

MP Mark Williams joined the Saturday volunteers at Siop Cynfelin in Tre'r Ddol, and spent the morning serving customers in the shop and café. Just like the regular volunteers, he first had to tame the coffee machine and learn the precise recipes for cappuccinos and americanos. But, just like everybody else, he found it was actually quite an easy, satisfying skill and served up a succession of perfect frothy coffees. The computerised till with its intricate stock-control system also seemed daunting, especially with a queue watching, but again he quickly got into the rhythm. It is very different from Westminster! But, as Mark Williams agreed, it is a worthwhile project. A village shop that supports local producers puts money into the local economy, and its café provides a meeting place that nurtures a sense of community, and gives a healthy spur to other local services. When so many rural services are in retreat, Mark Williams suggested how pleasing it is to see an initiative that is clearly not 'on the back foot'.

The shop and café now have around 50 active volunteers, backed by a full-time manager and two part-time supervisors. In recognition of the high standard of the pilot project, it has been awarded a Capital Development Grant by the Lottery, to help put together a bid to buy and develop the Cletwr Building for the community.

On Sunday October 6th, the company, Cwmni Cletwr, holds its first AGM at 3.30 in the LLanfach building in Tre'r Ddol. It will be a social occasion with refreshments, and all supporters and volunteers of Siop Cynfelin are welcome to attend.