

## £2m for community projects in Wales

The funding from the Community Facilities Programme (CFP) has been earmarked for seventeen projects across Wales aimed at developing community facilities which bring people together.

CFP is a capital grant scheme which funds the development of community facilities; providing opportunities for local people to improve their day to day lives. Grants are available at two levels – up to £25,000 and up to £250,000.

The scheme is open to community and voluntary sector organisations, including social enterprises. All applicants are expected to work with partners which can come from the public, private or the third sectors.

Alun Davies said,

“The purpose of this funding is to help create resilient communities, where people are directly engaged with local issues. I want our communities to help to deliver the vital local services their people need and I will continue to empower them to be able to do this. Each of the projects announced today provide opportunities to deliver locally, while improving community cohesion and bringing people together.”

Since the CFP opened in 2015 it has funded 83 projects across Wales with grants totalling £17.7 million.

The projects being funded via the latest round of funding are:

- Tudno Community Association, Llandudno – £15,000 towards cost of purchasing new gym equipment for use by disabled users, National Exercise Referral Scheme beneficiaries and young people.
- St Grwst’s Church, Llanrwst, Conwy – £25,000 towards total cost of the internal refurbishment of its facilities and the restoration of the Gwydir Chapel.
- Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Machynllech – £250,000 to develop a permanent visitor centre and community facility to replace the current porta-cabins, which are reaching the end of their life.
- Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch, Aberystwyth – £25,000 to improve its reception area, fit new windows and commission an arts installation.
- Hay Castle Trust, Hay on Wye – £150,000 to provide a community learning space as part of the wider regeneration of the castle.
- Hope Church, Newtown – £250,000 towards cost of fitting out nursery and Flying Start setting in its new purpose-built facility.
- Menter Cymunedol Mynach, Devils Bridge – £150,000 towards the cost of extending the former Capel Mynach to create a community facility.
- Sheep Music, Presteigne Community Barn, Powys – £23,000 for building a community barn as a covered space for a variety of community activities

and events.

- Carmarthen Youth Project, (Dr M'z), Carmarthen – £209,845 towards the cost of purchasing and refurbishing its current building to ensure its future sustainability of venue.
- Hengoed Community Project, Hengoed – £176,639 towards the cost of transforming a former Welsh Baptist Chapel into a Community Wellbeing Centre.
- Treharris Area Community Trust (TACT), Treharris, Merthyr Tydfil – £202,631 to build new changing rooms with a community meeting space.
- Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust, Aberfan – £250,000 to refurbish and extend the community café and gym areas of Aberfan Leisure Centre
- St Catherine's Church, Pontypridd – £23,000 to improve disabled access and refurbish office/interview rooms.
- View (Dove) Ltd, Banwen, Neath Port Talbot – £10,050 to refurbish its nursery.
- Hill Community Development Trust, Phoenix Centre, Swansea – £160,000 towards cost of extending its nursery area and refurbishing training and conference rooms.
- Cardiff City Community Table Tennis Club, Cardiff – £24,516 towards the total cost of creating a community café at the venue.
- St Julian's Baptist Church, St Julian's, Newport – £180,000 to provide a larger community facility which will enable the group to expand the services on offer.

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The plans are the latest in a series of measures designed to make council tax fairer in Wales – a key Welsh Government commitment.

All young people leaving care will not have to pay council tax until the age of 25, if the proposals are approved following the 6 week consultation.

Professor Drakeford said:

“I want to ensure the Welsh Government and our local authorities are doing everything we can to support care leavers and are supporting their successful transition into adulthood and independent living.

“Last year, I asked local authorities to consider using their discretionary powers to grant a full dispensation from council tax for all care leavers, regardless of their individual circumstances. In October 2017, Torfaen Council became the first in Wales to exempt care leavers from paying council tax.

“This is an important opportunity to make our council tax system fairer and I am keen to hear everyone’s views and to work with stakeholders to improve our approach.”

As part of its pledge to make council tax fairer, the Welsh Government has been working to improve uptake of the council tax reduction scheme, which provides support for almost 300,000 vulnerable and low-income households in Wales with their council tax bills.

The consultation will run from 7 November to 19 December and will involve engagement with a range of stakeholders including local authorities, the WLGA, third sector organisations representing care leavers and care leavers.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance will bring forward legislation to exempt care leavers from council tax from 1 April 2019.

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## £3m to improve access to technology for health staff and patients

Speaking at the Digital Health and Care Conference in Cardiff today, Vaughan Gething, said the money would form part of a new three year Digital Inclusion and Health programme which would help staff and patients engage with technology and support people to access and manage their medical information online.

“Having the skills and motivation to access digital health services can help people better manage their conditions, whilst helping to reduce the burden on under pressure NHS services,” he said.

“The National Survey for Wales 2017-18 showed that 60% of people in Wales aged 75 and over and 26% of disabled people are digitally excluded. These people are also more likely to access health and social care services than the rest of the population. It is vital we improve their ability to access digital services.”

The Leader of the House with responsibility for digital Julie James said:

“Improving digital literacy can have a significant impact on improving health outcomes for people by giving them more control to manage their own conditions and improve their wellbeing.

Developing the basic digital skills of citizens in Wales is a priority for this government and we know those more likely to access health and social care services are often those least likely to engage with technology.

Today’s announcement will see us go out to tender this Friday for a jointly funded £6million three-year digital inclusion and health

programme, to begin in July 2019. This funding recognises the importance of digital inclusion to delivering digital transformation in health.”

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## Hard at work for our Armed Forces community

As we prepare to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War, which cost the lives of more than 700,000 British soldiers, including thousands from Wales, events are being held across the country to mark this significant milestone.

Ahead of Armistice Sunday, when the Cabinet Secretary will attend the Welsh Government’s National Service of Thanksgiving at Llandaff Cathedral, he today outlined some of the work currently ongoing to support our Service personnel and Veterans in Wales.

He also launched an Employment Pathway for Veterans and Service leavers, aimed at supporting them into employment, and funding for councils to implement long term support through dedicated liaison officers.

Alun Davies said:

“This time of the year serves as a poignant reminder of those who fought bravely in previous conflicts to preserve our way of life. We must never forget those who have paid the ultimate price, and those that survived with serious injuries, to protect the freedom we have today.

“We have made tremendous progress in Wales to deliver appropriate services and support for our Armed Forces community and today I am delighted to announce two new measures which I believe can help many more.

“Employment is clearly pivotal to a successful transition, and the health and wellbeing of Veterans and Service leavers. That’s why we have been working hard with our partners including the Armed Forces Expert Group to develop an Employment Pathway. To complement the Pathway, we are also working with ‘Business in The Community’ to develop an Employers’ Toolkit, which will help them recognise the qualities ex-Service personnel can offer prospective employers.

“Last year, the WLGA was successful in obtaining Covenant Funding to appoint Armed Forces Liaison Officers, to deliver consistent

support for veterans and their families in local authorities across Wales. I have been carefully following the valuable work they are doing, including the Construction Insight Day, which provided Service leavers and Veterans with an opportunity to meet employers in the construction and civil engineering sector to give them an overview of opportunities within these areas of employment.

“This funding will come to an end in 2019. To continue this momentum, and build on the good work already being undertaken, I am allocating half a million pounds from next year to enable Covenant Guidelines and services be fully embedded by councils over the next two years.

“We will continue to work collaboratively with our key partners to make a difference for our Armed Forces community.”