



Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council

ABERTILLERY & LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL: **LONELINESS PROJECT APPLICATION 24/25**

About the Project:

The pandemic not only caused but has also highlighted the dire need to combat isolation in our communities.

The pandemic has left many with anxiety about mixing and many people are still afraid to go out and about. Many have lost the opportunity to connect with people and others. Post pandemic many have observed the massive need and focus on mental health and well-being, and combatting isolation in it's many forms.

The People and Communities Committee at ALCC have set up the loneliness project in response to this.

The aim of the project is to provide and facilitate resources and opportunity for community groups, religious organisations and businesses alike; who wish to collaborate towards the common goal of combating the detrimental effects of loneliness and isolation suffered throughout our communities.

This application is for local businesses and other groups/organisations who are keen to give back and support their communities; assist and facilitate community based activities and projects; enabling those effected to have more active roles in their communities and participate in society with their peers.

Whilst we want to support activities which bring people together face-to face in a safe and secure way, funding can also be used to support online activities where this is the most appropriate or only way to build social connections e.g. where access to a venue is difficult or for those not quite ready to meet people face-to-face.

Project participants will be expected to report back to ALCC how the funding is spent and how many it has or will benefit in the community.

**Please ensure you complete the application form in full and make sure we have all your details.
Please attach a brief cover letter explaining about the work your organisation does or is proposing to do.**

Name of Applicant:	[REDACTED]
Name of Organisation:	Kenny's Vinyl Vault/The Crystal Cafe
Name of Project (if different to above)	Spiritual Development Group, Chatter Group, Monthly Moot, Craft Class
Geographical area of project (<i>please give details of the area it will cover i.e. county, town, community</i>)	Abertillery -Town / Community
Name of Main Contact:	[REDACTED]
Address:	[REDACTED]
Post Code	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]
Daytime Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]

Type of Organisation (please tick): Sole Trader business Est 2022

Constituted Group	Date Established;	
Registered Charity	Date Established;	Charity No:
Community Interest Company	Date Established;	CIC No:
Company Limited by Guarantee	Date Established;	Company No:

Grants are usually paid by cheque (please provide your organisations name as it appears on the account)

Account Name:	Kenny's Vinyl Vault (Lee Kendrick)
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APPLICATION DETAIL

Tell us briefly what work you are currently undertaking or proposing, to support people in your area who are impacted by loneliness and isolation. How many do you think will be impacted by this project?

At the moment we are providing many groups that are open to the community which are listed above. We have a number of spiritual groups running from the business, one is a Wednesday evening group and the other a Monthly Moot. These groups are targeted to people who fall within the Pagan or spiritual community. These are often minority groups who can feel isolated and unwelcomed by the wider community due to ignorance or false perceptions. Our business offers these people a safe space to use daily, if they wish, in the form of a Goddess room and resources needed to practice solitary or as part of small groups. This has provided a sense of belonging for people who associate with this type of faith and belief system and those who are keen to learn more. Many of these people are from Abertillery and surrounding areas and we also have people travel from further afield to access the space and groups on offer. Some as far as Bristol and Nailsea.

Many local people who are neurodivergent or feel slightly lost in the world due to bereavements or personal struggles and minority groups such as the vegan community, find the building a great source of support for their wellbeing. We have a book borrow library and aim to offer a friendly welcome and atmosphere to all.

We hold a monthly meet and chatter event on a Friday morning in the Goddess room which is free of charge and open to all. This is a non-agenda meeting allowing people to discuss whatever is important to them whilst allowing them to feel a sense of belonging. These groups have been very successful with the community stating that they feel comfortable in a community that encourages learning and support.

At Kenny's Vinyl Vault we have also supported vulnerable people who are not in education, employment and training to develop and deliver their own workshops and offer them to the wider community. This has resulted in two of our customers developing their own spiritual art class which was fully attended. People were able to learn about the significance of colour and how this impacts us spiritually. The participants were able to take home their own canvases of art after the session.

We also offer people the opportunity to volunteer at the café. This could be as little as one hour a week to several days a week. At present we have seven volunteers who are gaining skills such as communication, confidence and self esteem building, and transferable skills such as barista training.

We also have an outside agency that comes to our Goddess room to offer group support to women experiencing the menopause. This is also a minority group who can find this time during life very challenging and lonely. This group allows a safe space to explore symptoms, worries and concerns in a private and safe community.

Wiccan Circle – A Wiccan circle also functions from the shop approx. twice a month for those who follow the Wiccan religion. There are no other Wiccan groups in Abertillery and many people who identify with this faith often must travel far and wide to find others of the same faith. This is a nature-based religion that aims to support the environment and encourages people to think about and explore

how they can make their communities better places. This also fits with the cafes vegan ethos with veganism which focuses on global citizenship and sustainability. There are currently 7 participants of the Wiccan circle.

Community music sessions such as listening events and local artists showcasing their musical talents – These events bring members of the community together and provide an alternative to pub settings or events that are offered by the local authority. We have a number of people who live alone that come to these events and they are a great way to boost positive wellbeing.

The estimated number of people we reach out to include:

Fortnightly spiritual development group = 7 participants

Monthly Moot = 12 people

Spiritual Art Classes = 8 people

Moonapause Circle = 6/7 people each month

Monthly chatter group = max 10 people

Wiccan Circle = 7 people

Listening sessions/showcase event = Approx 20 people per month

Total estimated number of people reached each month = 70

Consultation has been done with some of the groups and their ideas for the groups have been included in ideas proposed for the grant.

How is this grant going to create, maintain or increase these activities?

The grant will be used to secure equipment that can be used in each group and will also allow us to develop further groups. The grant money would allow us to purchase spiritual sound equipment such as crystal singing bowls, gongs and spiritual drums. Sound can be used as a tool to aid relaxation and meditation which is used in almost all of the groups at the shop. Sound therapy can help to reduce conditions such as anxiety and depression, it can aid positive sleep, improves mood, assists positive wellbeing, improves attention span, helps to release emotions and it can create a sense of belonging and community (www.academyofsoundhealing.com 25/1/25).

The musical equipment will be available for everyone to use, even without the need of a group facilitator. The goddess room is always open and the equipment is available for all. This will hopefully inspire others to create further groups such as sound journeying or outdoor drumming sessions in the spring and summer.

The freedom to have a spiritual space to allow creativity will assist others to feel connected and can help people to develop skills and abilities to transform their lives for the better. Having staff on hand who are non-judgemental, inclusive and who encourage expression is essential to what we are offering.

Spiritual healing also takes place at the shop, and I am currently assembling a team of registered and insured healers who will meet monthly at the shop to provide free hands on or distance healing for those who request it. It would be beneficial for the Goddess room to possess a large Amethyst cathedral with a small water feature that will support the healing environment that has been created within the room. Many of our customers enjoy the healing powers of the crystals within the shop and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that such crystals can assist healing. The Hospice of the Valleys offer different forms of spiritual healing, and we are also seeing healing such as Reiki being offered in hospitals. Achieving the correct environment at the shop and bringing the outdoors in, such as using water features, can assist with relaxation and the hands-on healing from a registered practitioner can bring about positive wellbeing and a feeling of belonging.

Who is the main focus of your activity (i.e. older people, families in need, carers)?

The main focus of our activities is aimed at anyone who feels that they will benefit from these sessions. In particular we have a large amount of people who are neurodivergent who come to the shop and participate. They state that they feel safe and not judged and enjoy the atmosphere. It helps that almost 100% of our workforce are neurodivergent and some have diagnosed learning disabilities.

Other minority groups such as the Pagan and Wiccan community. It has been identified from the last census that Paganism is one of the fastest growing religions in the UK yet this is not recognised in our current communities with practically no indoor spaces available that are purpose built for members of this community. Wiccans/Pagans enjoy outdoor activities but given the nature of the British weather, this is not always possible and safe indoor space is often needed.

There are no age restrictions on any of the workshops we offer and a number of people who attended the talking groups, art group and the Moot are welcome to bring children along with them.

One particular story that I would like to share with you is a local lady who has recently lost her husband. She attends the shop weekly and enjoys the peace and quiet of the goddess room and enjoys the vibes in the shop. She finds it healing and has been very drawn towards the crystals that we sell for healing and comfort. She often meets different people at the shop and has attended some of our one-to-one sessions with local spiritual workers for healing and guidance.

Do you have necessary insurances in place to ensure the safety of your volunteers?

We have full public liability plus additional insurance to cover the spiritual practices on offer.

Financial Details:

Please give a breakdown of the items/costs/materials you are applying for funding for:
(can be continued on another sheet if needed)

Indoor water feature	£179.99
Spiritual Drums x7	£140.00
Singing Crystal Bowl Set	£569.90
Ancient Chau Gong Sound Healing	£259.90
Total grant amount being requested:	£ 1149.79

You will be expected to be able to evidence costs itemised above (e.g. material costs, quotations, invoice, on line quotation).

You may also be asked to complete a brief monitoring reports and be able to provide evidence of the expenditure of the grant for the purposes applied for (e.g. receipts, bank statement, paid invoice)

SIGNATURES (you can do this electronically)

Applicant (authorised to make the application on behalf of the organisation)		Date
Name (printed)		
Signature	J.Kendrick	25/1/25

Once completed, please return this either via email to either email addresses below with subject title "Loneliness Project" to:

clerk@abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk

joshua.rawcliffe@abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk

Paper copy applications can be returned to:

Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery, Blaenau Gwent, NP13 1AE

Amount requested £1149.79

Amount available £1108.81

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