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CEFN HENGOED & HENGOED COMMUNITY FIRST PARTNERSHIP

FEASIBILITY OF A *'COMMUNITY TASK FORCE'*

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communities *first* **cymunedau yn gyntaf**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
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PREFACE

Consultus wish to take this opportunity to thank Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed Community First Partnership, the communities of Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed and the groups at the Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed Community Centre (s) for their cooperation and support in carrying out this feasibility study.

Thanks is also expressed to the organisations that offered their time and expert views to the study in particular: Caerphilly Care and Repair. GAVO, Wales Co-operative Centre, RCSVP, Prime Cymru,

The consultants of this study Paul Price and Jo Muscat wish to express their thanks and wish the Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed Community First partnership every success in their future aspirations.

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SECTION A – FEASIBILITY REPORT

1.0 Background

The Communities First Programme is a long-term strategy for improving the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. The programme seeks to ensure that the funds and support available from the Welsh Assembly Government and various other publicly funded agencies are targeted at the poorest areas.

As a direct result of the Welsh Assembly Government's Community First Programme, Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed Communities First Partnership was formed in 2002. The Communities Partnership has, during its lifespan, developed a broad range of projects and initiatives in support of the Assembly's strategy and in support of addressing the disparate needs of the community.

The Partnership has had many successes in the community, as an example it runs a busy fruit and vegetable co-operative that is well used by the community. The partnership is keen to develop services of value to the community and develop services to meet the needs of the community. In furtherance of this aspiration and in building on the successes of the food co-operative initiative, the Partnership has expressed a desire to develop a 'Community Task Force'.

The 'Community Task Force' idea is to provide a repair and community services facilities at reasonable prices for all local residents. The partnership formulated a set of examples of services that the task force could provide and were keen to explore the local communities' perspective on the idea.

The partnership submitted an application for funding to the Coalfields Regeneration Fund to carry out feasibility study. The funding application was successful and the partnership were now in a position to develop a consultancy brief, a tendering process and invite tender submissions from external consultants.

2.0 Introduction

Consultus was commissioned by The Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed Community First Partnership in March 2006 to carry out a feasibility study on the viability of setting up a community business.

The consultancy brief outlined the key intention of the survey as:

- The project viability
- The project sustainability
- Questionnaires to address the issues surrounding competition
- What the demand is for such an enterprise
- The most effective structure required
- Assessment of the legal implications for the business
- Provide recommendations for all the above

The key aim of the survey was to enable the Partnership to move forward with validated evidence of need, a structure from which to develop an operational process and a degree of confidence in enabling an informed choice to be made as to 'the business case' for a service of this type.

In achieving these aims and objectives the study proposed to answer three essential questions:

- Is there a demand/need for such a service?
- Are skills available locally to service the demand?
- What would/could an operational delivery model look like?

The primary intention and purpose of this report will be to offer clarity and validity to the potential/proposed service provision based against a backdrop of qualitative and quantitative analysis.

3.0 Methodology

This feasibility study has been evidence from a variety of sources. The mixture of methods used to collect the information had at its core a key principle of interaction with both the community and the partnership.

3.1 Interaction with the community

- A questionnaire was developed and with the support of the Community First Partnership 2,000 questionnaires were sent out.
- A door to door survey took place – a sample of 50 households was conducted.
- Attendance at existing community group venues – three community group meetings were attended.
- A community evening session with the wider community partnership group.

3.2 Interaction with local business

- Telephone interviews with local businesses and a face to face meeting with businesses took place.

3.3 Research

The research undertaken was to offer the partnership suggestions and options in:

- Determining an appropriate structure for the community business. It was also felt useful to explore other community businesses or similar initiatives in the country so as to identify lessons learned.
- Assessing the legal implications of the business, including guidance of good practice from professional organizations within the field of social enterprise development.
- Offer the partnership a financial forecast based on all of the above to support or otherwise the viability of the business.

3.4 Structure of the report

In keeping with its brief and drawing on the above evidence and experiences, the report will begin by offering a 'snap shot' of the community in Cefn Hengoed & Cefn Hengoed. It will develop a community profile of the area using existing data from On Line Statistics (ONS). (Consultus has license to use this data)

The report will offer researched evidence of the communities' thoughts, needs and aspirations of a social business in the area. It will develop the foundation of a business plan, offer observations based on evidenced experience to date, explore the options available to the partnership and outline the feasibility of the proposed business for wider discussion.

Finally, the report will offer examples of good practice in similar community ventures and will list contact details of organisations that can support the development of a business of this nature.

The report is structured in three sections beginning with section A the feasibility study, section B an outline of a business plan and section C examples of good practice and contacts for the partnership to pursue should they wish.

Please note direct quotations in the following pages are shown in italics and quote marks.

4.0 Community profile

The statistical information has been provided by the 2001 National Census and uses the latest figures (2001 census) and the newly developed formula of Output Areas and the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation to offer an up to date 'snap shot' of the community of Cefn Hengoed & Cefn Hengoed.

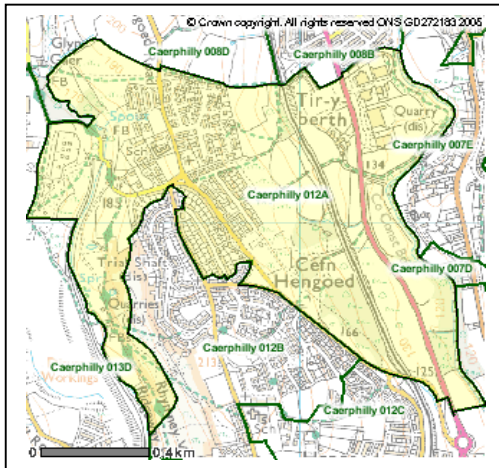
4.1 *The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005 (WIMD) is the official measure of deprivation for small areas in Wales. It was developed for the Welsh Assembly Government by the Assembly's Statistical Directorate and the Local Government Data Unit (Wales). It replaces the index which was produced in 2000.* Pre 2005 the standard unit for presenting local statistical information had been the electoral ward/division this had drawbacks:

- Electoral wards/divisions vary greatly in size, from fewer than 100 residents to more than 30,000. This is not ideal for nationwide comparisons, and also means that data which can safely be released for larger wards may not be released for smaller wards due to disclosure requirements (i.e. the need to protect the confidentiality of individuals).
- Electoral wards/divisions are subject to regular boundary changes creating problems when trying to compare datasets from different time periods.

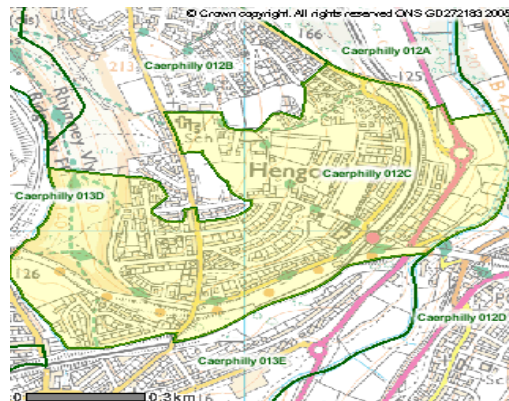
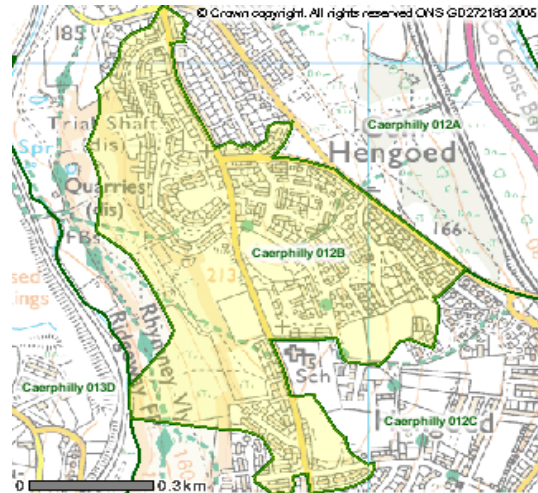
A decision was taken to develop a range of areas that would be of consistent size and whose boundaries would not change. These would be built from groups of Output Areas (OAs) used for the 2001 Census, and would be known as Super Output Areas (SOAs). Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed are Lower Super Output Areas 012A, 012B & 012C (LSOa) within the respective Middle Super Output Area (MSOa) of Caerphilly which is 012.

4.2 The maps below highlight the coverage of output area for Hengoed & Cefn Hengoed.

Output area 012A



Output area 012B



Output area 012C

Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed span across three super output areas (based on 2003 boundaries as defined by WAG) the areas of 012A, 012B & 012C.

Against this backdrop the following provides a statistical summary of Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed.

4.3 Demographics

Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed are in the Rhymney Valley area of Caerphilly County Borough. The area has a resident population of 5,044 of which 49% are males and 51% are females. 99.4% of residents are white.

The average age of residents is 34 years, this is reflective of the following data: 012A average age 32.4, 012B 34.2 and 012C 36.2.

The average age in comparison for England and Wales is 38.7 years. This suggests that Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed have a relatively young population.

The area has an above average percentage of lone parent households – 10.6% compared with 6.5% nationally.

The 2001 Census provides information on any voluntary care provided to look after, help or support, family members, friends, neighbours or others affected by long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability, or problems relating to old age. These figures are expressed as follows for Cefn Hengoed Hengoed.

In the (LSOA) Caerphilly 012A, 11 per cent of the resident population provided unpaid care; this was the same in 012B but rose by 3% in 012C to 14 per cent, giving an overall average of 12 per cent. This compares to 10% in England and Wales. Of the people providing unpaid care, 41 per cent gave 50 hours or more per week; this compared with 21 per cent in England and Wales.

4.4 Housing

Housing in Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed is a mix of owner occupier, Council (social housing) and housing association dwellings. There is a very limited number of private landlord and family rented accommodation.

The data set definition for social housing comes under two sub definitions within the descriptions given by the ONS survey these are: Council owned properties – other which refers to registered social landlord properties, housing associations, housing co-operatives and charitable trusts. Private rented accommodation refers to private landlord, family rented accommodation and letting agencies.

There are 1,841 households in the area of these 67.6% are owner occupied, 16.3% are council (social housing stock) and 16.1% are housing associations or private landlords.

This can be further broken down in localities as follows: in the 012A locality 4.8 per cent of rental accommodation is council properties, in 012B council rental provides for 33.8 per cent, in -12C rental of council properties is 9.8 per cent. This compared with an average for England and Wales 13.2 per cent.

The above statistics can be teased out further to offer the following information: overall or total number of social housing rental figures show that for 012A, 85 households, for 012B, 233 households, and for 012C, 159 households.

These figures are better presented in the table below:

Output Area	Social rented (total)	Council	Other
012A	85	25	60
012B	233	205	28
012C	159	70	89

These figures represent a strong local presence of social rental accommodation in pockets or density of localities. An example of this would be the bungalows at Hengoed Avenue that are generally occupied by older people and known locally as 'the pensioners' bungalows'.

National statistics represent the type of accommodation in Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed 012A and 012B as semi detached houses or bungalows at 66.1% and 75.9% respectively. (Statistics were not available for 012C) The National average of this type of accommodation is reflected as 31.6 per cent (England and Wales).

The average size of household is noted as 2.8 persons in 012A and 012B and 2.5 people in 012C. The National average is 2.4 people.

4.5 Employment

The Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed environmental Strategy report, prepared in August 2005 stated that "*Hengoed has an above average unemployment rate {4%} and high levels of incapacity claimants*". ONS neighbourhood statistics indicate that 7 per cent of unemployed people were aged 50 and over, 17 per cent had never worked and 44 per cent were long-term unemployed. This compares with England and Wales as a whole where 19 per cent of unemployed people were 50 or over, 9 per cent had never worked and 30 per cent were long-term unemployed.

Statistical data (census 2001) also points to a higher proportion of economically inactive looking after the home {8.5%} the National average is 6.4 per cent. A high proportion of disabled 15.6 per cent – the National average is 9.2 per cent.

Added to these statistics is the rate of households with out cars. Statistics indicate that in the 012B Output area 37 per cent of households do not have a car. This compares with 27 per cent in England and Wales.

This data presents a snap shot of Hengoed and Cefn Hengoed. The relevance to this report of carrying out a brief assessment of the locality is to offer an indication as to who lives in the area and who the target audience is likely to be.

4.6 Key findings of the community profile

The following bullet points provide a summary of the key findings:

- The population is on average young (34 years)
- There are a high number of lone parents
- A high percentage of voluntary/unpaid care is provided to the older generation
- There are large numbers of houses and bungalows as apposed to multiple occupancy dwellings (MOD) or apartments.
- There is a significant number of council and association rented accommodation.
- Households are slightly larger than the national average.
- A high rate of unemployment

- A high rate of inactivity
- A high level of disabled people and incapacity claimants
- Low level of car ownership

5.0 Market Survey - questionnaires

Two surveys were undertaken; the first was a blanket survey of all households in Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed. The second was a specific targeting exercise of door to door surveying in areas known to be generally occupied by retired people and lone parents.

5.1 Survey 1 - The Partnership sends out a regular newsletter to two thousand households (2,000) in Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed.

The consultancy took the opportunity to develop the questionnaires to coincide with the distribution of the newsletter.

The questionnaires were inserted in the newsletter and the community were asked to fill these in and return to a local point where a post box was sited. After a period of two to three weeks the post boxes were collected.

The return sample equated to 0.7% (14) this was a poor and disappointing response and generated some discussion amongst members of the partnership and the authors of the questionnaire. The discussions focused on determining a reason for the lack of response from the community. A local Councillor offered the view that *“previous questionnaires have had a poor response. He recalled that a survey involving fifty questionnaires had a return sample of 6% (3)”*. This prompted further investigation to ask why the low response rate?

It may be noted here that what materialised was not a reflection of disinterest by the community, or a lack of understanding of the questionnaire, but, it was suggested that many of the newsletters had not been delivered. This again, was explored later in the survey and added were the views of some members of the community who suggested that *“people will sometimes just bin things that come through the door – don’t read them and then say they have not received them”*. Having taken up discussion regarding questionnaires again, at a feedback meeting with the Community First Partnership it was felt that reasoning this lack of response could well remain a mystery.

5.2 Survey 2 – the door to door survey questionnaires were semi - structured. Whilst using the same format as the postal questionnaires there was an opportunity to collect some qualitative data. This method of collecting qualitative data enabled the researchers to obtain an additional insight. Often the case is that there are underlying aspects that may be missed by other defined mediums of research. More appropriately to this study were concerns of misinterpretation of the questionnaire (given the low sample return). It was felt that communicating the ideas of the partnership so as they were understood was a critical element.

In presenting the results of the survey the two sets of questionnaires have been merged and where appropriate the qualitative feedback has been interspersed in *quotation marks and italics*.

5.3 The questionnaires asked nine questions

Q1 Did people think that setting up a not for profit organisation was a good idea?

The majority of people (95%) felt that the community business was a good idea, 2.5% felt that it was not, equally 2.5% were not sure.

One of the returns suggested that *“if it was well run and fully accessible and accountable to all members of the community”*. Unfortunately, services are not accessed within the area because of ill feeling and disinterest of current provision”.

Along a similar note another return offered the view that *“I think the idea is excellent just as long as it is a partnership and is not just for Cefn Hengoed, where most things seem to be based, making it difficult for Hengoed people to be involved due to the bus service being poor”*.

When asked why this was a good idea – a selection of responses were offered:

- *Reliability*
- *Feeling of security* – one interviewee suggested that *“if the service is provided by the community partnership we have someone to get back too if we are not happy, or people don’t turn up.”*
- Another view was that *“nothing happens here, people need services like window cleaning and gardening”*
- *“Well worth looking at older people – we could use this service. I need my guttering done and I was quoted £600.*

When asked why this was **not** a good idea

- *“Don’t believe there will be much of a need – I have six children and they are all willing to help”*

Why are you not sure?

- *“The business needs to be affordable – that’s the issue”*

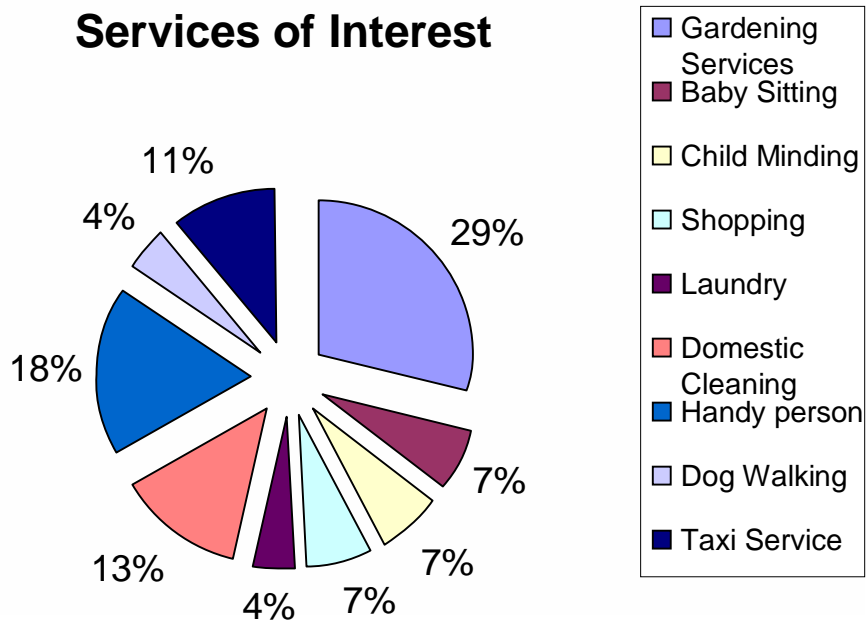
Q2 Would you like to have services that meet the needs of our community developed and managed locally?

95% of respondents said that they would with 2.5% stating no and 2.5% not sure.

Q3 Would you be prepared to pay for the services?

84% stated that they would pay for a service that they needed. 16% were not sure if they could afford to pay for services.

Q4 Listed a range of services and asked respondents if they were currently using any of these services and if not which of the listed services might they use if they were available?



This graph illustrates the services that are of interest to the community.

A number of the people interviewed already paid for gardening, handy person, shopping and laundry services. When asked how much they paid for these services they stated that for an ironing service a price of £15 per 20 items was paid. The service was used on a monthly base. Gardening services were priced between £15 -£20 for cutting lawns or trimming back and front lawns.

One of the residents suggested that *“all old age pensioner’s gardens should be done. I am 86 and I can’t do this sort of work any more. I pay a gardener £20 every two weeks to keep my gardens tidy. I would pay for the community service”*.

A gentleman that talked about the ironing services he uses suggested that he would be happy to pay for community services stating that *“you don’t get anything for nothing”*

Another person suggested that whilst they would be happy to pay for services provided through the Community business *“value for money”* was important. Additionally, the following view was offered as an example of value for money *“I did use the food co op but found that the bags got less and the food poor, so I stopped”*.

Generally, people felt that they would use the services and that the idea of a community business was good. The deciding factor for many seemed to depend on what the cost of the service would be.

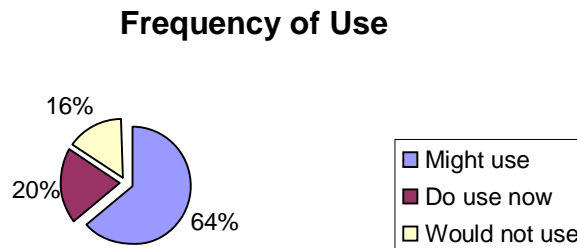
One questionnaire returned stated *“it depends on what a ‘competitive’ fee is. Probably too expensive for me”*

Q5 Are there any services that are not listed which would be of interest?

The responses were as follows: short term van hire, form filling and advice, car washing, house sitting and window cleaning.

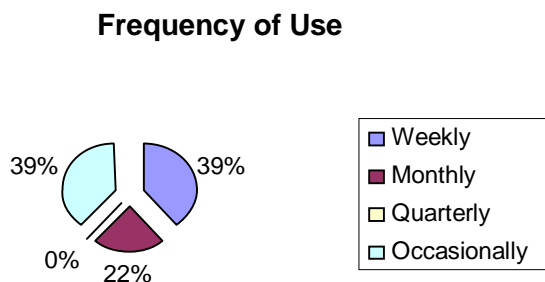
The highest responses were form filling and advice 24% and of equal demand was that of car washing.

Q5a If any of these services were available to you would you use them?



20 per cent of interviewees pay to use a service at present. 64 per cent stated that they would consider using a community service. Approximately 30 percent stated that they would use the service but considered that cost was a major factor whilst 34 per cent stated that they would welcome a regular service.

Q6 How often would you use the service?



From these responses we seem to have an equal split between weekly and occasional usage.

A member of the community interviewed at the door to door survey suggested that *“older people would benefit from this support and would probably use it. Younger people would not want to use the service”*. When asked would he use the service {as he seemed to be within the older age group} he offered the view that *“I would not use this I believe in self sufficiency”*

Q7 Would you be prepared to assist in developing the skills needed amongst our community?

Of the postal questionnaires 30 per cent of respondents indicated that they would wish to assist in developing the skills needed for a community business.

On an equal footing, 30 per cent did not comment and 40 per cent stated that they would not wish to assist in developing skills. One respondent stated *“I would like to help but am not sure how”*

The door to door interviews offered a slightly different perspective in that people offered their views of support suggesting that it would be a good idea to support the youth of the area to build on both soft and hard skills. As an example it was noted that young people who are not working could learn from the older residents in the area. One resident offered the view that the training of young people was important for the area and he would be pleased to be involved. Through his working life he had trade skills of painting, decorating, and bricklaying. He felt he could contribute substantially to support a youth skills training programme. He stated "I can offer this to young people on a voluntary basis a few hours a day. *I am disabled and am not able to work, being involved in a community business would get me out of the house for a few hours*"

Another resident suggested that *"I think supporting the kids of the area is a good ideaI did national service.....Some youths have just broken up the local play area this learning of skills and putting them to good use would help keep their minds occupied"*.

Q8 In what capacity do you feel you could help?

The postal questionnaires indicated that 5 per cent had practical skills which others could benefit from learning. No respondent felt that they had professional trade skills that could benefit the service. 5 per cent indicated that they could assist in a general volunteering role, 3 per cent indicated that they could provide business/management skills support and 1 person suggested that they had knowledge and experience of marketing. Another respondent clearly stated that skills offered would need to be in paid capacity. The remainder of the returns did not offer a view.

Additionally, a number of returns indicated areas of skills that they could offer for example: reflexology, aromatherapy, music teaching, and electrical work and telecommunication skills.

At the door to door survey the community offered the following views:

"I would offer my skills to younger people in a voluntary capacity. I have computer and engineering skills".

"I am a retired service engineer for machine tools and I would support young people to learn skills. I would be happy to do this voluntarily".

Q9 Where the respondents resided

The returns came from the following residencies; Heol Dewi, Hengoed Avenue, Ashgrove Hengoed, Park Road, Hengoed Hall Close, Cheriton Avenue, Graig Road, Kestrel View, Old Parish Road, Hill View, Birch Crescent, Cae Ysgubor, Cefn Hengoed, Beechfield Avenue.

Additional questions asked on door to door survey

The only additional question asked at the door to door survey was that of age range.

The age range was predominantly in the 65 plus group, however, a number of interviewees were in the age range of 35 -50 and 50-65.

Interestingly, two young males were stopped on Hengoed Avenue and asked if they would like to participate in the survey. They gave their age as 18 and 19 years old. One was pushing a pram with a young baby and the other was sat on a front garden wall. They kindly took time to offer their views so I proceeded with the questionnaire – the responses although fairly sparse are presented below:

They stated that they had no interest in the community business and they had never heard of the Community First Partnership. When I explained the idea of a local service they suggested that they would be interested in working for them adding *“we would do anything as long as it brings in money... that would be better than the dole”*

Locality

The door to door survey took place in the following areas: Gelligaer Road, Danycoed, Hengoed Avenue, Lansbury Avenue, Hengoed Hall Drive

5.4 One to one meetings with key individuals

Meetings took place with three individuals who have been involved with ‘Growing the idea’ expressing their views on the background and rationale for developing a community business.

5.4.1 Interview 1

It was explained that there had been no real presence of “community provision” until the vegetable co-op was started. People then began to associate the Community First Partnership with a positive and tangible outcome.

The idea of a community business was borne from this initiative, as it was felt it could provide a viable service that may help unemployed people and retired people. It was described as a *“way of encouraging people to engage in their community”*.....Using the coop as an example the interviewee explained that *“the vegetable co-op had become a social event at the Youth Centre”*. {The Youth Centre is one of the three Community Halls in the area} *“The Co-op has developed well over the past months and this is in part, due to the Vice Chair of the co-op”. There are organisations wanting to use the opportunity of the vegetable co-op as a means of publicising services for example working links and CHAD” this is a reflection of the success of the co-op”*.

This view was offered in response to elaborate on the success of the current initiatives that the community partnership has set up.

The interview then focused on the how the new business may be structured. The question asked here was how you see the ‘community task force/social enterprise business working?

A basic model was described in that the business would revolve around a co-ordinator who would have access to a team of people. The team would provide assessments, estimates of work, offer a list of professional people and working with local businesses hand in hand not in competition.

At this point it was mentioned that Caerphilly Care and Repair offer a service to the local area. How did this service fit with and complement the proposed service or was this seen as competition?

It was explained that although the interviewee was aware of the service he was not familiar with it and that the community business could work hand in hand with Care and Repair Caerphilly for the betterment of a community service in Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed.

The key points raised at this meeting mirrored those raised by the community partnership in that it was felt essential to gauge the long term viability of a community business and that any start up funding should be just start up and not continuation funding i.e. the business should be self sustaining.

Ideas expressed that could form part of the community business:

- Delivery of newsletters – 2,000 community newsletters are sent for delivery in Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed. There are sixteen community first partnerships in Caerphilly that also require newsletters delivered. It was felt that this in its self could create a viable newsletter delivery service business.

It was expressed that this service could provide work for the local community but it was also recognised that the employment offered could be sessional and part time work and could impact on benefit entitlement. {This is explored further later in the report}.

- A vehicle to support the food co-op – a delivery service could be offered for the co-op.

The vehicle could also be offered for hire to members of the community

- Caretaking facilities – the thought here was that experience suggests it is difficult to find people who are willing to take up a care takers post. This is primarily due to the times required to work and the times caretakers are expected to be available. It is relatively low pay and short working hours, this does not make it an attractive position to apply for. The business could offer caretaking facilities to a number of community centres. This would enable a critical mass of hours to be provided making the employment hours longer and therefore more attractive in terms of remuneration.

Discussion was taken up as to the areas of importance for the business in terms of its unique selling point; the view offered was that it would be the provision of reliable and accountable work persons that would provide a service to the local community.

5.4.2 Interview 2

The second interview was by way of opportunity rather than a pre arranged interview, nonetheless it was useful to gain a different perspective.

It was expressed that a number of gardening firms operate in the area. It was felt that usage of the service would depend on its affordability and that this would be a real issue for some of the residents.

The view offered was that a handy person service to carry out jobs such as changing washers on taps, changing light bulbs, tidying up gardens and decorating would be welcome. The explanation offered was that it was difficult to commission businesses to deal with minor repairs as it was often viewed as not being cost effective for them.

The interviewee was asked if she was aware of Caerphilly Care and Repair Service? In response it was stated "*a leaflet has been recently delivered through the door that highlighted this service*" {Hillview resident}.

Family support and the level of care support that the statistics provided was offered as a point for discussion. The response was that the trend of providing support was changing as family/people tend to move away from the area they grew up in. Often the reason was for work but nonetheless it was becoming increasingly difficult to provide support unless people/families lived locally.

Transport was highlighted as a problem area and the interviewee offered "I have waited an hour and a half for a bus from Caerphilly....private cars are not readily available to families.... {This latter statement fits with the statistical information that suggests a low level of car ownership}

5.4.3 Interview 3

The third interview that took place was with a Local Ward Councillor. As a long standing member of the community and a ward councillor this interview offered an opportunity to gauge a perspective of local culture and local needs.

The questionnaire survey had a return with a statement that offered the following view "*I think the idea is excellent just as long as it is a partnership and is not just for Cefn Hengoed, where most things seem to be based, making it difficult for Hengoed people to be involved due to the bus service being poor*". Given the longstanding background of the individual it felt appropriate to ask for a perspective on this view.

"Historically, there has been a healthy competition between Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed". An example given was that of the Youth Centre, in the words of this individual "*it's the best in the valleys'; it offers good facilities and is a good example of a youth centre. Yet people are reluctant to sit on committees. People seem to work and partake in other counties and areas*" This example was validated later in a telephone conversation with the co-ordinator of a line dancing group that takes place at Hengoed Community Centre.

The purpose of this call was to arrange a community group meeting but it was discovered that none of the attendees were from the Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed area. It was suggested that although the group was incredibly well attended no one from the area attended. The Co-ordinator had tried various methods of advertising the session at various times of the year, but, found that there did not seem to be any interest at all. The participants that attended Hengoed Centre for these dance sessions all came from other parts of Caerphilly.

In discussion with the Ward Councillor it was suggested that there was a sense of expectancy that the council would carry out repairs to council properties. This sense of expectancy seems to be a common theme amongst communities and whilst it is not suggested that all tenants feel this way a proportion of tenants have this mind set.

The services that were felt to be of value were shopping – it was explained that carrying goods could be a problem for many of the older residents. Gardening was seen as a *“brilliant”* idea, and having this *“done at a cost price would benefit local residents”* it was commented that a neighbour was currently paying £40 for a garden service. It was also suggested that a service that carries out small repairs would be of value. This was validated by stating that *“people worry about call out fees and worry about vulnerability”* It was felt that there would be an element of reassurance in the community partnership supporting a community business. The vetting of businesses that are part of the community business offers a sense of comfort in alleviating elements of concerns associated with vulnerability. There were a number of potential concerns highlighted and these have been noted:

- Liability and health and safety was highlighted as an areas that required careful consideration and assurance that the community business would be fully compliant with all legal requirements.
- The question of who would carry out the work was posed – it was felt that the business should consider carrying out CRB checks for all who are and may be involved in delivering services.

5.5 Group meetings

Three group meetings took place. The meetings were enabled greatly with the assistance of the group facilitators/leaders these were: the play group, the food co-op and the pensioners group. A mix of methods was used for each group for example: the play group offered to complete the questionnaires, the food co-op used one to one interviews and the pensioners group took a slightly less formal process. In the first instance an introduction was offered and they were encouraged to discuss their views and ask questions. The results of all three meetings are described further in the following narrative.

5.6 The play group results

The method used here was to visit the playgroup leader on two separate occasions. On the first occasion a brief explanation and introduction of the

'community task force' idea and the purpose of the study was offered. The Play group leader expressed great interest in the idea and stated that she had received a questionnaire with the partnership newsletter but had not filled in the questionnaire; this was due to pressures of time. She offered to take a questionnaire and respond. Additionally, she kindly offered to distribute the questionnaires to all playgroup parents, guardians and carers, collect the questionnaires from them and forward them to a member of the Community Partnership.

The visit on the second occasion was approximately four weeks later to prompt a response. The playgroup leader stated that she had passed the questionnaires on but there had been no response. She kindly offered to collect views verbally and note them down. During the lifetime of this study returns from the play group have not materialised and have therefore not been included in this report.

5.7 The Vegetable co-op results

The method used for this exercise was one to one interviews. The age range of participants was two in their late 20's/early 30's, two in their 50's and the remainder were 60 plus.

In general it was found that people were reluctant to participate in the one to one interviews. They offered the view that they were too busy or didn't have the time right now. Interviews were however taken up by nine people, two of whom were outside the Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed area. They resided in Trelewis and Maesycwmmmer but were taking advantage of the fruit and vegetable co-op. As they were not within the geographical remit of the study, the interviews with these two individuals have not been included in the following results.

Their comments have been noted in that they both felt that the community business/social business was "*a good idea*".

Of the seven (7) people interviewed all felt the development of small social businesses was a good idea. They suggested a range of services that they felt could be attractive and these included:-

- **Crèche for babies**, suggesting those that exist are too expensive for most people residing in the area. The locality has an after school club which is well attended but services for young children would it is believed be attractive.
- **Gardening services** - it was reported that the Local Authority operate a garden clearance service through the Community Support Scheme but they wouldn't provide a regular service to keep the gardens looking trim and tidy.
- **Painting and decorating** - it was suggested this could be attractive to the elderly or even people who live busy lives.
- **Domestic cleaning** - the point immediately above featured.
- **General handyman services** - people suggested this would be helpful but felt if people were engaging workmen to undertake critical tasks such as plumbing, gas or electricity type duties they would need to

satisfy themselves the people undertaking the tasks were competent to do the work. It was commented by one person that *“repairs that do not require a professionally qualified tradesman would be the ideal service”*.

- **Dog walking** - this it was felt, could be attractive to the elderly or to people who have had an accident and are temporarily unable to exercise their animal.
- **Shopping** - the point immediately above featured.

Overall, the responses of those interviewed were *“it is a good idea”*. However, one interviewee offered the view that *“people in the community often declare an interest, then think about it and then do not proceed”*.

The group felt there are a couple of matters that need to be addressed to give added confidence to the community before services were developed. These have been summarised below:-

- To consider the views of local businesses as this development may be a threat to their livelihood? Although there was a suggestion that *“this could improve competition and drive down prices”* this wasn't viewed positively.
- People in the community are always looking for bargains but what is the merit of the service and can it provide the quality of service that people may be seeking at a reasonable price?
- People often have had much pride in themselves and their properties and may not want to trust this service as their perception may be that it is not being professionally driven.
- Money will be a factor and the mind set of many people is one of saving for a “rainy day”. Will people part with their money? Some people are known to need Social Service support but will not part with the £9 contribution they have to make.
- How can the service guarantee it can provide people with the right level of skills and abilities?
- Can people trust the individual workers in entering their homes?

5.8 The pensioners club results

The approach at the pensioners club was informal and the group was encouraged to participate. Although it should be noted, that not much encouragement was needed. They were a great group to have visited and were keen to offer their views. As described earlier in this section the discussion was preceded by an introduction and an invitation to ask questions. The group consisted of approximately nine people of these eight were female and one male.

Post the introduction of the “community task force” idea the group asked two questions which centred on the service provision i.e. what services would be provided and what would the cost be? In the first instance the interviewer referred to the list of services on the questionnaire and offered encouragement for further suggestions.

On the latter point it was explained that it was too premature at present to offer a suggestion of cost, as specific costings had yet to be modelled. The interviewer offered the aspiration of the Community Partnership which was that any provision offered would be competitive but needed to offer the workforce at the least the national minimum wage. It was also stressed that as a not for profit organisation any profit would be ploughed back into the community business. These responses were welcomed by the group and they expressed an interest in being informed of the outcome.

The group began to discuss the service needs of the area and identified a number of gaps. The views of the group echoed the need of a gardening and handy person service. There were suggestions that often they need small jobs around the house like for example: tap washers, light bulbs, locks, painting and decorating etc.

These jobs were difficult to do themselves and finding someone to carry out small jobs was often prohibitive, either because it was too expensive or businesses did not really want to carry out small jobs as they were not cost effective.

They felt that when the need arose for them to instruct someone to carry out work the concern at the forefront of their minds was *“we don't know who will be calling to do the job”* this view was explored further and it became clear that they were referring to reputability and honesty of trades people.

When asked who did these small jobs for them at present - it was stated that in general *“families do this at the moment”* when asked if this was a usual occurrence in the area i.e. do families live close by and so are able to support relatives? I was told that the trend seems to be that children now seem to move away with work etc and so the reliance and dependency on them is decreasing. As one lady put it *“you can't be asking them to travel miles to change a light bulb or fix a lock”*

They felt that a community business would offer them a sense of trust in that they would feel happier about engaging someone to do work who has come from a trusted source. They also suggested that although in their minds the gardening and handy person service was very much needed, that shopping would also be a useful service for some people. Although, they did stress that they did not need this service as they did their own shopping. (This was observed as demonstration of independence)

They offered the view that domestic cleaning was a service that was well used within their circle of friends and stated that people often paid for this privately. When asked about approximate numbers and usage – they stated that they did not know the extent of usage but that they were well aware that this service was being used.

They were asked about Caerphilly Care and Repair Service – did they know it existed, did they use it, did they know someone who had used it and if so what was their view on the service?

Generally, it was felt that the service was good, this view was offered not as direct recipients of the service but they were aware of people (friends) who had used Care and Repair. One lady stated that she had recently received a leaflet from Care and Repair and had telephoned for a service, but found that it took a long time to access as she put it “*you go through a lot to get a person to come out*”. (Later in this section an interview with Caerphilly Care and Repair offers an explanation to this statement)

Additionally, they stated that the need for information was important and asked that I note this for the Community First Partnership. They expressed concerns on the lack of after care – when a person has been in hospital for a period of time, on discharge there is no provision for them at home and they are often left to cope in difficult circumstances. I asked about Age Concern but was told that they do not operate a service in the area. This followed a series of examples of provision that is available in Gwent and in Cardiff but they were not familiar or aware of any such provision in Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed. They suggested that things like form filling was an issue and they would like to see more information on what services are available, who can access them and how?

{Taking the point of lack of information of services that Age Concern may provide, I spoke with an Officer at Age Concern who offered to provide a talk to the group and distribute leaflets and contact numbers for the community}.

5.9 Summary of results

The survey thus far indicates that there are disparate needs within the community and it would seem that should these services be provided by a ‘community task force’ they would be used.

However, within this statement there are considerations to be noted that would impact on the self-sustainability of a business of this nature.

- 1) Evidence suggests that voluntary or unpaid care is higher than average.
- 2) There is anecdotal evidence that unemployed or inactive people take on handy person jobs, cleaning and household chores with a smaller than professional fee charged.
- 3) The geographical span is small – the business will operate in the locality of Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed.
- 4) The business would be dependant on a small market and subsequently a small share of that market.

There are many social benefits to be highlighted that business of this nature could contribute to the community and these are better expressed within a later section of the report, where timebanks are explored.

However, in terms of feasibility and self-sustainability the four points outlined above which may be viewed as less positive need to be treated with a degree of respect.

These initial observations have been taken forward to the business plan (Section B) and have been noted in the PEST and SWOT.

5.10 Interviews with local employer and key stakeholders

Interviews took place with a local employer and two key stakeholder organisations.

The Community Partnership felt that any new business should not negatively impact on existing local businesses and that the study should explore the probability of negative impact upon existing businesses.

5.10.1 Interview 1

A meeting with Caerphilly Care & Repair was convened on 25th May 2006 with the Director, Pat Jones.

The meeting opened with an introduction of the proposed community business, followed with an exploratory discussion of how the two services could gainfully support services for the Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed Community.

Care & Repair operates across the geographical area of Caerphilly. It was not possible at this meeting to identify how many of the Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed residents use the service but the Director suggested that it would be possible to determine the number of users from a database at a later stage.

The service is run by a team of nine people which includes a full time employed handy person. The primary role of the eight staff (including the Director) is administrating the service. They operate a data bank of professional trades' people who they call upon to provide more specialised work. Care & Repair follow strict policies and procedures in terms of Criminal Record Bureau Checks, checking of credentials of trades' people i.e. qualifications and experience etc. Should trade people wish to register their services on the data base they are required to adhere to these guidelines and procedures.

It was suggested that the types of work that the handy person would carry out were such jobs as leaking taps, drains and guttering problems, applying sealant around showers and general odd jobs. They would not carry out such jobs as gardening or painting and decorating.

They provide their handy person service to people in the community who are 60 years plus or disabled people, they only work on private owned properties/owner occupier and not council owned properties or rented properties. The charge made for carry out handy person work is £10 for any work up to 2 hours plus materials. Last years annual income for this type of handy work amounted to £4,000 and it was envisaged that this level of income would be maintained this financial year.

It was expressed that the handy person service was in great demand and at present the organisation does not have the capacity to meet these demands.

The organisation has given due consideration to the employment of one more handy person but feels that it would not be able to subsidise and sustain a further post of this nature with the current level of funding received.

Additionally, the service is an extended resource for the social services department. It takes referrals from the assessment team on house adaptations for example: hand rails, showers for disabled residents etc. This type of work is contracted out using the Care and Repair data base personnel.

The Director was interested in the setting up of a community business and would be interested in supporting the setting up of the business in terms of sharing good practice like for example; policies and procedures. At a practical level there could also be some cross referral of contacts and clients. The development of such a bi lateral arrangement was viewed very positively and it was suggested that in working closely there would be added value to the community services.

It was decided that once the feasibility study was completed and cleared there would be merit in meeting with the Community First Partnership to explore these options further.

The Director also offered the suggestion of time banks as a possible option. Time banks are based on a theory of complementary/community currencies. In principle this works as an exchange of time rather than a financial exchange and is in keeping with the LET scheme. This is further explored later in the report.

5.10.2 Interview 2 with stakeholder

A meeting took place with Geraint Jones from the Wales Co-operative Centre to explore possible options for setting up a community task force and to determine the type and range of assistance that could be forthcoming from the Wales Co-operative Centre if this initiative was feasible.

There are reported to be around 700 Co-operatives in existence in Wales, the vast majority of which are Community Co-operatives. Geraint at the Business Centre in Tredomen was familiar with the concept of a 'community task force'.

In the immediate future, it is recommended, by the representative that should there be an interest from the client in looking at a co-operative structure, the starting point really needs to be to determine which type. This can quickly be determined by the Community Partnership and Geraint suggested that there would be a degree of support to the Community Partnership if they felt that a community business was their preferred option. As an example Geraint offered the following assistance:

- 1 Support to test the feasibility idea
- 2 Establish a business plan
- 3 Develop a framework for a legal structure and support to incorporate

4 Training for the business – training and business development support

These services would be offered free of charge to Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed Community First Partnership (service available due to geographical location)

Geraint offered the view that the idea of a community business (community task force) would need to give serious and due consideration to its sustainability and that exploring options of partnership working, particularly, creating partnerships with housing associations and local authorities could well develop as a key measure towards self sustainability.

5.10.3 Interview 3 with stakeholder

A meeting took place with Alun Brooks from Prime Cymru. The purpose was to explore possible options of support for the ‘community task force’ and to gain a view from Alun’s experience of supporting to set up small businesses and community businesses.

Prime Cymru works with people who are over 50 years of age and offer support with marketing, business idea planning and advice and guidance. They have a wide range of business start-ups and as a Princes Trust organisation they have a wealth of experience of working with young people in a variety of projects.

Alun offered a very positive perspective of the potential and emerging model that was developing through this survey. He offered a number of projects that had been run by PYT and Prime that mirrored a number of ideas that the researcher was exploring for example: The Buddy Project – worked with young people by matching them to retired professionals who would act as mentors in support of small business start-up and skills training. He gave examples of similar models, suggesting that ‘unlimited’ an organisation that draws down lottery funding for innovative ideas could be a possible avenue to explore for funding a project of this nature.

A further example of a small handyman business was given – with an offer of attending a community partnership meeting to explore areas of closer working links with the community of Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed, to support in the set up a ‘community task force’ (within the remit of Prime Cymru) and also a suggestion to speak to the owner of the handyman business with a view of him attending a partnership meeting to offer his experience of setting up a business of this type.

5.10.4 Interview 4 with stakeholders

Attendance at a Communities First Network meeting in Cefn Hengoed offered an opportunity to observe and interact with members of the Communities’ First Partnership. At this meeting a presentation was provided by Jan Walsh, Communities First Support Network (CFSN).

This meeting proved to be useful in two ways; in the first instance it was possible to make links with Jan Walsh who explained that WCVA have recently attracted European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) monies to support social enterprises. It was agreed that a meeting would be set up to explore the possible type and range of support that may be offered to the Community Partnership if and when they decided on a possible way forward. In the second instance it was possible to validate two fairly important points that the research had identified with the members of this group (mentioned in 5.9 summary of results pg 21).

Evidence suggests that voluntary or unpaid care is higher than average i.e. the average in the area has been quoted as 50 hours per week..... The group felt this was a true reflection of their community and suggested that a service offering short time respite would be valuable. As an example a service that may offer a carer an evening off or a couple of hours during the day for shopping or recreation would be useful.

The second point raised for validation was.....*a number of people who are unemployed or inactive take on gardening and handy person jobs with a smaller than professional fee charged.....* again, there was acceptance that this statement was familiar and a recognition that this did occur in the community.

The group were asked about the services that were provided by Care and Repair – and again, as a mirror of the survey findings - it seemed that whilst there was recognition of the service it was not highly prominent in the area.

It was expressed that handy person and gardening services were two provisions that would be welcomed by the community. It was also stated that a delivery van service would be beneficial for the community.

The group offered the view that at present there were few businesses available locally and that it was generally accepted that if the community required services of this nature it would be a matter of contacting a business outside the Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed area. The group felt that one of the important aspects and benefits of a 'community task force' would be the knowledge of having some security in terms of who would be carrying out the work and lessening the real and perceptual 'vulnerability' of the community.

5.11 Telephone interviews

The Community First Partnership was keen to explore and consider any negative impact on existing local businesses. Contact details for businesses were provided by the Community First Partnership team by way of newspaper cuttings and leaflets that had been delivered locally in a door to door marketing exercise and a series of telephone interviews took place.

Interviews were semi structured and focused on customer base, the perception of a community business, would the new business impact on your business and how and would it be feasible to explore working together for

example cross referrals. This list is not an exhaustive set of questions but is provided here to offer a flavour of what the interviews sought to identify.

Interestingly, the first interviewee was someone who had conducted a marketing exercise to test the local need for a handy man service. He had distributed the leaflets across the Cefn Hengoed & Cefn Hengoed area and had also conducted some door to door marketing.

He stated in his interview that *“not long after conducting this exercise I was offered a permanent job and decided to take it”*. He expressed the view that his decision to take on a job was due to the little response he had had from his market test and felt that the handy man business would not be able to provide him and his family a regular income. Based on this information he totally abandoned the idea. When asked about what he was looking to charge people he stated that in order to get the business up and running he was prepared to offer very competitive rates. He stated *“my aim was to develop a customer base and so I was prepared to (and did) carry out jobs at low prices....even this did not generate a good enough response to give me confidence in setting up a business”*.

He was asked of his view on a community business – he suggested that he would be interested in working with the community business to explore possible options and opportunities. He would be prepared to discuss this further if and when the time came.

5.12 Researchers observations on limitations of survey

In conducting this survey there are a couple of points to note in terms of its limitations:

The sample size was limited in terms of returns from questionnaires executed. It has been difficult to gauge what the reasons are behind the lack of response and whilst attempts have been made to identify lessons learnt the researchers and the community partnership have drawn a blank. Nonetheless this has limited the survey. In some ways although not as a remedial action but as a triangulation of data it was useful to have conducted a door to door survey, interview key stakeholders and organisations like for example Prime Cymru, Wales Cooperative Centre and have attended group meetings.

This offered some reprieve in terms of sample size however it must be noted that the size of sample probably only equates to five per cent of households of a potential sample size survey of 2,000 households.

The specific targeting of local businesses was a difficult area to explore as comparing like for like in the locality proved less fruitful than expected or anticipated. It seems that businesses outside Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed service the area and the existence of small business in the area providing the potential services were very limited.

As always with these studies, as one makes progress through the maze, more questions arise – the limitation here is time.

However, it may be noted that the Final report has endeavoured to capture information from a number of perspectives i.e. community, organisations, businesses, the community partnership and desk research in order to offer an informed range of options to the community partnership. The researcher also attended a presentation at University of Wales Newport on timebanks.

6.0 The potential business

Here we begin to explore the options of the potential business in terms of structure and ethos. The business could structure itself within a 'social enterprise' or as a community LET scheme or a time bank scheme. These are explored in more detail in the following section.

6.1 Definition of a social enterprise – “Social Enterprises are businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners”.

Social enterprises tackle a wide range of social and environmental issues and operate in all parts of the economy. By using business solutions to achieve public good, the Government believes that social enterprises have a distinct and valuable role to play in helping create a strong, sustainable and socially inclusive economy.

Social enterprises are diverse. They include local community enterprises, social firms and mutual organisations such as co-operatives. There is no single model for a social enterprise. They include companies limited by guarantee, industrial and provident societies and companies limited by shares; some organisations are unincorporated and others are registered charities.

Successful social enterprises can play an important role in helping deliver on many of the Government's key policy objectives by: helping to drive up productivity and competitiveness; contributing to socially inclusive wealth creation; enabling individuals and communities to work towards regenerating Their local neighbourhoods; showing new ways to deliver public services; and helping to develop an inclusive society and active citizenship.

6.2 Definition of a social firm – “A social firm is a type of social enterprise that focuses on job creation and providing supported employment opportunities for people with a disability or disadvantage in the labour market”.

6.3 Characteristic of a social firm -A Social Firm is a business created for the employment of people with a disability or other disadvantage in the labour market

- It is a business that uses its market-orientated production of goods and services to pursue its social mission.
- A significant number of its employees will be people with a disability or other disadvantage in the labour market
- Every worker is paid a market rate wage or salary appropriate to the work whatever their productive capacity.
- Work opportunities should be equal between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged employees. All employees have the same rights and obligations.

At least 50% of income is derived from sales (i.e. not public, private or voluntary grants) At least 25% of the employees will be people with a disability or disadvantage who are integrated into the staff of the business and employed on the same terms and conditions as other non-disabled staff, having the same rights and responsibilities.

The drive to develop social firms has come primarily from the care sector, where providers are keen to improve employment opportunities for their disabled client groups. Social Firms sit neatly within what should be a spectrum of services for disabled people, positioned in the gap between sheltered work projects and open supported employment.

However, in the case of the new enterprise it is essential that this does not become another day service provision or a sheltered work shop. It requires clear focus in order to have on the top of its agenda the progression of individuals with the goal being that of employment. This key focus will support the ethos of the aspirations of the new enterprise, reducing the risk of the new enterprise becoming a social venue or a day service provision.

Both examples highlighted above suggest “fully grown” social firms and possibly an aim for the future. At present the best fit may be that of an emerging social firm as it will allow people to volunteer in order develop and build on their skills whilst still in receipt of benefit.

In using this concept of an emerging social firm it may better place the new enterprise to access funding streams that will enable them to work towards sustainability in the longer term without moving away from their prime objectives and aspirations but by strengthening the foundations for sustainability.

6.4 Definition Of An Emerging Social Firm

- A business, which, in the long or shorter term, will progress to becoming a social firm.
- Disabled employees may still be in receipt of benefits
- The business requires a high level of subsidy to assist the development and establishment of the enterprise, but the aim is to reduce the level of subsidy in a given time frame.

6.5 LETs schemes

Local Exchange Trading Systems or Schemes (LETS) are local community-based mutual aid networks in which people exchange all kinds of goods and services with one another, without the need for money.

LETS are stated as *“revitalising communities throughout Britain”*. They operate as grassroots initiatives that are open to everyone - people of all ages, skills and abilities; local clubs and associations; voluntary groups, charities, community initiatives; housing co-operatives, small businesses and local services - helping everyone to give and take, connect to new resources, and find a genuine community identity.

LETS offer equal opportunities to all - whether employed or unemployed, financially secure or on low income, black or white, able or disabled. LETS use a system of community credits, so that direct exchanges do not have to be made. People earn LETS credits by providing a service, and can then spend the credits on whatever is offered by others on the scheme: for example childcare, transport, food, home repairs or the hire of tools and equipment.

Research conducted in 1996 indicated that at least 40,000 people were involved in some 450 LETS schemes, most of them established according to the democratic and co-operative LETS model developed in Britain by LETSLINK UK, which began work in 1991.

LETS were invented in Canada and are now a widely used model for community currency systems. There are LETS in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland.

LETS use 'community credits' enabling people to accumulate credits and use them as and when they need them. They do not need to make direct exchanges. People earn LETS credits by providing a service and can spend their credits on whatever is offered by other people in the scheme.

This could be childcare, transport, home repairs – whatever is on offer. Generally a wants and offers publication is available that community members can opt for the services they need or are offering. Currently there are approximately 450 LETS schemes in the UK involving 40,000 people.

The national organisation for LETS is LETSLINK UK. The website address is www.letslinkuk.net

6.6 Time banks

Time bank is a reward system that offers 'Time Credits'. The terminology is a little confusing here however one example is the BBC Time bank where an issue of a flat rate currency is expressed as hours to reward volunteering. The Timebanks UK model rewards members for engaging in community, teaching or learning activities, but also encourages "give and take" between the members: a paid "broker" responds to requests from members and matches them to a volunteer role and vice versa. As an example if Fred needs help he

will call the time broker who will arrange for Sue to carry out the task. On completion of the task the broker will transfer time credits to Sue's account.

On a similar principle Timebanks can issue "vouchers" these can begin to accrue a monetary value. The benefit of using vouchers as apposed to credits is that there need not be a system account.

The latest statistics for time banks in the UK suggest that there are:

- 78 active time banks
- 32 developing time banks
- 30 completed time banks
- 4994 participants actively involved in time banking
- 367989 hours traded between participants to date

6.7 Time Banks work on a set of core values

- **People are assets**, the true wealth of a society is its people Every individual has something of value to contribute to the well being of their local community, be it their experience, their practical support, their empathy, their contacts, their skills or their time.
- **Embedding reciprocity** in all transactions as the means of saying, "we need each other". Giving and receiving are the basic building blocks of positive social relationships and healthy communities.
- **Building social capital...** People require well-constructed and maintained social infrastructures as much as they need roads, railways and power stations. Belonging to a mutually supportive and secure social network brings more meaning to our lives and new opportunities to rebuild our trust in one another.
- **Redefining Work** activities such as bringing up children, caring for people who are marginalised, keeping communities safe, fighting injustice and making democracy work have to be recognised, rewarded and counted as real work

6.8 Principles of Community Currencies

- Personal and group development
- Collective working to effect change
- Developing participative processes and structures
- Including marginalised groups
- Promoting the self-determination and self-development of community groups
- Promoting sustainable development
- Confronting prejudices and discrimination
- Fostering a creative and dynamic approach to community development, open and supportive of innovation and co-operation between organisations

6.9 Time Banks Vision

A world in which people may have all they need for their own well being by contributing what they can to:

- Building community
- Caring for the marginalised
- Bringing up healthy children
- Fighting social injustice

“We have what we need if we use what we have” Edgar Cahn

- Time banking was devised by Edgar Cahn in the 1980s where it was launched in the USA as time dollars.
- England the first time bank was set up in Stonehouse in Gloucestershire in October 1998 under the name of Fair Shares.
- Time Banks UK, the umbrella charity for time banking in the UK, started in 2000.
- The principle of time banking is the currency is time.
- One hour of help given to someone else earns one time credit
- Everyone’s time is valued equally and one hour always earns one time credit. Everyone’s contribution is welcomed and valued equally.
- Time credits are deposited in a time bank. They can be withdrawn at will and spent on a whole range of skills and opportunities on offer from other members of the time banks.
- The time bank is run by a time broker (a kind of matchmaker) and all details of the participants skills, needs and availability are stored confidentially in the time bank computer so that any request for help can be immediately ‘matched’ with the right local person.
- When communities use the time banking tool they relearn the value of ‘give and take’ (reciprocity). The more Time Credits that circulate the more people share their time and talents with each other, the stronger the community becomes.
- Everyone has the chance to be both a giver and receiver and is able to define him or her self as a productive member of the local community.
- Over time, informal networks of trust and support evolve that act much like a new form of extended family – connecting people and respecting their autonomy.

6.10 Glossary

Time bank – refers to the organisational setting and the administrative system for using **time credits**.

Time credits – are the units used to measure the use of the community currency based on time. Time-credits are created as required but require some form of "authority" to organise and approve the activities. The activities of members are known in advance to the Time broker, who would also take care over issues of identity, police-checking, insurance, access to vulnerable members, and keeping a record of what has taken place.

Time brokers – are the people who run the time bank and connect people locally. The role of the broker is to develop and manage the time bank by recruiting members, linking them up and keeping the time accounts using the TimeKeeper software. This person needs to be a good communicator, administrator, organiser and most importantly, an innovative ‘people person’: they must relate easily with people from all walks of life and be able to turn challenges into successes.

When appointing a time broker, you need to be very clear what roles you want he/she to fulfil. In many time banks, this post is combined with the role of project manager, so the person must be even more multi-skilled.

The project manager’s job includes all areas of project development including marketing, recruitment and public speaking as well as fund raising and financial management.

The skills and qualities needed for a time broker and a project manager are quite different. Most time banks, however, do not have this luxury and therefore it is essential that the management or steering group are able and willing to take on many of the project management tasks needed to secure the future of the time bank.

Sample Budget for One Year to Run a Time Bank -This sample budget has been included in the report as an example of what costs would be required should the partnership decide to develop a time bank project.

<i>Cost</i>	£
Broker, NI, pension (roughly £18,000 3 days per week)	12,500
Travel etc	750
Set up costs	3,000
Insurance	300
Overheads	4,000
Information and publicity and training	800
TOTAL	21,350

Other costs will include recruitment, a computer if you do not have access to one, and possibly legal fees/management advice if setting up a new organisation.

All time banks need some funding to pay the general running costs. At the very least, funding will be required for stationery, telephone bills, postage, printing, and insurance. The majority of time banks have a paid Time Broker

or Project Manager, so salary costs are incurred. In most cases, funding is also required to cover the costs of rent, utilities and office equipment.

Whilst most time banks have found it relatively easy to get funding for the first three years, in many cases difficulties have been experienced in getting funding to continue the time bank beyond this point.

The most frequent sources of funding are government initiatives, local authorities and funding trusts. Most organisations in the voluntary sector, along with time banks, are competing for the same sources of funding, so it is worth looking at areas that are not so readily tapped

6.12 Local examples and support available

There are a number of local examples of Timebanks (17 developed/active and 8 developing) one example of a developing Timebank is in the Vale of Glamorgan. A list of developed and developing time banks has been provided in **section c** of this report together with contact details as examples of practice.

There is service support available to set up a Timebank model. The University of Wales Newport has project funded under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support the setting up of Timebanks. The University offer several services:

- Hands-on time bank development with local organisations who wish to explore the idea
- Funding advice and support to write bids
- Training and networking days
- Monitoring and evaluation of time bank effectiveness

Community currencies are mechanisms under popular control for facilitating and recording transactions between people which contribute to building social networks and/or strengthening the fabric of local economies.

They enable the design, development and operation of new exchange systems that favour the principles of social justice, mutual equity, social inclusiveness and community development.

One emerging form of community currency uses time as a medium of exchange recognising that peoples' time is an obvious renewable and sustainable resource. Community Time Banks record, measure and accredit peoples' active engagement in the life of their community. One hour of active citizenship equals one time award. People who participate in a Community Time Bank can give their time to community projects such as environmental schemes and skills exchanges and then receive awards such as trips, recycled computers and educational materials.

The information provided above has been sourced from <http://wicc.newport.ac.uk> (University Wales Newport Site)

6.13 Observations

In considering the above information on **Social Firms, LETs and Timebanks** the immediate concern is the impact or effect of participation to members of the community if they are benefit claimants. And how would (in the case of timebanks) the 'rewards' be viewed by benefit claimants and (in the case of employed status community members) The Inland Revenue? Having raised this question at the UWN presentation on timebanks, the response from the presenter suggested that the full impact and effect on benefits had not been fully explored. The view that was offered was that there may be a possible implication in terms of 'permitted work rules'. It was felt that some further exploration was required in order to better inform the Community First Partnership of the possible implications of voluntary work to benefit claimants.

7.0 This following section provides a perspective on the benefits system and how it may effect claimants who wish to participate in the 'community task force'.

7.1 The benefits system and the effects on claimants in receipt of benefits - can sometimes act as a disincentive to people who are accessing incapacity or disability benefits particularly when there is a connection between the claimants housing benefits.

The complexity of benefits and the many rules that are associated with benefit claims are a maze. Often professionals are confused by the complex structure and rules that apply and this may filter to claimants who are attempting to work through the maze. There is a fear by claimants of losing benefits and the detrimental affects that this would have on their daily lives, particularly if housing benefits (rent and council tax) are being claimed. Additionally, it is generally accepted that once benefits are given up or lost, for whatever reason, there is huge difficulty in re-claiming or re-registering. These real and perceptual barriers act as disincentives to the participation of work or the re-integration of excluded people.

7.2 Confusion over **Incapacity Benefit** is in part due to an old ruling, which stated that individuals in receipt of this benefit could only volunteer for 16 hours a week. This rule no longer applies although it is not widely acknowledged and people are still being advised that they may only volunteer for 16 hours.

The most current ruling for people in receipt of Incapacity Benefit is that they may volunteer as many hours as they wish. One of the concerns that people often have is that starting to volunteer will automatically trigger an investigation into their need to claim Incapacity Benefit. This is not the case and reassessments due to an individuals volunteering role very rarely occur. There is also confusion about volunteering and Permitted Work (which can have hour limits) this rule relates only to paid work so should not affect volunteers.

7.3 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is an allowance paid in acknowledgement of the fact that life for someone with a disability may be more expensive i.e. someone with mobility problems may be reliant on taxis. Volunteering will not have any adverse affects on DLA.

In all instances, where a disabled individual is in work, more often than not the Disability Living Allowance is not affected, unless you are in receipt of the attendance allowance.

If the individual is in receipt of **Income Support**, they are only allowed to earn £22 a week, but can work up to 16 hours a week.

With the minimum wage currently standing at £5.05 per hour, no one will want to work for more than perhaps 4 hours. If a disabled person starts work they must tell the Benefits Agency within 48 days of starting work

There are no maximum hours that **Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)** claimants can volunteer for. However, individuals must be actively seeking work and be available for work. Therefore, while there is no stated limit to the number of hours a person can volunteer, it is very likely that a claimant in a full time volunteering role (5 days a week) would be considered as not having time to be actively seeking work by the benefits agency. To be available for work, a volunteer must be available to attend a job interview at 48 hour's notice, or start work at a week's notice.

7.4 Permitted Work Rules - have been developed in support of the Government's commitment to removing barriers to work for people with long-term health problems who want to take steps back to work. They strengthen the aim of work as a "stepping stone" from benefit into employment.

The rules apply to the following benefits because of illness or disability: Incapacity benefit; Severe Disablement Allowance; National Insurance Credits; Income Support; Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit.

The rules permit people to earn small amounts of money and support the aim of helping individuals to maintain contact with the labour market and for social inclusion purposes.

7.5 Claimant rules for people on statutory benefits - The permitted work rules have been developed to support the Government's commitment to removing barriers to work for people with long-term health problems who want to take steps back to work. They strengthen the aim of work as a stepping stone off benefit and into employment. The rules apply to one of the following benefits because of illness or disability:

Incapacity benefit; Severe Disablement Allowance; National Insurance Credits; Income Support; Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit.

The rules will also allow people to earn small amounts to help them maintain contact with the labour market and for social inclusion purposes.

The rule is generally for earnings of up to and including £20.00 a week for an unlimited period.

If a disabled person starts work and is in receipt of welfare benefits, they must tell the Benefits Agency, within 48 days of starting work. Normally, the claimant's employer should pay an hourly rate of at least the national minimum wage.

The general rule that applies, for anyone in receipt of **Incapacity Benefit** is that provided they work for less than 16 hours a week, on average, over a 6 month period and earn no more than £81.00 a week in those 26 weeks (16 hours x £5.05 per hour, minimum wage = £80.80) the benefit they receive directly from the Benefits Agency will not be affected. In all instances, where a disabled individual who is in receipt of Incapacity Benefit, is in work, more often than not the Disability Living Allowance will not be affected, unless that individual is in receipt of the attendance allowance. However, their Council Tax or any Housing Benefit may well be affected as earnings could affect the amount of income support/housing benefit/ council tax a claimant receives.

After 6 months (26 weeks), the individual on **Incapacity Benefit** can continue to earn £81.00 weekly, providing an officer of, or a person providing services to the DWP (this person could be a Job Broker, a DEA or a Personal Adviser) agrees that an extension will help increase their capacity towards work of 16 hours or more a week. As such they will need to be registered with, for example, a Job Broker or a Supported Employment provider, such as Remploy, the Shaw Trust, or Scope.

In all instances, where work has been achieved for 12 months, the individual could be subjected to the Personal Capability Assessment on the basis of the individual's ability to do a similar job elsewhere, because the skills the individual has developed should allow that person to do at least a similar job and the individual could be expected to seek similar work.

If the individual is in receipt of **Income Support**, they are only allowed to earn £22 a week, but can work up to 16 hours a week.

7.6 The minimum wage

The main rate for workers aged 22 and over is currently set at £5.05 an hour. On 1 October 2006 this will increase to £5.35

- The development rate for 18-21 year olds is currently set at £4.25 an hour this will increase to £4.45 on 1 October 2006
- The development rate for 16-17 years olds. This rate is £3.00 an hour. This will increase on 1 October 2006 to £3.30 an hour
- On 1 October 2006 the rate of the accommodation offset will increase to £29.05 per week (£4.15 per day). The current rate is £27.30 per week (£3.90 per day)

7.0 Exploring the options

In drawing a close to the survey results and the research and before progressing to (section B) an outline of a business plan it would be valuable to explore and discuss the options that may be available to the community partnership.

Three key considerations to focus the basis of the option (s):

- Is this feasible? The Oxford English Dictionary defines feasible as “*able to done easily*”
- Is this viable? Viability is defined as “*capable of working successfully*”
- Can this be sustained? Sustain defined as “*keep something going over time*”

A point to note here is the key aim of the survey was to enable the Partnership to move forward with validated evidence of need, a structure from which to develop an operational process and a degree of confidence in enabling an informed choice to be made as to ‘the business case’ for a service of this type. In support of these aims and objectives the study proposed to answer three essential questions:

- Is there a demand/need for such a service?
- Are skills available locally to service the demand?
- What would/could an operational delivery model look like?

The survey suggests that there is a demand for disparate services to support the community; it suggests that the community would purchase these services from a “community task force” and would do so with a degree of confidence.

The idea of a Community business was well received by the participants of the survey, many of whom offered their support in voluntary capacity to grow the services that may be provided.

It would therefore suggest that the idea in principle is feasible; this has been determined by a market need i.e. there is a demand for services and there are few (if any) barriers to entry, so it can be done easily.

Viability of the business requires consideration to be given to the skills available locally to service the demand. If the aim here is local people for local jobs then evidence exists to suggest there are people with skills that can support the business however, “professional” competency of people has not been explored.

There is seemingly a lack of small local businesses that cover the range and type of services that the ‘community task force’ would offer. The food for thought here is the work that is being done by the unregistered/hidden economic activity and the evidence that suggests professional work is generally contracted to companies outside the locality.

Also consider the geographical constraint i.e. trading/operating in Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed which limits the pool of service purchasers geographically, also there are limitations within the pool of purchasers as the target group is mainly made up of people of pensionable age, lone parents and others that may require the range of services.

These considerations point to offering a view that the business would require a model to be developed with strong partnership/links to be viable. A partnership (s) that can offer reciprocally i.e. income, support and professional services, this observation leads to a notion that a single service provision model for the community task force which rests at its core one coordinator who would also deliver services would be a difficult operational model.

In considering ways of sustaining the new enterprise/community task force it would be worth noting that care and repair charge £10 per job up to two hours work. This would crudely equate to something like 69 jobs needed to be carried out per day to keep one person employed.

Based on the £10 per job model, Care and repair have an income of 4K per annum and are grant funded by the WAG and Local Authority to sustain the service.

Given the range and type of services required by the community, the geographical trading area, the target group (generally, low disposable income) the admirable culture and mind set of independence and caring for each other, leads to offering a view that the business would not be self sustaining and would require grant funding to be set up with continuation funding to operate/trade in the long term.

It may be that given the opportunity to set up, test and pilot a partnership model of community service provision; the service may emerge as a self-sustaining community business in the future. Although, there is a need to express that given the research findings of this study the community business could begin to work towards sustainability but the reality of this would not materialise in the near future.

The bases of the model requires a strong sense of social benefit – this may be an opportunity to develop a model that may address disparities in the community, offer social skills to young people, bring the community closer together, offering trade offs i.e. you do something for me and I will return the courtesy, which retains individual independence and values community participation and skills.

In taking all these points on board, what might an operational model look like?

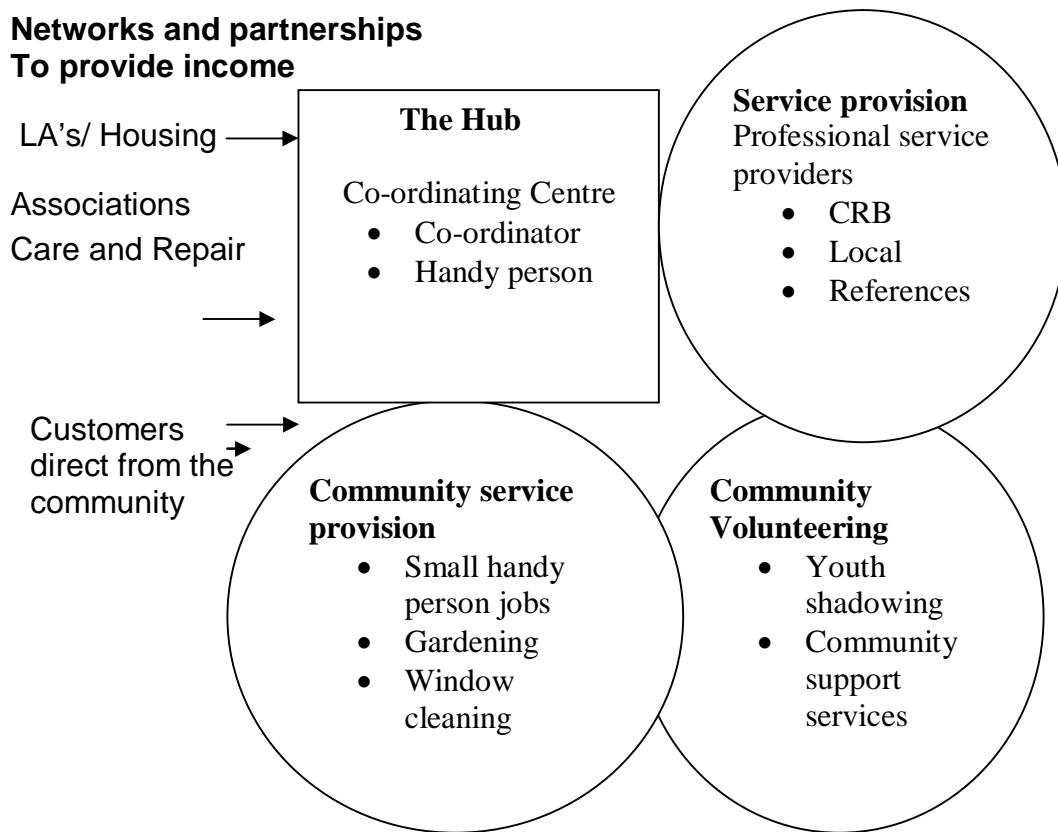
The following model is offered for discussion.

'A possible model for a community task force'

INCOME STREAMS	SERVICES PROVIDED
<p>House husband model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Agreements for 1 day a month work that would involve a range of different services. <p>Partnership with LA and Housing Associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To carry out minor handy person jobs and gardening services. <p>Networking partnership with Care and Repair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- cross referrals and support- <p>Annual subscription</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Annual fee charged to businesses to be listed on the data base. <p>Grant funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Grant funds to support and sustain the community task force.-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Handy person- Gardening etc <p>These services could be provided directly for the community and via pre arranged service agreements with housing authorities</p> <p>Examples of services are provided in section C of this report.</p> <p>A data bank of local professional services that can be called upon to provide specialist work like for example: Gas heating, Electrical work, plumbing etc.</p> <p>Use of volunteers and volunteering – utilising LETs and Timbanks</p>

Overseen by a management committee with the skills to support the operational model

**Networks and partnerships
To provide income**



Networks and partnerships – Income streams

Set up a model to offer service level agreements with Local Authority and Housing Associations in the area. They could purchase blocks of time for handy man work and gardening services. (An example of block purchasing has been highlighted in section C of this report). A similar model could be used for purchasing by the community (house husband model) in this model people purchase a day a week, month, year. The house husband will do any small jobs that are required around the house or in the garden.

Develop a two-way partnership with Care and Repair Caerphilly – at present they do not have the capacity to meet the demands of servicing all of Caerphilly. There could be a reciprocal arrangement for Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed of cross referring to support both the community task force and care and repair. Providing there is a demarcation of services so as competition remains low between the organisations the reciprocal arrangement could work well in practice. Consideration to the funding sources would need some exploration but the Director of Care and Repair would be in a position to offer a view on this.

The community would self refer – in other words they would request services to purchase.

The service provided – What business are we in?

Three arms to the service the first would be a bank of professional trade people that are vetted i.e. CRB checked and are adhering to the 'task forces' specific criteria (good practice can be shared here with care and repair). The task force may consider a small administration charge for businesses that wish to join their data base (an annual subscription fee)

There are economic benefits here for instance supporting local businesses to service the local area and social benefits for the community using the services in the way of raising confidence in buying in services – feeling safer and less vulnerable.

Community volunteering

Developing a LETs and/or Time bank scheme for trading services like for example: taxi's for short journeys, shopping, baby sitting, respite care etc, etc. The volunteering could develop to include young persons shadowing project, supporting the exchange/transfer of skills from older people to young people.

The idea here is that the community led needs services are developed through a LETs or Time Bank model. If one imagines this as a patch work of services that would or could not have a prescriptive monetary value or feasible income i.e. not able to be a 'business' but are nonetheless needed and valuable pieces of work. It would make sense to provide these services by the community for the community.

The Hub

The idea here is that the hub would provide the administering of and to the business, the marketing, developing new and sustaining developed partnerships and work closely with the community to incrementally develop services that they need locally. It may be that the hub is administered from a home working environment to begin with (keeping costs to a minimum) or it may be that the hub is sets up a community based office. There are options and flexibility that require discussion.

The Management Committee

Would ideally have the skills and capacity to oversee the business, it would need to be a proactive committee that collectively has skills of strategic management, funding, marketing, finance and HR. They would need to be a strong support for the business whilst the model is being set up and until such time as the business can sustain the salaried positions it requires.

Section B

9.0 The business

In drawing the above data together we can begin to identify the market, the target audience and begin to develop a structure with the required resources to develop a business plan for the community business.

9.1 The market

The market is local and there does not seem to be an indication of this expanding outside the local vicinity. The aim is to provide a community service that can meet the needs of the Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed community.

The research suggests that this 'local market' would in the main be pensioners and disabled people. These groups of people have expressed the need for services that are currently not available or if available too expensive to access.

9.2 Target audience

In this instance we can gauge from the demographics, housing and employment status of the area that the key target audience are more likely to be:

- Older residents
- Disabled residents
- Lone parents

Demographically these households would be aligned with average to low incomes and therefore have low levels of disposable income.

9.3 Management and Organisational Structure

The Community First Partnership as founders of this new business may wish to adopt a model that governs and manages the 'community task force' at arms length from the community partnership. The idea of a separate management and organisational structure offers ownership to the community and could consist of at least one founder member, a treasurer, a chair, member (s) of the community and other key stakeholders. They would need to develop a constitution with an outline of aims, objectives, membership and management structure. Support to develop a management committee can be accessed from the Wales Co-Operative Centre.

9.4 Skills of the management group

The committee would need to ensure that collectively they have the skills required to support the new business. There will need to be a level of strategic commitment that may be time consuming for voluntary members of the committee. This would keep costs low in terms for the business until such time as the business could sustain the employed human resources it requires.

9.5 Roles and responsibilities

The business may be staffed by two workers:

A coordinator – who would coordinate all service provision and administer the hub and a full time handy person, it may be that the **handy person could start off working part time**, incrementally rising to full time as work demands. The coordinator could also play a key role in providing some of the services that the community may require. It could be that the coordinator's role is 3 days a week with 2 days a week as handy person. The part time handy person could work 3 days a week. In this way the business would be covered for 5 days a week until such time as it can afford to pay for full time salaries.

Alternatively, it may be that the staffing could be an administrator and a handy person. Both these could be full time – these options require discussion and thought by the community partnership. However, the bottom line is to keep costs as low as possible but allow the businesses flexibility to incrementally grow.

It may be that the Community First Partnership would like to incrementally grow the model and begin by using LETs or Time Banks as it's 'toe in the water'. The amount of funds required to set this option up has been discussed on page 41 of this report.

9.6 The legal framework – the study has taken a broad view of the legal framework in which the enterprise is required to work under. The study defines this view in quartiles in an attempt to identify the legal requirements that are necessary in order to minimise risks to the enterprise:

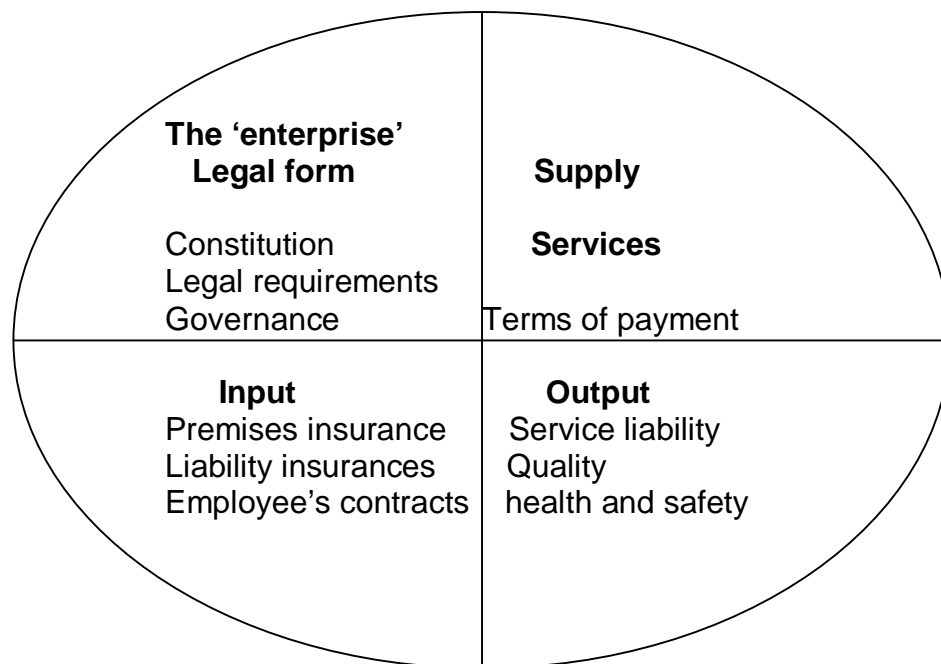


Diagram (2) Legal framework

9.7 The enterprise – the business itself and how that is constituted and legally formed. The legal form of an organisation refers to the way in which it has been established and the rules which govern it.

The legal form is important for a number of reasons, one of which is that it can be a way of managing risk. Some legal forms mean that risk is ring-fenced so that the individuals involved cannot be held liable except in certain circumstances. Others mean that the risk for individuals is unlimited.

On the governance side, different legal forms have different underlying structures - for example a company has a two tier power structure made up of members and directors. There are also many different ways of involving stakeholders through legal forms.

The main legal forms for voluntary organisation (s) or social enterprise (s) are unincorporated associations, trusts, companies (including community interest companies) and community benefit societies or co-operatives. A key point here is that when opting for a legal form (unincorporated or incorporated) is that legal forms are flexible and, within certain limitations, each can be tailored to suit the organisation's needs.

The most important feature of unincorporated forms is that the individuals involved are personally liable for the debts of the organisation. This means it is their personal assets - their house, car, jewellery - which are at risk.

The reason for the unlimited liability is that an unincorporated legal form has no 'legal personality'. There are advantages to an unincorporated form but there are a number of disadvantages not least the point that individuals are at risk.

The key feature of incorporated forms is that the organisation has a legal personality and liability is limited. It is the organisation that enters into contracts, takes on leases and employs staff. The liability of the members of an incorporated organisation is limited.

With incorporation comes a duty to register with a government body and to make disclosures about the activities of the organisation, including filing accounts.

Finally, incorporated bodies are usually more easily recognised and understood by funders and others.

Legal requirements – Wales Co-operative Centre will provide training and business development support, free of charge. The training focuses on what is required to run a successful business and will target people at different levels in the organisation – Director, Trustee, Finance, Community members etc.

Constitution of enterprise – “The Community Task Force” will require a constitution that will serve its purpose and ethos. Support can be provided by Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations to set up a constitution.

Governance – this may be determined when and as the new enterprise develops its constitution and status. The training that is offered by Wales Co-Operative Centre will support the development of the key individuals who would wish to be known as the management committee or governing body.

9.8 Input – the measures that are required to be put in place to legally and professionally operate the business;

Premises insurance - Property insurance should include a broad form of coverage to protect you from a wide variety of losses. Your insurance should include:

- Buildings. Coverage would be required only if business owns the building. In a lease situation the landlord should provide coverage.
- Business personal property is required to cover the business assets of equipment etc. Also, include the tenant's improvements that may have been carried out on leased premises.
- Loss of Income
- Earthquake
- Flood (which may or may not be available)

Liability insurance - Public liability insurance will cover you in the event that a member of the public is injured and the accident is deemed to be your business' fault.

Employers' liability insurance If you employ **anyone** outside your immediate family, you are required by law to purchase employer's liability insurance. This insurance offers you protection for any liability arising from injury or illness sustained by employees while they are working for you.

Professional indemnity insurance – to cover any work carried out that at a later point may be deemed not fit for purpose.

9.9 Supply – this section seems quite straight forward as there are straight transactions i.e. the work is completed and a payment is made.

It may be that the service agreements are paid retrospectively or paid on a monthly basis.

As the business is not reliant on supply chains and any materials required would be charged to the customer. There does not seem to be a need to give consideration to things like stock, suppliers or supplier payments.

9.10 Outputs

The business will deliver services therefore this section explores the delivery of services within a legal framework.

Service Liability - the business may be covered by indemnity insurance which would suggest that in the unlikely event of something going irretrievably wrong with the service provided the business would be covered.

Quality assurance – it would be advisable to formulate a system for quality assurance. Consideration could be given to customer satisfaction questionnaires, continual development training for staff and volunteers and the development of a quality assurance organizational policy that details the policy and implementation plan.

Health and safety - Health and safety is about preventing people from being harmed by work or becoming ill through work. This is so important that the law says we must not put ourselves, other workers or the public in danger.

Health and safety laws apply to all businesses however small. It covers employees, full - or part-time, temporary or permanent ; the self-employed; young people doing work experience; apprentices; volunteers; mobile workers and homeworkers. In order to give full consideration to health and safety the following key points have been included in this report and where appropriate a website address is offered for further information.

Here are 10 key considerations:

1. Decide what could cause harm to people and how to take precautions. This is your risk assessment.
2. Decide how you are going to manage health and safety in your business.
3. To find two ready-made **self-assessment forms** for a risk assessment and a health and safety policy, look at An introduction to health and safety <http://www.hse.gov.uk/smallbusinesses/must.htm>
4. If you employ anyone you need Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance and you must display the certificate in your workplace.
5. You must provide free health and safety training for your workers so they know what hazards and risks they may face and how to deal with them.
6. You must have competent advice to help you meet your health and safety duties. This can be workers from your business, external consultants/advisers or a combination of these.
7. You need to provide toilets, washing facilities and drinking water for all your employees, including those with disabilities. These are basic health, safety and welfare needs.
8. You must consult employees on health and safety matters.
9. If you have employees you must display the health and safety law poster or provide workers with a leaflet with the same information.
10. If you are an employer, self-employed or in control of work premises, by law you must report some work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences.

New businesses need to register either with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the Local Authority.

9.11 Premises

The community task force may consider a range of options to determine a base for the business, for example: if capacity was available at one of the three community centres a base could be established there or the community task force could be sited at the new build community centre, or as mentioned earlier in the report the adoption of a home working model may be considered. The appended financial budget has allocated a notional 3K for rental.

9.12 Price

The business will need a turnover of £75,500 per annum. This would suggest that (rounded up) 2,082 hours per annum, working 40 hours per week. The total hourly cost based on a projected forecast to break even equates to £36.28 per hour. (See appended financial report)

The price may well be too prohibitive to charge. An option may be a subsidised charge of £10 per hour – this could be considered as a competitive rate. In this scenario the business could consider a turnover of £5,500 in the first year of trading which would suggest: 550 hours work @ £10 per hour for the first year trading. This could be incrementally increased in years 2 and 3.

The business would in this instance require grant support in order to operate. This has been factored into the full year budget (which is appended to this report) at £70,000.

The notable point here is that salary costs have been accounted for two people on a full time basis this could be made up in a variety of ways for example: the coordinator could coordinate for three days per week and carry out handy person jobs for two days. The handy person could work full time as handy person or could work part time to begin with, increasing hours as the business requires. The mix is fluid and is there to be considered.

9.13 What equipment is required?

Provision has been made in the projected forecast of 3K for equipment. This would allow the community task force to purchase the tools required to carry out the work. As an example: lawn mower and gardening implements, handyman tools like for example; drill, hammers, electrical screwdrivers, etc.

Additionally, the projected forecast has made a budget provision of 4K for the purchase of a van.

9.14 Factors likely to affect the business

This following section of the report outlines the external environment in terms of strengths, weaknesses; opportunities and threats (SWOT) to the business. They have been labelled as diagram (a) SWOT. The second diagram (diagram (b) PEST) outlines the political, economical, social and technological factors that may impact both negatively and positively on the potential community task force.

Diagram (a) SWOT

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a community enterprise the business would have access to community and social capital • Could ultimately employ and or train local people. • Not reliant on seasonal work alone • Bespoke services to satisfy customer needs • Could develop a skills exchange programme using volunteers 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to business entry low • Small geographical market • Reliant on local community usage alone.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to link, liaise and partner other organisations that operate locally. • Opportunity to liaise and link with local businesses • Grant funding support from various avenues. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitors and replication (low barriers to business entry) • Competition from inactive or unemployed persons.

Diagram (b) PEST

<p>Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate active citizenship • Place communities at the head of service delivery • Supports to address social exclusion 	<p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep income within local communities supporting the regeneration of deprived communities and • Assisting in regeneration strategies • Recruit local people for local jobs • Support for professional businesses to work locally • Access 'hard to reach' groups • Ensure that 100% of the budget is spent on the service
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<p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could provide skill development and training opportunities • Helping long-term unemployed back to work • Engage the community in management and service delivery. • Support to address social exclusion • Support the youth of the area to gain hard and soft skills 	<p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the business is seemingly of low technology but this may develop as the business grows
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10.0 Financial projections

A costing formula and a financial forecast in the form of a year's budget has been constructed and provided as guidance for the Community First Partnership.

11.0 The challenges

In order to consider the model offered a number of organisations were consulted these were: Gavo, Mike Bridgeman and RCSVP, Richard Sabido and two of the Executive Members of the Community First Partnership. These organisations and individuals have been presented as 'experts' for the purpose of this study. This perceptive of 'expert' is the view of the researcher which is based on the years of experience that the organisations and individuals have of working with the community of Cefn Hengoed and Hengoed. In engaging in discussion with people who know and understand the area it has enabled the study to offer an informed view of the challenges that the Community First Partnership may face in setting up a 'community task force'

In drawing collectively, the research, interviews and 'expert' views it has enabled a balanced understanding of the challenges. These have been presented in bullet form below for consideration and discussion by the Community First Partnership. Please note these have not been listed in any particular order of priority.

- **Capacity** – the prospective business, regardless of its status i.e. project/grant funded, social enterprise, time bank etc will require drivers.

The driving force at present are the Executive Members of the Cefn Hengoed & Hengoed Community First Partnership, who are enthusiastic, dynamic and are keen to pioneer and deliver new services for their communities. However, they are limited in numbers and have full and busy schedules. They themselves are volunteers and give much of their time to the strategic, funding and operational activities of what has developed into a vibrant community led provision.

- **Volunteers** – taking the knowledge and expertise of an organisation that works wholly with volunteers it is apparent that people in the community are often reluctant to volunteer. It should however be noted that the model presented i.e. Timebanks or/and LETs has not been piloted/tested in the area. The concept of exchanging skills is different to volunteering. It would therefore seem that in acknowledging the challenges that have been offered for this survey it may be noted that it is not a comparison of like for like in this instance.
- **Competition** – there is the anecdotal evidence of hidden competition that needs to be given due consideration. In addition a different point of view offered is that of competition of funds or grants. It may be that whilst in practical terms the notion of partnership working seems a good way forward – consideration and further exploration needs to be given to the view or perception of funders and payees of service level agreements. As an example if both of the above statements – a bilateral partnership with Care and Repair Caerphilly seems to make good sense – would the funders of this service consider it so or would they consider restricting Care and Repair funds? In terms of service level agreements would Caerphilly Council be open to negotiating a contract? Would housing associations consider such contracts?

The point of departure on competition is that the “business” arm of the suggested model would require a degree of independence as ‘state aid’ rules on funding could impact. (Unfair competition rules)

- **Culture** – the culture and mindset of the locality is a key consideration. The report offers an insight within the qualitative data it presents. There did not seem to be any additional views offered by the cohort of people that were interviewed at the latter stage of the report. There seemed to be a validation. Mike offered a view on the questionnaire returns which was very welcome, as the low return has continued to remain a mystery throughout the consultation. The view was that of late the community had been bombarded with questionnaires of differing topics and this may have deterred people from responding. The sheer volume of information requested may have been too much. In hindsight and at the suggestion of Mike it may be worth any future survey contacting GAVO to establish what surveys are being conducted in the area.
- **Geographical coverage** – may need to consider widening the geographical area to make the business more independent – but would need to consider the political aspects of this for instance can the

proposed task force if funded under Communities First work in a wider geographical area - is there a restriction to working in non Communities First areas?

- **Rural aspect** – the ‘rurality’ of the proposed business opens the doors to specific funds it was mentioned that rural businesses grant may be accessible for an initiative of this type.
- **Business set up** – there are a range of possibilities for the set up of the business as mentioned within this report however the option not explored was that of a private enterprise. The option that ‘somebody’ may wish to take up the opportunity of a private type enterprise.
- **Too big a task** – consideration to be given as to the model being overambitious and maybe what would suit the immediate needs of the Community First Partnership is that of an element of the model with steps to incremental growth.
- **Sustainability and the long term challenges** – a view expressed here was that of projects and initiatives that had accessed various avenues of funding in the past. These project funds are now coming to an end and the projects are closing down as they are not self-sustaining. This example was given with reference to Objective 1 funding and lottery funding. It was also expressed that Local Authorities generally are becoming more overstretched as more demands are made upon them. The lesson to take from these discussions is the need to consider the longer term vision of an initiative of this type. If the Community First Partnership do take forward a community task force then it would be valuable to consider also long term planning and exit strategies from the outset.

Sharing of thoughts and practice

Overall all the ‘expert’ organisations and individuals that were consulted felt that the idea was good.

Sharing of practice - GAVO offered a booklet that has been included for the Communities First Partnership to view. The booklet outlines a plethora of grant schemes for 2006/07

12.0 Recommendations

In considering the researched findings conducted through this feasibility study it is the suggestion of the consulting team that the Community First Partnership seriously re-considers the financial viability of a stand alone business.

It would seem that evidence points to a model of social and community development that offers a mix of partnerships and services. However, there are considerations to take on board and these have been highlighted in the section above titled ‘challenges’. There is no absolute method or model that will enable the Community Partnership to gauge if this is a) the perfect fit and

b) sustainable in the long term. It does however offer an alternative to a stand alone handyperson service that can be incrementally grown to offer a degree of financial viability. It offers a range of ideas and options that could better support the community services that are required (as expressed by the community).

Maybe this is an opportunity to drive a community led programme forward and test and pilot an innovative community led idea?

Section C

Examples of good practice and community projects abound, in both Wales and England.

This section offers a small range of examples of these businesses and offers a list of websites and contacts for the community partnership to follow up should they wish to do so.

1) An example of a house husband model which originated in the States

**At your Home or Business: weekly, fortnightly, monthly
a half day or full day - or as often as you wish:**



On the inside:

- All odd jobs & repairs..
- Oven & Carpet cleaning..
- Painting & Decorating..
- Spring cleaning..
- or whatever is needed...



On the outside:

- All gardening & Lawn Care..
- Pressure washing: patios, drives..
- Gutters, Fencing & gravelling..
- Seasonal preparations..
- and so much more...

Plus he can also: collect or deliver; tidy the garage or attic; clean the pool; remove the rubbish and so much more

The above model allows people to purchase a regular contract of a range of services. The handyman would deal with any of the above services within his/her allocated time.

Website address:

<http://www.handymanhome.co.uk/man-for-all-seasons.htm>

2) The following advert offered a wide range of handyman services, some of which were specialised jobs:

We are ideal for the following type of jobs:

General

- Assembling furniture and **flat packs**
- Putting up shelves, hanging pictures and mirrors
- Fixing blinds and curtain rails
- Fitting or changing **locks**

- Internal TV aerials, tuning videos and TV's etc
- Fixing [sticking doors](#) and windows
- Odd jobs and general repairs
- [Re-sealing baths, showers](#) and kitchens.
- Filling holes in walls

Plumbing

- [Plumbing](#) in sinks, washing machines and dishwashers
- Fixing water leaks
- Unblocking sinks, baths and showers
- Repairing or replacing [dripping taps](#)
- Repairing or replacing flush systems in toilet cisterns
- Repairing or replacing [ball valves](#)
- Fitting outside taps
- Fitting water filters

Electrical

Repair, replacements and maintenance work including:

- Broken power sockets - we repair and replace
- Broken [light switches](#) - we repair and replace
- Broken lights - we repair and replace
- Fitting [extra telephone points](#)
- Single power sockets to double power sockets

Painting & Decorating Services

- A full range of professional [painting and decorating](#) services from a single door to a full internal or external redecoration
- Both domestic and commercial projects undertaken

Website address for above advert: www.handydo-decorating.co.uk

- 3) The following example offers a list of local timebank schemes with contact addresses. The box on the far right will allow a direct web link to the site. If one positions the mouse over the box it will offer a link to be followed. (Hope it works)**

Ladybirds Time bank(Penygraig School)	Developing	Penygraig Communities First, 1 Cross Street, Pnygraig, Rhondda Cynon Taff,	More Details...
Penygraig Time Bank	Developing		More Details...
Penywaun Time Bank	Developing	Cana Centre, Gwladys Street, Penywaun, Aberdare, United Kingdom	More Details...
Torfaen Youth Service	Developing	Pontypool Education, Trenant Street, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 8AT United	More Details...

		Kingdom	
Tredegar Health Time Bank	Developing	Glan-yr-avon Surgery, Shop Row, Tredegar, Gwent, United Kingdom	More Details...
Blaengarw Time Bank	Active	Blaengarw Workmens Hall, Blaengarw, Bridgend, CF32 8AW	More Details...
Cwm Learning Time Bank	Active	Cwm Community Cafe, 38 Marine Street, Cwm, Ebbw Vale, NP23 7ST United Kingdom	More Details...
CwmNi (Communities First)	Active	156 Bute Street, Treherbert, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF42 5PE	More Details...
Dinas Time Bank	Active	Flat 54, Pen Dinas, Dinas, Rhondda Cynon Taff,	More Details...
Fernhill Youth Time Bank	Active	Fernhill Youth Project, 8 The Shops Fernhill, Glenboi, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF45 3EE United Kingdom	More Details...
Glyn Coch Youth Time Bank	Active	56 Garth Ave, Glyn Coch Estate, Pontypridd, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF37 3AA	More Details...
Graig-Y-Rhacca Time Bank	Active	Graig-y-Rhacca Resource Centre, Grays Garden, Graig-y-Rhacca, Machan, CF83 8TQ United Kingdom	More Details...
It's About Time	Active	Cynon Taf HA & RCT Area 2 Regeneration Partnership, 44-49 Cardiff Street,, Aberdare, CF44 7DG United Kingdom	More Details...
Kicks Time Bank	Active	Miskin Regeneration Trust, Clarence Street, Miskin, Mountain Ash,	More Details...
Mount Libanus Environmental Time Bank	Active	156 Bute Street,, Treherbert, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF32 5PE	More Details...
Penyreglyn Project Time Bank	Active	Corbett Street, , Penyreglyn, Treherbert, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF42 5ET	More Details...
Pontcymmer Time Bank	Active	LETs Help, 101 Oxford Street,, Pontcymmer, Bridgend, CF32 8DE United Kingdom	More Details...
RHATE - Rhondda Housing Association Time Exchange	Active	FREEPOST CF4138, Tonypandy, Mid-Glamorgan, South Wales, CF40-1AR United Kingdom	More Details...
Rhydyfelin Time Bank	Active	Rhydyfelin Project, Ilan Centre, Rhydyfelin, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF40 1LD United Kingdom	More Details...
Rhymney Time Bank	Active	38b The High Street, Rhymney, Gwent, Tredegar, NP22 5LP United Kingdom	More Details...
Time 4 Trade	Active	The Strategy 2-4 Commercial Place, Matthewstown, Mountain Ash, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF454YR United Kingdom	More Details...
Trevithin Time Bank	Active	Communities First Resource Centre, Folly Lane, Trevithin, Pontypool, NP44 8JB	

4) Handyman Service offered by Age Concern

- A service provided by people who care and whom you can trust

We can help with

- House maintenance.
- Gardening work.
- Basic decorating.
- Home security and safety.



For example, our handyman can:

Fit or repair such things as hand rails, locks, chains, spy holes, doors, shelves, garden gates, tap washers, bath sealant, battery door bells or smoke alarms, telephone extensions, small window panes, small areas of brickwork, plaster, paving or decor, draught proofing, curtain rails, tiling, reset clocks, clean windows, garden tidying and mowing.

- Competitive rates charged.
- A speedy response.
- Quality service

The new service operates throughout most of Leicestershire and Rutland, and in particular, Blaby, Coalville, Hinckley, Leicester, Loughborough, Market Harborough, Oadby, and Wigston. The service is available to both owner occupiers and tenants, where the repairs are not the responsibility of the landlord.

For more Information please contact Dot Hill-Cousins on 0116 2992254 or **Email Dot**

What we can't do

Any job:

- requiring large plant.
- over two storeys high.
- on main electrical installation.
- on Gas appliances.
- involving PVC windows & double glazing.
- fitting or repairing central heating.
- outside Health & Safety Guidelines.
- not covered by our insurance.
- that our Handyman feels unable to tackle for whatever reason