

Welsh Secretary sees community renewal projects in Torfaen

Secretary of State for Wales Robert Buckland has viewed two community projects in Torfaen which are receiving UK Government funding to increase the amount of locally-produced food and combat food poverty.

The Welsh Secretary was in Cwmbran on Wednesday 28 September to see how £618,403 allocated to the Food4Growth initiative under the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund, was being used in the community.

The launch of the Community Renewal Fund in Autumn 2021 saw £46m granted to 160 projects across Wales, including £3.8m allocated to seven different local initiatives in Torfaen, including Food4Growth.

On Wednesday, Robert Buckland visited two of Food4Growth's projects – radio station Able Radio which has opened a community food shop and food distribution scheme Tasty Not Wasty.

Secretary of State for Wales Robert Buckland said:

It was fantastic to be in Cwmbran to see how the injection of funding we made a few short months ago is doing good in our communities.

We want to unlock the potential of all our local areas and target significant funding to places that need it and where it can make a real difference to people's lives.

Councillor Joanne Gauden, Executive Member for Skills and Regeneration, said:

We were thrilled that the Secretary of State for Wales came to visit two projects in Torfaen.

We are really proud of these projects. They have worked so hard to get these projects off the ground and are dedicated to helping the community.

The costs of living crisis really is being felt by all, so it's lovely to see projects like this helping people. It would be wonderful to see more projects like these in Torfaen.

Shaun O'Dwyer- Managing Director, Able Radio, said:

The Food4Growth grant has allowed Able to provide suitable opportunities for those we support.

Importantly it has allowed Able to redevelop our site and install poly tunnels, a sustainABLE shop that operates a pay as you feel model.

Supporting the community is an important objective for Able, the engagement opportunities and relationships fostered from this funding has created strong network in Torfaen, allowing communities to access fresh, sustainable produce whilst recognising the abilities and strengths of the people with learning disabilities we support.

Sabrina Cresswell, Director, Tasty Not Wasty, said:

With support from the Food4Growth project we are now able to increase usage and train local volunteers. It has enabled us to provide healthy food at a lower cost whilst helping to reduce food waste and bring the community together.

Last year UK Government launched three new funds including the Levelling Up Fund which saw £121m allocated to 10 major projects in Wales and the Community Renewal Fund which saw £46m allocated to 160 new programmes in Wales that invest in people, boost skills and support local business.

The £200 million UK-wide funding through the Community Renewal Fund will help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the scheme that will see UK-wide funding at least match EU money, reaching around £1.5 billion a year.

Food4Growth is a cooperation project between Torfaen, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire with the aim to find new ways to help develop food supply chains and create a whole system approach

With a huge rise in numbers of people in food poverty the project also launched a Community Food Scheme, where third sector organisations, community groups or public sector services were encouraged to apply for a grant to help create sustainable solutions to food poverty.

The Food4Growth project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund.