

Connecting Carmarthenshire

End of year report 2024/5



Dyfed

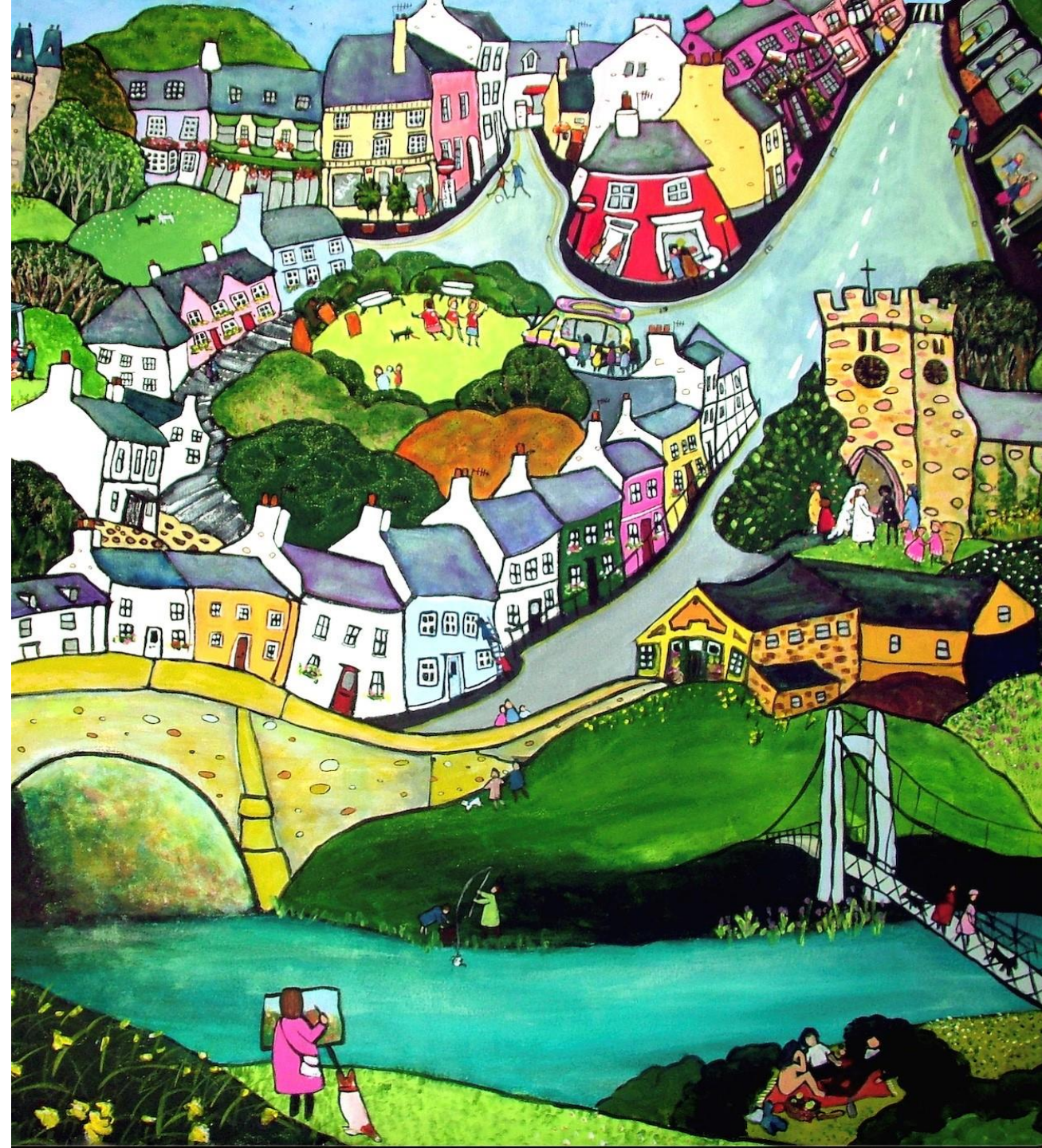
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Introduction

Over the past year, *Connecting Carmarthenshire* project has continued to grow and evolve, strengthening its presence and visibility throughout the county. Our focus has remained on reaching the most rural communities, ensuring that individuals in these areas have access to vital support, services, and social opportunities. By maintaining and expanding our efforts, we have successfully engaged with new groups and individuals, fostering a deeper sense of connection and community resilience.

In the latter part of the year, we placed emphasis on community events, with our *Age Cymru on Tour* roadshows specifically targeting *Gwendraeth* - one of the most challenging areas to reach. These events enabled us to connect with residents who might otherwise remain isolated and encouraged more individuals to feel confident in accessing the support available to them.

A key priority this year has been collaborative working with external partners and our clients. Through strategic community outreach, we have worked alongside charities, public services, and partner organisations to enhance the support available to residents. These strengthened relationships have extended our reach, enabling greater access to essential services and resources for a wider cross-section of our community. This approach has not only broadened impact but also reinforced a cohesive, effective support network for those who need it most.



Introduction

Our involvement has gone beyond simple facilitation. We have taken an active role in shaping and delivering collaborative sessions tailored to the needs of our communities. This includes co-hosting events with partners, supporting their sessions through promotional efforts and resources, and ensuring that residents are aware of and can easily access available services.

Our core service continues to provide enhanced one-to-one support. Recognising the diverse and often complex needs of the individuals we assist, we work closely with clients to navigate services, coordinate referrals, and help overcome challenges that may otherwise prevent them from accessing the help they need.

This personalised approach has been crucial in breaking down barriers to engagement, particularly in more isolated communities, where access to information and support can be very limited. Offering clients the option to work with a Welsh-speaking officer has also proven to be of significant benefit, especially for individuals who had previously declined support. Being able to communicate in their preferred language has helped foster trust and reassurance, encouraging greater engagement with our services.



"We have extended our reach further than ever before to ensure no one is left behind."

Service Development

Through these combined efforts, we have strengthened our outreach while maximising the impact of our partners' work. By prioritising collaboration, we have championed a holistic, community-led approach, ensuring that those most in need receive support that is both accessible and effective.

A significant development this year has been the creation of the *Connecting Carmarthenshire Information Pack*. Designed to offer clear, practical support to clients who struggle to access the help they need, the pack covers a range of essential topics.

It also includes direct contact details for the Wellbeing Officer assigned to their area. We believe this more personable approach fosters stronger relationships between clients and support services, ensuring individuals feel both connected and supported.



Service Development

Careful thought went into the distribution strategy to ensure these **packs reached those who needed them most**, particularly individuals unlikely to leave their homes. We specifically targeted frontline community-based professionals, such as the Carmarthen Social Care Team, district nurses, private care providers, GP practices, and hospital discharge teams, among others. As a result, we successfully **distributed over 700 of these packs**, significantly increasing access to support for some of the most isolated individuals in the county.

“I hadn’t seen anyone other than my carers for months, and I honestly didn’t know where to begin looking for help. Then one day, my district nurse gave me the Age Cymru pack—it was full of useful information. Having the direct contact details for the Wellbeing Officer in my area gave me the confidence to finally reach out and ask for support.”

— Mrs D., Carmarthenshire resident



“We provide trusted advice, helpful information, and personalised support for over-50s and people living with physical disabilities. Age Cymru Dyfed is here for you”

Service Development

As a well-established organisation with deep roots in the community, Age Cymru Dyfed remains a trusted point of contact for those in need. Over the past twelve months, our Information and Advice team managed an impressive **1,378 referrals**. This level of demand reflects the community's trust and confidence in our service.

Of those referred, **238 individuals** benefitted from dedicated one-to-one support delivered by our now experienced Wellbeing Officers. This personalised support extended far beyond general advice - offering empathetic, ongoing assistance, **tailored to each person's unique circumstances**, with a focus on achieving meaningful and lasting outcomes and preventing them from requiring further intervention from statutory services.



"Our Wellbeing Officers provide a holistic package of support over a period of 6 to 8 weeks, allowing individuals the time and space to work through their concerns and access the support they need."

Challenges

Over the past 12 months, we encountered several challenges. One of the most significant was the time constraint of working with clients within a 6 to 8-week window. While this timeframe can be sufficient for some, the nature of certain elements of assistance, benefit applications and availability of onward services often requires a longer period of engagement.

In many cases, additional time is essential to ensure that all elements of support are properly in place and that outcomes are fully achieved, allowing individuals to gain the maximum benefit from our involvement. We hope that the flexibility of extended support may be considered moving forward.

Staff sickness has also presented a challenge, placing additional pressure on the team during key periods. Nevertheless, team members have worked collaboratively to bridge any gaps, ensuring that clients continued to receive the consistent support needed to achieve positive outcomes and access the full range of assistance available to them.



The Year Ahead

This year's achievements have laid a strong foundation for continued growth of the Connecting Carmarthenshire Team. As we look to the future, we remain committed to expanding our reach, deepening our partnerships, and further enhancing the support we provide across the county.

Looking forward, we aim to foster a **mindset** that recognises how small changes can lead to significant, lasting improvements in people's lives.

By continuing to build on what works and remaining responsive to our community's needs, we hope to empower individuals and strengthen the sense of connection across Carmarthenshire.

