

CARTREFI CO-OP

Newsletter



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BLIND WITHIN 12 MONTHS?

Read Chris's story about his battle with blindness

'SIOP NI' OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Bangor opens their new dementia-friendly honesty shop

RHYMES AND MUSIC

Poetry and percussion in North Mont Forum

MESSAGE FROM ADRIAN

Every now and again somebody asks me: "What difference has becoming a co-op made to Cartrefi?" It's a good question, and one we should keep asking ourselves, because our co-operative difference is something that only started growing two years ago, and to get the full benefit of it, it needs to keep growing. It needs to grow across our geography, our policies and procedures, and our decision-making at every level.

We're doing quite well at the top end of the company with an active Council of Members involved in high-level decision-making with the Board. Our regional story-gathering events are hugely co-operative, and everyone who attends finds them enjoyable and powerful opportunities to think about our work and learn together. Some of our Co-op Forums are making important collective

decisions, and have greatly increased the level of community activities and reduced service isolation. The quarterly meetings of all the Forum Chairs and Co-Chairs are also a great expression of co-operative equality and inclusion, where the opinions of people we support, and of support workers, old and new, are not just welcomed but crucial.

Yes, for most of us, most of the time, life and work is going on pretty much as it ever did. Great things are happening, and that's to the credit of everyone whether they are co-op members or not. But by becoming a co-op we have significantly increased the range of opportunities for the people we support and for all employees. Opportunities to elect representatives with real power; to take on valued roles locally and nationally; to have your ideas and

opinions heard, and your talents used and celebrated; and to get out and about, meeting other people and doing good things for the community as part of your Support Plan or your Work Goals.

The more co-op stuff you do, the more it makes sense. And the more of us who become members and get involved, the bigger the difference we can make.



I WANT TO SEE CHRISTMAS

By Chris Narbett

My eyesight started to deteriorate, and I was diagnosed with cataracts - the prognosis was not good and my optician told me I would be blind within 12 months if nothing was done. This made me feel apprehensive, but with lots of encouragement I agreed to have the procedure done.

As the date got nearer I became increasingly worried, my support worker managed to get me to the theatre, but at the last minute I declined as the pressure got to me. My support staff were very concerned at this point, as the possibility of having the procedure within the following 12 months was unlikely due to the waiting list.

My eyesight was reassessed by Dr Danesh Rafod from Ammanford Hospital. He asked me "What do you want to do Chris?" to which I replied "I want to see Christmas". Dr Rafod was able to rearrange the procedure for the 16th December which was very unexpected due to the waiting list. The date soon arrived and we were on our way, I think my support worker was more nervous than me!

The nurses took me to prepare me for the procedure - which I managed to build enough courage to go through with! I came out of theatre and reassured everyone waiting for me 'that there was nothing to worry about'.

The next few months I dedicated to my recovery, I really appreciated the support I received at this time. When we came out of hospital I was able to read a car number plate and we saw a double rainbow on the trip home. My first trip out was to Broadhaven beach, where I was able to take my own photos! My life has improved so much since having the cataracts removed!

I supported Chris to his pre op appointments, it was a very scary prospect that Chris would be blind within 12 months, but it gave me a great deal of motivation to help Chris across the line.

We worked hard together in preparation for the operation, and as it got closer the nerves kicked in! It was perhaps the most intense time I had experienced in my 6 years at Cartrefi.

Chris told me I was more nervous than him - I think he was right! Chris seemed very relaxed, but I knew how important this was to him, and he could easily decline again which would mean the end of things as we knew them! Chris and I had spent a lot of time together and we had become good friends - this intensified the situation for me.

When Chris came out of theatre I had to leave the room, I was so emotionally overwhelmed. I felt very proud of Chris that he had overcome his fears to get his sight back!

Geoff, Chris' Support Worker



Pictured: Chris and Geoff

CARDIFF HALF MARATHON

by Ceri Davies

Thank you to everyone who supported me and my daughter Anwen to run the Cardiff Half Marathon. It was a day to remember, and the atmosphere in Cardiff was quite something! We even made a brief appearance on the television just before the race, with our specially designed Cartrefi Cymru Co-operative t-shirts.

All the money raised went towards the purchase of new equipment for the Carmarthen Life Line Project. This project provides a variety of support and activities for the people who attend, and has helped to make a big difference in their lives.



Pictured: Anwen and Ceri

DID SOMEONE SAY CAKE?

by *Beryl Woodfine*

If you follow this recipe then you will end up with a fantastic Coffee Morning.

Ingredients

1 determined Beryl
Some Cartrefi support
1 Victoria Sandwich
1 amazing Chocolate Cake
a lot of delicious looking fairy cakes
A handful of Raffle prizes
Some good friends from North Mont Forum

Method

Make the invitations and post them
Plan what cakes you're making
Buy the ingredients and some raffle prizes
Day before the event bake the cakes and decorate them.
On the day of the event
Lay out the cakes and raffle prizes
Greet all your guests when they arrive
Ensure everyone has coffee and cake
Have fun talking to your guests
Draw the raffle
Raise £61.02 for the Co-operative

Thanks for everyone's contribution, everyone had a lovely time.



Pictured: Beryl busy baking



Pictured: Beryl's masterpieces

SIOP NI - OPEN FOR BUSINESS

by *Lou Barber*

The Tenants of Cae Garnedd in Bangor have been working extremely hard with the support of Cartrefi, and North Wales Housing Association (NWAHA) to build a dementia-friendly honesty shop. This has been set up to help the residents that find it difficult to get out and about to get a bit of their independence back.

The project has been run democratically, tenants did their own raffle so they could fundraise for their own ice cream freezer and votes were taken on what to call the shop. "Siop Ni" was the winner.

The Mayor of Bangor, Councillor Dafydd Wynn Jones and the shop manager Derek Taylor officially opened Siop Ni in March. The residents all enjoyed meeting the mayor, having a chat, and a champagne reception with cake.

All the residents now have the opportunity to buy themselves anything with their own money and it has brought a sense of excitement into Cae Garnedd.

Good luck Siop Ni with making it a success.



Pictured: Derek and Lou with Carwyn (NWAHA) and the Mayor



Pictured: Siop Ni open for business

AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH

by Alys Phillips



Pictured: Alys, Izzy, Sophie and Gabby



Pictured: Stuart and Becky

Members of Brecon Forum walked 20 miles and climbed three peaks to show support for 'The Bethan Roper Trusts' to help continue her campaigning work for Refugees and Shark Conservation.

On Saturday 30th March the sun greeted us (Alys, Sophie, Gabby, Izzy, Stuart and Becky) at the start line, and set the scene for a picturesque hike across the three most prominent peaks around Abergavenny: Blorenge, Sugar Loaf and Skirrid.

We battled steep inclines, knee aches, blisters and worst of all map reading. Throughout it all, we supported each other and kept morale high. We had fun, and all went home feeling a sense of accomplishment (and ordered a takeaway!)



£1100

raised of £700 target by 50 supporters

We want to thank everyone who believed in us, and donated in memory of Beth!

THE CRAFTY GUESTS

by David Holdsworth

We have started building some squirrel boxes to encourage more red squirrels around the garden and surrounding areas. This was the start of a new venture, and pastime for me. Having such a big garden at the Rectory means we also get wild birds, so we will be building nest boxes too. We are also blessed with having a few species of bat that inhabit the roof space and trees around the property, so we will be building quite a few bat boxes too. And finally, now we are up and running we also have to make some garden planters too!

We have been lucky enough to receive donations of wood and other bits from the community in order to get started - special thanks to Huws Grey. If anyone feels they may need any of these items we hope they will be available to order soon.



Pictured: Crafty Guest



Pictured: Squirrel Boxes

It makes me feel good that we are providing an environment where the wildlife can thrive, with the involvement of the guests we support. It's great that the people we support get to see the outcome of their contributions - it started with one person being involved, which encouraged more and more people to get involved.

CO-OP POETRY & PERCUSSION EVENING

by Kerianne Evans



Pictured: Forum members enjoying rhymes and songs

At our last local forum, we had a discussion
And agreed on an evening of poetry and percussion

Sharon took the lead and arranged the event
After a vote of general assent..

A room was booked and a date set
We wondered how many people we would get?

The evening came, the weather was wild,
But in, one by one, the people filed.

Members and supporters of our local Co-op
Arrived for the event - it wasn't a flop!

We each had an instrument whilst sat on our seat,
'Lou' started drumming - we followed her beat.

With drums, shakers and a tambourine playing,
The sounds we made were truly dismaying.

Sharon read out some poems, we provided a beat
By tapping and drumming and stamping our feet.

Poetry was next, in small groups we amassed
And around us, some photos and pictures were passed.

(Sharon thought we needed some inspiration
To help us write our poetic creation).

We took it in turns to read what we'd written
(With this poetry writing - I'm totally smitten)

To finish up, we again drummed a beat
Said 'good night', and the evening was complete.

To watch the poetry and percussion evening in action visit:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVki7OJc8VA>

CARMARTHEN FORUM UPDATE

by Andrea Osborn-Evans



Pictured: Andrea, Jonathan, Stephen, Peter and Mandy

The Carmarthen Forum welcomed Mandy Jenkins, Patient Experience and Community Involvement Co-ordinator from the Welsh Ambulance Services to the latest meeting held in February. Mandy talked about:

- Issues someone with a LD may experience in accessing and using their services
- How they are going to make improvements to their services for the LD community
- The opportunity to become a LD champion. Jonathan Richards, a Carmarthen Co-op member and service user showed an interest in this and we are hoping that this will be put in place within the next few months.

Mandy also spoke about organising a 'Come and meet your ambulance service' event to be held in October in Carmarthen and inviting learning disability (LD) providers to attend this. This would allow us to collaborate with the Welsh Ambulance Service to put this event together.

MEMBER STATISTICS

We currently have

500

Co-op members across Wales

CO-OP CONNECTIONS

Co-op Connections bring together seasoned co-op members - with experience and advice to share - with others who are new or have yet to start a society, mutual or co-operative.

These informal, but structured, networking events usually feature guest speakers and are designed to inspire - and promote more co-operative working. If you or your forum are interested in hosting a Co-op Connections event then please email events@uk.coop for more information.

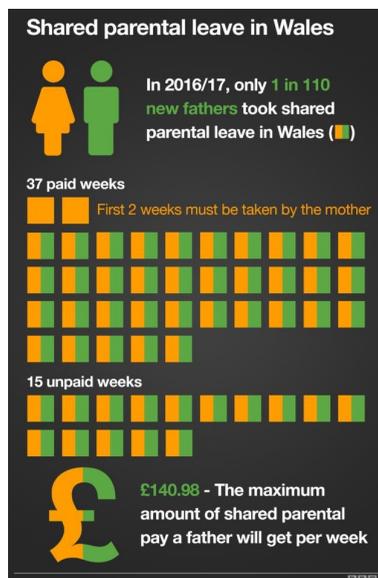
It's a great chance to join Co-operatives UK and other societies and co-operatives across the UK for an evening of collaboration, co-operation and promotion. Let's all get together to help build a fairer economy together!

For a list of existing dates visit <https://www.uk.coop/networking>.



UPDATE FROM HR

Shared Parental Leave



In 2016/2017 **only 1 in 110 new fathers** took shared parental leave in Wales. This was compared to 27,650 mothers taking maternity leave.

We have a shared parental leave policy in place which can be used by those who wish to co-parent (father, partner or share the main responsibility for a child) as a way to share child-caring responsibilities. It has been in place since its introduction in 2015 but it is a little used policy.

How does it work?

It allows eligible parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave and 37 weeks of statutory pay following the birth or adoption of a child. Leave can be taken in one complete block or split up into smaller blocks of time over the duration of the 50 week period and is designed to enable more involvement in the care of the child by both parents.

It can give new parents more choice about their caring arrangements, allowing them to take leave at the same time or swap their arrangements around to suit them.

We also have a Flexible Working Policy which again can help new parents manage their childcare responsibilities and remain in work. This can be found on Linc.

If you would like to discuss this in more detail please contact the HR Department at hr.enquiries@cartrefi.coop or 02920 642 257



Catch up with Adrian's latest blog: Why multi-stakeholder co-ops have so much to offer for the good governance of public services

<https://adrianroper.blog/>

GET IN TOUCH

Share your Co-op story with us to feature in the next newsletter.



02920 642 250



info@cartrefi.coop



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