



# Cletwr newsletter

## Spring 2016

Siop Cynfelyn is a community-run project that provides a range of services at the Cletwr site, Tre'r-ddôl

# A new stage in the story

It's our third birthday in May this year, and we've got something huge to celebrate. Since beginning the Cletwr project 3 years ago, many people in the Llangynfelyn area have worked together in many different ways to regenerate the Cletwr services and remake them as a local hub that the community can be really proud of. The project has now passed a major milestone: on St. David's Day this year, the Llangynfelyn community itself became the proud owners of the site. The social enterprise has been working towards buying the property from its previous owners, Huw and Sue Lewis, since last year's award from the BIG Lottery People and Places fund. Further awards from Ceredigion Community Grant Scheme and from the Trusthouse Charitable Foundation helped us to complete the purchase. Their generous support underlines how widely the value of the enterprise is recognised. As Shelagh Hourahane, chair of the directors of Cwmni Cymunedol Cletwr, says

"The fact we are rooted in the community gives us unique opportunities to recognise and be receptive to the community's needs, and to develop our own solutions. This purchase marks a new stage in the story."

The aim is to be more than a basic village service: alongside the shop and café, you'll find a rich programme of social events and services. The value of a community hub that draws people together and helps combat rural isolation is priceless. *(Read overleaf - how a grant from the Ashley Family Foundation is helping us to develop the events programme.)*

Now that the Cletwr is owned by the community, the race is on to raise additional funds to complete the financing of the project, to redevelop the site with a purpose-designed new building and an attractively landscaped parking area. The plan is to make the Cletwr a fitting gateway to Ceredigion and an even more welcoming place. Plans for the new building, designed by George + Tomos of Machynlleth, can be seen in the café. And do check out the 'funding thermometer' in the shop which is tracking the raising of each £1000.

One of the key aims is to enrich the local economy - and it is very exciting to see how well that is working: alongside forty or so volunteers who loyally invest their time to help the business to grow, Siop Cynfelyn now employs six part-time staff and a team of young people.

**Here's a snapshot to introduce you to just a few of the recruits who now work alongside business manager Karen Evans, head chef Jane Leivers, and business assistant Suzanne Davies.**

### Hats off to Hat!

Harriet McDevitt-Smith, otherwise known as Hat, is working as assistant chef at Siop Cynfelyn. Her six-month post is sponsored by Jobs Growth Wales which gives young people the opportunity to work in a professional sphere. "The set-up here is really groovy!" said Hat. "I haven't experienced anything like it before. I even love my daily bus commute between here and Aber, It's so beautiful." Hat is no stranger to the area - from the age of twelve her family came on their annual holiday to Borth from the Midlands. A love of the sea attracted her to study Fine Art at Aberystwyth University where she gained her B.A. degree in 2014. She intends to pursue her creative career but realises that it's necessary to have another string to her bow. When she saw the post advertised she jumped at the chance to train in catering. She has no previous experience but loves being part of the team and learning new skills. She says, "You can have a painter that can cook and vice versa. There's definitely a creative aspect to cooking - from methods and processes to final presentation".

### Smooth Operator!

Meet Conor McEwan, who joined us as weekend supervisor in March, after easing in with some volunteer work. Originally from Northern Ireland, he came to the area with his girlfriend who is a junior doctor in Bronglais Hospital. He works with us at weekends, while the rest of the week he is otherwise employed on writing up his PhD research on ultrasound activated anti-cancer drugs.

His experience of supervising students in Ulster Uni's pharmaceutical science lab comes in handy in his role of guiding Siop Cynfelyn's team of young workers. They all have different tasks and roles, and Conor oversees them all and makes sure the operation is running smoothly.

Conor has been a volunteer himself in Belfast, mainly on projects encouraging different sections of the community to mix together. What kind of mix would he like to see here? "I would like to see us find more ways to bring young people into the project. The effect of social media means that away from school they don't meet up so much to talk in person - we could create more occasions for them to meet. As a maths and science person, I think a homework club with refreshments would be nice. But we can ask them!" This hits the nail on the head - in fact, a wider variety of creative and learning activities for young people are absolutely central to our plans for the period 2016-17.



Conor McEwan and Samantha Chapman

### The value of continuity ...

Samantha Chapman has been with us since April last year. She has graduated to relief chef and duty manager, and manages the cleaning schedules to comply with health and hygiene regulations. Sam says "I used to work here as teenager myself in 2006, it's really interesting to see how it's changed. I live close by in the village so it's very convenient, and lovely getting to know more people locally. There are a lot of satisfying things about my role - I really enjoy working here. It has a great community spirit".

### Earning their own money in their own community

Each young worker works a shift at the weekend and comes in one weekday-evening for the clean down. Lucy Dixon is the newest recruit and is very enthusiastic about this, her first job. "It's close to home so I don't have to worry about transport. I like helping out, and earning my own money"; and she enjoys "that feeling of achievement from getting things clean and done". Isabel Hughes has been with us for a year and a half. She says she likes "the way it is all centred on the community - everyone is so patient and friendly, and there are so many different kinds of people working here and passing through. We get lot of visitors from away and abroad and it's nice to chat about where they're from and where they're going, and they are interested in what we're doing. I like helping Jane in the kitchen- I bake a lot of cakes at home and it is fun getting the chance to do that here".



*Hat McDervitt-Smith with young worker Siwan James (who joined as one of our very first volunteers). Brian Davies in the kitchen - retired headmaster, and now a regular on the volunteer team*

## The Cletwr Community Hub

Last year we created the post of Community Coordinator to help develop the potential of the Cletwr Community Hub and deliver our aim to enrich local life. Lowri Jones and Gwilym Morus shared the post, and put together a lovely programme of social events and award-winning activities. With help from a grant of £10,000 from the Ashley Family Foundation, we can continue to build on that first season. There will be even more in the cultural programme of films, concerts, exhibitions, storytellers, talks, and informal creative arts and language courses. These have proved to be very popular relaxed gatherings, with a glass of wine or a cuppa, and no need to dash to town. There has also been a lot of enthusiasm for small-group walks accompanied by guides who are knowledgeable about the land or wildlife, so we'll be doing more of those.

*(Read opposite how Cletwr Walks will open your eyes and ears to hidden secrets of the landscape.)*

The co-ordinator's role is also to develop partnerships with various organisations and agencies to provide useful outreach advice and services. We already provide links with fuel poverty advice, dementia information workshops, defibrillator training and collaborate with South and West Wales Wildlife Trust, Ceredigion Museum, The Dyfi Biosphere, The Shaw Trust, Natural Resources Wales, and DASH (Disabilities and Self Help) (check out the programme of events and services for May-September

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## Keep your ears open!

There will be lots of opportunities for groups to get outdoors in the lovely landscape of the Dyfi Biosphere Reserve. Caroline de Carle has been leading walks in the Cletwr Woods around the theme of identifying the songs of hard-to-see woodland birds. "We have a group of regulars, and also fresh faces every time. The dawn chorus walks are very popular". This summer, she'll be taking people in search of birdsong in the very different habitat of Cors Fochno, "a very special place managed by Natural Resources Wales. It feels a real privilege to have a permit to walk there. We are particularly excited about midsummer evening walks to hear the elusive nightjar, a North African migrant and one of the strangest birds of the Welsh countryside. We hope bats and barn owls will be around too, which we'll also identify by sound".

Caroline did a countryside management degree in Wales and stayed on. She has worked in conservation for Natural Resources Wales and the RSPB. Caroline is also a loyal volunteer and often deputises for the managers. The other string to her bow is guiding birdwatching holidays in the Gambia.

## Summer Opening Hours

Sunday	8.30 - 4.00
Monday	8.30 - 5.00
Tuesday-Saturday	8.30 - 6.00 (café till 5)

**Hot home-made food & breakfasts  
9.30-2.30  
coffee & home-baked cakes all day**



Contact the shop 01970 832 113; [cletwr@cletwr.com](mailto:cletwr@cletwr.com)

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