



**Beth am siarad am Llandeilo**

**CREU CYSYLLTIADAU AR GYFER PAWB  
CREATING CONNECTIONS FOR ALL**

**Let's Talk about Llandeilo**

**SIR GÂR**

Jamie Horton, Community Volunteering  
Development Officer, CAVS



## PROSIECT CYLLIDEBU CYFRANOGOL MEWN PARTNERIAETH Â CAVS

## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CAVS

”

Mae PB yn ymwneud yn uniongyrchol â phobl leol wrth wneud penderfyniadau ar y blaenoriaethau gwario gyfer cyllideb gyhoeddus ddiffiniedig.

Mae hyn yn golygu ymgysylltu â thrigolion a grwpiau, sy'n cynrychioli pob rhan o'r gymuned, i drafod blaenoriaethau gwario, wneud cynigion gwario a phleidleisio arnynt.

**Dryloyw**  
**Democratiaeth**  
**Gwella lles**  
**Newid agwedd**

**Cynrychioli chi?**  
**Amser**  
**Cydgysylltu**

**Transparency**  
**Democracy**  
**Improved wellbeing**  
**Change in attitude**

**Representative?**  
**Time**  
**Co-ordination**

\*

PB directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending priorities for a defined public budget. This means engaging residents and community groups, representative of all parts of the community, to discuss spending priorities, make spending proposals and vote on them.

”

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3 pilots  
across  
W.Wales

£11,000  
per  
county

## Background

Create  
Toolkit

Community  
engagement

Supporting, programme 7, Staff

- Jackie Dorrian CAVS
- Sue Smith Hywel Dda
- Nicky Sandford CCC
- Kate Naidoo CAVO
- Nia George PAVS

### Pilot Brief

To support Local Action Hubs to build community support and pump prime local activities and services through the use of participatory budgeting techniques to meet service gaps identified. To include identification of appropriate Local Action Hubs to take part in a participatory budgeting pilot. ABCD - with identified 'Doing with' cohort:

- Identify local action hub area
- hold workshops
- run a participatory budgeting pilot
- develop community proposals
- develop a model - toolkit

Participatory budgeting (PB) started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989, as an anti-poverty measure. Since that time PB has spread across the world and been used on vastly different scales, to meet the needs of the local people. Whilst still in its infancy in Wales this democratic way of communities deciding on how public funds are allocated is gaining traction.



*the model common in the UK is that of 'participatory grant making' where small budgets are devolved to a locality and local people can bid for, and vote on that money. IWA 2017*





"Empowering, community, engagement can be characterised as transformational"



In 2017 the Welsh Assembly Government asked the Public Policy Institute of Wales to provide a framework for considering how Participatory Budgeting techniques might be used to inform spending decisions in Wales.

community  
assets



Outcomes included the 1) 'need to take a slow approach' and 2) to 'consider the interaction between any new PB process and the existing legislative and institutional landscape (e.g. *The Well-Being of Future Generations Act, Public Service Boards, Town and Community Councils, Third Sector Organisations etc.*)'.

"Genuine, meaningful engagement is resource intensive, and inadequate resourcing of any process risks not only failing to realise potential benefits, but also generating negative outcomes in terms of public disengagement and disillusionment".

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Prior to this, in 2012, the Welsh Government published a toolkit on using Participatory Budgeting with Young People - supporting their commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Both indicate an exploratory interest in the potential of Participatory Budgeting and may be seen as foundational work for this 'element' of the Welsh Government Transformational Change pilot programme.

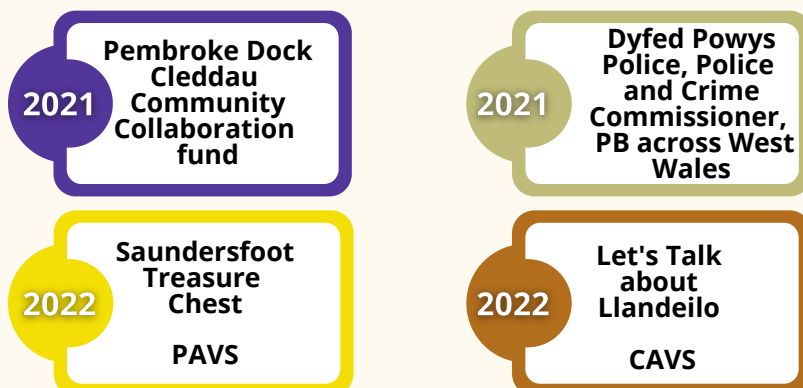
Note also, that there are a wealth of resources available on Participatory Budgeting and Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), to support this pilot undertaking.

Examples of UK based options:



Over the past 33 years Participatory Budgeting has been trialled in various communities, across the world, and it is these experiences which will continue to inform the Participatory Budgeting movement and address many of the points raised above.

*Some recent regional examples:*



A change in budget allocation from both UK Government, and the Welsh Assembly Government, which encourages and promotes a dynamic shift in the distribution of public funding should add more weight to the validity of this process and enable communities to become more empowered.

## PB – Empowering communities to make decisions on how funding will be utilised

Funded through the Welsh Assembly Government Transformational Change Programme, and delivered through the West Wales Care Partnership, regional Community Volunteering Development Officers worked with a local community to explore the many facets of Participatory Budgeting.

This document will endeavour to highlight the process adopted in Llandeilo, share the challenges, learning opportunities and successes, to offer insight to others considering a similar pilot.

- Saundersfoot
- New Quay
- Llandeilo



# Introduction

Having worked so successfully with Llandeilo on the Community Action Hub pilot it made sense to approach them once more and float the idea of Participatory Budgeting (PB).

- Christoph Fischer - Community Action Hub Chair
- Sara Rees - Menter Dinefwr
- Owen James - Community Action Hub / Menter Dinefwr

The Community Volunteering Development Officer was able to offer a £10,000 starting pot, with encouragement for the community to match that amount. £1,000 was retained to cover marketing, potential event expenses and incidentals. Anything remaining would contribute to a follow up event.

An initial meeting with community representatives took place at the end of July 2021. Following this a briefing paper was delivered to the group and dates agreed for community consultation. (*Appendix A*)

“£10,000 was a tempting amount of money for us not to commit to the project”.

## Covid-19 Virus

In July 2021 there were a number of easements in the regulations governing restrictions in Wales. Living in a state of 'Alert Level 1', with prospects of moving to 'Alert Level 0' in August, there was some movement of change within the county.

During the length of this pilot project, July 2021-March 2022, the Covid-19 Pandemic impacted the project in a variety of ways, for instance: outbreaks in schools, concerns regarding changing indoor capacity for public events, overall risk of transmission and mitigating factors, individual preference to remain physically distant, numbers of residents still self isolating and shielding.





This necessitated the community, and the project itself, to be flexible, responsive to Government updates and generally very patient.

Whilst a Participatory Budgeting 'framework' is seen to incorporate various common elements, it is essential to work within the 'fabric' of the community itself. This pilot took place at the time of a global health crisis, but others have run during a change in political parties, inflation, rising costs of living and with a host of other external pressures. As such, the Llandeilo steering group chose to make certain adjustments to better fit the need of their community.

For instance, the blended/hybrid\* final event was changed due to a range of considerations. It was agreed that the presentations would be recorded and then posted online and shown on ipads at Hengwrt Community Centre. Voting would take place in-person, or online, and allowed over the period of a week. *(This contrasted with the Pembrokeshire Participatory Budgeting Event where they had an in-person 'Decision Day'. The groups gave their presentations and then were voted upon online and in-person).*

Regardless of the idiosyncratic nature of the process undertaken in Llandeilo, the outcome was the same. The community voted on which project they liked the most and one, or more, were funded.

Building on the work of the Llandeilo Community Action Hub, this pilot project was able to test some of the connections created and evidence the resilience of residents.

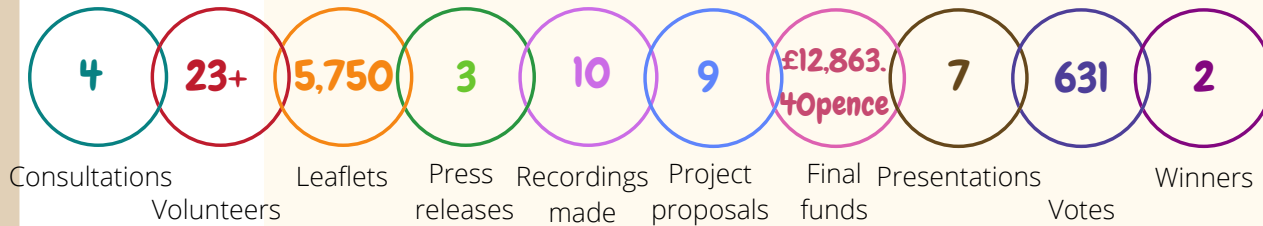
“**The concept fits in perfectly with the aims of the Llandeilo Community Action Hub: To promote grassroot initiatives, community spirit and cooperation.**”



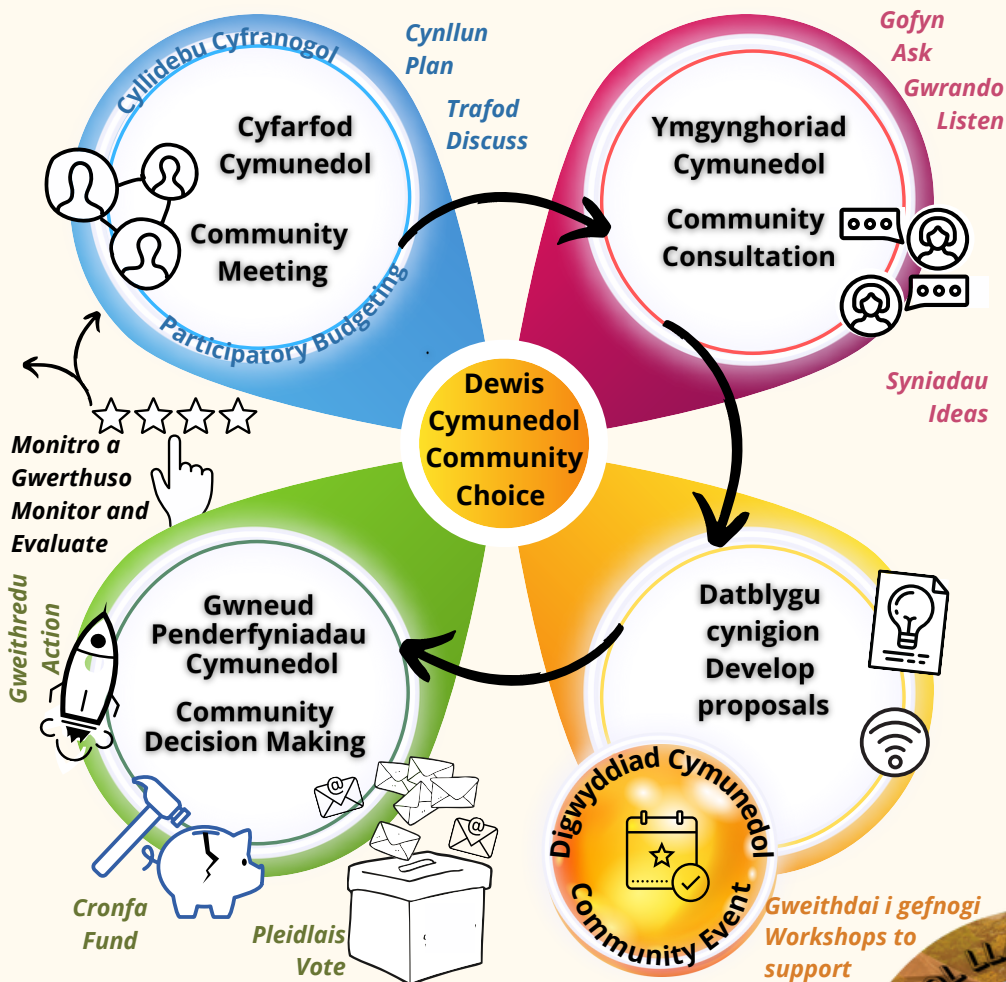
\*Blended/hybrid = combination of in-person and on-line meeting/event

# Process

The process itself was discussed at every stage of the project, with its true complexity being gradually realised by all involved.



## PEILOI CYLLIDEBU CYFRANOGOL LLANDEILO



\*JH2019



### Key points

Working under the banner of, 'Let's talk about Llandeilo', the project tag line was 'For the community, by the community'.

The logo used was a development of the community action hub logo, which was already a familiar sight within Llandeilo. This intentional choice was made in an attempt to garner a level of trust and support, right from the start.

It was also recognised at an early stage that Participatory Budgeting requires a **coordinating element** with capacity to build interest, drive progress and support engagement. (Small communities often have a core group of active residents who are already stretched to meet existing needs).

The project steering group was formed following the first public meeting, and grew as the project did. There was more interest from the second public meeting and the core members rallied volunteers to support with community engagement.

- Steering group meetings were held in-person and on-line with the CVDO attending virtually, or being read-in on actions afterwards, in order to maintain a central overview.

“Due to Christmas and Covid restrictions we had additional steps to take, extra leafleting, and that stretched us beyond our capacity. People that would have been obvious candidates to join us were working on the Ten Towns initiative”

Actions, such as administrative tasks, were not discussed in detail prior to their requirement, and should be discussed from the start:

- Letters of appeal to potential funders (*Appendix E*), and letters of appreciation (*Appendix E*).
- Acknowledgement correspondence with those submitting proposals (*Appendix G*).





- Winners acceptance of the funds (*Appendix J*).
- Issuing final funds, presentation cheques etc
- Reviewing (*Appendix K*)
- Monitoring (*Appendix L*).
- Raising and paying invoices

Many elements of the process were a matter of trial and error. Utilising the connections and networks of individual steering group members, benefitting from the goodwill and enthusiasm of civic minded volunteers, and working through a variety of challenging moments, all created a process that *fit the moment*. If something wasn't working it was approached from a different perspective, if clarity was in question the point was revisited, when morale was at risk, we had to remember the pilot nature of the work and the fact that we were all doing our best.

Being such a novel concept there was also an underuse of project resources. The steering group, and wider project support, were on hand to help with every aspect of the pilot: from writing the proposal and working out finances, to creating a digital teaser and preparing presentations. This raised a number of points and could reflect a lack of intrinsic understanding of the whole process:

1. Those who could do, did
2. Time restraints, and availability, was an influencing factor
3. The resource had not been fully understood
4. Some people do not like to ask for support or clarification

“

**"PB is a fantastic idea and one that has succeeded in Llandeilo. I think the *process needs refining* but it will have a positive effect on community funding and engagement and get projects off the ground that people in the area really want".**

”



# Community Meetings

Initial team  
prior to  
development of a  
steering group

- Owen James
- Christoph Fischer
- Jamie Horton
- Jackie Dorrian
- Sue Smith
- Nicki Sandford

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LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

One of the key messages of Participatory Budgeting is that 'local people are best placed to know what is right for them'. This was our *modus operandi* from day one. All public meetings, for instance, were chaired by local residents to reduce the misconception that the Community Volunteering Development Officer was 'making decisions' and/or 'taking over'.

Circumstances dictated that two of the public meetings take place over Zoom. Whilst not the 'typical' experience for residents, it did mean that meetings were Covid-safe. With the addition of break out rooms, chaired by the initial team, and opportunities for Q&A, it felt to be managed well and initiated a greater interest of the concept. (*Appendix B*, *Appendix D*).

Another key element of Participatory Budgeting is the need for fair representation; the idea that every member of the community can have their voice heard. This was an aspiration for this pilot and not necessarily met at this time. It was understood that steering group members would extend their reach to ensure maximum engagement of the community.

Each meeting was followed up by a written overview and this information was posted on the newly developed CAVS [community engagement section](#) on their website, and shared on the [Community Action Facebook](#) group.

As the pilot developed these meetings supported the impetus to succeed, and evidenced how challenging a new concept can be.

“

"I think the concept of the project was hard to grasp and we all had slightly different and wrong ideas about it".

"Public uptake was slow despite extremely hard publicity. People in town fed back that they didn't believe they would actually get a vote on it".

”



# Community Consultation

(Appendix C)



"Beth fyddai'n gwneud  
eich bywyd yn well?  
What would make your  
life better?"

The driving force of this pilot was to meet the need of community priorities. In order to identify what these were it was necessary to speak to, reach, as many residents as possible.

After discussions around how this would happen it was agreed to make it as simple as possible by adopting a 'National Lottery' funding approach. Limiting undue bias, influence and any sense of steering group agenda, the consultation consisted of one question: "What would make your life better".

The steering group, and other volunteers, leafleted homes and spoke to as many people as they could. (Appendix C). Information was shared on CAVS website and on the community Facebook group as well as through a press release (Appendix C) and around the town. A number of community venues were also brought into the pilot and highlighted as places that feedback could be left.



**"There was not a lot of engagement  
from the community despite massive  
publicity and leafleting".**



Whilst feedback was not as bountiful as hoped the steering group were able to share the top three priorities (Appendix D):

- **Children**
- **Young People**
- **Green Spaces**

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LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT





## Additional Funds

The second element of consultation was focused on ways in which to engage the local community to invest in the Participatory Budgeting pilot through financial donations. At the outset the pilot encouraged the community to match fund the £10,000 seed donation.

Online and in-person meetings saw the steering group discuss, debate and divide their attention in order to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Letters were written (*Appendix F*) and sent to contacts, and a public 'Just Giving' campaign launched. A community appeal was made with residents who were also encouraged to donate at local shops.

Whilst this pilot has needed to be flexible to reflect community need and changing external influences, there are certain founding elements that cannot be altered. Transparency throughout the process was essential to support trust and engagement and all funding needed to contribute to the over all 'pot' and not allocated to any of the three identified needs.

Whilst there was some interest from groups who were happy to support a particular project, there was no guarantee that those projects would be chosen by the public. This proved to be a challenging realisation and took sometime to embed.

**£2,863.40** was raised from 5 organisations and through public donations.

*Llongyfarchiadau*

*Congratulations*

Despite personal emails and personal visits to shops etc few people got and trusted the process. I think in future years, when we can point to the winning projects and the press coverage of the process, we will have more sponsors on board.



# Proposals

Community members were invited to submit their project proposals (*Appendix E*) alongside a digital teaser. The idea behind the digital teaser was that the wider community would be introduced to the projects and encouraged to participate in choosing their favourite idea. These would form part of the marketing programme to garner interest and maintain momentum.

01 Boxing Gym	£4,570.00
02 Bee Bombs	£1,239.00
03 Natur Project Ysgol Bro Dinefwr	£10,000.00
04 Gardd Cymunedol Ysgol Ffairfach	£8,460.00
05 Ffairfach Park	£2,150.00
06 Young People's Creative Empowerment Project	£1,000.00
07 Llyfrgell a Lles Hwb Ysgol Gymraeg Teilo Sant	£7,268.00
08 Tree Nursery	£2,850.00
09 Orchard Extension	£2,245.00

As part of the planning process the steering group decided to allow groups to apply for any amount of funding that they needed. Whilst this might see only one group being funded, it was agreed that more might be achieved with a significant sum.

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LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

“Quite hard to determine what sort of thing was expected, and real purpose of these, given that the main presentations were undertaken hot on the heels of these ‘teasers’. The range and form of the teasers demonstrates this. It was also a bit confusing as to who the ‘teasers’ were aimed at? I wonder how many of the population of Llandeilo are digitally connected in this way? Were they really worth the effort?”

*It may have been more democratic to take such decisions back to the public. It is important to remember that the steering group were representing the wider community group, and time restrictions were in place as well as Covid-19.*



## Media Examples

- [Herald](#)
- [Ceredigion Herald](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [CAVS](#)
- [Connect](#)
- [Carmarthenshire](#)
- [Hidden Carmarthenshire](#)

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( Full proposal applications [Appendix G](#) summary below:

- **Boxing Gym** - offering training sessions and a new activity to young people in the town who currently have a lack of things to do
- **Bee bombs project** – involving children from all three local school and adults in the creation of wild flower areas throughout Llandeilo and surrounding areas
- **Ysgol Bro Dinefwr natur project** – outdoor theatre roof, benches for theatre and peace garden
- **Gardd Cymunedol Ysgol Ffairfach** – development of the school garden for use of the pupils, elderly and local community
- **Ffairfach park** – planting of trees and a willow structure in the park, working with Ffairfach school and Ti a Fi
- **Young people's creative empowerment programme** – empower individuals to develop their own resilient tool kit to confidently pursue a career within the creative industry.
- **Llyfregell a Llecyn Llonydd/Library and Wellbeing Hwb Ysgol Gymraeg Teilo Sant** – the creation of a quiet area dedicated to support mental wellbeing and a predominantly Welsh library for the use of several primary schools
- **Tree Nursery** – a locally based tree nursery to provide free native saplings for re-greening projects in the town and surrounding area.
- **Orchard extension and apple processing** – to make more of the produce of the Dinefwr Orchard and other local orchards, extend the spiral orchard and involve local schools in their activities.

Despite having a team behind the pilot, to support with digital elements, applications, presentations etc. we found that this resource was under used.

As such the reluctance to engage with 'digital teasers' required the CVDO to create a clip which covered all projects. This incorporated submissions by the applicants and also offered the opportunity to set out the next steps.



Llandeilo Facebook pages, press releases, word of mouth and flyers direct to residents homes, kept everyone updated of deadlines etc.

## LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

“Some people ran very good word of mouth campaigns within town and they gave our project the colloquially used name **The Cavs** £10,000”.





# Presentations

You can watch all of the pre-recorded presentations via YouTube (*Appendix H*). These were recorded, and lightly edited, by the CVDO and submitted to:

- the Connect Carmarthenshire Platform
- the local schools to be shown in their assemblies
- Hengwrt community hall, in order to make them available for in-person viewings via digital tablets

**"The presentations were very varied and in some cases were hard to follow because of poor sound quality and / or broken and slurred speech recording".**

The decision was made to make the presentations available to residents over the period of a week. This would enable the steering group to promote their release, would allow more people the

time to access the online or in-person viewings and support the participants to build interest and promote their own projects.

Presentations could incorporate any method of delivery and participants were encouraged to be persuasive, engaging and memorable.

Had the presentations been given at a single event, participants would have had audience engagement and encouragement to bounce off of. You cannot underestimate the importance, and value of, smiling faces and nodding heads. Regardless, the point of the CVDO recording the presentations was to support equity and ensure that all presentations were delivered under the same conditions.

Embracing this bespoke method removed the 'decision day' element (as termed in Saundersfoot) and introduced an announcement event.

**"It was not an even playing field as some schools had IT managers and resources at their disposals that camera shy pensioners who wanted to plant trees couldn't match. While some are to blame for not trying, we left parts of the community behind".**

## LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

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# Polling

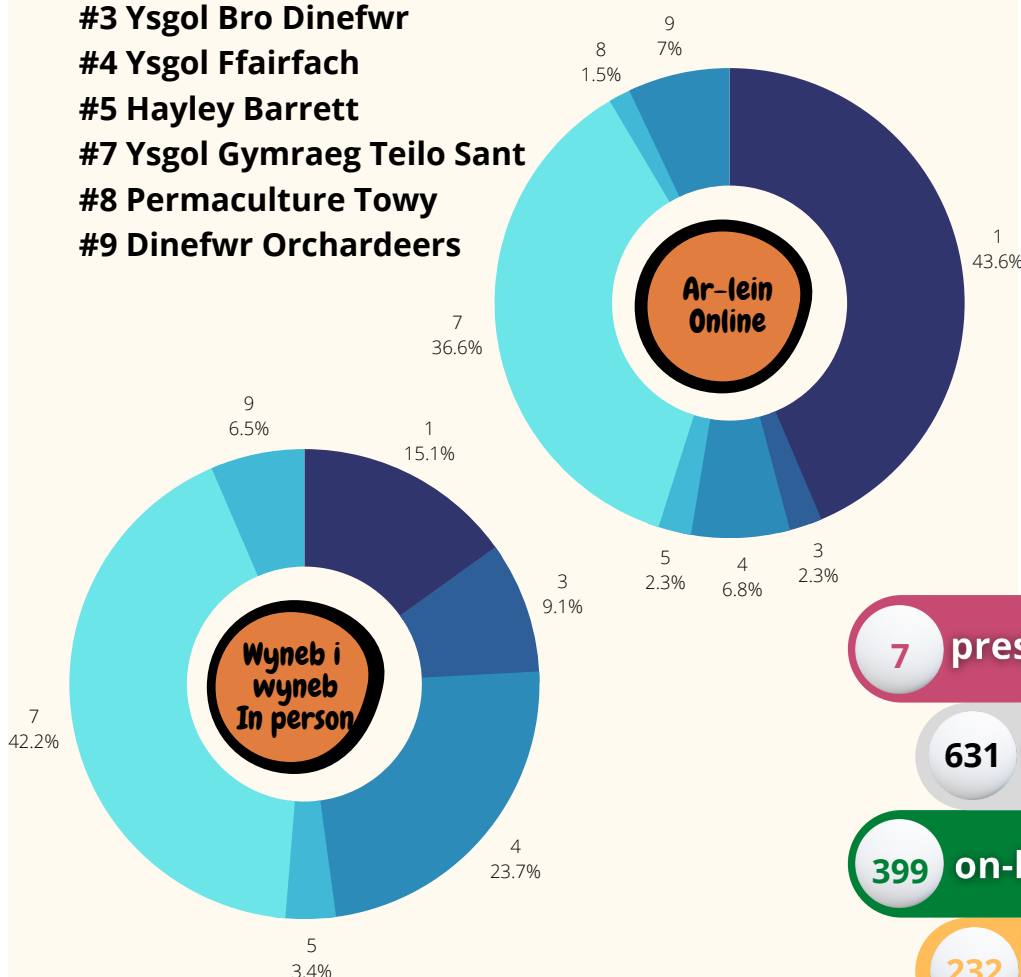
From February 17th to February 26th Community members were invited to cast their votes. Whether on-line, or in person (*Appendix I*), the hope was that the proposals would be viewed and a one person, one vote, process followed. (*Appendix G*)

At the presentation stage two projects were unable to take the next steps. so seven groups were open to be voted on.

- #1 Carl Lewis
- #3 Ysgol Bro Dinefwr
- #4 Ysgol Ffairfach
- #5 Hayley Barrett
- #7 Ysgol Gymraeg Teilo Sant
- #8 Permaculture Towy
- #9 Dinefwr Orcharders

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LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT



7 presentations

631 votes

399 on-line votes

232 in person votes

There were some clear challenges with how to offer both forms of voting, how to ensure only those living in the identified areas were voting and making the experience an enjoyable one (or at least stress free).



# Announcement Event

## #1 Welsh language library and wellbeing Hub



## #2 Boxing Club



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Following a process of vote verification, two groups stood head and shoulders above all others. With funds standing at £12,863.40 it was agreed that those two groups could be funded with anything remaining being kept for an additional event towards the end of the year: "The Llandeilo Soup". (*Appendix K*).

On March 3rd 2022 the winners were announced during a gathering held at Hengwrt Community Centre. Hosted by Christoph Fischer and Owen James, the event was attended by project representatives, members of the community, and representatives of CAVS. The Town Mayor, Rob Jones, gave a speech and presented cheques to Woody Lewis, from Box of Fist, and Maureen Williams, from Ysgol Gymraeg Teilo Sant, to an appreciative audience.

With the majority of the Participatory Budgeting process taking place under Covid-19 restrictions, it was a pleasure to see Llandeilo community members interacting and celebrating the outcome of seven months of hard work.

The announcement event was recorded and shared live online to include those community members who were unable to attend in person.



The event also presented the opportunity for steering group members, and other volunteers, to be celebrated and thanked for their support: certificates were presented on the night (*Appendix J*) with slate plaques offered to both 'winners' (as well as the Llandeilo Community Action hub), later in the month.

A press release was shared following the success of the evening, with the next focus being on evaluation. (*Appendix J*).

## LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

**The ceremony went well, unfortunately the Two Saint's festival ran that week and there was a parent teachers evening in the big school, so attendance was not as big as we would have liked.**





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Susan Smith (Community Connector Plus) and Christoph Fischer (steering group and Community Action Hub Chair), represented the wider project team and presented the Welsh slate keepsakes.



## LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

“Always great to see money spent on small local developments that helps smaller communities.”





## LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

- Clearly defined timeline
- Explicit understanding of commitment
- Task and finish groups
- Agreed, and defined, understanding of the process

Under different circumstances the **steering group** would have been more representative of its community with tasks widely shared amongst its members. A small number of people cannot successfully balance the voluntary expectation of the role and, it might have been argued, do not have a wide enough reach across all demographics. Over reliance on a few individuals may reflect:

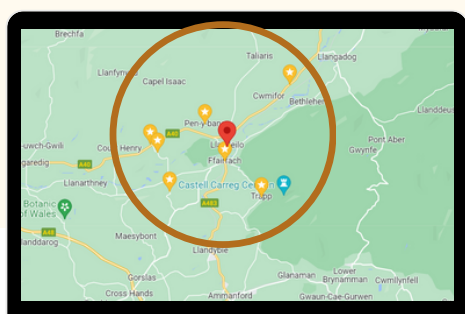
1. the heavy involvement of the CVDO
2. a mid-project reassessment of actions needed
3. the decision to return some funds at the end.

The **geographical areas** were defined by the Steering group who were the feet on the ground, so to speak. This was an element which would require careful consideration for future projects, especially where there are no clear demarcation lines. 'Llandeilo and supporting areas' was not sufficiently descriptive and using school catchment areas was too wide (with some children being bused in). This added an additional element of confusion when voting as the Connect Carmarthenshire Platform did not break the geography down enough.

- Llandeilo
- Ffairfach
- Trap
- Llandyfan
- Gelli Aur
- Llangathen
- Broad Oak
- Pen y Banc
- Manordeilo

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**"The choice of communities for eligible voting was a bit odd? Why were Trap and Llandyfan included and not Derwydd, for instance? Or what about Salem, when Manordeilo was included?"**



**Communicating** the pilot to all residents was an area that proved challenging: there were a number of leaflets dropped directly to people's homes, posters and banners were placed around the town, a number of community venues held information and drop boxes for feedback, there were regular social media posts and digital clips created, press releases and CAVS created content for their website. Despite all of these efforts there were some residents who were not aware of events. The volunteering team will acknowledge that they underestimated the number of leaflets required and the first dissemination was short by approximately 250 households. This was remedied for all future activities.

It might be suggested that speaking directly to every resident would be the only way to ensure complete engagement, but this was impractical with the timeframe and likelihood of someone being home.

It was hoped that the breadth of actions undertaken would reach sufficient numbers. Future projects would benefit from the creation of a clear marketing strategy, some additional investment in research and the creation of a team responsible for owning the strategy.

It is recognised that there was substantial **suspicion** of the process; uncertainty in matching the funds provided, questions around whether residents would actually have a voice and/or vote, and wider inexperience of the concept.

"This method of allocating cash for local projects has the potential to be divisive in my view"

This is a risk with any new idea and should not deter communities from 'trying something new'. These initial concerns might be mitigated through more consultation, an extended period of introduction, guest speakers from successful projects ... or simply through conducting matters in a face-to-face manner rather than on-line. Perhaps two new concepts at one time was one too many?



This highlights the need for a community engagement strategy which includes a range of digital options.

Additional resource: [GHD Digital Community Engagement Toolkit](#)

The response to the initial **consultation** around priorities was disappointing. The extraction of the three themes was easily achieved, though had there been more experience with this type of working, further polling might have occurred. Time was a pressing determinant and might be mitigated through more flexibility, an extended time frame and better understanding of community mindset.

This did, however, focus the project priorities and presented us with 9 incredible projects.

It was agreed amongst the steering group that a **funding cap** would not be added to the projects applying. This left the door open for large requests, and indeed one project requested £10,000. This was more a lesson of managing expectations than needing to issue a specific cap, as this project winning would have precluded any other.

There were some comments received around some of the projects having a perceived advantage with regards to **voting**. The schools, for instance, would theoretically have access to more votes due to the association of parents and grandparents.

This was a trickier matter to deal with as the arguments were essentially true. However, it could be argued that where 2/3 of the priorities were focused on children and young people these were one of the main target audiences.

Future projects might reconsider these arguments and decide whether redefining the parameters of the pilot are needed. Excluding schools, as a group, would contradict the original precept but could potentially be reworded to encourage a co-produced approach to submitting proposals. As a community directed process any opportunity for members of the community to work together should be celebrated.



08

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## PEILO CYLLIDEBU CYFRANOGOL LLANDEILO

Infact, the concept of '**advantage**' arose throughout the pilot and refocused the wider support team. Having a multifaceted resource available, to every participant, was an intentional way to address equity. Public speaking, proposal writing, the ability to effectively utilise technology and financial understanding are not skills that we all possess, however, they were all required for this project. As such there were facilitators on hand to offer their time, skills and experience.

Future attempts might include providing a series of workshops prior to the submission of proposals and/or at various stages to reflect the skill requirement.

There is strong evidence to show that not all groups were sharing their project details, being active on social media or **promoting** their proposals across Llandeilo. This was an area where some clearer information might have been beneficial and for participants to be explicitly directed to take the lead.

**Voting** on the projects was complicated by:

- confused geography
- the use of a new digital platform 'Connect Carmarthenshire' and difficulties with registration
- the addition of in-person attendance at Hengwrt, with required voter identification

It has to be accepted that Community Engagement during a Pandemic comes with a host of additional considerations. It must also be accepted that 'blended approaches' / 'hybrid events' were unknown to most before March 2020.

Many of these challenges would not be a consideration had the presentations been delivered in-person with members of the community voting there and then.

The lesson learnt in this instance can be transferred to any attempt: regardless of the method chosen - trial it, know it inside and out and have contingencies in place.

## LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

09





## LLANDEILO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT

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Participatory budgeting, or deliberate democracy, intentionally focuses the allocation of community funds on the community itself and for this to work well the concept needs to be fully understood and embraced. It became clear at the conclusion of the pilot, through some community feedback, that more time should have been spent on ensuring a complete and agreed comprehension. One response epitomised this point:

“**Surely, we have elected bodies who are there to deliver what’s best for our communities – wouldn’t it have been easier if a judging panel of these elected bodies were set up to decide on the projects that they wanted to support, against perhaps selected simple criteria?**”

## PEILOT CYLLIDEBU CYFRANOGOL LLANDEILO

The final lesson of this pilot is to **persevere**.  
For every concern there is an opportunity to think differently, eg:

**"Same people always get everything"**

What an opportunity to increase community engagement/ involvement. Develop a new culture of active citizenship. Support this through encouraging leaders, offering new skills and knowledge. Focus on inclusivity and thinking of where you find the steering group.

**"I don't have enough time to give to this"**

Time to widen the net ...  
Perhaps we need to rephrase? Refocus? This is for US.

**"That's not my job"**

Who knows best about you and your community?  
True participatory democracy empowers the decision making of community members.

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# Monitoring

Monitoring the projects, post funding, was intentionally light touch. The CVDO had supported community groups over the past two years and was able to take on board their feedback that 'onerous and complicated funding arrangements turned them off applying for funds'. This led to the monitoring focusing on key successes and impact on beneficiaries as priorities (*Appendix L*).

CAVS have shared the progress of the projects via their [website](#) and kept in touch, in order to remain a supportive partner.

At time of writing, the Wellbeing space and Welsh library at Teilo Saint Primary School had started repurposing the allocated space, had received local authority permissions, pupils were engaged in its design and completion was purported to be March 2023. (*Appendix L*).

The Box of Fists boxing gym was opened in May 2022.

(*Appendix L*). **"The WHOLE community has benefited, from the young people, their parents, school teachers and everyone who benefits from the reduction in anti-social behaviour".**

The steering group presented the remaining £1025.40 funds to the third project, Ysgol Ffairfach. They had applied for £8460.00 for the creation of a community garden and received 82 votes (27/55). It was decided that, due to fatigue, there would be no investment in the previously discussed 'Christmas Soup' event. This was agreed outside of the parameters of the Participatory Budgeting Pilot and so full monitoring is unavailable. As the steering group had successfully attributed over this financial amount to the final pot, it was felt that the donation would support the further fund raising required to meet their previously stated request.



## Alison Morgan - Ysgol Ffairfach

(At the time of writing) "Gardeners have begun clearing out/ removing in order to re-start with a clear space. Old shrubs have been removed to make new space. The pond has also been cleaned out. The 3 apple trees are now in access for easy picking and many 'elderly neighbours' have been able to pick and collect apples.... Therefore our community garden is starting to take shape!!!

Our next step will be to find more funding in order to ensure safety e.g path down to garden and flat surface (slabs). We are hoping local business might want to sponsor a flower bed/ greenhouse".

“Due to covid there were many restrictions, but maybe as a school the pupils would have enjoyed working with outside agencies to create and plan (I'm sure this could happen now that covid has lessened)".



"Support from Jamie at the beginning when creating the presentation was great".

"Presentation night was lovely to see so many locals coming together for good causes".





## Final Thoughts

“Participatory budgeting is a new concept for many communities and, as expected, it took time for the underlying principles to embed themselves. The pilot took eight months from the initial discussions to the final presentation of cheques, and the journey between those two points required a significant investment from the local residents of Llandeilo. This pilot was coordinated through the Community Action Hub with its success dependent on the contribution from volunteers. Whilst we were able to contribute £10,000 towards the final budgetary amount, the time spent canvassing and building interest and momentum cannot be monetized.

There were a variety of learning points to take forward and the development of the PB toolkit should address some of these.

Echoing the IWA 2017 report, 'Genuine, meaningful engagement is resource intensive'. The CVDO role was integral to the final outcome of the pilot and should evidence the necessary commitment need from lead individuals. This pilot seemed to land on the shoulders of one or two people and that is not a sustainable element for PB. Had the timeframe been longer I feel that the outcome may have been different.

As there was a small amount of funds remaining it will be interesting to see how this process replicates itself towards the end of 2022. Whilst not in Llandeilo, CAVS will be looking for a smaller community group to compare and contrast the process and also learn from the invaluable lessons of this community engagement”.

**Jamie Horton, Community Volunteering Development Officer**

“ Truly thankful for the hard work and success of the project. ”







"All in all the PB project has been fantastic. It was a steep learning curve with some unexpected curve balls thrown in by the changing pandemic legislation.

After a slow start public interest in the project took off and it was talked about everywhere. People did say they felt empowered and enjoyed the voting process. I received particularly positive comments about going into the schools and involving the children at the youngest possible age.

People feel positive that they contributed to projects they deemed necessary for town. I think the concept has a future and has the potential to transform private funding and donation policies in the future.

I'm proud to have been involved in this pilot project and hope it'll be possible to repeat the process".

**Mr Christoph Fischer,  
Steering Group Chair**

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**"Proposals and digital teasers-  
Once we were clear of what was  
expected it worked well and  
learners benefited from the  
experience"**

”

“

**"Voting was a good  
experience for the learners,  
Christoph's visit worked  
well and sparked  
excitement for the voting".**

”

Making  
voting  
accessible



“

**"Word of mouth in the later stages were great, it was talk of town and people were all very keen to find out who won"**

”

"Participatory Budgeting in Llandeilo proved that giving a community the autonomy to choose what they needed in their community worked well with two excellent projects for very different members of the community.

Because this was a new way of working the support from the CVDO was key to the management, group understanding and taking the ideas forward to the community.

I was pleased to have a small part in supporting Llandeilo and look forward to visiting the projects and promoting them.

I hope this way of funding continues as it gives a community the freedom to shape their own services".

**Susan Smith**  
**Community Connector Plus**

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**"The fund raising for a first time process was definitely successful from our perspective".**

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