

Cydweithio i gael y gorau o'r ystad gyhoeddus
Working together to make the best use of the public estate

Case Studies



1 Ebbw Vale Institute



Ebbw Vale Institute is the oldest Institute in Wales. This Grade II listed building was built in 1849 and needed extensive repair and refurbishment, and its owner, Blaenau Gwent CBC, could not commit to funding.

In 2007, ProMo-Cymru approached the council to take on the major task of saving and restoring the historic building and turn it into a sustainable cultural centre of community activity and learning; which was its original function when it opened its doors as the first educational institute in Wales. The challenge of restoring the Institute to its former glory began with initial funding from the Heads of the Valley Project. Following the launch of the Big Lottery's Community Asset Transfer Fund, ProMo-Cymru then approached the council for a freehold Community Asset Transfer. The transfer was completed in May 2012 and a £750,000 Big Lottery grant was secured, with support from DTA Wales, to complete the restoration.



Business

ProMo-Cymru Ltd, a registered charity, was established in 1982 as South Wales Co-operative Development Association to develop, train and support business, utilising co-operative principles and community development aspects wherever possible. The underpinning themes of ProMo-Cymru's work are to empower, sustain and develop young people and to sustain and work in partnership with others in the social and economic context for lifelong learning, personal and community development. The Ebbw Vale Institute and Cultural Centre Project (EVi) is a landmark initiative of ProMo-Cymru.

Details

The Institute provides the following services:

- Cafe – Open to the public and offers snacks and meals with free Wi-Fi access;
- Training and Workshops – Courses include music tuition, event management, art classes and photography. Training facilities can be used for private hire;
- Venue with Licensed Bar – Events, concerts, wedding receptions and parties;
- Conference Facilities – Full conference facilities including boardroom meeting spaces and breakout rooms;
- Recording Studio – State of the art recording facilities available for tuition, workshops and private hire;
- Rehearsal Rooms – Fully equipped music rehearsal rooms and dance studios;
- Video Editing – Apple based video editing suite available for training workshops and private hire; and
- Business Incubation – Provides hot desk spaces, professional facilities and support for businesses hoping to develop and grow.

The building is now used for a wide variety of functions including award ceremonies, business meetings, weddings, musical events, training and education, community socialising and much more. ProMo-Cymru works in partnership with a wide range of groups and organisations including Blaenau Gwent CBC, Princes Trust, WEA, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, BRFM (community radio station), The Rotary Club, Encore Academy, Blaenau Gwent Young Stars, Ebbw Vale Operatic Society and Coleg Gwent.

Benefits

The primary benefits of ProMo-Cymru taking ownership of the Ebbw Vale Institute are: –

- The building has been saved as a community facility; and
- The change of ownership meant that grant funding could be used to carry out immediate and necessary work to save the building, and also to refurbish the interior to a high standard. This included the installation of a café restaurant, a state of the art recording studio, a main hall venue for events serving the community and local businesses, and training rooms and facilities for educational purposes. As a charity, ProMo-Cymru has much more flexibility in what it can offer in terms of service and has the freedom to apply for grant funding to help maintain and sustain the facility. This includes the setting up and running of a wide variety of projects including music, drama, adult education and community courses.

Lessons Learned

- Be flexible in respect of the tenure to transfer; and
- The Community Asset Transfer of EVI required the council to be more flexible on the tenure they were prepared to transfer as initially they would only consider a leasehold transfer. However, the conditions for grant funders investing significant funds such as the Big Lottery specified a freehold transfer. The council subsequently ensured that their Community Asset Transfer Policy, whilst making a presumption that transfers would be made on a leasehold basis, still provided the flexibility for a freehold transfer in exceptional circumstances, for example where significant grant funding depended on it.



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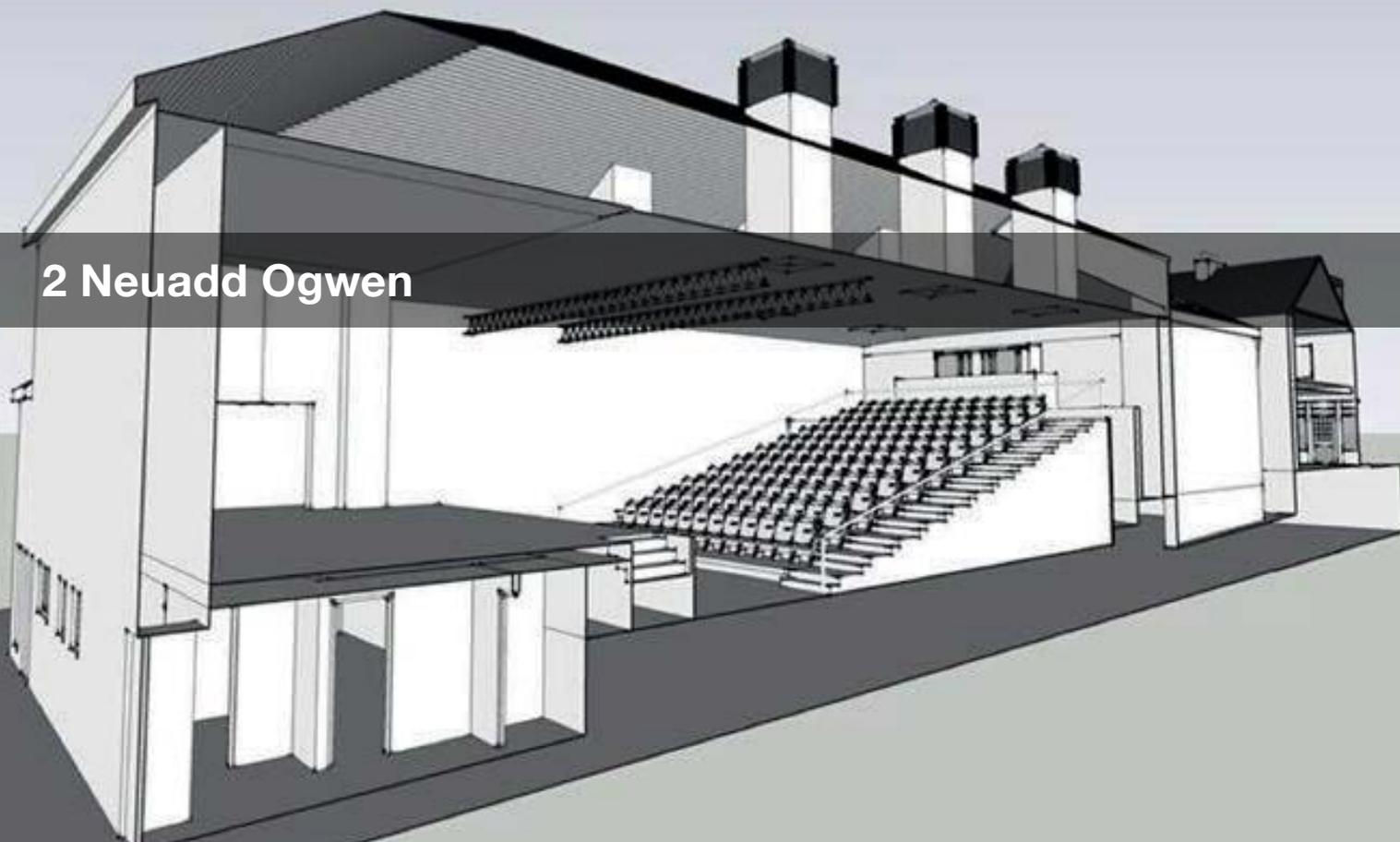
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2 Neuadd Ogwen



In September 2012, Gwynedd Council's Estates Department accepted a recommendation to transfer the freehold of Neuadd Ogwen, an arts and music centre, to the responsibility of Tabernacl (Bethesda) Cyf, a social enterprise. The purpose of the transfer was to secure finance to redevelop the centre and included a parcel of land adjacent to the building.

Business

Tabernacl social enterprise was established 20 years ago to celebrate the local arts scene of Bethesda, home to a number of successful Welsh artists including internationally renowned musician Gruff Rhys, the lead singer of Super Furry Animals. Tabernacl had access to funding not available to the Local Authority and had secured a £600k grant from the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) Community Asset Transfer programme to redevelop Neuadd Ogwen. It had also secured £312k from the local Môn Menai Regeneration fund for the building project.

Details

The transfer of the asset took place for a nominal sum of £1. This was due to the restriction on its use in the lease, the council's intention to include a 'claw back clause' in the transfer terms, and because the building was already let to Tabernacl.



Benefits

On paper, the transfer of Neuadd Ogwen to a social enterprise business was a straight forward process. There were a number of factors that aided the transfer process for Gwynedd Council and for Tabernacl:

- Transferring a public liability into a community asset;
- A Local Authority champion; and
- Social enterprise peer-to-peer mentoring.

Tabernacl had not been successful in its first bid to the BLF for a Community Asset Transfer grant, and in preparation for its bid to the final application round, the social enterprise was supported by a peer mentor, Promo Cymru facilitated by DTA Wales. The mentor had previously been successful in its bid for grant money and was able to provide guidance and knowledge to Tabernacl.

Lessons Learned

Local Authorities and social enterprises considering an asset transfer should consider the following issues:

- The responsibilities of both parties involved in an asset;
- Encourage measured risk-taking and innovation;
- Appropriate and successful joint working between the stakeholders; and
- Legal fees to be eligible in grant applications.



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3 Hay-on-Wye Cheese Market

Hay-on-Wye Cheese Market, a Grade II listed landmark building, required substantial investment which had been declared surplus to Powys County Council (PCC) requirements.

The Hay-on-Wye Community Enterprise CIC (HCECIC) wished to be granted a lease at a nominal rent to allow the organisation to apply for a Community Asset Transfer grant under the Big Lottery Fund/Heritage Lottery Fund and restore the building into a community facility and therefore completed a PCC business case and structural survey. The property was acquired originally by the Urban District Council of Hay and is subject to a number of restrictive covenants limiting its use.

Business

In response to the public consultation carried out in 2008, there was a clear mandate by the people of Hay-on-Wye to support Powys County Council's transfer of the Cheese Market building, at a nominal amount, to HCECIC to ensure its continuous use for the benefit of local residents and visitors. The building will enable HCECIC to raise further inward investment that will support the local economy and job creation in the short term. Using the building as a launch for the other initiatives, HCECIC's plan will, in the medium to long term, enable a number of viable job creating enterprises to be established that, over time, will support a thriving local economy.

The building will also bring social benefits from the initiatives hosted there that will benefit all the residents of Hay and visitors. HCECIC renovated the building using environmentally sustainable materials and methods and promote this as an example of good practice within the constraints of renovating a Grade II listed building.

Details

The HCECIC planned to renovate the building, creating community space on the ground floor whilst renovating the first floor into a holiday let which would provide vital revenue income. The initial request for a Community Asset Transfer was made to PCC in 2009.

The council, having considered the business case, agreed to grant a long lease at nominal rental, which allowed the group to formalise its grant applications.

A long lease was completed in the summer of 2013 following the confirmation of funding.

Benefits

- A landmark listed building has been sensitively preserved evidencing traditional building methods;
- The scheme involved comprehensive community engagement via numerous events; and
- A landmark building has been preserved for community use and enjoyment.

Lessons Learned

With the challenges of dealing with a listed building that needs repair and is subject to legal restrictions, never underestimate the time it will take to reach key milestones. This project has taken over four years to complete and is now at a stage where the group can start to realise its goals.

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4 Gwesty Seren



This Community Asset Transfer has transformed a former residential home for the elderly owned by Gwynedd Council into a hotel that provides respite holidays for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers.

Gwesty Seren in Llan Ffestiniog is owned and managed by Seren Ffestiniog Cyf, a social enterprise, and is open to all members of the public. It also offers respite adventure holidays for a specific audience. The Community Asset Transfer was completed in 2011-12 and funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Magnox, Welsh Government (Visit Wales), Snowdonia National Park Authority and Gwynedd Social housing. It was also funded by Seren Ffestiniog's investments and borrowings and support from the Big Lottery Fund, which included capital and revenue support.



Business

Gwesty Seren is a not-for-profit project; the hotel includes facilities including a hydrotherapy room and a sensory room, as well as other features which are not commonplace in hotels. It works with a range of local businesses to offer adventure and leisure activities throughout Snowdonia. The adaptations made to the hotel, to accommodate guests facing a range of mobility and disability related challenges, represents a significant investment from Seren Ffestiniog Cyf to enable them to market their facility with a particular social benefit. Established in 1996, Seren Ffestiniog Cyf supports and employs people with learning disabilities. With over 60 full time and part-time employees, Seren Ffestiniog Cyf is the second largest employer in Blaenau Ffestiniog. It also owns and operate a number of social enterprises in Gwynedd.

Details

The property was bought from Gwynedd Council at a discount to valuation of the district valuer and specialist valuer and opened in April 2014. In its first year, the facility generated a small profit and it has also received a capital grant from the Big Lottery Fund and a further revenue grant tapered over a five-year period.

Benefits

It is a unique and innovative project aimed at supporting people with disabilities and challenging circumstances. The facility has reached a wide audience thanks to the booking.com website and links to a number of tailored holiday companies.

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5 Plasnewydd Community Centre



A Community Transfer Asset for Plasnewydd Community Centre in Roath, Cardiff has enabled the YMCA to widen its work in Cardiff and expand its service provision for the future.

The YMCA is one of the oldest youth charities in the UK, and it has worked with young people and the wider community in Cardiff since 1852. It is therefore well-established with resources and a track record of delivery.

The YMCA currently provides a range of projects supporting young people throughout Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, including projects supporting young carers across the two counties and specialist sexual health advice to young people in partnership with Public Health Wales. It also provides homeless accommodation and support to vulnerable young adults, with over 100 beds available throughout the city.



Business

Within Cardiff, the YMCA portfolio includes two gymnasiums, a theatre and community rooms, which are made available to local clubs and groups as part of its wider community engagement initiatives.

The YMCA was interested in the Community Asset Transfer for the Plasnewydd Community Centre as it allowed the charity to widen its work in Cardiff beyond its main site in the Walk. The Plasnewydd Community Centre has been a valuable community resource in the local area for some time, with residents, groups and other families historically using the site. The CAT has provided an opportunity to capitalise on this engagement to target improvements at both existing and new potential users.

Details

In late 2013-14, as part of its budget setting process, Cardiff Council identified that it wanted to seek Expressions of Interest regarding the possible Community Asset Transfer of the Plasnewydd Community Centre. It acknowledged that it did not have the resources to continue to operate the centre and had therefore earmarked it for closure. However, it was clear that there was a continued demand and need for the centre and so the council proposed to find a solution via the asset transfer process. Following Cabinet approval, it took approximately 12 months of negotiation before the transfer was concluded in April 2015.

The conditions of the Community Asset Transfer were:

- 99-year lease as the council was not able to release the freehold for the site;
- Rent-free for the first 25 years;
- Rent agreed to be set at ground rent level;
- Site must remain for community use.

Benefits

The Community Asset Transfer has facilitated the redevelopment of the site and enabled the YMCA to create a hub building in partnership with partners that will have a focus on health and wellbeing programmes, childcare provision and access to community resources.

The re-development is beneficial to the long-term interests of the YMCA, the people it supports and the community. The asset transfer has secured a facility at Plasnewydd Community Centre that enables community engagement and cohesion around a range of community development aims. It has allowed the Cardiff YMCA to progress a five-year strategic investment programme for the site, which has rejuvenated its service provision in Cardiff.

Lessons Learned

Both parties have learnt a lot through the transfer process and had to compromise to make the transfer achievable. At the time of transfer, there was no established toolkit within Cardiff County Council for Asset Transfers. Despite this, the success of the transfer has been due to the mutual commitment to collaboration, with both parties prepared to take some degree of risk by compromising to resolve issues. Two particular areas of contention that took some time to work through were the TUPE transfer of staff and the lease agreement.

In October 2014, Cardiff County Council published its 'Stepping Up' Toolkit to support its application to take over the management of a community service or asset formerly run by a Public Body in the Cardiff area.

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6 Carnegie House



In 2013, Bridgend Town Council began planning to relocate its Council Chamber to a former public library building in Bridgend town centre.

Alongside this, the local arts organisation, Bridgend Arts Ltd, had identified that the town centre lacked an arts venue and could not offer space for local artists to meet and present their work. Members of Bridgend Arts Ltd met with Bridgend Town Council to present a vision for how the old town library might be used to respond creatively to this situation.

Through collaboration and following detailed discussions with Bridgend County Borough Council, the Town Council relocated to the former public library building, founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1907, in Wyndham Street in January 2014. With permission from the Carnegie Trust and to pay tribute to the past, the building was renamed Carnegie House/Tŷ Carnegie.

Business

The aim of Carnegie House is to provide a high standard of art and cultural events and activities. This includes a programme of professional events as well as community and educational activities that encourage local people to get involved in the arts in all its different aspects. Events hosted at the venue include live performance, arts classes, workshops, musical events and exhibitions.

The first floor of the building accommodates the Town Council Chamber, Board Room and staff office, whilst the ground floor and a small gallery area on the first floor are designated for the arts.

The Town Council has used its funds to undertake refurbishment of the building, which has included replacing the heating system, renovating and redecorating the ground and first floor rooms (in Edwardian colours), and replacing the flooring in the entrance hall, on the stairs and throughout the first and the main hall.

In September 2014, the Town Council was awarded a grant from the Arts Council of Wales to develop a programme of events at the venue throughout 2015. Additional funding was later secured for an events programme for 2016.

In order to enhance the delivery of the new arts programme, the Arts Council of Wales awarded capital funding, which was match funded by the Town Council. It is proposed that this will be used to further improve the facilities and equipment in the building, providing a stage, lighting, PA system and display boards as well as making significant alterations to the main hall.

The internal works will improve views for audiences by reducing the size of the central pillars and improving the acoustics in the room by removing the suspended ceiling.

A project to repair and restore the exterior stone work of the building was funded by a Heritage Lottery Grant with match funding provided by Bridgend County Borough Council and Bridgend Town Council.

Details

By the end of the 2015 programme, the Hub had programmed:

- 17 events for artist development;
- 18 professional arts events, including drama and theatre, literature and storytelling, spoken word and comedy, music and visual arts;
- A range of activities, including performances and workshops for four seasonal events; and
- A range of events which engaged specific audiences: children and young people, adults and older people, families, Welsh language families and children with disabilities.

Benefits

The Town Council and Carnegie House sought to engage with and inspire the people, audiences and artists in Bridgend by providing opportunities for people to be creative, enjoy new cultural experiences and engage in community life.

The Community Asset Transfer from Bridgend County Borough Council has returned a civic building into public use, and made a historical building relevant by providing a focal point for the arts and creative media in the area.

The library that was relocated from Carnegie House has also benefited by moving into a more purposeful space near to the town centre with appropriate amenities, and other leisure facilities are provided in a multi-use setting at the leisure centre. The Halo Trust manages the leisure facility and has spent a substantial sum on refurbishing the space. Footfall to the library has increased following the relocation, despite its move out of the town centre.

The building that had originally housed Bridgend Town Council and Bridgend County Borough Council on the outskirts of town has been sold to a private developer who will be redeveloping the site.

The Town Council is now positioned within a central location that has raised its profile and increased both its visibility and accessibility, and Bridgend County Borough Council has consolidated its presence alongside other council functions.

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7 Galeri Caernarfon



Galeri Caernarfon Cyf is a not for private profit community enterprise operating as a development trust in the historic town of Caernarfon in Gwynedd. It was established in 1992 (under its previous name Cwmni Tref Caernarfon) to “pursue social, economic and environmental projects for the benefit of the community in Caernarfon and its environs” by the current Chief Executive Gwyn Roberts. It operates in partnership with colleagues from a variety of private businesses and Community Groups, together with the Local Authority.



Business

The centre of Caernarfon is now a World Heritage Site, but in the mid 1980s over half the properties within the walled town were derelict, vacant or for sale. Cwmni Tref Caernarfon's first brief was to buy and then completely refurbish a selection of the most important of those buildings. There was a clear social enterprise vision from the outset, and to date, it has renovated and refurbished over 28 neglected and vacant properties in the town, which are now occupied by tenants, including shops, offices, flats, two cafes, a music training centre and a pub.

The development of the 'Galeri Creative Enterprise Centre' has been the largest and most ambitious of the Trust's projects to date. It is a brand new £7.5m creative enterprise centre, which opened its doors in the town's Victoria Dock on 7 March 2005. The centre houses a flexible 400-seat auditorium, which also doubles up as a cinema (the first live entertainment venue in Caernarfon in over 20 years), several rehearsal and practice studios, an art space, café bar, rooms for hire, conference facilities and 27 enterprise units, which currently house 15 creative companies all engaged in artistic or creative work.

Benefits

- Bringing people back into the town centre as residents, shoppers or tourists;
- Regeneration was a catalyst for the economic regeneration of Caernarfon, creating new retail and office premises and improving the built environment with high quality refurbishment and renovation;
- The community is empowered and supported in becoming key stakeholders for the project;
- As a social enterprise and development trust, Galeri, is truly independent and driven by its social, cultural and economic mission. Twenty properties have been restored since 1922, including commercial, residential buildings and a pub. Many were listed buildings within the walled town and the town has now achieved World Heritage Status;
- The benefits, experience and track record in Caernarfon town centre were built upon and transferred to the five slate mining valleys surrounding Caernarfon, which were suffering significant social, physical and economic neglect;
- The success of the Caernarfon Arts Projects (SBARC) helped build the case for the Galeri Creative Enterprise Centre; and
- Rents secured on each completed property help to pay for subsequent restorations, while financial surpluses help to fund the new Galeri Creative Enterprise Centre.

Lessons Learned

- Grand visions can be achieved –with a lot of motivation and determination but also flexibility;
- When planning your project, build in asset development and income generation from the start of the planning process;
- The increase in staff from four people in 2002 to 40 staff in 2006 required organisational, HR and skills development. Many staff members have stayed within the organisation with increased roles or responsibilities;
- Ensure that your ideas are seen as carefully constructed, effective, best value and (most importantly) attractive to statutory or private sector investors;
- Work with local individuals, groups and organisations so that your local community is involved in what is happening; and
- Never give up even if the key partners do not follow through with commitment to your vision.

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8 Cambrian Aquatics/Connah's Quay Swimming Pool



Connah's Quay Swimming Pool is a long-standing aquatics facility in the Flintshire area. It was built in the 1960s and has been valued by the local community ever since.

In the face of pressures on Public Body budgets, Flintshire County Council invited the local community to take over the running of the facility as part of a Community Asset Transfer. It was hoped that this would avoid the closure of the pool, or reducing opening hours across the county's leisure facilities. In a bid to ensure the long-term financial viability and operation of the pool, a group of four Directors formed the social enterprise, Cambrian Aquatics, and working with Flintshire Council, Swim Wales, Sport Wales and Social Business Wales completed the asset transfer in May 2016.



Business

Cambrian Aquatics is led by a board of four Directors with varied backgrounds but a common interest in Connah's Quay Swimming Club and Pool. The group, supported by Social Business Wales, completed the transfer in May 2016 and was supported by a £150k capital fund from Flintshire County Council for the maintenance of the pool and facilities. Since then, it has used £65k (from the capital fund) to make improvements to the roof, pool and pool plant machinery. Cambrian Aquatics received further support from Connah's Quay Town Council, Sport Wales and Swim Wales.

Cambrian Aquatics aims to provide a real pathway for young people to build a career in the leisure industry within their local area. Cambrian Aquatics is a not-for-profit limited by guarantee organisation and aims to be fully sustainable through income generated funds.

Since completing the takeover, Cambrian Aquatics has extended the pool's offering with new disabled and high performance swimming programmes hosting Connah's Quay Swimming Club. It is on track to become the Swim Wales flagship 'learn to swim' organisation in the area, having succeeded in increasing the numbers of those learning to swim. The group has introduced the Aqua Passport scheme, whereby both child and parent can actively follow progress made via the aqua passport website.

Cambrian Aquatics works closely with 14 primary schools and has used the facilities to bring children to use the pool and areas such as the cafeteria and meeting room as a class room, which allows schools to bring up to two classes at one time.

Cambrian Aquatics is actively supported by Coleg Cambria, the Royal Lifesaving Society and Swim Wales to deliver education, apprenticeships and training opportunities on a national level. Residents can participate in over 60 water-based sports at the pool, from swimming and snorkeling to water polo and kayaking.

Benefits

Cambrian Aquatics has created 27 new jobs and of these, 11 are filled on a full-time basis and 16 are casual staff. The group is working with Coleg Cambria to offer apprenticeship schemes supported by a National Vocational Qualification level 3 in sports and leisure. All staff are fully trained lifeguards and hold at least a level 2 in swimming coaching (the highest level qualification). This complements the level of staffing compared to local facilities. Staff are invited and encouraged to visit schools to provide swim safe presentations to children of all ages.

As the pool required a level of refurbishment, Cambrian Aquatics, supported by the community and swimming club, was able to clean and maintain the facilities before opening to the public, and this has created a firm community following and those involved hold a sense of ownership and are keen to see these high standards kept. Students from Coleg Cambria studying a National Vocational Qualification in Building Maintenance were drafted in to paint and decorate the building and were rewarded with real life experience and credit towards their course. This has strengthened the relationship with the college.

Lessons Learned

- Cambrian Aquatics found the process to be lengthy and disjointed and there was a lack of co-ordination in regards to the decision making process around TUPE staff transfers. Although time consuming, the council has retained staff and 27 new roles were created and filled by recruiting the council's casual staff. Thanks to support from Swim Wales, training and qualifications were made available for all new staff.
- Cambrian Aquatics found it difficult to navigate through the grant/funding processes as it was unclear which of the many grants available were appropriate for its application. The council application had a 'one size fits all' approach and many of the questions/comments were not applicable to this application. However, Cambrian Aquatics held a grants forum and invited other asset transfer enterprises to attend, and this provided insight and advice on the process and funding mechanisms.

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