



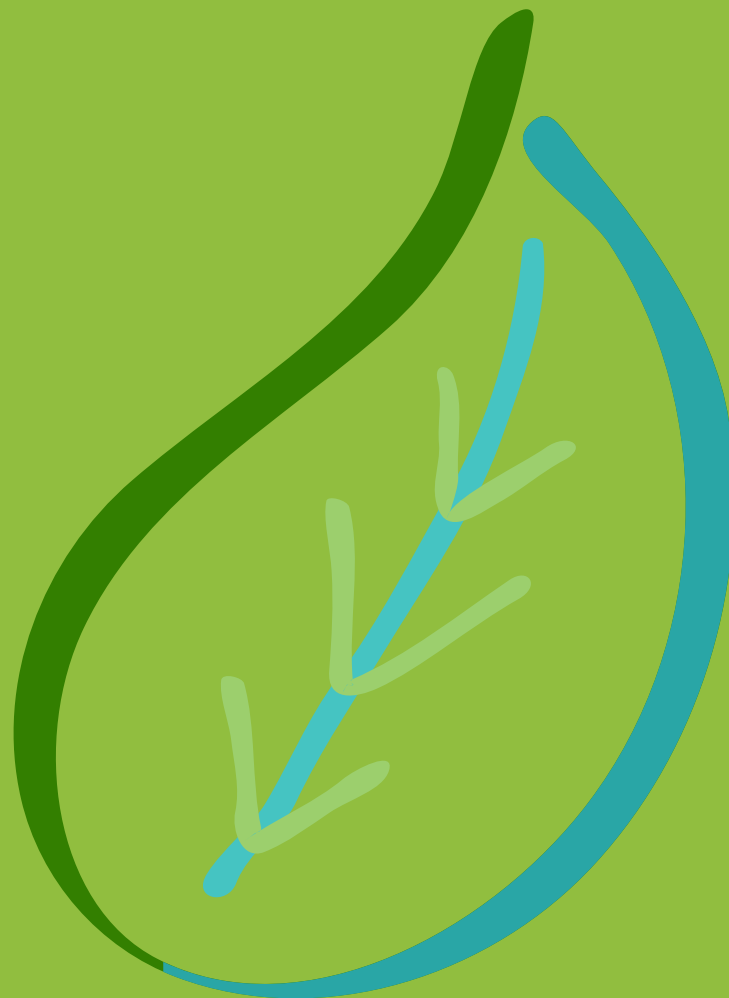
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The Green Recovery

A toolkit for organisations



A shared resource for
developing knowledge





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Introduction

What is a green recovery?

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the green recovery is the opportunity to refocus our aims and activity in ways that increasingly benefits people and the planet, to create a more sustainable future.

Why does it matter?

It aims to address key global issues; the nature emergency and climate emergency. These have real, local impacts for organisations and communities. Our response to the pandemic must follow a pathway that restores nature and decarbonises our economy.

How does it affect you?

A green recovery calls on everyone to play their part to deliver the changes needed.

Third sector organisations have strong social, environmental and ethical aims at their core so are well placed to be proactive and align activity with the green recovery. Future support, funding and resources will prioritise behaviour that helps us all on this journey.

The pandemic has introduced new ways of doing the usual things. It has challenged the traditional use of buildings and transport, heightened the desire for nature and green spaces, increased the focus on well-being and empowered us to actively support local businesses. These are all fundamental components of a green recovery.

We need to consider how our day to day activity, projects and future planning can be adjusted so that we collectively help deliver a green recovery, to benefit our organisation, clients and communities.

Using this toolkit

If you decide to take action, what you do depends on your understanding of the green recovery and its components, any previous experience you have of environmental activity, and the resources you have available. This toolkit will help you:

- Gain a better understanding of what the green recovery means
- Explore your opportunities, considering the action you've already taken and how to identify new ideas
- Choose practical actions your organisation can take
- Connect with the wider third sector through environmental volunteering

We recommend you consider all sections of this tool kit, but recognise that organisations must take action most suited their own situations. You can find a Glossary of terms that may not be familiar at the end of this guide.

This toolkit has been developed by The Environment Centre and Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF), commissioned as part of the West Glamorgan Volunteering Support Project.



Part one: Supporting a green recovery

1a: Priorities for a green recovery in Wales

A green recovery task and finish group, assembled in 2020 and led by Natural Resources Wales, identified four priority themes that a green recovery should achieve. This section outlines the type of environmental activity covered by these themes.

Reduce carbon emissions and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change

This includes moving towards more sustainable transport and active travel options, especially reducing single occupancy car journeys. It means supporting opportunities for walking, cycling, using public transport and car sharing, and switching to alternative technologies such as electric bikes and cars.

What impact have flexible work patterns and working from home during the pandemic had? These changes reduce carbon emissions associated with fossil fuel use, but also reduce air pollution and encourage positive behaviours that support well-being, a healthier lifestyle and more connected communities.

Buildings are also key sources of carbon emissions. Things to consider include how energy efficient your work spaces are, do you use green utility suppliers, or could you install renewable energy technology. What do you need from your buildings now and in the future? How can you get there in a low carbon way?

Do you know how climate change impacts your organisation? Maybe you are impacted directly with buildings used by staff or clients liable to flooding. You could experience this indirectly, if your organisation supports people

displaced from their homes around the world due to the global impacts of extreme climate events or rely on supplies from overseas. What can you do to help?

Reverse the decline in biodiversity

Biodiversity is vital to a sustainable future, and is being lost at an increasing rate. More than ever we need to support local wildlife, trees and plants – the opportunities to get involved are endless.

Picture community orchards, transformed neglected green spaces, community woodlands, wildflower areas, allotments, pollinator gardens, growing food, ponds and water features, community supported agriculture, courtyard gardens and homes for wildlife. It's not just the countryside, we need solutions for urban environments too.

What can you do at the workplace? Can you help staff or clients get involved at home or are there local environmental groups that would love you to be involved in delivering local solutions?

Connect people and nature

Unequal access to green and blue space has been highlighted by the pandemic, with one in eight households having no access to a garden, while many lack easy access to local parks and green space.

As well as improving biodiversity, this is about getting out into nature, learning about the environments around us, why they are important and how we mutually benefit from them - not just some of us, but all of us. How could you build connecting with nature into your organisation and service provision?



Tackle unsustainable levels of production and consumption by keeping resources in use for as long as possible, avoiding all waste and moving to sustainable alternatives

Our activity can have a huge environmental impact depending on what we buy and how we use it.

Our purchasing decisions have wider implications than you may realise; from the source of materials, how items are made and by whom, how far they have travelled and how they are packaged. Our actions will need to support the circular economy and follow the waste hierarchy. When we no longer need something, we must reuse, repair, re-purpose or recycle before we dispose of it. A huge range of business, community and volunteering opportunities arise from treating waste as a resource.

When taking action to deliver these four priority themes, we must keep in mind these two other components:

Green jobs and skills

A green recovery must support job creation, skills development and developing new markets.

Examples include retrofitting social housing to be low energy, increasing nature-based solutions and developing more reuse and repair initiatives.

We can collaborate and develop opportunities through volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships, placements and training programmes; but also through increasing connections with social enterprise and small local businesses.



Protecting the vulnerable

Groups, communities and places that are most vulnerable and hardest hit by change should be prioritised to address underlying inequalities.

As well as protecting our environment, the green recovery is about enhancing our livelihoods and improving quality of life.

We have to ensure that opportunities are accessible to all and that communities are involved in decisions that impact their lives.



1b: Getting involved with the green recovery

The purpose of this section is to encourage you to widen your understanding of the green recovery priority themes, and to help you explore how to contribute to and benefit from the green recovery.

Benefits of the Green Recovery

Third sector organisations can benefit in many ways from contributing to the green recovery by taking action that helps develop a local green economy, enhances our environment and provides opportunities for individuals and communities.

Benefits could include:

- Helping your organisation define its pathway towards long term sustainability
- Strengthening business cases and development plans
Finding new partners and opportunities to collaborate or generate income
- Aligning your activity with national goals and any associated support, funding and development opportunities
- Finding new opportunities through education, training and up-skilling for future jobs
- Being part of a movement that aims to keep skills, funding and experience in Wales and boost our region.
- Finding inspiration to develop new initiatives that enthuse your stakeholders and networks
- Doing your part to help tackle the nature and climate emergency
- Engaging with staff, clients and networks that share your values and are increasingly motivated to take positive action
- Better supported to focus on solutions to concerns or vulnerabilities clients have



Finding out more

Here are some suggestions of ways you can find out more about the green recovery and how to contribute:

Environmental organisations are keen to engage, share their knowledge and experience, and help us all be part of a green recovery. **Contact local facilitators** such as:

The Environment Centre

A hub for the environment movement in Swansea. Exchange views, take action, learn new things, and shop ethically and plastic free.

www.environmentcentre.org.uk

Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF)

Promoting and facilitating environmental sustainability in Swansea through projects, events and partnerships.

<http://swanseaenvironmentalforum.net/>

Low Carbon Swansea Bay

A network of public, private and voluntary organisations in South West Wales, working together to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs

<https://lowcarbonswanseabay.weebly.com/>

Don't reinvent the wheel; look for organisations that already share useful environmental guidance and toolkits. Examples include:

TUC Cymru

This national union has published a useful 'Greener workplaces for a just transition' guide.

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/greener-workplaces-just-transition-wales-tuc-toolkit-trade-unionists>

Eco Church Scheme

A structured environmental award scheme managed by A Rocha.

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

Eco Schools Scheme

A structured environmental award scheme managed by Keep Wales Tidy

<https://www.keepwalestidy.cymru/pages/category/eco-schools>

Check out campaign groups which provide helpful information on green recovery themes and the types of action, such as

Take Climate Action

<https://takeclimateaction.uk/climate-action/climate-action-plan-wales>





Future Generations Commission

Resources which support action today for a better tomorrow

<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/>

Natural Resources Wales

Green recovery resources to support the environmental sector

<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/strategies-and-plans/green-recovery-supporting-the-environmental-sector-in-wales/?lang=en>





1c: Ways of working for a green recovery

Wales has a strong foundation to build a green recovery. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act already encourages us to put sustainable development at the heart of decision making.

A green recovery also links with the aims of the Social Services and Well-being Act and promotes ways of working including co-production.

During the Covid 19 pandemic we focused on new priorities and different ways of working, which are important in a green recovery.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act also encourages specific ways of working, and it is a good idea to consider action for a green recovery in this way. Using it as inspiration, these points and case studies might give you some ideas on how to look at your own activities and potentially new ways of making decisions.

Examples include:

- working from home, which reduces carbon emissions from transport and buildings
- spending more time outdoors and getting involved in enhancing the local environment
- consciously supporting local businesses, makers, growers and producers
- connecting with nature and the environment to be active and support our mental health





Long Term

Balancing short-term needs while safeguarding the ability to also meet long-term needs

One of the most important things we can do is make sure that our decisions today do not have long term impacts or restrict future environmental improvement. A good time to consider this is when you are purchasing, replacing or upgrading assets, such as buildings or vehicles.

Circus Eruption



<http://www.circuseruption.co.uk/>

A longstanding charity that teaches young people circus skills, Circus Eruption is prioritising the environment in the future renovation of their new home, the former St Luke's church in Cwmbwrla.

From the outset they've planned to include renewable energies, introduce a pollinator friendly 'green corridor' to the concrete surrounding the church, and a natural approach to preserving the historic building.

Although their charitable purpose is not environmental, they feel that an environmentally conscious site is important for their longer-term community engagement and viability.

Prevention

Acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse can help meet environmental aims

A green recovery can help us focus on solutions to problems our organisation or service users' experience. Sometimes the best action to take might not be the most directly obvious. If you operate in an area subject to surface water flooding for example, you might want to get involved in planting scheme which use the natural environment to slow the flow of water, and help prevent or minimise the impact of these events.

As well as helping deal with the impacts, can you take action to prevent these issues occurring in the first instance?

F.A.N (Friends and Neighbours) Centre



<https://www.facebook.com/BringingPeopleTogether.CreatingCommunity>

With support from Keep Wales Tidy, the Friends and Neighbours Centre in Neath delivered a SuDS (sustainable urban drainage system) project.

This involved installing planters filled with water-loving UK-native marshland plants, watered directly from the building's guttering. This helps reduce the risk of local flooding caused by drains becoming overwhelmed by surface water run-off. The SuDs planters have a reservoir of water underneath, acting like a water butt, that can be pumped for use when needed.

The project helps improve local biodiversity, reduce water consumption and protect against the effects of climate change.



Integration

Considering how action against the different green recovery themes impacts each other, both within your own organisation and with other organisations.

For example, taking action to meet the priority theme of reducing carbon emissions might involve building or technology improvements, such as insulation or solar panels. This also helps achieve the priorities of developing local green skills and protecting individuals vulnerable to fuel poverty.

Nyth/Nest Warm Homes Scheme



<https://nest.gov.wales/en/>

This scheme helps individuals make their homes warmer and more fuel efficient, which can then also benefit health and well-being.

It is worth considering if the initiative is suitable and beneficial for you clients. Contact details and eligibility information are on their website.

O Dan yr Awyr / Under the Sky Project



www.glynneathtc.org.uk/services/under-the-sky

This partnership project is a great example of collaboration, and involves Glynneath Training Centre, the Glynneath and District Allotment Society, local schools and other education bodies.

The aim is to encourage community growing and develop outdoor learning spaces so the communities in the Glynneath and Resolven areas can learn to grow together.

The project, is supported by a grant from the Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund and led by Glynneath Training Centre Environment Department.

Collaboration

Acting in collaboration can help us deliver on the green recovery themes

As we all look to take environmental action, there will be plenty of opportunities to work in collaboration. Look for other organisations that aim to take similar action, or have experience and skills that you can exchange. Link with environmental organisations, find your common ground and see what opportunities develop from making connections. Environmental volunteering is a great way to try things out.





Involvement

Involve your community and people with an interest in achieving the green recovery priorities

Ask your groups, members, networks, partners, funders: what are they enthusiastic about or interested in doing in line with the green recovery themes? Raise awareness and engage through networks and with audiences - the more people know about what you are doing, the higher the chance they will get involved.

Women4Resources



<http://www.women4resources.org/>

Supporting a network of women and girls in Swansea and Africa, projects are based on feedback from their users.

This has led to initiatives with environmental themes: to nurture green spaces to support well-being in the UK, and develop sustainable, women-led business opportunities such as setting up equipment loan schemes and maintaining beehives in Africa, as well as initiatives such as sewing reusable period pads.

This involvement has helped communities and the environment, locally and globally.



Hopefully these case studies have given you an idea of the different actions you can take and how they might come about.

Chances are you already take some environmental action. What might be new for you is the greater focus on environmental impacts and prioritising them in a way you didn't before.

This might mean introducing some new day to day actions, such as recycling everything you can, having an office procedure to make sure lights and equipment are off at the end of the day, or committing to purchasing food and refreshments from local suppliers.

These may be small actions, but collectively across the region they will make a big difference.

Beyond this, you may be able to deliver projects or initiatives that support the green recovery - you don't need to be an environmental organisation to do this.

For example, if your focus is on supporting young people with education and skills development, you might consider training or experiences that develop green skills such as installing solar panels or green roofs, building planters and wildlife features for community gardens or learning repair skills.



You may need guidance in exploring these opportunities.

This could be done using the resources referenced in all the sections of this toolkit, or by seeking additional focussed support, as these case studies show.

St Pauls Church, Sketty



<https://www.parishofsketty.org/>

This church was already environmentally conscious, buying green cleaning products and food from sustainable sources, but wanted to do more.

Using the A Rocha Eco Churches scheme, they completed a questionnaire which identified the actions they already took and introduced them to ideas they hadn't considered before.

This led them to installing solar panels and planting a new community orchard on the grounds. They are keen to engage more with the community and help other groups take environmental action.

Social Business Wales



<https://businesswales.gov.wales/socialbusinesswales/>

If you're a socially motivated organisation that is trading (or seeking to trade), support is available from Social Business Wales to help you consider how the green recovery links with the sustainable development of your organisation.

The support helps consider your current activity and explores what you would like to do.

The outcome is a plan of action and a concise 'eco code' document used to promote your ambitions, connect with your audience and encourage collaborations.





Part Two: How to Green your organisation

In this section, we look at some key areas of action that organisations can take in support of a green recovery.

These include planning for environmental action within your organisation, taking action on six different environmental themes (energy, waste, water, procurement, transport and biodiversity) and engaging with the wider community.

2a: Planning for environmental action

The key with planning environmental action is to focus on aligning this with your organisation's vision and aims, to bring together interested parties and do what you're enthusiastic about.

Set out your environmental priorities

- You could set up a green team or eco-committee, a mix of staff, volunteers and collaborators who learn from and help each other. A simple SMART action plan will help keep things moving. Within your field of work, there may already be resources to help.

You might need some additional training or up-skilling. Local training providers often offer free or low-cost courses or mentoring around sustainability or environmental action in the workplace. Accredited schemes are also available, such as the Carbon Literacy delivered in Wales by Cynnal Cymru <https://cynnalcymru.com/carbon-literacy/> which seeks to improve understanding about climate change, what it means for your organisation and how to talk about it with stakeholders.

- Learn by volunteering with other projects and replicate initiatives, e.g. creating a courtyard garden for wildlife. The Environmental Volunteering section will help you explore this.
- A more formal approach to managing your environmental issues is to use or develop an Environmental Management System, such as the Green Dragon Standard <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/green-dragon/>. This is a useful step-by-step approach to reviewing and implementing environmental best practice.



Support your environmental champions

These include planning for environmental action within your organisation, taking action on six different environmental themes (energy, waste, water, procurement, transport and biodiversity) and engaging with the wider community.

- They're inspired to act, and could already be part of your team, a client or associate, one of your volunteers or another organisation you collaborate with.
- Listen to what they say, consider what permissions you can give them or how to support what they want to do and remove any barriers. Give them time to try new things.

Check out what others are doing

- Find case studies and examples of other organisations that do the same kind of work that you do, which have already introduced environmental activities.

There are many online resources that can help you learn from initiatives close by and further away, such as Carbon Copy

<https://carboncopy.eco/> or Hubbub
<https://www.hubbub.org.uk/>

- Remember to reach out to groups for support, e.g. contact The Environment Centre, Swansea Environmental Forum or Renew Wales and find out about the help they provide.

Act with your networks

- Publicising your Environmental Policy or Eco Code will share your ambitions with your stakeholders, highlighting opportunities or sparking ideas for collaboration. The more people know you are taking environmental action, the more likely they are to get involved.

Centre for African Entrepreneurship



<https://www.caentr.org/home>

This Swansea-based organisation aims to inspire, support and promote entrepreneurship and remove barriers to employment within ethnic minority communities and help those that have experienced barriers to employment.

In a Lottery-funded programme to address environmental issues, the Centre want to increase environmental understanding and capacity within the organisation; to expand their training, employment and business support services to include environment-related topics; and enable them to support BAME communities across the Swansea region to participate more fully in environmental activities.

Ten members of staff took part in a Carbon Literacy course and a programme of webinars and activities, along with information packs, is being designed for beneficiaries.

Sources of further information and support:

The Environment Centre - A hub for the environment movement in Swansea. Exchange views, take action, learn new things, and shop ethically and plastic free. www.environmentcentre.org.uk

Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF)
Promoting and facilitating environmental sustainability in Swansea through projects, events and partnerships. swanseaenvironmentalforum.net

Renew Wales - Helping communities in Wales reduce their carbon footprint, adapt to the impacts of climate change and live more sustainably. <https://renewwales.org.uk/>



2b: Managing Energy

Energy is required for many activities that we undertake in society, including heating or cooling buildings and water, cooking or cooling food, manufacturing products and travelling.

Over the past two centuries, most of the energy we used has been generated from burning fossil fuels, and this has had a dramatic impact on the environment, the climate and our health.

Actions that can be taken focus on:

Using less energy

- Look for ways to reduce energy by switching off equipment when not in use e.g. computers and monitors.
- Install energy efficiency measures such as wall and roof insulation in buildings, timer switches for lights and drinks coolers.
- Choose the most energy efficient options when buying new equipment such as fridges or water heaters.
- Monitor your energy use, and perhaps install a Smart Meter to help you identify where savings can be made.

Renewable generation

- If you own a building, consider installing renewable energy generators such as solar panels or energy recovery systems such as heat pumps.
- If you pay energy bills, opt for a supplier that generates or purchases its energy from renewable sources (a green tariff).
- Support local community energy projects and national campaigns to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

Down to Earth Project



<https://downtoearthproject.org.uk/>

Down to Earth Project delivers innovative and inclusive approaches to sustainable building, learning and well-being programmes and adventure activities.

They have a particular focus on working with vulnerable and disadvantaged people to construct amazing buildings using a mix of traditional and cutting-edge low carbon building technologies. These have included a spectacular multi-award winning residential and training facility at one of their own sites and a cluster of innovative homes in a Gower village that will generate more electricity than they consume.

Sources of further information and support:

Energy Saving Trust - An independent organisation providing advice on energy efficiency and clean energy. energysavingtrust.org.uk

Awel Aman Tawe - A community renewable energy charity with 20 years' experience of researching, developing and delivering renewable energy projects at a local level. www.awelamantawe.org.uk

Gower Power - A community co-operative that develops renewable energy projects and helps establish other ecologically focussed enterprises. www.gowerpower.coop

Smart Energy GB - Government backed campaign supporting the rollout of Smart Meters in the UK. They provide lots of useful information about Smart Meters and energy efficiency. www.smartenergygb.org/en



2c: Cutting Out Waste

We're moving away from 'waste' to a 'circular economy'.

Waste may be something we no longer need, but it's also a resource - we shouldn't create it unnecessarily and must make the most of it when we do. Positive action can generate funds or

reduce spend, build community and connections and boost the local economy, all while protecting the environment. Considering what you buy, how you use it and what you do when you can't use it any more can make a big difference. How can we do this? Simply follow...

The Waste Hierarchy



Reduce - Avoid waste in the first place, join the refill revolution.

Find alternatives to single use items where you can. Simple but effective swaps include using scrap paper to take messages and notes, use local refill shops for cleaning materials or sign up as a water refill station for your community.



Reuse - This takes time, but it's worth it to give someone else a chance to use what you don't need.

- Local authority recycling centres are increasingly focussed on reuse and work with the third sector to do this. Look for these opportunities first.
- There is a wide community reuse network through social media market places.
- Join groups and always advertise before throwing away: one person's trash is another's treasure. Give to charity shops and support emerging initiatives, such as Benthlyg Library of Things.



Repair - A vital service for communities and one that uses and builds local skills.

- Support the small business network or look at connecting with groups championing repair opportunities for everyone, such as Repair Cafés and Men's Sheds (details in the volunteering directory).
- Helping your own network share skills, such as through a sewing repair group, is a great volunteer opportunity too.



Rot - Preventing food waste to landfill is simple and effective.

- Try composting, sign up for a food waste collection, help set up local initiatives linked with networks such as Community Fridge or Fair Share Cymru.
- Find like-minded groups to set up your own, like a new project such as 'Sweet Pickings Swansea' (picking surplus fruit from trees to be used by food banks).



Recycle - Build upon existing successes!

- Have recycling bins available and use simple signage and conversation to ensure they're used properly. WRAP Cymru have a helpful resource library <https://wrapcymru.org.uk/resources/campaign-assets>
- Connect with local networks that recycle for fundraising. There are a huge number of options now available, including the Terracycle network.



Chaddesley Community Garden



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/560281011377013>

When the time came to dispose of old riot shields, South Wales Police considered other options to landfill.

A little research showed that they could be used to build greenhouses.

After connecting with the Swansea Bay Community Green Spaces Project, they were able to provide greenhouses to charities and community groups.

This included Chaddesley Community Garden, who put the shields to good reuse to help deliver its aim to establish a community orchard on a patch of waste ground.

Sources of further information and support:

Benthyg Library of Things - Benthyg Cymru is Wales' Library of Things and has one simple goal; to make borrowing as easy as popping out for a loaf of bread.

<https://www.benthyg-cymru.org/>

Beyond Recycling Swansea @ The Environment Centre - This initiative aims to mainstream reuse, repair and recycling by supporting communities and groups to take their own action. It's the place to go for advice and practical help to boost these activities in your own area

<https://www.environmentcentre.org.uk/beyond-recycling-swansea>

Wales Recycles - Practical information to help you recycle, including campaign resources

<https://walesrecycles.org.uk/>

Swansea Council - For information and advice on local waste collections and services

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/recycling>

NPT Council - For information and advice on local waste collections and services

<https://www.npt.gov.uk/1422>



2d: Wise with Water

Water is abundant in Wales, but this may change, and is already not the case in many places.

Treating and distributing water for consumption uses energy and has environmental impacts.

Changes to our climate is results in more extreme rainfall and higher temperatures, leading to a greater risk of flooding and draught.

Water environments are also being damaged by pollutants.

Avoid wasting water

- Avoid leaks by insulating pipes against freezing and keeping pipework in good repair. Ensure that any leaks that do occur are dealt with quickly.
- Choose the most water efficient options when buying new equipment, such as washing machines, and install water saving devices such as dual flush toilets and water-efficient taps.
- Fit a water metre so water use can be monitored more easily and leaks can be detected quickly.

Make good use of water

- Collect rain water using a water butt connected to a downpipe for watering garden areas and indoor plants. If constructing a new building, consider using rainwater to flush toilets (grey water).
- If you manage land, use a SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System) to alleviate the risk of flooding and to support biodiversity.

Protect our water environments

- Choose eco-friendly options for cleaning products such as washing-up liquid, and never dispose of chemicals and waste products in drains. Ensure sanitary products and other disposable materials are binned rather than flushed down toilets.

The Environment Centre



www.environmentcentre.org.uk

In line with its role as a demonstration project, the Centre has a number of features which support efficient water retention and reuse.

Water butts collect rainwater which is used in the urban garden. A down-pipe has been diverted to a raised planter helping a wider range of species thrive. Green roofs and a living wall also slow the flow of rainwater to the surface water drainage system. Only environmentally friendly products are used on site and reuse options are widely available to prevent single use items polluting water environments.

Sources of further information and support:

Waterwise - An independent, not-for-profit organisation focussed on reducing water consumption in the UK providing lots of tips and resources on water efficiency.

www.waterwise.org.uk

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water - The not-for-profit business that provides drinking water and sewerage services for most of Wales. Offering advice of saving water and reducing pollution.

www.dwrcymru.com/en

WaterAid - An international charity that provides clean water, decent toilets and hygiene knowledge to people around the world who don't yet have access to these.

www.wateraid.org/uk



2e: Sustainable Procurement

Where you buy things from is important.

As consumers, we can influence supply chains and companies to be more ethical, socially responsible and environmentally friendly.

For a green recovery, we should prioritise local suppliers and try to help build the local circular economy too. This will build skills, expertise and employment in the Swansea Bay region.

Remember to think about the full life-cycle of a product.

Consider product sources

- Look for standards related to your purchases, such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for wood products
- Follow sustainable procurement guidance related to your purchases, such as The Wildlife Trusts guidance on 'Peat Free' composts.
- Choose items that have a high percentage recycled content or are easily recyclable themselves, especially paper and plastics. This helps build the circular economy.
- Use or offer fairly traded goods - Teas, coffees and snacks are simple switches.

Short-term vs long-term costs

It can be more expensive initially, but investing in higher quality products can save you more over the lifetime of an item.

- 'A' rated electrical appliances will save on longer-term running costs
- More robust items will need replacing less frequently
- Introduce reusable rather than single use or disposable items
- A good cleaning, maintenance and repair regime is a simple way to keep items in use for longer.

Go local

- As well as supporting the local economy, this reduces the amount of transportation linked to your purchases, a significant source of carbon emissions and pollution.
- Use local suppliers, makers and growers, especially those using locally sourced materials
- Support the region's food growing networks
- Refill shops are cost effective and increasingly popular. Switching to eco-friendly cleaning and hygiene product refills are easy swaps.
- Most of all, consider if you need something new in the first place. A green recovery is about making the best use of our resources, and sometimes that means not using them at all.



Cae Tan CSA



<https://www.caetanrsa.org/>

Cae Tan is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project based on The Gower Peninsula which grows and supplies fresh, seasonal, biodynamic produce to its members on a weekly basis throughout the year.

This not-for-profit social enterprise is helping other CSA schemes to establish too, increasing the opportunities for local food production and procurement.

They also offer a wide range of volunteering and educational opportunities, so we can all learn more about our food while supporting local procurement options.

Sources of further information and support:

Forest Stewardship Council - FSC has developed a system of forest certification and product labelling that enables people to identify responsibly sourced wood, paper and other forest products.
<https://fsc.org/en>

The Wildlife Trust - How to go peat free
Guidance on sustainable gardening, from a federation of 46 independent wildlife conservation charities.
<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-go-peat-free>

Fair Trade Wales - The national organisation for Fair Trade education, policy, procurement, support and campaigning in Wales.
<https://fairtradewales.com/>





2f: Transport and Travel

The way most people travel has become dependent on fossil fuels, with private car use the dominant mode of transport.

Our travel choices can have a huge impact on health and wellbeing through exhaust pollution and road accidents.

Public transport can reduce these impacts, and switching to walking or cycling for more journeys can also have a positive effect on our health.



Explore the options

- Find out how staff travel to, and during, work and how clients access your services. Explore what alternatives might be possible and develop a travel plan to support more sustainable and healthier travel such as car sharing, public transport and cycling.
- Research local public transport services and promote them to staff and clients. If the times are not convenient, ask the providers to change their timetables or consider adjusting your work or activity times to fit better with existing services.
- Find out about discounts and deals for public transport or active travel such as the cycle to work scheme.

Support healthier choices

- Work with local cycling groups to offer cycle training to staff and to help them plan cycle routes from home to work.
- If you offer travel expenses for car use, mirror this for those using bicycles.
- If your organisation uses fleet vehicles, look at switching to electric.
- Install electric charging points for staff and/or clients to use, and provide facilities for cyclists such as cycle storage and a shower.
- Consider allowing staff to work from home or to use office facilities close to them to reduce the need for commuting.



Hub on the Hill Community e-Bike Station



https://www.facebook.com/MP_hubonthehill/

Having identified a local interest, the Hub on the Hill in Mount Pleasant Swansea developed a project to offer greener travel options for their community.

The group raised funds through a Swansea Council crowdfunding scheme to set up a lockable bike shelter on an underused car park and host e-bike chargers, two e-bikes and a mountain e-trike. They also joined the Environment Centre's bike repair station network.

The group are keen to promote collaborative mobility and a sharing economy, understanding that these go hand in hand with reducing our environmental impact and increasing our wellbeing.

Sources of further information and support:

Sustrans UK - National charity working to improve everyday journeys for everyone, managing the National Cycle Network and providing support for active travel. www.sustrans.org.uk

BayTrans - Promoting sustainable travel in the Swansea Bay area. swanseabaywithoutacar.co.uk

Traveline Cymru - A 'one-stop-shop' for travel information in Wales including bus, coach, train, walking and cycling routes. www.traveline.cymru

CoMoUK - A leading charity in sustainable travel promoting shared transport solutions as an alternative to private car ownership. como.org.uk

Go Ultra Low - A joint government and industry campaign to provide information about switching to electric vehicles. www.goultralow.com



2g: Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life and the ecosystems in which they live.

For centuries this has been under threat from human activities that reduce the space for nature, create pollution and affect the climate.

The benefits of a biodiverse natural environment are numerous, and we need to turn around the trend and help nature recover.

Make space for nature

- If you have a building or land, support biodiversity by creating homes for wildlife such as bird boxes, or even a simple log pile can provide a shelter for some creatures.
- Provide food sources such as bird feeders and pollinator friendly plants.

Create new habitats or wild spaces, such as letting an area of lawn go unmowed to allow wildflowers to grow. Water habitats are really important (e.g. ponds and boggy areas).

- Plant native trees and hedgerows as these can support many different species and have additional benefits such as providing shade and reducing flooding.
- Support a community growing project on your property or in a local green space – a great way for staff to engage with the local community and nature.





Protect nature from harm

- Avoid use of herbicides, pesticides and chemical fertilisers; use eco-friendly cleaning products and never dispose of chemicals and waste materials down the drain.
- Keep control of invasive and non-native species.

Friends of Craig Gwladus Woods



www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Craig-Gwladus-314371098763357

Craig Gwladus Country Park is a woodland near Cilfrew and Cadoxton with great views and walks.

The Friends of Craig Gwladus Woods work in partnership with the Countryside and Wildlife Team of Neath Port Talbot Council to manage the site for wildlife and public access, as well as managing the coal mining heritage of the site.

They also provide education or awareness raising of the heritage and wildlife of the site working in close partnership with the neighbouring schools and other environmental organisations such as Coed Lleol.

The group offers multiple opportunities for people to do volunteer work.

Sources of further information and support:

Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales

- Charity that manages some of the region's most precious wild places and provides advice and ideas for supporting wildlife. www.welshwildlife.org/things-to-do/wildlife-gardening

RSPB Cymru - The country's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home with great online resources.

www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep

Wales Biodiversity Partnership -

Bringing together key players from the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote and monitor biodiversity in Wales and support local nature partnerships.

www.biodiversitywales.org.uk

Swansea Bay Community Green Spaces Project

- Helping communities make greater use of green spaces with a useful online toolkit.

swanseacommunitygreenspaces.weebly.com



2h: Engaging the Wider Community

Community engagement is one of the cornerstones of improving environmental activity.

Through promotion, awareness and inclusion, your organisation's staff, volunteers, clients and local community can learn about the issues, start to take action themselves, and get more involved with your organisation's environmental aims.

This will help drive the behavioural change we need to deliver a green recovery.

Share what you're doing

- The community needs to know that you are taking environmental action and that there are opportunities to get involved.
- Harness the power of social media; follow local and national initiatives and share the messages important to you. Promote what you're doing about it.
- Use posters in staff rooms, communal areas and on your website to raise awareness of your activity and encourage conversations.
- Consider having an environmentally focused page on your website. Keep it simple, a copy of an environmental policy, your main aims, and any updates on activity you want people to get involved in. Include links or signposting to resources you think would be useful.

Use campaigns for community outreach

Use campaigns for community outreach. Link your activities with local and national environmental campaigns and encourage the community to get involved too.

- Take action on awareness days – for example, host a pop up repair café for your local community on International Repair Day; or

encourage your team to take public transport, cycle or walk to work on 'World Car Free Day'.

- Connect with grassroots campaigns to improve your local area: Living Streets, Caru Cymru, Sustrans are good examples.

Swansea Community Farm



swanseacommunityfarm.org.uk

Swansea Community Farm is a community-led charity. The only city farm in Wales, it's home to farm animals, allotments, wildlife areas, bee hives and a community café.

The Farm exists to improve wellbeing, build skills and create a sense of belonging, alongside producing local food and caring for the natural environment.

Engaging the local community has always been a priority for the project, and many volunteers and participants in their youth activities come from the locality.

Not only a good example of community engagement, they provide ample opportunities for teams and volunteers to get involved.

Sources of further information and support:

Living Streets - The UK charity for everyday walking
<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/>

Caru Cymru - Keep Wales Tidy - An initiative to inspire everyone to take action and care for the environment, focusing on eradicating litter and waste
<https://www.keepwalestidy.cymru/pages/category/caru-cymru>

Sustrans Cymru - The charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/about-us/our-work-in-wales>



Part Three: Environmental volunteering guide

3a - Introduction to volunteering and the Environment

Public interest in the environment has been increasing over recent years, as we become ever more aware of the impacts our actions have on the planet; and the opportunities around us to do something positive, whether planting trees, picking up litter, repairing items to avoid waste or growing things to get closer to nature.

This increased interest has been particularly evident during the Covid pandemic.

Volunteering with organisations that do environment-related activities is a great way to contribute to a green recovery and a better world for everyone.

In this section, we begin by suggesting some of the benefits of volunteering and where you can get more information and support - whether you are an individual looking for voluntary work, an organisation exploring opportunities for its staff or clients, or a group that is looking for help from volunteers.

We then move on to outline the wide range of volunteer activities that support the environment, with local examples to illustrate key themes.

Finally, you'll find a dedicated directory of organisations, groups and projects that offer environmental volunteering opportunities, whether locally or further afield.

Benefits of environmental volunteering

There are many different reasons why people choose to volunteer. Here are just some of the benefits of volunteering, both in general and specifically with environmental projects.

- Learning new skills or improving the ones you already have; gaining practical work experience to improve your CV, boost your confidence and help you get paid work.
- Doing something you feel passionate about or trying new things.
- Socialising and making new friends; spending time with people who might otherwise feel isolated or undervalued.
- Passing on skills and sharing your experience with others in your community.
- Improving your physical and mental health and well-being; keeping active, getting closer to nature and feeling personal satisfaction from helping others and the planet.
- Helping your community become a cleaner, greener and more interesting place to live.
- Protecting and improving the natural environment and wildlife for the benefit of everyone now and for future generations.
- Volunteering with work colleagues as part of a corporate volunteer scheme can help with team building and develop stronger links between your business or organisation and the local community.
- Some volunteer projects also offer time-credits to volunteers which they can spend on things like training courses or leisure activities.



Finding environmental volunteering opportunities

There are several local and national organisations that provide information and advice to anyone wanting to volunteer and to organisations or projects wanting to work with volunteers.

A good starting point is your local volunteer centre which provides a one-stop resource for information, advice, training and guidance on all aspects of volunteering. Volunteer centre staff try to link the skills, experiences, time and enthusiasm of local people who are wanting to volunteer with organisations that are seeking volunteer help to deliver their services and activities. There are two volunteer centres in the Swansea Bay region:

Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service (NPTCVS)

T Margaret Thorne,
17-19 Alfred Street,
Neath, SA11 1EF
Tel: 01639 631246
info@nptcvs.org.uk
www.nptcvs.wales

Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS)

Voluntary Action Centre,
7 Walter Road,
Swansea SA1 5NF
Tel: 01792 544000
scvs@scvs.org.uk
www.scvs.org.uk



There is also a very useful online platform called **Volunteering Wales** (volunteering-wales.net/vk/volunteers/index.htm) which helps match potential volunteers to hundreds of volunteering opportunities from across Wales, including environmental projects.

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (wcva.cymru/volunteering) and Third Sector Support Wales

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/volunteering/>) also have lots of useful information and guidance about volunteering on their websites.

Volunteering Matters

(employee.volunteeringmatters.org.uk) and **Business in the Community Cymru** (www.bitc.org.uk/business-in-the-community-cymru) are just two of the national organisation that work with businesses and organisations to arrange employee volunteering opportunities for staff, whether one-off team building days to long-term partnerships with local charities and schools.

For information and ideas about volunteering with environmental projects and groups across the Swansea Bay area, **The Environment Centre** in Swansea is a great place to go. They offer lots of volunteer opportunities directly but can also signpost you to other organisations that welcome volunteers or help you start your own environmental project.



3b - Types of environmental volunteering

Caring for places

Keeping neighbourhoods free from litter, taking part in beach cleans and looking after local parks, green spaces or heritage sites can all be very rewarding.

These activities are often outdoors and involve working with others so can be great for your health and socialising. Litter picks and beach cleans are often organised by local groups with support from national organisations such as Keep Wales Tidy and the Marine Conservation Society. In recent years, a network of litter picking hubs have been established where litter picking equipment can be borrowed.

An increasing number of parks, community green spaces and heritage sites have 'Friends of...' groups that help to look after and improve these much loved sites. This might include site maintenance, clearing litter, tree planting or organising events and activities.

Examples of local groups involved in caring for places include

Rosehill Quarry Community Park Group, My Green Valley, Mumbles Development Trust, Penllergare Trust, Clyne Valley Community Project, St. Madoc Centre, Swansea Canal Society, Neath & Tennant Canal Trust, and lots of different 'Friends of...' groups and residents associations. Further information and contact details can be found in the directory.

My Green Valley



<https://www.facebook.com/mygreenvalleyorg/>

My Green Valley is a community organisation set up to help keep Swansea Valley green, clean and beautiful.

They are passionate about reducing litter, maintaining green spaces, and promoting recycling and environmental projects.

The group organises regular litter picking events in Pontardawe, Clydach, Trebanos and the surrounding areas.

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Wild about nature

Helping out at nature reserves or with conservation projects is a great way to enjoy fresh air, be active and learn about the natural world.

This could involve tree planting, hedgerow maintenance, removing invasive species or installing bird or bat boxes. There are often opportunities to learn new practical skills, sometimes with useful vocational qualifications, in hedge-laying, drystone wall building, coppicing, etc. and in the safe use of tools such as chainsaws and strimmers. You can also take part in wildlife surveys to help monitor local wildlife.

Examples of local groups involved in nature conservation work include

Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW), Coed Lleol (Small Woods Wales), National Trust, Woodland Trust, RSPB, Kilvey Hill Community Woodland Volunteers and numerous other groups that focus on particular sites (e.g. 'Friends of...' groups) or specific animal types such as butterflies, bats, badgers, amphibians and reptiles.

Many of the community groups referred to in the caring for places section also undertake conservation activities as part of their site management work.

Public bodies such as local councils, national park authorities, Swansea University and Natural Resources Wales sometimes offer volunteering opportunities with projects at sites that they manage, such as nature reserves and country parks.

Further information and contact details can be found in the directory.



Coed Lleol (Small Woods Wales)



<https://www.smallwoods.org.uk/en/coedlleol/>

Coed Lleol (Small Woods Wales) help to improve the health and wellbeing of people across Wales through woodland and nature-based activities.

Project officers in both Neath Port Talbot and Swansea run Actif Wood Wales activity groups designed to offer participants the opportunity to learn new skills, gain confidence, make friends, spend time outdoors and protect the natural environment.

The organisation also manages a Lost Peatlands project to restore areas of historic peatland between Neath Port Talbot and Rhondda Cynon Taf, which also involves volunteers.



Growing together

Gardening and food growing have become increasingly popular community activities. Community gardens, orchards and allotments have been popping up in many neighbourhoods or alongside community facilities offering people the opportunity to grow together, learn new skills and socialise.

Growing activities can have positive effects on health and wellbeing and some projects are particularly targeted at people recovering from ill health or at children and young people.

Groups that manage community growing projects often need help with organisational tasks such as publicity, events and fundraising, as well as practical help with horticulture and on-site construction.

At a larger scale, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes are social enterprises which involve community members in the production and distribution of food with volunteers helping in the field, in the packing areas, on delivery rounds or in education activities.

Examples of local groups involved in community growing activities include

Sarn Helen Community Garden, Clydach Community Garden, Coeden Fach Community Tree Nursery, O Dan yr Awyr / Under the Sky Project at Glynneath Training Centre, Cae Tan CSA and Big Meadow CSA.

Networks such as Swansea Community Growing Network can signpost to many other local growing projects and provide support for setting up new projects.

Further information and contact details can be found in the directory.

Sarn Helen Community Garden



<http://www.doveworkshop.org.uk/garden/>

Sarn Helen Community Garden The Dove Workshop in Banwen created accessible community growing spaces on previously disused and badly overgrown land owned by Onllwyn Community Council.

The project includes built raised beds, constructed paths and large poly tunnels. There are 23 families using the raised beds and one of the poly tunnels to grow fresh produce while the other poly tunnel is used for horticulture and woodwork sessions with participants and volunteers.



Animal Welfare

Helping to take care of animals can be a hugely positive experience and great for our mental health.

Community farms, rescue centres and sanctuaries offer lots of different volunteering opportunities from hands-on activities such as taking a dog for a walk or cleaning out pens, to support tasks such as helping out at a reception desk or in a charity shop (see more below about these types of volunteering task).

Examples of local groups involved in animal welfare in and around the Swansea Bay area include

Swansea Community Farm, Llys Nini Animal Centre, PDSA, T -Nant Cat Sanctuary and the Gower Bird Hospital. Further information and contact details can be found in the directory.

T-Nant Cat Sanctuary



<https://tynantcatsanctuary.org/>

A small, independent, not-for-profit organisation, based in Cymmer, Port Talbot that rescues unwanted and abandoned cats and kittens and tries to find them suitable forever homes.

They are run completely by volunteers and funded solely by public donations.

There may be lots of reasons to help out at T -Nant, but the main reason is to help ensure the cats are happy, safe, clean, healthy and loved. There is always lots to do at the sanctuary from washing, brushing and feeding the cats to improving their social skills and re-building their trust in humans.



Back to basics with the 3 R's

There are many third sector projects which aim to reduce waste through reuse, repair and recycling.

The Environment Centre's Beyond Recycling Swansea project supports several community initiatives aimed at reducing waste.

Repair cafes are regular pop-up events where volunteers fix household items for free in order to reduce waste, teach skills and bring communities together. In recent years, repair cafes have been established in several community facilities across Swansea Bay, including Seven Sisters Rugby Club, Clydach Community Hall, the Environment Centre and Swansea Council's Tip Treasures store.

A national organisation, Repair Café Wales, has helped many new repair cafes become established and offers lots of information, advice and support to local groups. Men's Sheds projects often include repair activities and some community projects focus on specific items such as the bike repair project, Re-Cycle South Wales.



Volunteering with any of these types of projects can be great for people with good practical skills but this isn't always necessary. Although some volunteers may be experts or love fixing and tinkering with things, many are simply passionate about not wasting resources and can help with administration or staff the front desk at events.

Charity shops enable people to reuse unwanted items and 'Library of Things' schemes offer items of equipment for rent rather than buy to promote reuse, reduce consumption and save people money.

Examples of local groups involved in community repair, reuse and recycle activities include the Environment Centre, Re-Cycle Wales, Enfys Foundation, Swansea Community Workshops plus repair cafes, libraries of things and Men's Shed projects at various locations. Further information and contact details can be found in the directory.

The Men's Sheds Movement



<https://www.mensshedsymru.co.uk>

The Men's Sheds Movement
Men's Sheds are community spaces for men to connect, converse and create. Activities undertaken by Men's Sheds projects can vary greatly but often includes repairing and restoring, electronics, woodworking and gardening.

The Amman Valley Men's Shed in Lower Brynamman is involved in woodwork, bicycle repair and gardening.

The Crynant Men's Shed, based at the Crynant Community Centre, makes wooden planters.

The Clydach Men's Shed has refurbished an historic old blacksmith's forge to become their base and are building raised beds for flowers and vegetables (unlike most other sheds, this one opens its doors to women too).

Swansea Community Workshops on the City's High Street has large workshops and offers training and activities such as building planters, bird box making and stained glass.

There are several other Men's Sheds projects in the Swansea Bay area including at Glyncorwg, Sketty, Manselton, Clase, Skewen and Briton Ferry.

A list of local groups and contact details can be found on the Men's Sheds Cymru website.



Getting around

Supporting people to get to services they need or helping them make the most of the great outdoors can bring health and social benefits to volunteers and beneficiaries alike.

Community transport schemes enable access to shops, facilities and activities, particularly for older people or those with disabilities, where conventional public transport is infrequent or unsuitable for their needs. These schemes need drivers and organisers, as do projects running charity shops or delivery services (see other sections).

Some community groups, such as BikeAbility Wales, provide cycle training and access to specially adapted bikes so everyone can enjoy getting around on two wheels. There are also many walking and cycling groups that depend on knowledgeable and safety-conscious volunteers who are willing to plan and lead trips.

Some walking and wildlife volunteer groups also get involved in ensuring public rights of way and countryside trails are kept open and maintained.

Examples of local groups involved in community transport and cycling

include DANSA, Gower Voluntary Transport, Neath Port Talbot Community Transport, BikeAbility and Wheelrights. There are also volunteer car schemes in Swansea, Gorseinon, Pontarddulais, Upper Amman Valley and Ystalyfera. There are many walking groups in the region including the Cerdded y Cwm Walking Group, Lliw Walking Club, Swansea Outdoor Group, Cwm Walking, Pontarddulais Walking Club, Swansea Ramblers, Neath Port Talbot Ramblers and Tawe Trekkers.

Further information and contact details can be found in the directory.

DANSA Integrated Community Transport



<https://www.dansa.org.uk/>

DANSA is a not-for-profit community transport organisation serving the Dulais, Afan, Neath, Swansea and Amman valleys, providing a service to people who may not have easy access to conventional transport arrangements.

The scheme operates a variety of vehicles including cars, MPV's and minibuses that cover various and complex transport needs such as passengers who use wheelchairs.

The vehicles are driven mainly by paid staff, but DANSA also values its volunteer drivers who are willing to give up some of their valuable time to help them delivering their services.



Sharing knowledge

Working with children and young people or sharing with others your knowledge, skills or passion for the natural world can be very rewarding.

Some groups specialise in delivering activities for younger people or delivering training, whether formally or informally, and often welcome the help of volunteers.

Many of the groups mentioned in other sections rely on volunteers to train others or share their experience in gardening, repairing, leading walks, wildlife surveys, construction, customer care, etc.

Examples of local groups involved in environmental education and young people's activities include Forest School SNPT, Down to Earth Project, O Dan yr Awyr / Under the Sky Project and Cwm Clydach Kites and Dippers. Many other groups welcome volunteer speakers, trainers and event leaders with knowledge and skills in a wide variety of topics.

Further information and contact details can be found in the directory.

Forest School Swansea Neath Port Talbot



<https://www.forestschoolsnpt.org.uk>

Forest School SNPT has been providing inspiring approaches to outdoor learning and play since 2001.

They train others in how to use these approaches through a wide range of courses and also deliver projects directly to children and young people of all abilities.

The organisation welcomes volunteers to help with any aspect of their work, whether supporting Forest School sessions on a regular day every week with the same group during term time, or offering a few hours during the holidays for a Forest Fun Day. Alternatively, help is always needed in the office with things like publicity or fundraising, or helping to guide the organisation as a trustee.





Shops and cafes

Some charities and community groups run shops or cafes, often to raise funds for other activities or sometimes as a key part of their work e.g. selling environmentally friendly products or running a café at a nature site centre.

Volunteering at these types of facilities are great for those that enjoy dealing with customers or want to build their confidence and learn new skills.

Examples of local groups involved in shops and cafes supporting environmental projects include

the Environment Centre and local charity shops such as those run by the Enfys Foundation, RSPCA Llys Nini and the PDSA.

Further information and contact details can be found in the directory.

Llys Nini RSPCA Charity Shops

<https://rspca-llysnini.org.uk/charity-shops/>

Llys Nini Animal Centre is a local charity affiliated to the national RSPCA and based in extensive grounds in Penllergaer.

In addition to a large pet rescue and rehoming centre, the site supports environmental projects and a programme of public events. Llys Nini depends on a large team of volunteers helping at the animal centre, in their charity shops and at events. Volunteering in the charity shops may involve sorting donated goods, steaming clothes, helping to keep the shop clean and tidy, assisting with shop displays and serving customers. There are shops in Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot, Mumbles, Gorseinon and further afield. Volunteer drivers are also needed to keep a good supply of stock moving to the twelve charity shops across South Wales.

Speaking out

Many of the local groups that passionately campaign on environmental issues are part of wider movements or local branches of national or international organisations such as Greenpeace, RSPB or ActionAid.

Some groups listed under other sections may also engage in campaigning activities, particularly in relation to the site, species or issue that is central to their work.

Campaigning groups are sometimes involved in protests and direct action, but much of their activity involves sharing information, either online or by handing out leaflets in public places; encouraging people to sign petitions; writing to politicians or the media; and raising funds to support future campaigns.

Volunteering for these groups is a good way to channel your passion and knowledge about nature or environmental issues. There are also often opportunities to develop a range of communication skills. Hosting a fundraising event for a campaigning group or national charity is a great way to raise awareness while getting to know neighbours or having fun with friends.



Examples of local groups involved in campaigning on environmental issues

include Swansea Friends of the Earth, Neath Port Talbot Friends of the Earth, Swansea Fair Trade Forum, XR Neath Port Talbot, XR Swansea, Swansea Greenpeace and RSPB West Glamorgan Local Group.

Oxfam Local Groups and Shops



<https://www.oxfam.org.uk/shops/>

Oxfam is an international organisation working to eradicate poverty around the world. The organisation supports a wide range of projects including many related to climate change, access to clean water and sustainable farming.

There are many ways to volunteer with Oxfam such as working in a local shop or being part of a local campaigning group or fundraising group.

There are three shops in the Swansea Bay area, two in Swansea and one in Port Talbot, each with slightly different characteristics. The Oxfam shop in Castle Street Swansea is particularly active in campaigns and creative events, and also has been designated a Shop of Sanctuary in recognition of the role that asylum seekers and refugees play in the success of our shop.

Behind the scenes

Most voluntary organisations and community groups, including those involved in environmental projects, rely on volunteers that are willing to help with backroom tasks such as administration, computer work and sitting on committees.

If you are good at paperwork, enjoy handling data or like organising things, these are all much valued ways to support organisations.

If you are good at managing projects, people or resources, or interested in gaining skills in these areas, then you could consider becoming a trustee or a member of the management committee for an environmental group.

Bikeability Wales



<https://www.bikeabilitywales.org.uk/>

BikeAbility Wales is a charity based at Dunvant Rugby Club that provides cycling opportunities to people of all ages and abilities.

They have a large variety of specialist cycles designed to allow people to experience the freedom and empowerment of physical activity. The group runs cycle skills training for children and adult beginners, and offers free companion rides every week for those who need assistance.

The project relies on a team of volunteers to support the paid staff in delivering the activities whether assisting at cycle sessions, maintaining the bikes, raising funds or helping to administer the project.



3c: Directory of environmental volunteering opportunities

Staying local

Below are a selection of organisations, groups and projects in and around the Swansea Bay area that offer environmental volunteering opportunities.

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list, and there are many other local groups and projects supporting environmental volunteering opportunities in the Swansea Bay area.

Also, please note that the status of organisations and their contact details can change.

Afan Environment Volunteers

Aiming to improve the environment of the Afan Valley for the benefit of wildlife and people of the area. Activities include work days, training on environment issues such as meadow or woodland management or identification skills for specific species.

www.facebook.com/groups/134403727263961

Beyond Recycling Swansea

Helping to champion community action on reuse, repair, recycling and the circular economy.

www.environmentcentre.org.uk/beyond-recycling-swansea

Big Meadow CSA

An organic Community Supported Agriculture scheme based in Llangennith, Gower growing a weekly share of veg for 60 households, hosting volunteers and running a residential programme.

www.facebook.com/BigMeadowCSA

BikeAbility Wales

Enabling people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the pleasures and health benefits of cycling.

www.bikeabilitywales.org.uk

Bryncoch Environment Group

A group which interests itself in the environment of the Bryncoch locality through a range of varied activities.

www.facebook.com/Bryncoch-Environment-Group-163980687011934

Brynau Farm and Wood

Ancient woodland near Neath being restored into a haven for wildlife, allowing it to flourish and thrive.

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/brynau-farm

Cae Tan CSA

A Community Supported Agriculture Project based in Gower growing and supplying fresh, produce and running educational activities.

www.caetanca.org





Cerdded y Cwm Walking Group

A friendly walking group that meets every Tuesday at the Glynneath Training Centre with more strenuous walks on the first Saturday of each month.
www.walk-around-wales.com/pages/clubs/cerdded-y-cwm-walking-group.htm

Clydach Community Garden

Volunteer-run community project with an emphasis on wellbeing and environmentally friendly food growing, offering seasonal garden tasks and opportunities to learn new skills and socialise.
www.facebook.com/Clydach-Community-Garden-593188834508458

Clydach Heritage Centre

A small volunteer-run heritage and information centre in Coedgwilym Park alongside Swansea Canal with displays and refreshments available.
www.clydachheritagecentre.com

Clyne Valley Community Project

Improving access and organising activities to encourage the community to use and enjoy Clyne Valley.
www.clynevalleycommunityproject.co.uk

Coeden Fach Community Tree Nursery

A project with bases in Bishopston and Clyne Gardens offering training and practical experience of sustainable land management and providing native trees.
www.coedenfach.org.uk

Cwm Clydach Kites and Dippers RSPB Group

A local group for children aged 8 to 18 years enthusiastic about wildlife.
www.kitesanddippers.org.uk

Cwm Walking

A walking group based in Cwmafan in the beautiful Afan Valley which organises monthly walks.
www.facebook.com/groups/434178983640355

Cycling UK Swansea and West Wales

The local Cycling UK group organises rides every week as well as social events and holidays.
www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/swansea-and-west-wales

DANSA Integrated Community Transport

Serving people in the Dulais, Afan, Neath, Swansea and Amman valleys who may not have easy access to conventional transport.
www.dansa.org.uk

Down to Earth

Doing good things together – sustainable construction, adventures, well-being and therapy.
www.downtoearthproject.org.uk

Enfys Foundation

Reusing donated goods to help people in their time of need and diverting hundreds of tonnes from landfill.
enfys.org/volunteer

The Environment Centre

A hub for the environment movement in Swansea. Exchange views, take action, learn new things, and shop ethically and plastic free.
www.environmentcentre.org.uk

Forest School Swansea Neath Port Talbot

Raising awareness and appreciation of local woodlands and green spaces through recreational, educational and training activities.
www.forestschoolsnp.org.uk

F.A.N (Friends and Neighbours) Community Alliance

Working together to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants of Ethel Street in Neath and the surrounding area. Activities include litter picks and community growing.
www.facebook.com/BringingPeopleTogether.CreatingCommunity



Friends of City of Swansea Botanical Complex

Supporting and raising funds for Singleton Park Botanical Gardens and Clyne Gardens with lots of volunteering opportunities.

botanicsswansea.co.uk/volunteer-opportunities-1

Friends of Craig Gwladus Woods

Working in partnership with NPT Council to manage the site for wildlife, heritage and public access.

www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Craig-Gwladus-314371098763357

Friends of Jersey Park

Group of local volunteers who support and promote the development of their local park.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/113214569326020>

Friends of Margam Park

Working to conserve and enhance Margam Country Park, protect its natural beauty and raise the parks profile.

www.friendsofmargampark.co.uk

Friends of Morriston Park

A voluntary group set up to support, maintain and develop this historically significant park.

www.facebook.com/MorristonParkFriends

Friends of Neath Abbey Ironworks

A project concerning the future development of the site in Neath Abbey.

www.facebook.com/FriendsofNeathAbbeyIronCompany

Friends of Ravenhill Park

Caring for a peoples' park at the heart of the Fforestfach area.

ravenhillpark.com

Friends of the Gnoll Country Park

Working in partnership with NPT Council to involve the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment within this historic estate.

<https://www.facebook.com/gnollcountrypark/>

Gay Outdoor Club

A friendly mixed LGBT group with monthly walks in the whole of South and West Wales, weekends away, and other outdoor activities.

westwales@goc.org.uk

Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust

Working to protect, record and interpret our archaeological and historical inheritance.

www.ggat.org.uk

Gower Bird Hospital

Based in Pennard, Gower, its purpose is to care for sick, injured and orphaned birds and animals with the sole intention of returning them to the wild.

www.gowerbirdhospital.org.uk

Gower Ornithological Society

A society with a programme of talks and field trips for those interested in birds.

www.gowerbirds.org.uk

Kilvey Community Woodland Volunteers

An active group that organises regular task days, craft events and children's bushcraft activities each month.

www.facebook.com/groups/505039739516136

Lliw Walking Club

A popular walking club based in the Felindre area and organising a programme of walks of varying lengths.

www.lliwwalkingclub.co.uk



Llys Nini Animal Centre

A local charity working for animals, people and the environment with a pet rescue and rehoming service and several charity shops.

www.rspca-llysnini.org.uk

Mumbles Development Trust

Working for the regeneration of Mumbles and supporting community self-help projects.

www.mumblesdevelopmenttrust.org

My Green Valley

A community group helping to keep Swansea Valley green, clean and beautiful by reducing litter, maintaining green spaces and promoting environmental projects. The group organises regular litter picking events in Pontardawe, Clydach, Trebanos and the surrounding areas.

www.facebook.com/mygreenvalleyorg

The Neath & Tennant Canal Trust

Working to safeguard, restore and promote the Neath Canal and Tennant Canal with regular work parties.

www.neath-tennant-canals.org.uk

Neath Port Talbot Community Transport

Providing community transport for Social Services clients and the Townrider door to door service for passengers who wish to travel for shopping, church, appointments, etc.

www.npt.gov.uk/1512#NeathPortTalbotCommunityTransport

Neath Port Talbot Council Countryside and Wildlife Team

Council team managing designated sites, promoting biodiversity and supporting activities to connect people with the natural world.

www.npt.gov.uk/1577

Neath Port Talbot Friends of the Earth

Part of a movement transforming social beliefs and culture, creating a safer climate, flourishing nature, and healthy air, water and food.

friendsoftheearth.uk/groups/neathporttalbot

Neath Port Talbot Ramblers

The walks vary each week, from local walks around the Neath area to walks further afield.

www.neathporttalbotramblers.co.uk

O Dan yr Awyr / Under the Sky Project

A partnership project encouraging community growing and develop outdoor learning spaces in the Glynneath and Resolven areas.

www.glynneathtc.org.uk/services/under-the-sky

Penllergare Trust

Working to restore the historic Penllergare estate as a recreational green space.

www.penllergare.org

Pontarddulais Walking Club

A popular walking group that organises weekend across South and Mid Wales.

pontarddulaiswalkingclub.com

Re-Cycle Swansea

Restoring bikes to reduce waste, providing cycle maintenance training and volunteer opportunities.

recyclesouthwales.wordpress.com

Riverside Centre and Glantawe Outdoor Education Academy

A community project that has developed a beautiful public access parkland near Pontardawe and innovative outdoor education programmes.

www.arenapontardawe.com

Rosehill Quarry Group

Volunteer group maintaining a wildlife area and recreational space for those living in and around Mount Pleasant and Townhill.

www.facebook.com/groups/213944969114313

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (West Glamorgan Group)

The local RSPB Members Group holds walks and talks for the public.

www.rspb.org.uk/groups/westglamorgan



Sandfields Community Group (Port Talbot)

Local residents' group with a focus on improving the local environment. Projects include the development of Vivian Park Nature Garden.
<https://www.facebook.com/SandfieldsCommunityGroup>

St. Madoc Centre

Residential centre for groups in a stunning location offering outdoor activities and wildlife events.
www.stmadoc.co.uk

Sarn Helen Community Garden

Accessible community growing spaces set-up by the Dove Workshop in Banwen with raised beds and poly tunnels.
www.doveworkshop.org.uk/sarn-helen-community-garden

Swansea Built Heritage Group

A partnership of local organisations, community groups and individuals seeking to protect and promote historic buildings and heritage sites across Swansea.
swanseabuiltheritagegroup.weebly.com

Swansea Canal Society

Promoting the regeneration, renewal and restoration of Swansea Canal through recreation, education, culture and weekly clean-ups.
www.swansea canal society.com

Swansea Civic Society

Encouraging a quality and sustainable built environment for Swansea.
www.swansea civic society.org.uk

Swansea Community Transport Car Schemes

Providing transport to people who would otherwise be unable to access health, social and wellbeing services. Schemes run in Swansea, Gorseinon and Pontarddulais areas.
www.swansea.gov.uk/community transport

Swansea Community Farm

A small working farm helping to reconnect people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities with their food, their environment and each other.
www.swansea community farm.org.uk

Swansea Community Growing Network

Promoting and supporting community growing in Swansea to improve food security and community resilience.
swansea community growing.weebly.com

Swansea Community Workshops

A charity based in Swansea High Street that provides the opportunity for people of all backgrounds to pursue practical interests in a friendly communal environment.
www.sccw.org.uk

Swansea Council Nature Conservation Team

Protecting and enhancing areas of ecological and landscape importance in Swansea for the benefit of people and wildlife.
www.swansea.gov.uk/article/5428/Natural-Environment-and-Biodiversity

Swansea Council Recycling Team

Promoting recycling and waste minimisation in Swansea and running the Tip Treasures shop and repair cafe.
www.swansea.gov.uk/recycling

Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF)

Promoting and facilitating environmental sustainability in Swansea through projects, events and partnerships.
swansea environmental forum.net

Swansea Fair Trade Forum

A partnership of local organisations seeking to promote fair trade in Swansea.
www.fair tradeswansea.org.uk

Swansea Friends of the Earth

Local group of the international environmental movement to create a safer climate, flourishing nature, and healthy air, food and water.
friendsoftheearth.uk/groups/swansea



Swansea Greenpeace

A local campaign group of the organisation Greenpeace, taking action on global environmental issues.
www.facebook.com/groups/2768072559871211

Swansea Organic Gardening Group

The group has regular meetings to promote and support organic gardening.
www.facebook.com/groups/149473532102147

Swansea Outdoor Group

A friendly group for walking, cycling and other outdoor activities. YHA affiliated.
www.swanseaoutdoorgroup.org.uk

Swansea Ramblers

Friendly local walking group with a full weekly programme of short, medium and long walks throughout the year with social events and an emphasis on fun.
www.swansearamblers.org.uk

Tawe Trekkers

Local younger persons Ramblers group with a programme of walks, weekend trips and other social events throughout the year.
www.tawetrekking.org.uk

T -Nant Cat Sanctuary

A small charity based in Cymmer that rescues unwanted and abandoned cats and kittens and tries to find them suitable forever homes.
tynantcatsanctuary.org

Upper Amman Valley Community Car Scheme

Volunteer led car scheme that provides travel for medical appointments, shopping and other essential appointments or trips.
<https://www.facebook.com/upperammaivalleycommunitycarscheme>

Welsh Historic Gardens Trust (West Glamorgan Branch)

A conservation and heritage organisation set up to protect and conserve historic garden and park landscapes of Wales.
whgt.wales/?page_id=68

Wheelrights

Swansea Bay cycle campaign group helping to get people on bikes.
www.wheelrights.org.uk

Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (Swansea Local Group)

Wildlife events, activities and volunteering opportunities. Practical conservation volunteer days most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
www.welshwildlife.org/local-group/swansea-local-group

XR Neath Port Talbot

Local group of the Extinction Rebellion campaigning movement that uses non-violent civil disobedience to halt mass extinction and minimise the risk of social collapse.
www.facebook.com/XRNeathPortTalbot

XR Swansea

A diverse group of concerned and committed people from all walks of life, all ages, skills and backgrounds, part of the international Extinction Rebellion movement.
xrswansea.org.uk

Ystalyfera Community Car Scheme

Based at the Ystalyfera Development Trust offices assisting with medically related journeys for elderly local residents.
www.ystalyferadevelopmenttrust.org





Looking further afield

Below are some examples of national organisations and schemes that offer environmental volunteering opportunities.

The Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust

A national wildlife charity committed to conserving amphibians and reptiles and saving the disappearing habitats on which they depend.

www.arc-trust.org/volunteering

Badger Trust

Badger Trust exists to promote and enhance the welfare, conservation and protection of badgers, their setts, and their habitats.

www.badgertrust.org.uk

Bat Conservation Trust

Supports local bat groups across the UK to help secure the future of bats in our changing world.

www.bats.org.uk/support-bats/volunteer

Butterfly Conservation

A national charity with a vision of a world where butterflies and moths thrive and can be enjoyed by everyone, forever.

butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/south-wales-branch

Coed Lleol (Small Woods Wales)

Helping to improve the health and wellbeing of people across Wales through woodland and nature based activities including Actif Wood Wales groups and the Lost Peatlands project.

www.smallwoods.org.uk/en/coedlleol

Dynamic Dunescapes

An ambitious project rejuvenating some of the most important sand dunes in England & Wales for people, communities and wildlife with volunteer opportunities in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

dynamicdunescapes.co.uk/project/swansea-neath-port-talbot

Fair Trade Wales

The national organisation for Fair Trade education, policy, procurement, support and campaigning in Wales

fairtradewales.com

Keep Wales Tidy

Supporting litter picks, beach cleans and environmental projects across Wales.

www.keepwalestidy.cymru/pages/category/community-action-caru-cymru

Marine Conservation Society

The UK's leading charity for the protection of our seas, shores and wildlife.

www.mcsuk.org/seachampions

Men's Sheds Cymru

Men's Sheds are community spaces for men to connect, converse and create with activities including repair, restoration, electronics, woodworking and gardening.

www.mensshedscymru.co.uk

National Trust

Europe's largest conservation charity, looking after nature, beauty and history for the nation to enjoy with local sites and volunteering opportunities.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteer

Nature Volunteers

Website linking people with projects in nature volunteering across the UK.

www.naturevolunteers.uk

Oxfam

An international organisation working to eradicate poverty around the world with local charity shops and local campaigning and fundraising groups.

www.oxfam.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-with-us

PDSA

The UK's leading vet charity, providing free and low-cost treatment to pets in need.

www.pdsa.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer

Repair Café Wales

Helping many new repair cafes become established and offering information, advice and support to local groups.

repaircafewales.org

Woodland Trust

Planting trees and campaigning for better protection for woodlands and trees across the country.

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk



Part Four: Glossary

Active travel	Travel that requires active use of the human body, such as walking, cycling, running, skateboarding and roller-skating.
Air pollution	Air pollution occurs when harmful chemicals and particles are emitted to the air at a concentration that interferes with human health and welfare or harms the environment
Biodiversity	The variety of life on this planet and how it interacts within habitats and ecosystems. Biodiversity covers all plants, animals and micro-organisms on land and in water.
Blue and green Spaces	Green spaces, such as woods, meadows, allotments and parks, or blue spaces which are areas of water such as rivers, lakes, canals or even fountains, in an otherwise urban or built-up environment.
Carbon emissions	In the context of climate change, carbon dioxide released when fossil fuels such as oil, gas, and coal, are burned as fuel by vehicles and planes, factories and homes.
Circular economy	Based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems.
Climate emergency	A situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.
Co-production	An approach to decision-making and service design, in which service providers and users work together on an equal basis to create a service or come to a decision which works for them all. It is built on the principle that those who are affected by a service are best placed to help design it.
Community orchards	A collection of fruit and nut trees, often planted among grass full of wild flowers, shared by communities and growing in publicly accessible areas.
Community supported agriculture	A system that connects the producer and consumers within the food system more closely, by people purchasing a share from a local farm and periodically receiving produce throughout the farming season.



Community woodlands	Any woodland where the local community has some degree of control over how the woodland is run or managed. Often supported by a community woodland group.
Energy efficient	Using less energy to perform the same task. An example is insulation and double glazing in homes to reduce energy waste.
Fossil fuels	Fuels such as coal, gas, peat and oil, that are formed in the ground over a long time from dead plants and animals and are used up once they are burned for energy.
Nature emergency	The dramatic global loss in biodiversity and particularly the accelerated loss of the last 50 years.
Pollinator gardens	A green space planted and designed with specific nectar and pollen producing plants, in a way that attracts insects and other beneficial creatures that transfer pollen from flower to flower.
Renewable energy	Electricity from replenishable sources such as geothermal, hydropower, solar, and wind.
Resilience to climate change	Strengthening the ability of human and non-human systems to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate.
Sustainable development	Development that meets the needs of people today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Sustainable transport	Modes of transport, and systems of transport planning, which are consistent with wider concerns of sustainability, particularly reducing fossil fuel emissions.
Waste hierarchy	A ranking of waste management options according to what is best for the environment. Top priority is given to preventing waste, and the final option is landfill disposal.
Well-being of Future Generations Act	The Well-being of Future Generations Act is Welsh Government legislation which requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

West Glamorgan Volunteering Support is a multi-agency project creating shared resources to develop the knowledge, management and coordination of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas. It has been funded through the Welsh Government Volunteering Recovery Fund.

The project partners are:

Neath Port Talbot Council, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Swansea Council, Swansea Council for Voluntary Service and West Glamorgan Regional Partnership.

**For more information visit:
www.westglamorgan.org.uk/wgvs**