

# Asset Development Case Study

**Bryncynon Strategy** [www.bryncynonstrategy.org.uk](http://www.bryncynonstrategy.org.uk)



## About Bryncynon Strategy

'The Strategy' grew out of the Local Residents' Association, who wanted to combat the difficulties caused by the loss of the coal mining industry. A series of grants enabled the appointment of the first community development worker in 1993 and in 1994 the refurbishment of 3 terraced houses to accommodate a training facility, offices, community café and youth drop-in centre, followed by refurbishment and extension of the health centre.

The Trust takes a holistic approach to community regeneration and development, which includes lifelong learning, healthy living, building community spirit, developing the local economy and improving the local environment. It currently employs 25 people (mainly local) and about 30 volunteers. Recently, work has focused on the Healthy Living Agenda and supporting children, young people and families.

The Strategy is a community based development trust and also runs two other buildings, a youth drop-in project, after school clubs, the 'Growing Together' family centre (focusing on under-5s and their parents), a state of the art 'Digilab', a Timebank network, Build-IT (for construction skills), a music and drama project, a 'Green Team', a range of environmental projects, education and play programmes and community transport.

## **Asset Base Programme.**

### ***Growing Together Centre***

It owns a 'Growing Together Centre', which is a single storey building, a former clinic threatened with closure that now provides child care, a breakfast club and an after-school facility. It has recently taken control of the village community centre from where a range of social and cultural activities take place.

### ***Feel Good Factory***

Bryncynon Healthy Living Centre, better known as the 'Feel Good Factory', where the Bryncynon 'Strategy' has transformed the All Saints Church into a state of the art community facility.

The Strategy secured £700K funding to acquire and convert a local under-used chapel into a Healthy Living Centre that is home to a host of health and well-being services from yoga to family mentoring, catering services and the already established food co-op. The cleverly designed conversion has created a large, high quality, multi-purpose building offering access to a wide range of activities and services linked to health and well-being.

The 'Feel Good Factory' provides a venue for health education and promotion, clinics, exercise and dance classes, a food co-operative, healthy cooking classes and a wide range of conference, meeting and events rooms for hire.

The lower ground floor includes the 'Healthy Nibbles Café' offering a range of quality catering for local groups using the centre and external services.

As part of its income generating strategy, a wide range of high quality conference, meeting and events rooms are promoted for hire, accommodating up to 120 people. As a community enterprise itself, the Trust is keen to support and help develop other local enterprises.

The Centre is also a base for a Credit Union and a local food co-operative aiming to provide healthy, affordable food to local communities and potentially wider areas. An innovative aspect is that the Trust now owns and manages the building, but the church congregation can still access the refurbished facility for regular services as well as improved facilities for weddings, funerals and christenings.

## **Benefits**

Growing Together Family Centre - including after-school and school holiday play schemes, parent and toddler group, evening drop in programme for young people, alternative curriculum project with local school, literacy and numeracy, IT and personal interest courses for adults.

Nibbles Café - community café in the strategy building, also offering a buffet service.

Healthy Living Centre - various courses (fitness, smoking cessation, first aid, etc) and healthy living advice as well as training and careers guidance.

Life Support Project - aims to pilot a programme for personal development, training and support for young adults to help them go from unemployment or unskilled work to jobs in healthcare.

The People and Work Unit - training in skilled trades and opportunities to develop confidence and self respect - customised to the needs of disadvantaged young people (working in partnership with - among others - Penywaun Enterprise Partnership, another member of DTA Wales).

BUILD IT project runs in partnership with housing associations who buy old properties in poor repair and then The Strategy recruits apprentices and team leaders in the area.

### **Lessons Learned**

Long term focus and strategy for the regeneration of the community-integrated approach and services related to community regeneration and development and services, development of management of community assets and facilities, a wide range of community enterprises and environmental activities.

Clear focus – capacity building and development of local skills e.g. Build It, Time Bank network, music, construction skills, digilab, Green Team environmental activities, young people, healthy living and catering.

Links with local community groups and others providing local services, eg. Growing Together Centre's Credit Union, food cooperative, health teams, housing associations, adding value and improving local services.

The Strategy has become a symbol and catalyst for the long term regeneration of the whole community. You have to stay looking forward.

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