

Abertillery & Llanhilleth

Community Council Newsletter - Autumn 2024



Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Friends

In July, we began collaborating with the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Friends team to help them roll out their service in our area. We will be progressing this work during the Autumn.

Recent Actions:

- In July, Council awarded a £300 grant to Six Bells Community Centre - this paid for new security lights and contributed towards their ongoing garden revamp.
- In July, we raised £249 for Sofrydd Primary School via ticket sales at our Viaduct Run.

20mph Survey

We would like to thank everyone who filled in our survey about potential changes to 20mph roads. These responses will help inform our representations to Blaenau Gwent CBC.

Ward Grants:

The following ward grants were awarded in July & August. Please visit our website or email us to find out more about ward grant funding opportunities.

- £350 to Ebenezer Church Food Bank
- £250 to Abertillery Youth Drama and Musical Society
- £250 to Abertillery Rock & Blues
- £150 to Abertillery Ladies Orpheus Choir
- £100 to Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association
- £100 to Llanhilleth Park
- £200 to Abertillery Excelsiors Junior FC
- £50 to Pentref Tyleri
- £50 to Pen-y-Bont Scouts
- £50 to Bournville Community Centre
- £50 to Blaenau Gwent Community Centre

Town in Bloom

Throughout July, TAFY positioned 72 hanging pots in Abertillery. 8 more are due to be positioned this Autumn. The pots will be up until the end of October, and will return next May.

TILLERY
ACTION
FOR YOU



Noticeboard

In August, ALCC had a new noticeboard installed outside the Council Offices on Mitre Street, Abertillery. This will be used for meeting agendas, updates, newsletters, and posters for upcoming events.

Defibrillator Map

We recently published an interactive map of 24/7 accessible defibrillators in the area. The map will be reviewed regularly. It is intended to inform people of nearby AEDs, but should not be used in emergencies. Scan the QR below or visit our website to view the map.



Summer Cinema Project

Our Summer Cinema Programme ran across the six-week holiday. We would like to thank Blaenau Gwent Youth Service and Off The Streets for their help supervising some of the sessions, and we would also like to thank The Met for hosting.

Llanhilleth Summer Fete

This Summer, we provided funding for Off The Streets to host a Summer Fete at Llanhilleth RFC on August 25th. Despite rainy weather, the event was a success and raised £670 for Off The Streets to help them continue their work. The event also brought the community together, and supported local businesses, charities and community groups too.



OFF
THE
STREETS





We have seen an increase in the area of families, children and young people accessing our service for engagement in activities that they would not normally feel able to attend. A number of these participants have a statement of Additional Learning Needs and often struggle with engaging in social situations. Working with these children, young people and their families has been impactful and rewarding to say the least. We are now seeing these children and young people attending sessions by themselves, without parental guidance, making new friends, building confidence and learning new skills. We hope to reflect this work through further reporting to ALCC in September.

Participant Numbers

As before, Off The Streets continues to keep accurate records of children and young people attending sessions, as well as details of their emergency contacts, special requirements, allergies etc.

During Off The Streets 2023 Summer Programme we saw over one five hundred children and young people attending our sessions. We hope to engage with a similar number of participants again during our 2024 Summer Programme. Further details will be provided in September 2024.

Swffryd

Month	Number of Participants	Number of Female Participants	Number of Male Participants	Number of Sessions Facilitated
July 23	187	83	104	12
August 23	203	98	105	12
September 23	167	71	96	10
October 23	193	86	107	11
November 23	181	79	102	10
December 23	153	67	86	9
January 24	149	69	80	8
February 24	174	81	85	10
March 24	193	77	116	8
April 24	189	63	129	10
May 24	213	88	125	13



**Off The Streets
Progress Report
July 2024 - July 2025**

June 24	228	101	127	11
July 24	198	95	103	16

Llanhilleth

Month	Number of Participants	Number of Female Participants	Number of Male Participants	Number of Sessions Facilitated
July 23	197	99	102	12
August 23	201	104	97	12
September 23	183	79	104	11
October 23	167	62	105	9
November 23	187	89	98	10
December 23	154	73	91	8
January 24	148	64	82	8
February 24	169	77	102	10
March 24	152	59	93	8
April 24	122	49	73	6
May 24	155	66	89	13
June 24	178	65	113	12
July 24	188	70	118	13

Brynithel

Month	Number of Participants	Number of Female Participants	Number of Male Participants	Number of Sessions Facilitated
July 23	174	62	112	12



August 23	185	79	106	12
September 23	179	74	105	8
October 23	163	57	106	11
November 23	167	61	105	11
December 23	154	63	91	8
January 24	144	59	85	8
February 24	149	53	96	12
March 24	155	67	88	10
April 24	159	83	76	15
May 24	161	72	89	13
June 24	131	69	62	17
July 24	147	73	74	16

Children, Young People & Families Comments

"You helped me in a meeting because I didn't have any confidence. I love it here with you guys"
- **Lily, 10**

"Coming to Off The Streets helps me to cut down on my screen time so that I can take part in other activities like football" - **Kiera, 10**

"Since he been doing the off the streets he has come on so much with his confidence and wanting to take part you lot really do make a big difference to the kids" - **Parent of a Swffryd child**

Partner Organisation Comments

"Our young people have loved the cooking sessions. We have seen consistent engagement from them and their parents have received the project well too. We can't wait to have you back in September." - **Kirstie Lloyd, Blaenau Gwent Young Carers Service**



"The partnership between Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team and Off the Streets has been running for the past 4 years. The partnership has gone from strength to strength, supporting weekly sports and well-being sessions in Swffryd, Llanhilleth, and Brynithel. This has provided frontline opportunities for children in areas who do not have access to sporting facilities on their doorstep.

Off the Streets lead, Alana Insley's can-do attitude continues to support the health and well-being of young people and strives to eliminate barriers, and making sport and physical activity accessible to everyone.

As a team we are very proud to support such a great programme, and look forward to continuing to provide the support in the near future." - **Jack Cox, Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team**

"Ffin Dance has worked in close partnership with the community organisation Off The Streets for a number of years, developing and expanding our folio of projects together.

We are impressed by their solid and robust safe-guarding of children and young people, who are always enthusiastic and keen to participate in our dance and parkour opportunities.

The relationships between our professional tutors and the groups of children and young people has become an important part of our delivery, so much so that we have invited Off The Streets participants to join in our dance provisions at our home venue in addition to their home sites.

We aim to further develop existing projects and forge new friendships with Off The Streets in the future and come together for the benefit of the communities with whom we work and serve." -

Catrin Lewis, Ffin Dance

"We have worked with Alana and the team from Off The Streets on a number of projects.

It's great to partner with her as she shares our values and passion about having a positive impact on communities supporting children and their families to get them active and make them feel valued, as well as feeling part of something special.

The next project will see Off The Streets part funding us to deliver our Gateway Program in a local school with the aim of building the children's confidence, wellbeing, numeracy, creativity and so much more. Thank you Alana, you are having a massive impact in the community, keep up the great work." - **Steve Lewis, Dragons RFC**

Partnership & Multi-Organisational Working

Ffin Dance

We have continued our partnership working with Ffin Dance to promote children and young people's engagement in the arts, as well as encouraging participation in the development of their own health and wellbeing. Ffin Dance has supported our weekly sessions by providing dance and parkour workshops, this in turn encouraging children and young people's creativity and building their confidence and self-esteem.



One of our young people was chosen, during July 2024, to receive a subsidised place within Ffin Dances Summer School programme. This was a fantastic opportunity to provide this young person with an insight into the arts, to build their skills and confidence, to create new friendships and to engage in their mental and physical wellness.

Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team

Through our partnership working with Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team we have been enabled to provide further opportunities for our children and young people. The team sourced funding to provide our project with a six week programme of 'Swim & Slides' sessions. Each week fourteen children and young people attended Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre to attend Open Swim sessions. Over this six week period Off The Streets provided weekly snacks and refreshments for the participants.

Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team also sourced funding for cooking workshops to be facilitated with their partner organisations. Off The Streets was lucky enough to receive two funded cooking workshops facilitated by *Cook Stars*, providing children and young people with the opportunity to engage in free and fun cooking sessions. Twenty four children and young people attended these two sessions and as a result each of their families also received a free air fryer, ingredient pack and cookbook, again funded by Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team.

We have also been enabled to provide twenty-eight children and young people with the opportunity to attend subsidised Playscheme activity days at both Tredegar Leisure Centre and Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre. Again, these spaces were funded by Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team, and free lunch and swimming was also provided for all participants.

Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team also continues to support a number of our weekly sessions. Their Instructors support the facilitation of sports and physical activities, providing resources and assistance to our organisation, children and young people.

StreetGames - SportsWales

Working with StreetGames and SportsWales has proved very successful for Off The Streets. Through collaborative working we have been enabled to provide our children and young people with opportunities they might not usually have. This has included taking fourteen children and young people to see a live basketball game in Cardiff, as well as having our sessions filmed by videographers in order to create a 'Good Luck' message to the 2024 Olympians. Off The Streets have been also chosen, from only ten LTO's in Wales, to attend the Gareth Bale Festival at the Celtic Manor, in September 2024. This event will provide ten young people (eleven plus) the opportunity to engage in various sports at the Celtic Manor, including golf and football. They will also receive food and refreshments for free. The young people will also have the opportunity to meet Gareth Bale and to engage and converse with him in a meaningful way.

Dragons Community / Dragons RFC



Off The Streets has created a professional working relationship with the Dragons Community Team and Dragons RFC. This work has also supported a stronger connection and working relationship with Llanhilleth RFC, encouraging use of the club's grounds, buildings and facilities. Through developing these relationships, Off The Streets has been enabled to provide opportunities for children and young people to engage in rugby activities and events, encouraging physical fitness, mental wellness, personal and social skills, as well as attainment within school. Off The Streets has supported the Dragons in their facilitation of the Gateway Project within St. Illtyd's Primary School, and we also plan to support the project's progression into Swffryd Primary School. This project is facilitated within school time and aims to support children and young people to "become more skilful, learning important life skills through sport and ultimately enjoying the experience whilst looking after their health & wellbeing." (<https://dragonsrfc.wales/community/gateway.html>). Children and young people also benefit from the project by receiving complimentary tickets to two Dragons Games, as well as being able to participate in the Dragons RFC Primary Tag Rugby Festival held at Rodney Parade. We have also supported children and young people from St. Illtyd's Primary School to attend the first ever girls only Tag Rugby Festival at Rodney Parade in June 2024. This work has been hugely beneficial to our engagement with children and young people in the local area of Llanhilleth, we have been enabled to develop stronger relationships with participants and have created a level of continuity that they can trust.

Swffryd Primary School

Swffryd Primary School has been an invaluable asset for our facilitation within Swffryd. Using this space allows us to freely access hygiene and kitchen facilities during our sessions. The space itself is also hugely beneficial to the way that Off The Streets works, allowing us space for physical activities, as well as breakout spaces for quieter and more relaxed engagement opportunities.

We have developed a fantastic working relationship with the Headmistress of Swffryd Primary School, and have also built relationships with staff members of the school. These relationships have supported open communication between our organisation and the school, encouraging speedy results in combating issues, raising safeguarding concerns and sharing information.

Blaenau Gwent Young Carers Service

During the first part of the new financial year of 2024/2025, Off The Streets began facilitating our own cookery sessions, coined as "Into The Pot". These sessions were in place to educate children and young people about cooking, budgeting and independent living skills. These sessions went extremely well and were greatly received by our cohorts. Unfortunately as we could not find a suitable space to facilitate these sessions in Swffryd, we had to remove them from our schedule for now.

However, this session facilitation has led to partnership working with Blaenau Gwent Young Carers Service. Their service reached out to Off The Streets in order to ask us to facilitate



cooking workshops for their young carers, at their base within the Blaina Integrated Children's Centre. As of July 2024, Off The Streets has facilitated five budget cookery sessions for the young carers service, and we also have another six sessions booked in to facilitate from September 2024 onwards.

This work has enabled our project to build a strong rapport with the young carers service and has also bolstered our work with our own children and young people of which are young carers. We have been able to provide an outlet for our young carers by them being able to attend these cooking sessions along with the young carer services young people.

Clwb Llan

During the Spring 2024 Half Term, Off The Streets facilitated an inclusive Activity Day based in Llanhilleth, working in partnership with Clwb Llan. This activity day also saw us work with partner agencies like Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team, as well as Ffin Dance, to facilitate a wide range of activities for children and young people to engage in throughout the day. Children and young people were also provided with a free lunch pack courtesy of Clwb Llan and Llanhilleth Miners Institute. This event saw over thirty children and young people, between the ages of five and fifteen, attend to participate.

New Staff Members, Organisational Procedures & Key Indicators

Over the last year Off The Streets has seen a turn-over of staff, seeing long serving members leave to make way for a new team. The influence of the new staff within Off The Streets facilitation has been positive and impactful. These new members of staff have undertaken relevant training, obtained passed Enhanced DBS checks, and completed Off The Streets organisational inductions.

This year has seen Off The Streets implement new and effective policies and procedures within our work. This included a Play Policy, advocating for children and young peoples play and providing a concise overview of our activities and responsibilities regarding children and young people's play.

Deciding upon core Key Indicators has been a tricky decision for Off The Streets. We have not wanted to confine our work through the use of key indicators, rather we would like to use them to identify and improve factors of children and young people's lives.

Off The Streets work is heavily based upon encouraging personal engagement in individuals mental and physical health and wellbeing. We also hold a focus on creating more cohesive and supportive communities where children, young people and their families feel safe and able to access services. Off The Streets also aims to support children, young people and their families dealing with the Cist Of Living Crisis byway of providing free snacks and refreshments at all sessions. Through this we hope to engage children and young people in understanding food poverty and supporting them to access free food provisions. As an organisation, we strive to



provide children and young people with fun and accessible activities and opportunities that are inclusive and act as an enhancement to their learning, skill building and life experiences.

As of July 2024 these are **Off The Streets Key Indicators** -

- 1) Children & Young People are engaged in their personal Mental and Physical Health & Wellbeing
 - i) Children & Young People understand what wellbeing is, and why it is important for mental and physical health
 - ii) Children & Young People feel that their health & wellbeing is at a satisfactory quality
 - iii) Children & Young People feel that Off The Streets works to support them in attaining positive mental and physical health & wellbeing

- 2) Children and Young People feel safe in their community and understand where and how to access support
 - i) Children & Young People feel able to access services and support within their community, or in a format relevant to them (ie online, telephone helpline)
 - ii) Children & Young People feel heard and respected within their communities, and at Off The Streets
 - iii) Children & Young People are aware of, and feel able to access Off The Streets sessions and subsequent free food provisions

- 3) Children and Young People feel that they are provided with good quality youth and community activities and opportunities that encourage them to develop and grow
 - i) Children & Young People feel that Off The Streets provides relevant opportunities to them, in safe and accessible ways
 - ii) Children & Young People feel that by participating in Off The Streets activities they are able to engage, learn and develop new skills
 - iii) Children & Young People feel that they have improved confidence and interpersonal skills (ie social, communication, self esteem etc.) by engaging in Off The Streets activities

These key indicators will steer our methods of monitoring and evaluation, ensuring that Off The Streets are able to gather honest and accurate feedback from participants of our project to further improve our work.

Future Plans - Off The Streets Progression

- To undertake our Summer 2024 Programme facilitation and to undertake effective evaluation and motioning work
- To participate in, and deliver Sport Wales SERVES Initiative (tennis)



- To undertake the facilitation of Llanhilleth Summer Fete
- To attend Barry Island with numerous families from our three working areas
- To continue implementing, evaluating and reviewing Off The Streets Key Indicators
- To strengthen our understanding of the impact of Off The Streets work through evaluation and monitoring systems
- To provide a further report to ALCC regarding the impact of Off The Streets work by September 17TH 2024
- To provide timely reports to ALCC with regards to Off The Streets work, levels of engagement and notable achievements within our facilitation
- To attend Gareth Bale Festival at the Celtic Manor with ten young people
- To deliver Autumn Half Term activities
- To facilitate fundraising work and events
- To undertake the delivery of Off The Streets Firework Fest 2024
- To attend a Pantomime at Beaufort Theatre with forty five children and young people

Final Comments

I hope this progress report gives you a good understanding of Off The Streets as whole, and what services we are providing within the lower South Ebbw Fach Valley. We are now three months into the financial year of 2025 and, as an organisation, we are feeling more optimistic than ever. The past year has seen the organisation go through highs and lows, but ultimately we feel that we are providing a positive and effective response to the needs and wants of children, young people, their families and their communities of which we work in.

Off The Streets aims to become a more sustainable project in order to continue providing support and engagement opportunities in the long term. We have taken steps to address organisational challenges, to improve our practice and to ensure the continuation of quality youth and community services within Swffryd, Llanhilleth and Brynithel.

Our hope is that, in the very near future, Off The Streets will be able to further prove the importance and value of our work with children, young people, their families and communities. We have carefully chosen Key Indicators that reflect the priorities of our project, and hope that these will provide empirical insight into the lives of children and young people living within our working areas.

- Alana Insley & Off The Streets Team

Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council – Councillor Surgeries

Introduction

The Community Empowerment Committee, under its Communications duties, has been asked to investigate the possibilities of our Councillors running surgeries for the general public to meet with the Councillors in each ward. This document outlines the approach envisaged at this stage and the issues that will need to be addressed.

Proposal:

A rota is established for councillors in each ward to run meetings where the general public from the ward can meet with their ALCC councillors and raise their concerns.

It may be possible for these meetings to be run in collaboration with the Blaenau Gwent Councillors for the ward or run as part of some other social event such as coffee mornings in the ward.

There should not be less than two persons present at the meeting and the meetings should be notified some weeks in advance.

It is likely that the meetings will need to be held in different places in each ward to ensure all parts have an equal chance to access their councillors.

Councillors will be helped to help determine the most suitable places to meet and agree a rota of persons and places to run the meetings.

It may be necessary to hire premises for the meetings and an estimate of likely costings will need to be drawn up for the budget process this year. If we are able to fit with existing events our hire costs would be reduced.

Some form of notes should be kept, showing the visitors and queries raised. These notes are confidential and there are a number of issues concerning how they are stored/used.

The discussions with individual are necessarily confidential in nature so privacy in the meeting is needed.

We will need to produce a risk assessment showing the risks identified and the mitigations introduced to minimise them.

Issues to be addressed:

Which Councillors should be involved?

- all from each ward?

-on a rotation basis?

- What if some are not comfortable doing this? (It was not a stated requirement at the time of becoming a Councillor)

How do we ensure safety in the meetings?

-always two persons present?

- if confidentiality is to be ensured how is this achieved?

- should we seek police advice on safety?

- what if someone turns aggressive?

How do we deal with youths (16+) or vulnerable adults?

-should the Councillors be DBS cleared (costs?)

Some females may have difficulties dealing with men (from issues in their lives)

- how do we arrange for a female to be present at a meeting without prior knowledge of the issue?

- how do we get prior knowledge of the issue?

How do we schedule meetings in different areas of a ward?

- how often do we want the meetings?

How do we get the information about surgeries, places, dates times circulated?

- social media?

- news letters? (how many meetings can we notify each newsletter, means planning well ahead)

Would Blaenau Gwent agree to joint meetings?

- needs discussion with the appropriate councillors,

- would need discussions with Blaenau Gwent Council,

- raises planning issues

How do we keep records of the meetings?

- the quick and easy way is recordings, but needs agreement from the member of public

- how much information should be kept?

- how are these records used/stored?

- who is permitted to see/access the records?

There are very likely to be other issues/questions that we have not yet considered.

This is a working document subject to revision as events dictate.