

PEOPLE AND WORK
ANNUAL REPORT
2020

Introduction from the Chairperson

The last year has seen People and Work continue both its action research work to address issues facing people in the Rhondda, and undertaking research and evaluation work on a range of relevant topics. This report illustrates some of the key work that has been done.

At the end of 2019 People and Work secured funding for a major project linking a range of organisations and communities in Wales. The Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad (Slate, Coal and Countryside) project is working with nine partners from areas in Wales, each defined by these industries, to build community involvement in developing the foundational economy. The project will run until the end of 2022.

I am writing this in April 2020 and COVID-19 has presented People and Work with some immediate problems in terms of staff remote working, which have been easily overcome. However, the necessary interaction with the people of the Rhondda is more difficult to resolve until lockdown restrictions are lifted. We are expecting that it won't be a sudden complete relaxation but a gradual process until cures and vaccines are available (2021?). This raises concerns about funding for research projects and actions becoming more difficult to secure as government and charity budgets will be squeezed for a number of years. Most worrying is the fact that employment and incomes across Wales are likely to deteriorate as the economy contracts. In a sense, we are back to the start of People and Work back in 1984 when unemployment reached high levels and led to the organisation being set up.

People and Work will adapt to the new situation and play its part in improving the lives of the people of the Rhondda and across Wales.

Gerard McHugh
Chair, Board of Trustees

Introduction

People and Work seeks to make a difference through two core functions:

- to promote the value of education and learning (for all age groups) as a tool for tackling inequalities and promoting employment, through a programme of community-based action research projects and social enterprise; and
- to undertake commissioned research and evaluation work for the public and third sectors in Wales addressing inequalities in areas such as education (formal and informal), health and employment.

People and Work's self-generated action research and social enterprise work is funded through charitable trusts and funds. Earned income comes from commissioned research and evaluation work done for the public and voluntary sectors. Any surplus earned through the research and evaluation contracts goes into action research work that aims to build understanding of effective ways to tackle the causes and effects of poverty, especially in relation to education, health and employment outcomes.

Dr Duncan Holtom heads up the research team working with Rhodri Bowen, senior researcher, and Heather Pells.

James Hall heads up our project and partnership work working with James Watts-Rees and Ethan Jones.

Natasha Burnell leads on social enterprise and environmental sustainability.

Sarah Lloyd-Jones is the director and works with our Trustees – Ged McHugh (Chairperson), Jan Huyton (Vice-Chairperson), Phil Watkins (Treasurer), Gareth Lewis, Christala Sophocleous and Gordon Davies.

In August 2020 our trustee Archie McCaffer died. Archie has supported People and Work for over 20 years and we miss him greatly.

Achievements and performance

Research and evaluation

The research team have continued with the evaluation of the Invest Local project, for the Building Communities Trust and this year produced a report on the first three years of the programme (<http://www.bct.wales/invest-local-the-first-three-years/>). Invest Local is working with thirteen communities across Wales to support community action, with funding from the National Lottery.

Work on evaluating the refreshed autism strategy for Wales and the development of an integrated autism service in each health authority area was completed for the Welsh Government. The work looked at how adults with autism are being supported in Wales. The final report was published on the Welsh Government website: <https://gov.wales/evaluation-integrated-autism-service-and-autistic-spectrum-disorder-strategic-action-plan-final>

Our research into the employment and skills support needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales for the Welsh Government has also been published: <https://gov.wales/refugees-employment-and-skills-support-study>

A study on the availability of sign language courses for the Welsh Government can be found at: <https://gov.wales/independent-review-british-sign-language-bsl-provision-adults-wales>

Other work this year for the public sector included evaluation support for a pilot CAMHS In-Reach to school project (until early 2021); a study looking at all-age mental health services; and evaluation of the Parents and Childcare into Employment project, with OB3, all for the Welsh Government.

The research team continues to provide evaluation support to voluntary organisations. In 2019, as well as the Building Communities Trust, we worked with Credu Carers, Disability Powys, Age Concern Powys, Citizen's Advice Bureau Powys, RVS (partners in the Connected Generations project); Spectacle Theatre; Community Music Wales; SOVA (now Change, Grow, Live) and the Prince's Trust.

People and Work continue to convene Talwrn, an informal group of voluntary sector leaders from across Wales. Over the last year twenty people from different parts of Wales and different types of voluntary and community organisations have contributed to Talwrn.

Project Work: Rhondda 1000

People and Work has continued its focus on the two Rhondda Valleys. A grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation early in 2019 has underpinned a strategy to involve as many people as possible in community action around learning, wellbeing and employment. The overall strategy has been 'badged' as Rhondda 1000 – setting a target of seeing 1000 local people doing new activities by 2025. Within this focus we have continued to build a holistic approach to exercise, health and fitness with local people.

In the past year the project team moved from a small room in Too Good to Waste in Treorchy to a large school hall in the former Pentre Juniors building (a mile down the valley), to accommodate stock management for PIAS. The move happened just before the lockdown and this has proved extremely beneficial as there is space for 10 people to work in a socially distanced way.



The Rank Foundation funded a trainee post which enabled us to employ James Watts-Rees, a local young leader with very exciting ideas on working in his community. He has continued to support Walking Rugby for older people with support from PIAS (see below), working with a group of nine people. People and Work hosted a Walking Rugby Festival in

Treorchy in November, which was attended by 150 people. The event was sponsored by the Red Lion pub, which provided food for everyone afterwards.

James WR has worked with young people in Rhondda and writes:

I have created a strong relationship with the local library and the youth club upstairs and this has allowed us to encourage these young people to launch new projects and support

existing ones. For example, we had over 20 young people helping sort through kit that had been donated to PIAS.

James WR has run the Challenge Champions project (with funding from Children in Need) which supports groups of young people through a fitness programme to achieve a group challenge. He has worked with 63 children and young people on this project over the year. He has broadened the approach to support young people to tackle other kinds of challenges like a chess club, a Polish language group, a debating group and a walking group.

In addition, James WR has supported around 25 young people informally around education, mental health and work experience. The projects team are also providing a work placement for a Masters student from Cardiff Metropolitan University.

A grant from Pen y Cymoedd Community Fund enabled us to further develop work on code clubs and digital technology. Code clubs have been established and supported in Pentre, Treorchy and Treherbert and started in Aberdare, alongside ongoing developments lower down the valleys. Before Lockdown around 40 people were regularly attending these code club sessions, mostly primary school aged children. Working with universities, colleges and local digital technology businesses, James Hall, the project manager, has linked code clubs and participants to mentoring opportunities

In January we ran a Digi Fest that brought local technology businesses, universities and schools to Coleg y Cymoedd in Llwynypia, where 350 children and young people got the chance to try out a range of digital applications from design to robotics and coding. This work was supported by Pen y Cymoedd and the Waterloo Foundation and generously hosted by Coleg y Cymoedd.

Given the lack of females in IT industries, we also decided to hold a female only 'Game Jam' weekend which brought eight young women together to work with mentors from IT businesses across South Wales. Over the weekend the group developed a website and created a database that could provide results based on user input. The event was supported by Pen y Cymoedd and the Moondance Foundation. We asked the young women what they enjoyed and why:

*I enjoyed meeting new people and **learning more about the tech industry** because it helped me have a better understanding of what I would like to do in the future*

Talking to **people in the industry**, learning more about practical html and css and learning about functioning JavaScript (ed: **coding languages**)

Meeting new people because it **boosted my confidence**

Learning off **industry** about **different job roles**

We also asked them about it being an event for female participation only. Did that approach make any difference to your involvement or enjoyment of the weekend? If so, how?

It did as I think boys would've been more experienced in the tech industry than some girls

Yes, it gave me a feeling of girl power!

Possibly, but I haven't been to mixed gender events outside of the coding club, so I'm not sure

It made me realise that there's more out there for women than I thought

It was nice to meet other girls with the same interests but wouldn't mind if the event was for female and male participants either

It's less overwhelming having all girls when you have little knowledge of coding to begin with in an already stereotyped industry, it made the atmosphere feel light without pressure

Lotan Matewere, an MA student with the University of South Wales, who lives in Ferndale in Rhondda Fach, joined us last autumn for his community placement. He has been invaluable in supporting our work in the library with young people (helping set up a chess club with James WR), walking rugby and with community events. James Hall, our project manager, is his fieldwork supervisor. Lotan leads a youth basketball team in Ferndale (and used to play for Malawi's national team).

Social Enterprise: PIAS

The social enterprise Play it Again Sport (PIAS) sells sports gear donated or diverted from landfill. Good quality clothes, shoes and sports equipment are sold very cheaply through

our partner Too Good to Waste, which has two shops in the Rhondda, or online. Any surplus secured is used to support local wellbeing and sports activities including donating clothing and paying for sports coaching. In 2019 PIAS secured an enterprise grant from the Rank Foundation and the opportunity to join an international training programme for entrepreneurs. In October 2019 Natasha Burnell was employed as enterprise manager with a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.

PIAS aims to promote physical wellbeing while also saving waste. Every leisure centre in Rhondda Cynon Taf has a collection bin for people to donate items to PIAS and collections have also been made from primary schools.

Play it Again

Sport 

EST. 2016

7
WALKING RUGBY
TOURNAMENTS

700
PLAYERS

4 **CHILDREN'S**
SPORTS FESTIVALS

DONATION BINS
IN LEISURE
CENTRES



600 **CHILDREN**
PARTICIPATED

15,000 ITEMS DIVERTED
FROM LANDFILL

10,000
UNITS RE-CYCLED

WATT'S TOTS RUGBY
GROUP PROVIDING
SUPPORT FOR OVER
20 FAMILIES

CHALLENGE CHAMPIONS PROJECT WORKED WITH
60 YOUNG PEOPLE TO TACKLE OBESITY

email: natasha.burnell@peopleandwork.org.uk Tel: 07375894007

Website: www.peopleandwork.org.uk/en/play-it-again-sport/

During 2019 people in Rhondda bought over 6000 items of recycled sports/fitness clothing and equipment from the Too Good to Waste outlets at an average price of £2.28.

In addition to public donations, PIAS turned over £1200 in online sales from a generous donation from Quatro Gymnastics. Other notable donations have been from Connect2Africa, who gave 112 pairs of new Mizuno trainers, and Run Wales invited PIAS to collect the unwanted garments from Cardiff Half Marathon in October, which we hope to repeat. There is also a donation bin at the Sport Wales National Centre in Cardiff.



Increasing donations has been a major focus this year, and arranging a mass collection from Porthcawl Park Run in conjunction with Bridgend County Borough Running League resulted in over 500 items being donated. This approach will be replicated when possible. Additional donation bins are

now located within Torfaen Leisure Trust, in Cwmbran and Pontypool, taking our total number of donation bins to nine.

Collaborations have been developed with ReRun, Planet Earth Games, Sports Traider, University of South Wales, Choose2Reuse, SportRCT and Champions for Ynysir. Some of these projects have been hindered by COVID-19, but will be re-initiated when it is safe to do so. A large focus of these collaborations is to improve the sustainability of PIAS, further reduce the carbon footprint in sport and clothing in the Rhondda, and increase awareness of the benefits of being more eco-friendly. As a result, we no longer use 'cash for clothes' to dispose of unsuitable donations, and continue to identify ways to improve our delivery sustainably.

A collaboration with Welcome to Our Woods has seen our walking rugby group compete in seven tournaments in the last year. Following feedback, we hope to deliver walking football in a similar manner. A pilot of delivering sport in primary schools gained a very positive reaction, and will be rolled out when safe to do so. A walking group has been established

in Ynyshir with the support of Play It Again Sport, but is also currently postponed. Ensuring the funds raised from PIAS improve accessibility to sport and exercise in the local community has been difficult during the pandemic, but remains our key objective. In the absence of sport, we donated funds to the Rhondda Foodbank and The Play Yard in order to provide lunches in Treorchy and Ynyswen.

Our website www.playitagainsport.wales has now been developed and is a great reference tool. Hopefully it will be another way for us to sell in the future. Social media pages across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have been synced and now show a brand story. This has been supported by the introduction of blogs by members of staff detailing the behind-the-scenes story of our work.

A new stock and finance management system has been implemented to keep track of sales and to identify trends and patterns. This supported our application to Rank for a further £5000, which was obtained, and will hopefully be used to improve the sustainability of Play It Again Sport in 2021.

Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad

Coming out of Talwrn discussions over a number of years, the idea of focusing on how to support community leadership, especially amongst younger people, took shape. Nine partners came together to look at how local community members could work with them to shape their future work and build involvement in the foundational economy. The partners come from key iconic areas of the historical Welsh economy – slate, coal and agricultural heartlands, and are looking to develop their identity within new economic models.

The partnership succeeded in securing funding for three years from the Rank Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund. The funding allows each partner to employ a local community leader every year between 2020-2022 to help build its role in supporting the foundational economy locally, and to involve more local people in its work. The project, coordinated by People and Work, launched in January 2020.

People and Work, as a partner in Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad, employed Ethan Jones, a local Pentre resident, as a community leader for the first year. Ethan, who has a qualification in IT, supported the code clubs before Lockdown but since he has worked online providing resources for local teachers and setting up the Valleys Code Club Youtube channel. He has posted four videos on the channel helping children to access free coding

resources and during Lockdown these were accessed over 230 times.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8_1xSsVRH4CJ9ndun8Cw7Q/videos

Ethan has also posted weekly coding activities on People and Work's social media and has developed websites for PIAS <http://www.playitagainsport.wales/> and for Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad <http://talwrn.org.uk/en/llechi-glo-a-chefn-gwlad/>.

Partnerships

People and Work continues to support and develop networks and partnerships in everything it does. We have coordinated the Talwrn network for over 6 years (www.talwrn.org.uk) with members coming together every two months from all parts of Wales to discuss issues of relevance to the voluntary sector. As noted above, the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad partnership arose from our work with Talwrn.

Our approach to working in Rhondda is firmly based on partnership and on developing new and existing networks.

Stronger Rhondda and Interlink (RCT's county voluntary council)

James Hall keeps in touch with colleagues in a number of Rhondda third sector groups which are part of Stronger Rhondda, an informal network (started five years ago); for example, People and Work are collaborating with Spectacle Theatre on a new project, starting in 2021, Rhondda Digital Story Telling, to explore innovative ways of using digital media and the arts to capture people's COVID-19 stories, especially those in the local business sector. James Watts-Rees has become a Board member of Spectacle Theatre.

We are also in discussions with Rhondda Housing Association about possible IT apprenticeship placements and developing more custom for Play It Again Sport as part of their foundational economy work. We are members of InterLink and participated in their AGM at Valleys Kids, making a variety of connections with others in the county regarding our wellbeing projects. We have participated in InterLink's volunteers' awards programme (via James Watts-Rees and young people from Treorchy library). James Hall is also talking to Rhondda Housing and Men's Sheds Treorchy concerning possible support for a repair café in Treherbert. We are talking about providing coding sessions and IT support after the Lockdown has eased.

Welcome to our Woods

WTOW is a network of groups and businesses in the upper Rhondda exploring the natural world, foundational economy and wellbeing. James Hall is on the board of their Lottery funded 'Create your Space' project, providing ideas, suggestions and offers of support from People and Work's portfolio of project work in Rhondda. Natasha Burnell (PIAS) is exploring ideas with WTOW around green transport and preventing clothes going to landfill. We also partner with Martyn Broughton (of WTOW) to host the Upper Rhondda Colliers' walking rugby every Tuesday in Ystradfechan Park, Treorchy (when conditions allow). This group will become self-sufficient within a year and has about twenty people on the books with an average attendance of ten players.

Cambrian Trust

James Hall has supported the Cambrian Trust, a Clydach Vale based social enterprise, with developing its future strategy. He has supported it to broaden the base of its Board and provided links and ideas for its future. The Trust manages a very popular outdoor park and café with great meeting and sports facilities. Through our partnership, we have used these facilities for sports events and meetings and also received large donations of sports kit through them for PIAS.

Treorchy Chamber of Trade

Adrian Emmett, landlord at The Lion in Treorchy and chair of the local Chamber of Trade, is one of the sponsors of the kit for the upper Rhondda Colliers' team and provided food for all participants who played in the regional tournament held in Treorchy in November 2019. The Chamber has grown from twenty members to a hundred in the past three years and 80% of businesses on the main street in Treorchy are locally owned. James Hall has linked the Chamber of Trade up with Professor Carolyn Strong of Cardiff University. Her students are exploring a range of possible business and marketing projects for their second year project. This will help them do a real life exercise in a Valley community and support local businesses to understand more fully why Treorchy has been such a success recently and how it needs to adapt to thrive in these uncertain times. James also wrote and sent out an online survey to local businesses, asking how things are after the first wave of COVID-19 and if they would value support.

Universities

James Hall has been a fieldwork supervisor for two MA (Youth & Community Work) students this year – one from Cardiff Metropolitan University and the other from the University of South Wales (USW). James has also discussed future university collaboration in community development projects with Cardiff Metropolitan University and delivered occasional lectures and seminars to students on the community module of their Education degree course.

James Hall regularly attends Cardiff University's Business School breakfast briefings (latterly without breakfast – on Zoom). These have been seminars led by experts in many fields – from the Metro scheme to public health and racism (the latter especially in the light of COVID-19). This network has helped in making the links between the business school and Treorchy Chamber of Trade (see above).

James also created the link between Cardiff University's Computer Science Department and the National Software Academy which made a huge impact on the digital festival held in Llwynypia (at Coleg y Cymoedd's Rhondda Campus) in February 2020. We are working with Coleg y Cymoedd in Aberdare to develop the next digital festival, hopefully in 2021 and to find support for the next Girls in Tech event, which proved so successful in bringing businesses and young people together for an intensive coding event.

Media

We are regularly contacted by journalists from both BBC Wales and ITV and have been able to contribute to a range of news and current affairs programmes on radio and TV. James Hall has linked journalists to partners and other projects as well as promoting PIAS's link with the Cardiff Half Marathon and the recycling of sports kit by volunteers in Treorchy. This went online and on TV and radio in Welsh and English and Treorchy sixth formers, staff from Too Good to Waste (our partner with PIAS) and people from Cardiff Half Marathon were interviewed in this piece.

Remote working

During Lockdown nearly the whole team moved to remote working and work has carried on. James WR's role is so very much focused on the community that he was furloughed for a few months but all others have adapted to a new way of working. The team have been

meeting weekly via Zoom, with regular contact in between and this has meant that for the first time our administrator – who lives in Brittany – has been able to join us.

James Hall's expertise in IT has ensured that we have been able to carry on working despite occasional crises with equipment, resources and connections.

The Future

The additional focus around social enterprise and our work in supporting the foundational economy has led to discussions about how we respond to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and, in particular, its impact on the local economy and on the employment of young people.

We have been supported by the Rank Foundation to continue James WR's community development work and to employ a young person through the Rank Aspire Programme, Tomas Jenkins (our third team member from Ton Pentre) who starts his year with us on October 1st.

We are planning to map the impact of COVID-19 on the local economy over the coming year, building on the survey of employers that James Hall is doing, and are aiming to recruit a new community leader who can work with the community to tell the story of COVID-19 and how the economy builds back.

We are also looking at finding ways to recruit more young people onto a short term traineeship which would help them plan their futures, identifying the work they want to do and the steps they need to take to secure it.

We have a full programme of research and evaluation work for the coming year that will involve us looking, among other things, at the foundational economy in both South East and North West Wales.