or E-mail: [amorris@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:amorris@interlinkrct.org.uk) or Sharon Richards at VAMT on 01685 353932 or E-mail: [sharon.richards@vamt.net](mailto:sharon.richards@vamt.net)**

# Welsh Communities can make a Big Difference with Small Awards

From a support group for people who have had their Larynx removed due to throat cancer to a project which aims to develop and unearth the next top Radio DJs, community projects throughout the country are benefiting from the latest round of Awards for All funding.

A total of 50 community-based projects across Wales share in the £185,437 awarded under the latest round of the Big Lottery Fund's (BIG) Awards for All small grants programme.

In the Cynon Valley the Swallow Laryngectomy Club will use their award of £1,142 to take people who have had their larynx removed due to throat cancer on a series of outings to encourage integration into the community. The laryngectomy operation results in breathing through a hole in the neck and speaking by placing a finger on to a plastic filter on the front of the hole. This means a significant change in lifestyle for individuals and the accompanying visible and psychological effects this brings.

Lt Col (Rtd) Philip Wardle, Chair of the Swallow Laryngectomy Club, had a laryngectomy operation seven years ago. He was first diagnosed with throat cancer 13 years ago and it regressed after radiotherapy treatment. Unfortunately, the cancer returned and he had to have his larynx removed and a voicebox fitted.

Highlighting the importance of the project, Mr Wardle, said: *'The money will enable us to run our programme of events for the year. Our aim is to get people to speak confidently after the operation to remove their larynx. You tend to be very self conscious after you've first had the operation. The way you breathe in through your neck is visible and you get a bit shy about it at first. It's quite a mechanical thing and the outings will help people overcome any embarrassment as they regain their confidence in communicating outside of their immediate circle again.'*

Available in English and Welsh, the application for the programme can be downloaded from [www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk) or by phone on 0300 123 0735.



## Interlink Small Capital Grant Scheme



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Interlink's capital grant scheme is re-open. Groups in Rhondda Cynon Taff can apply for up to £5,000 for capital items. Previously, groups received money for a range of capital projects, including musical instruments, small renovation work and computer equipment. Interlink received two years of funding from the Welsh Assembly's Community Facility and Activities grant programme.

Darren Wilson from Llantrisant Amateur Boxing Club received £3,216 for a suspended ceiling to keep the heat in for the young people during the winter. Darren explained *'The small grants scheme from Interlink will make all the difference to our project during the winter months. Our club membership declined during last winter because it was too cold for our younger members to train. Our membership is essential to our sustainability.'*



Jean Harrington, Chair of Interlink, *'We were overwhelmed with applications from small voluntary groups in Rhondda Cynon Taff and were thrilled to receive the money from the Welsh Assembly Government to support voluntary groups in Rhondda Cynon Taff to access small capital grants.'*

For further information or an application form please contact Alisa Davies at Interlink on 01443 846200 or visit our website [www.interlinkrct.org.uk](http://www.interlinkrct.org.uk)

## Young Heroes Recognised at Vol Factor Celebration Evening

75 local young heroes from Rhondda Cynon Taff were recognised at Interlink's Vol Factor celebration evening, held at the Muni Arts Centre in Pontypridd, in March 2011.

The event was held to celebrate the contributions volunteers aged 16-25 made to the ten projects which received grants from Interlink's Youth-Led Grant scheme, known as The Vol Factor, in 2010-11. Participants gave brief presentations explaining their projects, and received certificates from Interlink Chief Executive Simon James.

Funded by GwirVol, the Welsh Assembly partnership promoting Youth Volunteering, the Vol Factor's panel of four handed out a total of £6,700 to projects as diverse as a Hair and Beauty Class (Alison House Youth and Play Project, Cwmparc), a Marketing Project for local youth website Wicid.tv, a football project known as Paddy's, and a separate music project run by the Penywaun Enterprise Partnership and the Arts Factory's Fashion Design project ran from Ferndale. Also successful were RCT People First (Sports and Leisure Activities), the Newydd Youth Challenge project from Glyntaff (Oakwood Trip), the Fernhill Youth Project (Glocal Citizenship project), Trealaw Village Trust (Peer Ed film promoting the timebanking scheme) and Ysgol y Pant E3's Pantomime project.

Thomas Crockett, Interlink's Youth Volunteering Advisor, said: *'The panel this year has managed to hand out more money, to a wider variety of projects than ever before, and I am delighted to say that the funding has been secured again for 2011/12.'*



For further information on the Vol Factor grant scheme, please contact Thomas Crockett on 01443 846200, or by E-mail: [tcrockett@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:tcrockett@interlinkrct.org.uk).



### Money & Advice Market

Friday 24 June 2011  
Pontypridd YMCA  
10.00am - 1.00pm

A **FREE** event for voluntary and community organisations throughout Rhondda Cynon Taff .

Come along to find out about possible funding opportunities for your group.

**Contact Interlink for more information**

### Do you need help and support with funding?

The Boiler House Project at Penrhys used Interlink's advice and support and received a grant for £24,000 from the Big Lottery.

Contact Joanna Markham at Interlink on 01443 846200 or E-mail: [jmarkham@interlinkrct.org.uk](mailto:jmarkham@interlinkrct.org.uk)

# Cynon Skills Festival Success

Cynon Skills Festival was a huge success with over 160 individuals accessing both accredited and non accredited courses throughout the week commencing 21 March 2011. Courses included Food Hygiene Level 2, Retail Skills, PC Building, Money Management and Baby Safe (First Aid) to mention just a few. With five training opportunities organised during every day of the week in a number of venues throughout the Cynon Valley there was a course to suit the needs of most residents!

Those attending provided very positive feedback with regards to the courses *'I enjoyed learning how to deal with different customers'* (attendee from Retail Skills), *'I enjoyed everything about this course and found it very beneficial'* (attendee from the Baby Safe course) and *'I learnt how to grow my own fruit and veg'* (attendee from Horticultural Skills). The courses were so well received that a number of participants have been in touch to find out when the next week will be taking place!

The Cynon Skills Festival was organised and supported by the following Communities First Partnerships; Bryncynon, Tri Yn Un, Darranlas, Fernhill and Glenboi, Abercwmboi, Cwmbach and Cwmaman. The week however would not have gone ahead without the support of partner agencies that provided some of the training sessions; special thanks go to Bryncynon Strategy, WEA, Communities 2.0, Interlink's See CHANGE Project and BTCV.

The weeks training brought so many opportunities to our residents the Communities First areas have agreed that a two week learning festival will allow for additional residents to access the programme. The next Cynon Learning Festival will be run between 4 - 15 July 2011 at a venue near you!



**If you would like to receive more information about Cynon Learning Festival contact your nearest Communities First Office or ring Zoe Parfitt on 01443 471080.**

## GAP - Green Access Programme Get QUALIFIED, Get into WORK!



Thanks to a successful funding application made to WCVA's European funded Engagement Gateway programme, The Strategy are able to launch an innovative and exciting new training programme for 16 – 25 year olds. We are now running our new Green Access Programme from Bryncynon Strategy and the Green Valley Centre. The programme gives learners practical work experience in horticulture and landscaping as well as formal qualifications in Manual Handling, First Aid, Brushcutting, Horticulture, Health and Safety and much more!

GAP is a full time 6 week programme for anyone aged 16-25, who isn't currently employed or already in training, and who is interested in learning about and experiencing practical outdoor work. No experience is needed to join the programme and believe it or not it's absolutely free!

**If you or someone you know is interested in joining the programme or would like further information please contact Ian on 01443 475120.**

## New Horizons Outreach

Our Hirwaun Outreach meet every Friday at St. Lleurwg's Church between 1.00pm - 4 .00pm and is currently doing a course on Healthy Eating on a Budget with Brian Shilton a Health Visitor of the local community. Also taking place is a Art and Craft Session.

Our Bryncynon Outreach is just starting up on a Tuesday at the Feel Good Factory between 10.00am – 1.00pm, which is a Well-being Coffee Morning. This will start on Tuesday 22 March and we hope to have guest speakers to come along and discuss various health and wellbeing issues.

For more information contact New Horizons on 01685 881113

## Free, Independent, Impartial, Confidential Advice Drop-in Service



### Tylorstown

In the library (During Term-time)  
In the Welfare Hall ( During School Holidays)

**EVERY MONDAY**

9.30am - 11.30am

For immediate telephone advice, please call:

**Adviceline Cymru 08444 77 20 20**

Open Monday - Friday

10.00am - 4.00pm



Online [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) / wales [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## Rhondda Listening Friends Celebrate First Year

Rhondda Listening Friends, a peer support group based at St. John's Church Hall in Ton Pentre, Rhondda, celebrated their first year of operating on the 22 February 2011. They are a community group who rely on fundraising to pay for the hire of the church hall and the activities they provide. The group is set up for people with mild to moderate mental ill health and for those who care for people with mental ill health.

**Jean Rees, Chairperson of the group said,** *'There is such a stigma attached to people with mental ill health. It is not something sufferers are willing to talk freely about. Listening Friends offer the chance to meet people in an informal, confidential setting and talk about their problems'*

Education Minister Leighton Andrews who visited the group during their first birthday celebrations said, *' This group is carrying out excellent work. A year on, you can see the impact they are making on the community.'*

The group holds sessions every Monday at the church hall, and is hoping to increase to two days per week if further funding can be found. They are open from 11.00am - 3.00pm and they would welcome new members.

**For more information call Jean on 01443 773864**

# Support for Sustainable Living Grant Scheme

The Supporting Sustainable Living grant scheme gives funds and advice for projects to help people move to a more sustainable and lower carbon lifestyle. The aim is to bring about long-term changes in lifestyle that will help reduce Wales' greenhouse gas emissions and tackle the impacts of climate change. The Welsh Assembly Government is funding the scheme and Environment Wales are delivering it with their core partner Cynnal Cymru.

The main grant stream has 3 stages. Although some applicants will work through stages 1 to 3, applicants can enter at any stage depending on their circumstances. The 3 stages are:

## Stage 1: Project Development Grants

To help applicants to explore areas where they could act to tackle climate change and to identify the methods, tools and budget that they will need to achieve the biggest impact.

## Stage 2: Implementation Grants

To help applicants to trial projects that are aimed at changing specific behaviours or lifestyle choices that will tackle the causes and consequences of climate change.

## Stage 3: Replication Grants

For applicants that have already successfully trialled one behaviour change project to roll it out to other areas or on a larger scale.

## Training and Fact-finding

Training grants are also available to help learn more about different ways to achieve behaviour change. This can include attending training courses, bringing in external trainers or consultants, or undertaking fact-finding visits to groups that have already implemented successful behaviour change projects.

## Who can apply

The grant scheme is open to organisations from all sectors. Individuals cannot apply. The maximum size of grant is likely to be around £15,000. Grants will fund up to 50% of project costs although, in exceptional circumstances, applications for grant funding to cover up to 75% of project costs will be considered. Volunteer time can also be counted as match funding.

## Applicants must demonstrate:

- a clear understanding of behaviour change methodologies
- a measurable outcome for their project
- value for money
- a commitment to sustainable development principles in project delivery.

**Environment Wales has a Wales-wide team of Development Officers who can discuss project proposals and advise on the application process.**

**For more information please call 029 2043 1727 or E-mail: [info@environment-wales.org](mailto:info@environment-wales.org)**



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