

We can hardly believe that five years have passed since we first offered a grant award.

Since the 2-year celebration events in 2018 the fund has continued to grow and support communities. Of course, the period between 2019 and 2022 has been challenging and communities and businesses have faced an unprecedented challenge.

As well as the normal grants and loans we offer we were able to offer a response to floods in Rhondda, Cynon and Neath in early 2020 and then of course we had to support the communities during the pandemic, and we opened a COVID specific fund.

Here we tell the story of some of the projects that have been awarded funding and the people who have made them happen as well as some key updates about the fund. We hope you enjoy reading it and that it offers food for thought. We would like to thank Vattenfall – and all of you – for your support, energy and creativity – Kate Breeze, Executive Director and Victoria Bond, Chair



## ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FUND

### Pen y Cymoedd Wind Energy Project

Developed and managed by European energy company Vattenfall, Pen y Cymoedd is currently the largest onshore wind farm in England and Wales – its 76 turbines have been generating enough power for 188,000 homes since September 2017. Vattenfall has been involved in energy generation for over 100 years, and the company's overarching aim now is to make fossil fuel free living possible within one generation.

The wind farm is situated on Welsh Government land, managed by Natural Resources Wales. Of the £400 million investment to build the Project, 52% went to businesses in Wales, securing work for more than 1,000 workers. Today, a 23-strong Operations and Maintenance Team is based at Hwb Pen y Cymoedd on the wind farm site. The Community Fund continues to work closely with Vattenfall staff and very much appreciates their enthusiastic support.

### Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund

The Community Fund has been integral to the development of the wind farm from the start as part of Vattenfall's long-term commitment to the communities hosting the turbines. At £1.8m a year, it is currently the largest such fund in the UK. Although initially established by Vattenfall, the Fund has its own Board of directors and is independent of the wind farm operation.

Following extensive community and stakeholder consultation, Vattenfall summarised all the wide-ranging priorities identified in a Prospectus – published on our website:

[www.penycymoeddcic.cymru](http://www.penycymoeddcic.cymru)



**Vision:** the community's vision set out within the Prospectus is that in 2040 and beyond, the Pen y Cymoedd area is a dynamic, exciting, vibrant place to live and work.

**Our Mission:** our role is to do all we can to make the community's vision a reality – using the resources we have, to sustain and enhance the economic, social, cultural and environmental assets of the area of benefit.

## Priorities and Values – we aim to:

1. Identify and raise awareness of opportunities and potential – people and ideas – encouraging discussion and shared learning.
2. Help to raise aspirations – fostering the development of a can-do attitude.
3. Help to build capacity – to develop ideas and take action.
4. Invest in economic opportunities, retaining assets in the local area – people, money, infrastructure.
5. Sustain and develop community infrastructure – things that need to be in place to be able to live in the area.
6. Improve connectivity and connect communities.
7. Develop the CIC as a long-term investor in the area.

	<b>Victoria Bond</b>		<b>Martin Veale</b>		<b>Michelle Coburn-Hughes</b>
	<b>Liam Hull</b>		<b>Emma Sheperd</b>	All Board Members were appointed following an open recruitment process. Board Members can serve a maximum of two three-year terms.	
	<b>Thomas Tudor Jones</b>		<b>Stephen Burt</b>		<b>Dr. Jack James</b>
Day to day management of the community fund is undertaken by our Staff Team of 3:			<b>Kate Breeze</b> Executive Director		<b>Holly Jones</b> Enterprise Support and Finance Officer
			<b>Shayla Walsh</b> Project Support Officer		

92 Vision Fund grants awarded - £5,570,860.05

6 Vision Fund grant/loan mix - £455,758.92

7 Vision Fund loans awarded - £176,421

11 rounds of Micro Fund

346 Micro Fund awards made - £1,187,062.08

933 appointments held across 49 community venues (including 353 appointments via Zoom or telephone since the pandemic)

£20,000 given to support flood victims

43 COVID survival grants awarded - £387,917.77

26 COVID project grants awarded - £184,946.10



2021-22 continued to see further disruptions from COVID 19. With ongoing COVID restrictions, the CIC has continued to operate in a hybrid way, engaging with new and existing projects, continuing to offer Micro Fund and Vision Funds throughout the year. We saw a small decrease in community proposals as pandemic effects continued to be felt across the sector and this reflected what other funders and the sector were reporting, as a lot of community groups / activities / buildings remain dormant during COVID, however the staff team continued to engage with key stakeholders across the communities to ensure support was there if needed.

In 2021-22 CIC extended their loan offer to unincorporated organisations, in excess of £25,000 as well as continuing to give loans to incorporated businesses.

The CIC made its first direct investment during 2019, diversifying its funding portfolio even further, by directly acquiring the shares of Afan Lodge, a strategic tourism accommodation business in the Afan Valley. The investment was made in line with the CIC's investment policy to safeguard the asset and preserve local employment. It is now run and managed as a subsidiary business of PYC CIC with the aim of realising its potential and securing both an economic and social return to the area and the Fund.



## Vision Fund award to Gentle Care services - £58, 141 as a grant and loan mix.

**Gentle Care Services** was established in late 2018, following discussions with individual resident in the Afan Valley it became evident the need for support for older individuals living in the community across the upper Afan Valley, it was clear there was a need to support local people, whilst offering well paid and good quality jobs to people living within the valley.

With the support from Business Wales to compile a thorough business plan and policies and with the support from Local Authorities and Health Boards to map care hours previously offered, obstacles and whether there was a need for a domiciliary care service in the Valley - Gentle Care Services was officially registered in early 2019 as a private limited company going on to registering the service with the Care Inspectorate of Wales in April 2020. Now the only fully registered care provider in the Afan Valley.

The team worked tirelessly throughout 2019, building on their business plan and sourcing financial support to launch the much-needed service in the Afan Valley. In July 2020, Pen y Cymoedd awarded a large Vision Fund award of £58,141. Pen y Cymoedd supported the plans with a combination of a grant award for £8141 alongside an interest free loan of £50,000. The loan was offered as a cash injection to support cash flow in the initial months of launching their service.

Pen y Cymoedd recognise that new businesses and projects, sometimes require up front financial support in the initial stages and are committed to supporting new projects with favourable terms of funding. Pen y Cymoedd recognise that successful businesses across the fund area can play a large part in recycling funds back into the community for others in a similar position later in the life of the community fund by offering favourable loans to support plans now.

Despite the in-depth business plans compiled by the directors, a global pandemic could never have been planned for, with many costs, such as PPE and hygiene equipment costing more than double originally quoted. However, local care by local people was needed in the Afan Valley, now more than ever. Gentle Care Services launched their domiciliary care service in April 2020, for their first clients. With initial plans to recruit five members of staff from the valley, they were faced with their first obstacle of many isolating or restricted to work due to the lockdown. The team offer employment to those who may normally be excluded from this industry, such as non-drivers and lack of experience. However, the team offers a comprehensive training program and as the service is local, these barriers for the industry were overcome. As of April 2021, Gentle Care Services employs 22 people across the Valley. 14 staff have gone on to start accredited qualifications in health and social care, with some progressing onto higher qualifications.

Pen y Cymoedd are proud to have supported Gentle Care Services Ltd, a business that supports local people by employing local people. The team have shown such resilience in their first year of trading, with big plans to expand further.

*"Without the support from Pen y Cymoedd Community Fund, we would never have been able to launch our service, supporting 22 jobs across the Afan Valley. It has supported us in setting up an office base, creating the foundation for the whole business. It has allowed us to recruit and to expand as we have needed, to meet the needs as they arise. We cannot thank Pen y Cymoedd Community Fund enough"* Barbara Trahar Director



## GTFM Connecting Cynon

Back in 2020 GTFM approached the fund as they had ambitious plans to extend their already popular radio station into the Cynon valley. Originally formed in 1999, GTFM provides a voluntary local radio service. It was awarded the first Community Radio licence in Wales in 2005 and had an audience of more than 20,000 regular listeners mainly centred in the Pontypridd area.

To extend the coverage of their charitable radio service across RCT, they needed funding to build two FM radio transmitters to establish local radio in the Cynon area, allowing them to launch a service for local residents which would:

- Provide news bulletins reporting local, RCT and Welsh interest stories in addition to world and UK headlines.
- Give an opportunity to local charitable and not-for-profit community organisations to gain free publicity.
- Offer local businesses a new and affordable advertising medium.
- Promote volunteering in the community and offer opportunities to residents.
- Actively promote the learning and use of the Welsh language in the Aberdare area.

The fund offered them £12,491 and they installed two new transmitters in the Cynon valley with support of a local club and RCT CBC. Both transmitters funded through this grant were successfully launched on-air on 11th June 2021. The construction phase went smoothly and although test transmissions revealed some interference issues, these were all resolved in conjunction with OFCOM. Nearly all the surrounding Cynon Valley area is now served with a strong signal, in all extending GTFM's coverage to around 65,000 more people than could hear it clearly on FM before. GTFM reception is also now possible on the main A465 road as well as in parts of Merthyr.

- Since the Cynon launch, they have been receiving an increasing number of news stories from the local MP Beth Winter, MS Vikki Howells, RCT Council, the local Health Board, the Police and other public service organisations.
- Local trainee news reporter Brad Williams has been awarded a Diana Award in recognition of his Cynon Valley community news reporting, both in his own right and later as a member of the GTFM news team. Following a successful year at Cardiff University's post graduate Journalism course, Brad was hired by ITV Wales in June 2022.
- They have hourly free 'Community Message' and 'Events Guide' (What's on) announcement services and worked with Interlink RCT to make contact with Cynon Valley organisations. While some already knew about GTFM and were sending information for broadcast, many didn't and were delighted to learn GTFM were in the Cynon. One early example in 2021 featured an interview with Lorraine Olson who runs a local 'swap shop' style community organisation in the Cynon Valley called "Cynon Care & Share".
- PyC were interviewed on air about Director recruitment, they have promoted the Splash Pad and other local projects, and also interviewed William Tregaskes the Manager of the Cynon Valley Museum in Aberdare about various cultural events there.
- GTFM intends to gradually enhance the depth of its Welsh language output to the point it can play an active part in promoting the National Eisteddfod when it comes to RCT and will help organise promotional events to raise awareness of the Welsh language as well as plan activities for the actual RCT Eisteddfod week, when GTFM hopes to be able to offer an additional 'pop up' Eisteddfod station on its digital system

There were unexpected technical complications that had cost implications and the Covid pandemic has so-far limited the amount of promotional activity they could have done so they are still intending to undertake more Aberdare area marketing and recently started by having a presence at the Aberdare Festival. But none of these issues have been allowed to prevent the successful delivery of the project's main short-term objectives.

"We believe the project has already strengthened GTFM's financial sustainability, evident through increasing post pandemic advertising bookings - both from clients in the new Aberdare/Cynon Valley broadcast area and because some advertising agencies and larger scale advertisers (including specific RCT Council departments) now perceive GTFM's expanded coverage area as worthy of more attention because it now includes both county borough's main towns (Aberdare and Pontypridd). Meanwhile in terms of the community services we offer we're already being contacted by Aberdare area organisations seeking publicity for their activities. A recent example is Llwydcoed Brass Band which made contact in April 2022 to ask if we could mention their 110th anniversary concert in June. As well as mentioning it on our 'what's on' listings, we also conducted an on-air interview with the band's secretary, who told us about the band's history and current activities as well as the anniversary concert, which we also posted as a podcast. We will continue to consolidate GTFM's position as the primary local radio service for RCT County Borough, encouraging community participation especially from newly covered areas like Aberdare and the Cynon Valley. Sincere thanks for all your help to date." - Terry Mann, Station Manager, GTFM (South Wales) Ltd.



Cronfa Gymunedol Fferm Wynt  
**PEN Y CYMOEDD**  
 Wind Farm Community Fund CIC

## LUNABELL GLAMPING AND PICNIC EVENTS £4,822.98 – Neath Valley

Lunabell Glamping and Picnic Events launched in 2021 with the help of a £4,289 Micro Fund grant from Pen y Cymoedd, as the world started emerging from tough lockdown restrictions – bringing people together in a safe environment was exactly what everyone needed!

With a keen passion for interior design and the opportunity to throw a friends 30<sup>th</sup> party, the idea of Lunabell was born to offer a glamping experience at home. This has proven to be very popular in America, but with little competition across South Wales. The initial ideas were to deliver, erect and decorate a 5 meter bell tent in customers gardens for a range of uses such as an outdoor sleepover party including the provision of beds and soft furnishings. Other options included using the bell tent as a chill out tent, date night den or graze tent for adults and children.

Lunabell met with us and a Business Wales advisor at one of our advice sessions in December 2020, to discuss her potential business idea and what she needed to help her dreams of running her own business become a reality. The PyC Board were impressed with the time spent exploring the business model alongside a full-time job as well as her commitment to support other local businesses to offer the full with many of the events and parties she organises now catered for by local business The Mine (proper link to them). The Mine is another local business supported by Pen y Cymoedd funding.

The business was fully booked until Autumn 2021 within weeks of launching, offering luxurious garden picnic set ups, bespoke slumber parties and organising and decorating for full private events were just some of the services Lunabell has offered in the six months they have been trading.

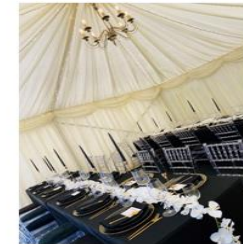
Pen y Cymoedd are passionate about supporting women in work, whilst helping new business start-ups access secure, favourable funding to help realise their dreams.

The aim is to build the business brand further to sustain a full-time salary. The biggest obstacle has been having the time around a young family and working a full-time job but with her commitment and such a beautiful brand and product we have no doubt she will succeed.

*"I had support from Pen y Cymoedd. Michelle was a great mentor and put me in touch with Business Wales who attended my initial meeting with PyC. Business Wales really helped with the financial planning and working with them enabled me to access other support such as workshops and online business resources. We are so fortunate to have this opportunity for investment in our community and what's best is anyone can apply, regardless of their personal circumstances, which is great! The funding from Pen y Cymoedd has been fantastic"*  
**Stephanie – Owner Lunabell**



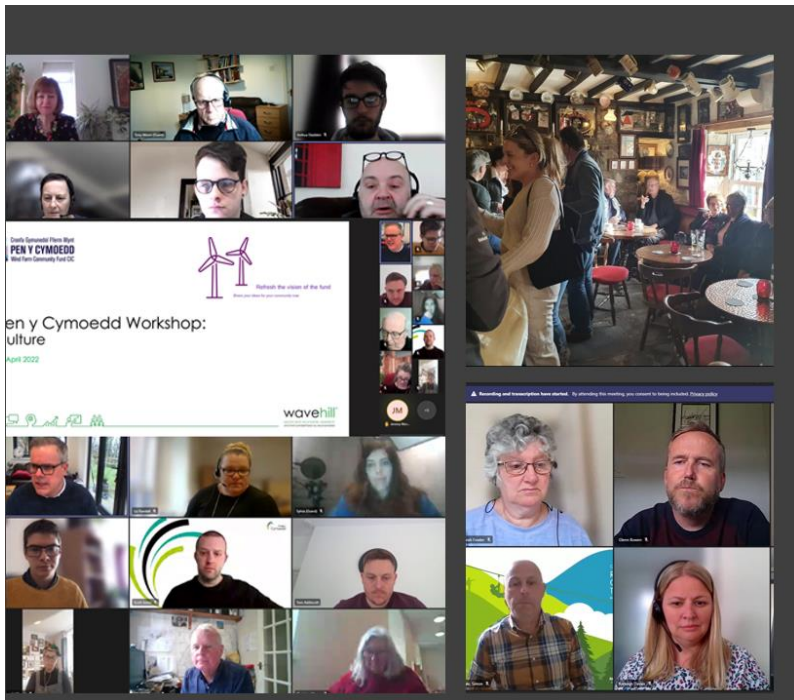
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Originally developed in 2015, the **Community Vision** for the Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm area of benefit highlighted opportunities for bringing added and new benefits to the area to drive local development. These opportunities represent a real demand for services, activities, and products that people living, working, and visiting the area identify are needed or are interested in encouraging here. The Vision is the communities' own work and creation, it is not something that others have decided will be good for them. It is now time to refresh your vision for the fund which means we will be engaging with communities to assess progress against priorities and set strategy for the fund.

Between January and June 2022, we hosted a variety of engagement activities from facilitated workshops to meet the team events. We ran a survey and engaged with as many stakeholders and community members as possible. The results of the refresh and the vision strategy for the next 5 years will be published later this year.



## Refresh the Vision of the Fund

Share your ideas for your community now

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### Key milestones

- June 2016** Board appointed
- June 2017** First Vision Fund awards made
- March 2017** First 36 Micro fund grants awarded
- Sept 2017** Over £1 million committed
- March 2019** Over £4 million committed
- 2020** Fund responds by offering £560,000 in COVID survival and project funding
- 2021** staff team extended / £1 million in Micro Fund grants has now been distributed

### Timeline of events and activities

The team will be out and about over next 6 months at a variety of business and community venues chatting to groups, businesses and community members. Keep an eye on our social media for more details:

February	March	April	May
Glynneath	Abercwmboi	Croeserw	Aberdare
Treorchy	Pelelenn	Resolven	Ferndale

### We need your help!

Between January and June 2022 we will be hosting a variety of engagement activities from facilitated workshops to meet the team events. We have a survey as we need as many people as possible who live or work in the fund area to complete.

You can complete the survey here:

www.penycymoedd.cymru/  
refresh-the-vision-of-the-fund/

Please ask your friends, families and colleagues to complete the survey as without the views of the whole community we cannot set the vision for the fund.

We will also be hosting a series of facilitated workshops with local leaders, strategic partners, community and business representatives and more. If you have a particular interest in any of these themes we would welcome the opportunity to chat with you further and if you would like to do this, please contact us:

Outdoor spaces and recreation / Jobs and the economy / Education, Learning and Digital / Climate and the environment / Health and wellbeing / Community buildings / Tourism / Culture / Transport

enquiries@penycymoedd.cymru  
01685 878785  
www.penycymoedd.cymru