



# Annual Impact Report 2020-2021

I Gymunedau, gyda Chymunedau | For Communities, With Communities

# Contents

Foreword by Chairman and CEO	3
<u>Statement of Financial Activities</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Statement of Financial Position</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Volunteering</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Community Development</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Engagement and Influencing</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Health, Social Care and Wellbeing</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Employability</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Children and Families</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Projects</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Corporate Services</u>	<u>26</u>

## GAVO's Bankers

NatWest Bank, High Street  
Newport NP20 1GG

## GAVO's Solicitors

Morgan, Denton & Jones, Ground  
Floor, Park House, Greyfriars Road,  
Cardiff CF10 3FA

## GAVO's Auditors

Walter Hunter & Co., 24 Bridge  
Street, Newport NP20 4SF

GAVO is the longest-standing and largest County Voluntary Council (CVC) in Wales. GAVO represents the Third Sector at local, regional & national levels and is part of the umbrella infrastructure for the Third Sector in Gwent.

### **Our mission:**

**To support, facilitate and broker positive change in the wellbeing of people & communities through collaborative approaches.**

We are also part of the Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) network of County Voluntary Councils and our shared goal is to enable the Third Sector and Volunteers across Wales to contribute fully to individual and community wellbeing.

Collectively we deliver four pillars of support:

- Volunteering
- Good Governance
- Sustainable Funding
- Engagement & Influencing



**@GAVOHQ for Third Sector news, events, funding, volunteering opportunities & more!**



# Foreword by the GAVO Chair



Welcome to the GAVO Annual Impact Report for 2020-2021.

2020-21 saw the World change overnight, with the Covid 19 Pandemic. When the UK Government announced 'Stay at home to Save Lives' GAVO adapted quickly to the lockdown and all staff were instructed to work from home.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 GAVO Trustees appointed Stephen Tiley as the GAVO Chief Executive Officer, appointing Alison Palmer as Deputy CEO in the following November. Steve adapted quickly to a very uncertain future and needed staff to do the same to adopt new ways of working.

The GAVO Executive Board did not need to furlough any of the GAVO staff as work has continued throughout the pandemic with officers across GAVO maintaining their support to the sector and the Board would like to thank officers for their sterling work and their perseverance in embracing the virtual world we have all had to become accustomed to.

The Impact on the sector at the outset of the pandemic was immense and understandably many Third Sector groups struggled, especially at the height of the lockdown restrictions. You will see throughout this year's Impact Report how organisations have adapted – carrying out 'virtual' meetings, craft sessions, door step checks (socially distanced) on their members. The Sector also increased their support by setting up additional services such as foodbanks, prescription riders collecting prescriptions for those shielding and establishing new groups to support communities across the GAVO footprint.

I would like to highlight two GAVO projects that have made a huge impact. On Page 18 EPP explain how they have delivered all their

courses on line instead of face to face, the only EPP project to do this. On Page 20 the C4W and C4W+ team explain how they continued to support individuals back into employment, even at the height of the pandemic.

Covid was something unexpected but has also proved how quickly the sector can adapt ensuring that all communities continue to have the support. It is great to see that towards the beginning of 2021 groups had begun to get back to a new normal, and the Sector was slowly re-opening, even though restrictions on activities remained.

It was good to administer a number of 'emergency Covid grants' to support third sector responses to the pandemic and hear how funders were flexible and extended deadlines so that the sector could adapt to the ever changing regulations. GAVO would like to thank funders who responded to the need of the sector by making emergency and recovery grants available to the Sector.

Collaboration continued with partners and stakeholders, made even more vital through the difficult circumstances faced, and I would like to thank Welsh Government, WCVA, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, the four Local Authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Newport, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for their support. GAVO has also continued to support Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and I represent the Sector on the TSSW Board which I Chair.

Who would have thought about the amount of time we would need to spend on line and embrace technology so quickly? It hasn't always been a great experience and a lot of communities and committees have struggled, but hopefully we will begin to meet face to face in the not too distant future.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your support and can assure you that GAVO will continue to support you through good and bad times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Watts'.

**Edward Watts MBE, DLL**

# Statement of Financial Activity

For the year end 31st March 2021

				31.03.21	31.03.20
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Pension Deficit Recovery Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds as Restated
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>					
Donations and Legacies	407	4,649	0	5,056	8,530
Charitable Activities	1,425,361	2,420,002	0	3,845,363	3,080,729
Other Trading Activities	7,675	4,360	0	12,035	15,834
Investment Income	284	0	0	284	753
Other income	0	800	0	800	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,433,727</b>	<b>2,429,811</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,863,538</b>	<b>3,105,846</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Expenditure on Charitable activities	810,705	2,429,811	(12,709)	3,227,807	3,056,908
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>810,705</b>	<b>2,429,811</b>	<b>(12,709)</b>	<b>3,227,807</b>	<b>3,056,908</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	<b>623,022</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12,709</b>	<b>635,731</b>	<b>48,938</b>
Gains on revaluation of fixed assets for Charity's own use	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>	<b>623,022</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12,709</b>	<b>635,731</b>	<b>48,938</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
Total funds brought forward	373,495	0	(81,458)	292,037	243,099
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>996,517</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(68,749)</b>	<b>927,768</b>	<b>292,037</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

# Statement of Financial Position

For the year end 31st March 2021

	31.03.21		31.03.20
	£	£	Total Funds as Restated £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible Fixed Assets		350,000	350,000
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	330,894		336,035
Cash at bank and in hand	1,186,960		273,594
	<b>1,517,854</b>		<b>609,629</b>
<b>CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING WITHIN ONE YEAR</b>			
	<b>871,337</b>		<b>586,134</b>
Net Current Assets		646,517	23,495
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>996,517</b>	<b>373,495</b>
<b>PROVISIONS</b>			
Pensions and similar obligations		68,749	81,458
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>927,768</b>	<b>292,037</b>
<b>FUNDS FOR THE CHARITY</b>			
Unrestricted pension deficit recovery fund		(68,749)	(81,458)
Unrestricted Funds:			
Other unrestricted income funds		996,517	373,495
Total Unrestricted funds		<b>996,517</b>	<b>373,495</b>
<b>Total Charity Funds</b>		<b>927,768</b>	<b>292,037</b>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. These financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 9th December 2021, and are signed on behalf of the Board by:

MR E Watts  
Trustee

Mr D Jones  
Trustee

# Volunteering

**What we do:** We work closely with organisations across Gwent, to facilitate quality volunteering opportunities & support individuals to find their perfect volunteering role.



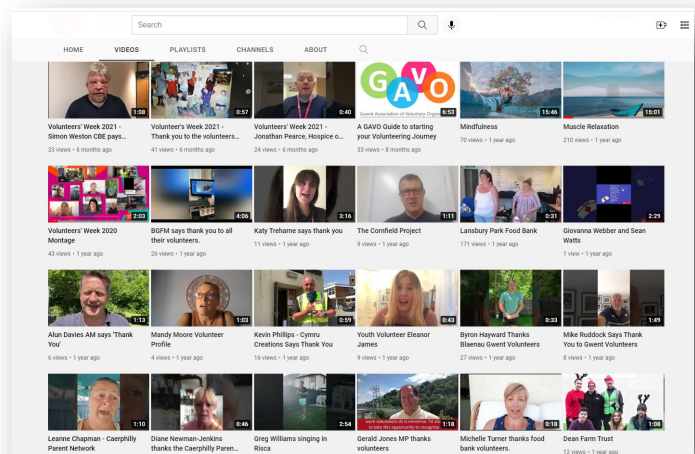
We continue to support organisations with their volunteering by advertising their Volunteer roles on the Volunteering Wales website, providing top tips for creating engaging adverts and how-to guides for getting the most out of this free to use Volunteer Management Platform.

<https://gwent.volunteering-wales.net/>

There has been a fantastic response from our communities to the Covid 19 pandemic, which not only helped our essential services but ensured the most vulnerable in our communities always had support. It was an amazing effort by all.

The Volunteering Team have been instrumental in the volunteering drive across the region, working with third sector organisations, statutory bodies and volunteers alike to match people to the range of volunteering opportunities that have supported our communities so valiantly. They embraced the need to work differently very quickly and took the annual Volunteers Week at the beginning of June online. We had videos from many organisations, thanking volunteers and recognising volunteering efforts. The videos are available on the GAVO YouTube Channel.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWRTK\\_EzCZfwq\\_u0xO2Syog/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWRTK_EzCZfwq_u0xO2Syog/videos)



## Volunteering Stories

The Team have been administering DBS checks for volunteers providing Covid specific support in communities throughout the pandemic, which has helped many organisations recruit volunteers, ranging from pharmacies to the Blaenau Gwent Community Play Volunteers for the Summer of 2020. The Team have also worked to support a Rotary Club to generate

<b>Volunteering Team Key TSSW Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Adjusted Annual Target</b>
Individuals Supported with Volunteering	1462	1249.5
Individuals Placed into Volunteering	617	486

income and use volunteers to provide World Food Boxes, ensuring food deliveries continued across the Blaenau Gwent area.

A key piece of targeted work has been to support One Life Autism, completing enhanced DBS checks for volunteers to enable a socially distanced, outdoor, August Holiday Club for children with autism to take place. There has also been support for our partners, Volunteering Matters and Blaenau Gwent Council, in the recruitment of volunteers for the Blaenau Gwent Community Response Project, supporting vulnerable and/or shielding families.

We were also fortunate to attend Coleg Gwent's Virtual Fresher's Fayre 2020, producing a 'virtual' volunteering video with GAVO's Marketing and IT Officers. This has been available on Coleg Gwent's intranet and the GAVO YouTube channel and has been a helpful guide for students to learn about and get involved with volunteering.

During 2020/21 GAVO worked in collaboration with Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) to appoint a Volunteer Co-Ordinator to support the CCBC Buddy Scheme. The Welsh Government recognised project was set up in response to the need to provide ongoing support to vulnerable residents to work alongside the Caerphilly Cares model with a view to recruit CCBC staff who had been volunteering during lockdown as well as community members.

Our Officers have also been active in supporting Risca CV19 UK in their development by undertaking DBS checks for their volunteers, providing comprehensive advice, and practical help with identity badges, and The Care Project with BMMR Churches

who have registered on VW website and are recruiting new volunteers through it to name a few. We have also been working with them and their appointed apprentice who is responsible for volunteer recruitment and needed support in recruiting young volunteers.

There has been some really positive feedback from vulnerable residents with volunteers proving themselves to be the right type of person needed in the community to provide the support. The year also saw the first 'Community Organisations Network Meeting' where the event was open to organisations to share best practices and a place to agree workarounds for challenges.

GAVO Officers have worked with our partners in Monmouthshire Council to progress the Pharmacy Volunteering Support throughout Monmouthshire. In addition to this, in a collaborative approach, GAVO officers have worked with the Community Pharmacy Advisor for ABUHB to ensure everyone is involved in supporting community pharmacies requiring help from safely recruited Volunteers.

Our Officers in Monmouthshire have been the key recruiters for the new COVID volunteer role, Monmouthshire Town Ambassadors. These are ambassadors for the area which help residents by directing and helping through the pandemic. This has been a positive collaboration with Monmouthshire Council. The Team has also been working with partners on a new collaboration, Bingo Beats the Blues which is aimed at

reintegrating the community with online events to help isolation and mental health. The events are looking to spread across Monmouthshire, hoping to address the isolation issues raised.

**1462**

**Individuals supported with volunteering**

**617**

**Individuals placed into volunteering**

Staff have also attended the Monmouthshire Employability Partnerships planning session for National Employability Day which was of great benefit to GAVO. The staff also produced a virtual flyer on how Volunteering can help employability which has since been passed through other areas of GAVO.

The Newport Team has worked to support numerous groups in Newport, ranging from Newport City Council North and West Hubs, Newport Rough Sleepers, Menter Iaithe Casnewydd, Community Connectors and Bettws ELC Project.

A Youth Volunteering Survey was launched targeting youth based voluntary organisations, with the hope of making more organisations aware of the benefits of recruiting young people as volunteers. The Team have also

opened up a youth based Facebook page to share information, opportunities and advice to young people and use the platform as a young person's forum and communication method for the Youth Led Grant Panel.

The Volunteering Team have been active in delivering Volunteering Wales one-to-one training for organisations / groups across the GAVO footprint, for those using or wanting to use the website for various levels of volunteer management. This service is available to anyone recruiting and managing volunteers in Gwent.

Get in touch with the Team, even if you just need a refresher session. We are here to support you to use the national database for volunteering in Wales!

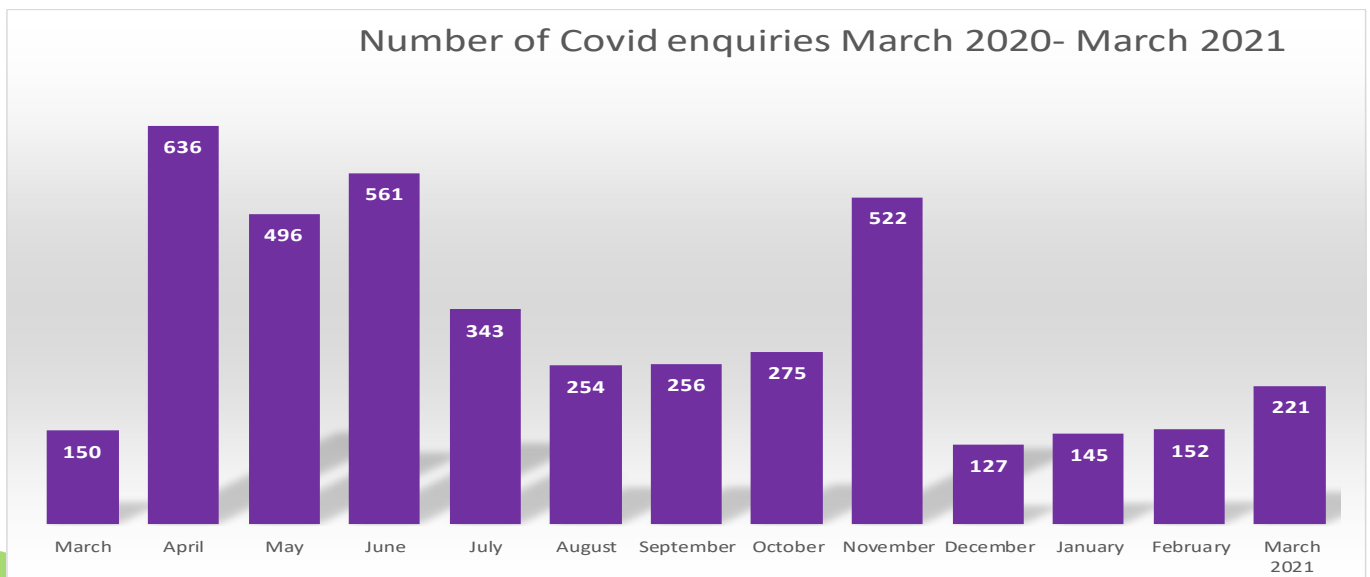
[volunteering@gavo.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@gavo.org.uk)

[www.gavo.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.gavo.org.uk/volunteering)

<https://gwent.volunteering-wales.net/>

## Covid 19 Impacts

All third sector organisations have been impacted by the pandemic, with lockdowns forcing the closure of all that provided face to face services and activities, except for those classed as emergency or frontline services, foodbanks, Red Cross, St. Johns etc. Many were able to move online, or provide support by telephone, and we have all developed skills with Teams and Zoom, unheard of to many pre-pandemic. GAVO, like everyone, had to adapt and this report has shown how we maintained our support through a variety of means. GAVO saw the number of enquiries received expand rapidly and TSSW added a Covid 19 indicator to our reporting system, enabling CVCs across Wales to monitor Covid specific work, you will see the impact below.





# Community Development

**What we do:** Two TSSW pillars fall under the remit of the Community Development Team: Good Governance and Sustainable Funding, although, with the need to engage in the wider partnership landscape more and more links need to be made to the Engagement and Influencing pillar, details elsewhere in this report.



The Officers have supported organisations throughout the year with the workload remaining consistent but undertaken in a very different way to reflect the pandemic, lockdowns and safety guidelines. The importance of GAVO's role in helping the Third Sector to access support and funding has been highlighted in this period. Intensive development support been offered to groups in relation to governance and funding, wrapped around ongoing dialogues with numerous organisations to ensure they did not feel isolated. Many new organisations setting up to address the pandemic and community support needs contacted GAVO specifically around governance, accessing funding and bank accounts, with plenty of good feedback and thanks received, some on social media, which is good for awareness raising of our role.

The Community Development Team across the GAVO footprint have been responsible for distributing a number of pandemic related

relief funds; e.g. Voluntary Sector Emergency Fund, Voluntary Sector Recovery Fund; on behalf of Welsh Government, WCVA and Comic Relief Emergency Fund as part of TSSW. These funds have been vital to support the additional activities of third sector grass roots groups supporting their communities through Covid19, but have also provided resources to enable those organisations unable to operate for a multitude of reasons to survive the lockdowns and restrictions, particularly those with buildings and associated running costs.

Much of the initial Emergency Fund was sought by foodbanks and food distribution groups, alongside those supporting vulnerable, isolated and lonely people, the homeless and those who through lack of digital technology were not in touch with family, friends and services that had moved online. Officers were please that third sector organisations with buildings were eligible to apply for the WG Small Business Rate Relief Scheme but saddened that our churches across the area, unless separately registered as community facilities, were not.

Embracing the need to work with technology with some trepidation, the Community Development Team have taken their advice and support sessions onto Teams and Zoom, and have run funding surgeries, seminars and TSSW 'Meet the Funder' sessions with funding distributors including regular sessions with the Lottery Community Fund, Heritage Lottery, Sports Wales to name a few. There has been excellent attendance at the sessions, with the TSSW sponsored events seeing attendance from across Wales. They have participated in running training sessions online with the BeAcademy in Monmouthshire and supported

the Annual Third Sector funding surgery run by Gerald Jones, MP for Merthyr and Rhymney. Governance advice and support to new groups has continued, enabling them to negotiate complicated pathways to developing and registering governance structures and open bank accounts. Groups have been faced with enormous delays in some cases with charity

registration and banking has been a particular issue as trustees have been unable to present evidence face to face to open charity accounts. However, there have been alternatives developed with support from Smart Money Credit Union and Monmouthshire Building Society.

**145**  
**Groups awarded with funding by GAVO totalling**  
**£326,871**

**154**  
**Groups supported to obtain funding of**  
**£2,120,783**

Looking across the region, we highlight some significant pieces of work over the last year:

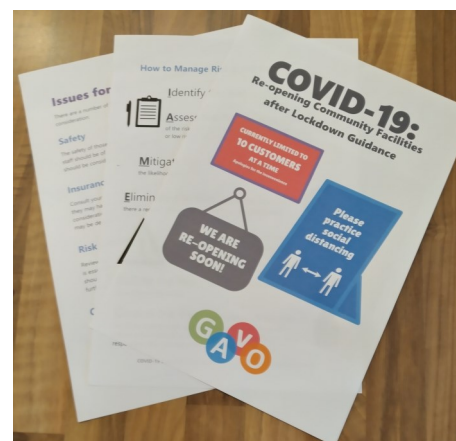
## Blaenau Gwent

The Community Development Manager has supported a number of groups to complete their registration as Community Interest Companies, showing that even though under restriction, groups are planning and developing.

The Community Links Co-ordinator, although unable to provide the usual hands-on support, continued to work with community centre committees and trustees, helping those that were able to open to provide specific services with information and guidance on opening safely. The Officer was active in dissecting Welsh Government guidance and creating a guide to ensure Community Centres, places of worship, sports clubs, groups and social clubs begin tentative steps to reopen and ensure all HSE guidance is in place.

As part of this process, the Officer linked productively to encourage centres to apply for funding to offset costs of making venues safe and secure for community members to access and benefit from, which helped centres greatly. Linked to this, the GAVO Officer worked with Public Health Wales and Health to create a

COVID compliant virtual guide that relayed the importance of COVID compliance and keeping the Risk Assessment as a live document. The Officer also helped centres to review inclement weather policies in advance of issues to ensure there was maximum use of outdoor spaces during COVID and even through the winter months.



The documents, initially used in Blaenau Gwent was then circulated wider for use across the GAVO footprint.

Funding bids have been a significant element of work in Blaenau Gwent and the officer has

been instrumental in groups receiving GAVO grants and applying successfully for external funding. The importance of this money is clear when feedback is received such as:

**“Without the grant we don’t know how we would survive, the Treasurer burst into tears, such a relief!”**

*“We couldn’t have dreamed of achieving without your help and assistance. Thanks ever so much for all the help on this, and indeed on everything else that you have advised us on!! Yer a star!!!”*

Blaina Rugby Club

During the year, the Development Manager was tasked through the partnership working under the PSB, to lead work to develop third sector response to the refresh of the Age Friendly Blaenau Gwent Strategy and work with the 50Plus Forum to develop their involvement; with GAVO involvement in the Age Friendly Communities Strategy consultation event. He also began work to scope groups that GAVO links with in the area that could have greater involvement in strategy, including any BAME groups in the area. Toward the end of the year the Community Development Manager was providing GAVO input into the Participatory Budgeting programme.

The Community Development Manager is also the GAVO representative on the TSSW Funding Network and the sub group developing the Funding Wales Hub.

## Caerphilly

Clearly, groups were trying to look at how they would operate under the new conditions and the number of funding enquiries increased steadily from the beginning of the year as lockdown eased. Long standing community

asset transfer work with a number of sporting groups halted for a time but returned with inevitable delays to legal processes. The Community Development Manager, supported by proactive Voluntary Sector Representatives Committee members promoted the Business Rate Relief grant and many third sector organisations with buildings benefitted.

A number of specific Covid support groups set up during the year to respond directly to community need, specifically The Parish Trust and Risca CV19 (UK), providing volunteers, direct services such as food banks and telephone helplines. Both organisations required governance and funding advice and guidance, and support from the wider GAVO team with their volunteering efforts. Both were very successful in drawing in funding and have expanded their services and reach as the year progressed. General advice was still being sought including charity registrations, trustee queries, community asset enquiries, account verifications and project planning. Many of the enquiries were related to lockdown and re-opening guidance as there was much confusion.

Funding has remained an important element of the work including the promotion of Covid-related small grant schemes as well as the local solar grant schemes. The Officer has chaired a number of Zoom seminars on funding with the Lottery Community Fund and organised a GAVO wide Be Active Wales Zoom funding surgery with Sports Wales.

Toward the end of the year the Caerphilly Third Sector Forum was reinstated as a virtual event on Zoom and the Voluntary Sector Representatives and Liaison Committees restarted, again as online meetings.

## Case Study

Islwyn Art Project is an art club for adults with learning disabilities. We started the art club when we realised that there were very few options for people with learning disabilities once they reached adulthood. IAP has received support from GAVO, Crafts for Everyone, Coleg Gwent, Libanus Primary School, Libanus Lifestyle, Community Connectors, Dewis, local businesses and other local groups.

Elizabeth Millington said:

“GAVO have helped us at every step of this venture. When we initially wanted to set up as an organisation, they were able to provide information and advice about registering as a CIC. We

have attended their One Beat events and other fairs where we have been able to display our artwork, recruit volunteers and gain the support of the community. GAVO have shared resources and information about funding opportunities and we attended one of their Comic Relief funding talks before we submitted our application."

"The lovely ladies at GAVO gave us the confidence to go ahead with our venture and have been there for us every step of the way. No matter what the query I know they will be there to advise us and have the knowledge to refer us to resources and further information."



## Monmouthshire

During the year the Development Managers have been included in Monmouthshire Partners Team meetings which have been successful in developing new and stronger relationships. These have allowed for introductions to new groups whilst making links with Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) colleagues in other departments, which is vital for future partnership working.

The GAVO Team approach has been strengthened in Monmouthshire with staff progressing work with 'One Monmouthshire' as a partner using a generic email for the Team on a pilot basis providing a more consistent message delivered to partners about GAVO's role and roles of team members. Joint work has taken place on projects like Time-banking, Repair Cafes and Community Fridges whilst developing the new Wellbeing Hub in Caldicot, recruiting partners with the aim of utilising the space to work in an agile manner to being more outward facing, when circumstances allow.

The GAVO Monmouthshire Team also arranged online voluntary sector network meetings and towards the end of the reporting period agreed to support the re-engagement with the community through the Community Support Networks with outdoor walkabouts planned. GAVO had taken the lead on the place based engagement in Severn Side, which initially had low take up but has improved during the period and has welcomed additional engagement support through the GAVO Engagement posts beginning in March.

The Community Development Managers have been proactive and effective in ensuring the distribution of the Covid specific grants. Historically Monmouthshire has been difficult to distribute to but this grant, linked to COVID has seen an increase in uptake. The Managers have also been keen to support the Be Academy work in particular around the online sessions, developing a virtual bid writing course in partnership with Monmouthshire partners. Dependent on success, this could be rolled out as training across all GAVO areas.



The Officers have been involved in some positive stories in the area, e.g. the funding bid secured by Monmouthshire MIND and Rogiet Community Junction. The organisation secured a Lottery Capital Development Grant to fund preparatory work and the project Coordinator post for the next six months and alongside this, GAVO has bid to John Lewis Plc in conjunction with MCC for GAVO to host a Caldicot-based Wellbeing Hub Manager.

The Officers have been providing bid writing support, funding and governance to a number of groups ranging from Angling UK, Orchid Drive and Sport Wales. The Sport Wales link has been useful as Sport Wales are keen to progress their support to sport clubs in the regions and GAVO will look to progress this link in the coming months. The Cornfield Track project is completed and being well used with volunteers and the wider community, being thrilled with the improved facility. A second development phase is likely and GAVO will be deeply embedded in the project.



## Newport

At the commencement of the pandemic hitting Newport, there was confusion in regarding the route for referrals and requests for emergency support. The Officer supported by the Parent Participation Officer was able to clarify the situation and provide advice to individuals and

organisations, reacting to a considerable number of enquiries from individuals contacting GAVO because they didn't know where else to turn. This demonstrated that local people saw us as a vital link to services, especially in a crisis. The Officers have successfully distributed the VSEF grant with most requests for food related items for foodbanks with some bids also to provide reconditioned IT equipment to provide communication tools to open new communication streams.

The Officers actively promoted the Welsh Governments Small Business Rate Relief Scheme that was open to charities. Initial links to the council's website caused confusion but, following contact with the business unit the Council updated its site resulting in more local charities and sports groups being able to apply and saw a number of successful applications made with GAVO help.

Officers have carried out extensive work helping the Newport Veterans Hub to set up as a Community Interest Company so that they could take advantage of some considerable grants that they had been offered.

The Third Sector Partnership continued to progress well, feeding into the PSB in Newport. This partnership comprised elected representatives of organisations from the area of Newport with a remit to scrutinise the Agenda and papers from the PSB, and provides a conduit from the third sector to influence the activity of Newport City Council. The Third Sector Partnership restarted meeting via Teams and was well attended with comments on how third sector organisations were coping during COVID fed through to the PSB. This has been a positive way of ensuring the statutory partners gauge the needs and concerns of third sector organisations.

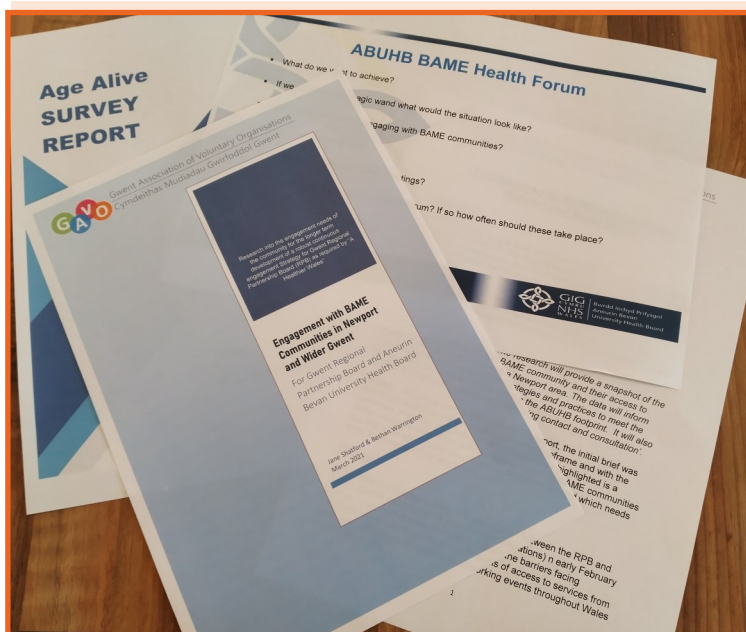


The Strong and Resilient Communities Intervention Board met with the focus on a Community Impact Assessment Exercise in light of the effect that Covid-19 had in the Newport community. The main issues included the disproportionate impact on BAME communities, digital exclusion, mental health, and the drop in safeguarding referrals with an increase in severity of such cases.

GAVO Officers continued to deal with requests for help with governance issues and groups wanting to register as charities, with examples ranging from the People & Work consultancy that has been engaged by Building Communities Trust to conduct a review of how local community groups have responded to the needs of the community as a direct result of the pandemic; Newport Veterans Hub which is now a CIC and applying for funding; a church pastor in Pillgwenlly to discuss their plans for an

extension to their community hall and the project ideas that they have for supporting the community; and supported the second draft of a constitution for Newport Youth Council.

GAVO's Development Manager worked with EYST in respect of the BAME landscape in Newport. BAME involvement linked to GAVO has been of priority and GAVO increased the Officer hours to meet the demand.



GAVO was awarded funding in January 2021 by ABUHB to investigate access to health services by people from BAME backgrounds, working with BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) groups across Newport, and provide a report to the Regional Partnership Board. The Officer carried out extensive work in the last quarter to research into the engagement needs of the community in conjunction with the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) as required by "A Healthier Wales".

The challenge was to provide qualitative evidence into the impact of the pandemic on the BAME community and their access to health services. With this review of impacts has come solutions which have helped many BAME organisations through the pandemic, including the development of a BAME Health Forum by ABUHB which GAVO attends.

Surveys were a key focus within Newport in particular with BAME Organisations, with GAVO supporting and reporting on the outcomes of these. The Community Development Manager was also active in supporting Save the Children Early Learning Community programme in Bettws, attending board meetings and supporting the work of the various subgroups including the digital poverty project supplying Chromebooks to local families with young children. The Officers have also been key in collaborating on the Newport Participatory Budgeting Exercise, carrying out 3 grant workshops and increased the number of funding enquiries as a result of this exercise.

Community Development Manager, Jane Shatford, announced her intention to retire at the end of the year. Jane will be much missed by colleagues and the community groups she worked with across Newport.

# Engagement & Influencing

The TSSW Engagement & Influencing pillar of activity, is a significant part of GAVO work as the organisation plays a key role in partnerships, nationally, regionally and locally through Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW), Public Services Boards (PSBs), Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and all supporting structures.



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 legislation, which required each PSB across Wales to produce a Well-being Plan, has been entrenched in our work and continues to have positive impacts across our patch. These have evolved and changed though the Covid pandemic but has been ever present in our working ethos.

## Blaenau Gwent

Within Blaenau Gwent we are the Lead on the Age Friendly Communities action area and have supported "Blaenau Gwent On the Move", having been a key voice at the Strategic Support Group where our representative is the Vice Chair, and in the Climate Change Initiative, to name a few.

Each action area has had the ultimate focus on effective delivery of the Well-being Plan in Blaenau Gwent, "The Blaenau Gwent We Want".

## Caerphilly

We are the lead on the 'Volunteering Action

Area', which is a priority under the Well-being Plan objective of "Positive People" whilst being an active part of the Leads Group and other Action Areas and Enablers, including Apprenticeships, which links with the volunteering theme well by offering volunteering as a step to training and employment.

In addition, GAVO continues its support through the Third Sector Forum, to an elected Voluntary Sector Representatives Sub Committee, and the Third Sector element of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Sub Committee, which includes elected members from Local Authority & representatives from the PSB partners.

## Monmouthshire

We lead the 'Active Citizenship' priority, which is a key objective of the Monmouthshire Well-being Plan, to respond to the challenges associated with demographic change. Active Citizenship has taken a different turn during the Pandemic but has been key in the support of Volunteers in the communities to cope with the Covid Pandemic.

Engagement has still been the key and GAVO's role within the Programme Board and PSB has helped drive the relationships with Partners in responding to the Pandemic and the subsequent recovery.

## Newport

In partnership with Coleg Gwent, we are joint lead of the 'Right Skills' step of the Newport Well-being Plan, which is focused on ensuring people have the right skills and opportunities for economic and sustainable growth - which will aid communities' wellbeing through learning.

We strongly support ways to encourage

volunteering as a pathway into employment whilst also acknowledging volunteering as a mode of learning new skills for well-being and continue to work with organisations and businesses across different sectors to create these opportunities; not just in Newport but across Gwent.

Feeding into the Newport PSB is the Third Sector Partnership (TSP), comprising representatives of the third sector who are elected through the Newport Forum to represent the sector across the One Newport priorities and who come together in the TSP.

## Gwentwide / Wales

Our involvement in the Regional Partnership Board, in particular our opportunity to provide Third Sector updates and to receive updates from Health, Social Care and generic partners, has been vital and positive during the financial year, especially with the Sectors links to the support opportunities around winter pressures and COVID 19.

These meetings have also created new opportunities for the sector, in particular the ICF small grant 2020/2021, where relationships have seen positive development with GAVO meeting finance representatives from the Health Board leading to agreed processes for involving the Sector in the discussions about funding allocations in 2021/2022.

During 2020/21 the GAVO CEO has become a Third Sector representative at the Gwent Strategic Working Action Group (GSWAG) which has been the main group focused on the development of the governance of the new Gwent PSB. The Gwent PSB conversations have progressed through 2020/21 with a view of launching during 2021/22.

The hope is the Gwent PSB will link more effectively with the Regional Partnership Board.

## WCVA/TSSW/CVC/MP Meetings

The regular discussions between CEO's and the continuation of the TSSW Networks has been beneficial and allowed for GAVO to promote our work and the work of the sector in Gwent, but also learn from other areas in Wales in particular during the COVID 19 pandemic.

There have been real collaborative approaches to national working, with Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and other CVC CEO's, with attendance at the Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) Executive, TSSW Safeguarding Board and Officers of GAVO attending various committees such as the Volunteer Practitioner Network, Funding Network and the Learning Steering Group to name a few. This national link allows for influence and engagement through communication streams between TSSW (GAVO is a member) and Welsh Government.

With the impacts of COVID 19 on our communities, the increased opportunity to discuss issues affecting the sector and said communities with MPs, AMs and Local Councillors has allowed for that message to help influence the development of policy, laws and agree funding which have been so critical through this pandemic era.

During the Financial year, the CEO has had the pleasure of becoming a part of a new working group, the South East Wales Collective which is a gathering of CVC CEO's covering South East Wales. Outside of this group, it has been useful to have discussions with partner CVC CEO's to discuss impacts, ways of working and how we can progress collectively.



Stephen Tiley  
Chief Executive Officer





# Health, Social Care & Well-being

**What we do:** We support partnership working between the third sector and other providers of health, social care and well-being services. We also develop and co-ordinate a fantastic range of free, Volunteer-led health and well-being courses.

Our HSCWB Partnership Officers have led on the distribution of Integrated Care Fund grants and have been vital in providing funding panels for these grants and the Transformation Fund. The ICF Grant consisted of £37,500 per GAVO area, all of which was utilised by our community organisations.

Working across the region our Officer in Blaenau Gwent has worked in partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Homestart and Volunteering Matters around Covid-19 support to vulnerable families and citizens in Blaenau Gwent. Support included shopping, medication collection, telephone befriending and dog walking. Support also included working with local pharmacists in Blaenau Gwent, and more widely across the other Gwent boroughs, offering support to them to recruit volunteers to assist with their medication deliveries.

Our Officer has also been liaising with a number of new partners including the new Hate Crime Training & Engagement Officer for Gwent to learn about the new role and where it links to the sector and Public Health Wales researchers focused on conducting research into the role of community-led action as a protective factor against widening health inequalities during, and in recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Caerphilly area has welcomed a new HSCWB Officer during the pandemic era and they have been involved in much support for residents in the area. The Officer has been

active with the Gwent Wellbeing Champions and has been positively contributing at their weekly virtual coffee mornings which has allowed the Officer to meet various community activists, project workers and local organisations.

The links made with the Integrated Wellbeing Networks have been positive and there has been increased activity with ABUHB in Caerphilly since COVID outbreak. Our Officer is supporting this through virtual meetings in key areas, namely Rhymney, New Tredegar, Bargoed and Risca with the first meeting of the having almost 50 attendees.

**35**  
**Groups awarded with**  
**ICF small grant**  
**funding by GAVO**  
**totalling**  
**£150,000**

GAVO has been active in the V for Vaccination sessions being rolled out to teams and communities, which the GAVO Officer supported with development and co-hosting. One session in particular had 100 attendees on Zoom with excellent positive feedback. This has focused on people feeling informed about the vaccines and alleviating fears.

The Monmouthshire HSCWB Officer, also newly appointed during the pandemic, has also been working with the area Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCN) and has attended both NCN's (North and South Monmouthshire) to represent and contribute on behalf of the Community and Voluntary Sector. Our staff member in Monmouthshire met with Lead GP's of these areas to discuss Voluntary Sector services and how people shielding during lockdown were being supported by community groups.

GAVO staff have worked in collaboration with the seven Monmouthshire County Council Area

Teams to ensure GAVO is involved with the Council led response to support communities through COVID outbreak.

Our Officer has also been involved in various other projects including designing and coordinating a pilot project involving people who have been assessed by the Memory Clinic as having Mild Cognitive Impairment, and inputting into plans for a 'Community Cabin' in Abergavenny; providing a shared base for organisations providing support services and an accessible point of contact for local people. They have also worked with Monmouthshire Housing Association and Mind Monmouthshire to fund their work in addressing isolation and loneliness and avoid deterioration of mental health.

Our Newport Officer has been linking with organisations through activities, training and virtual coffee mornings. Many third sector organisations have changed their way of delivering a service and these service changes have been shared with third sector colleagues and partners through 2020/21.

Our GAVO HSCWB Team has contributed to the

Gwent regional Learning and Innovation Network (LINs) set up to support the Gwent RPB infrastructures. Our Newport Officer has taken part and supported 5 Newport Wellbeing engagement events to support the Integrated Wellbeing Networks and contributed to feedback on the text of the draft leaflet being distributed to every household in Gwent on raising awareness of changes to emergency services with the opening of the Grange Hospital.

Our Officer has also contributed to the online BAME All Wales Forum, discussing the impact of COVID on the BAME communities, provided a news update for the third sector (also circulated to partners) on consultations, information on new third sector services, COVID guidance and took part in the EYST mental Health Forum and arranged a follow up meeting to discuss MH pathways for BAME patients and Interpreter and Translation services in Health and social care.

Officers have worked closely and tirelessly to shared information and develop new working practices which have become more evident during 2020/21 and this has helped shape our working moving forward.

## Compassionate Communities

The Compassionate Communities Team, being ABUHB funded, were transferred to frontline services, which GAVO supported and has resulted in the targets and training not being carried out. This did not affected any outcomes expected from ABUHB.

## EPP—Education Programme for Patients

Initially as lockdown began EPP Staff supported GAVO corporate staff to deal with a flood of individual enquiries to the main number, making sure that every call was dealt with, and we thank them for their support. These calls were linked to Food parcels, shielding letters or supports from groups in order to get delivery of food or medication as they were unable to leave their homes.

Once the initial concerns were dealt with the EPP Team reviewed how they could continue to operate in a very restricted environment and provide the support to people with long term conditions. They developed a course to be run virtually, training tutors on the course content and on the use of Zoom before going to live trials from 22nd June. Relaxation sessions were also filmed and released on social media generating thousands of hits. The course was aimed at helping those shielding and those who were self isolating connect to others in the same position.

The Team remained proactive and made connections with ABUHB to ensure that the EPP programme was a feature in the NHS Rehabilitation Programme that went live at the end of June. This ensured that patients were referred as a matter of course during their on-line appointments, enabling them to receive immediate support and EPP staff a quicker influx of Participants.

EPP came together to work across Gwent due to the pandemic, producing a Virtual course from a telephone script from Public Health Wales and developing a comprehensive resource pack to support the new Virtual Course, training volunteers to deliver confidently in this new way.

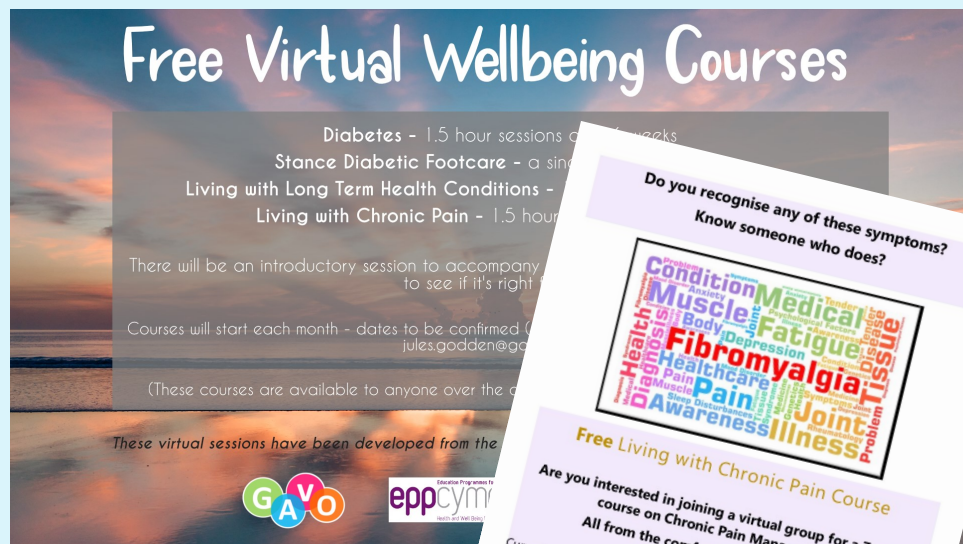
The response and feedback to the first course was overwhelmingly positive resulting in a series being run with more courses developed to be delivered on line following. The Team were asked to deliver their findings at the Joint Managers and Coordinators meeting for EPP Wales, which was a great promotional opportunity to highlight how GAVO's team had been able to adapt to work throughout the pandemic. Demand increased and as a result, additional funding was sourced to allow the production of more pain courses for Caerphilly. Staff were also selected to become part of Carers Wales Committee giving the opportunity to voice the work EPP in GAVO have done to support carers. One objective was to improve the technology for tutors so that numbers could be increased and therefore the capacity for delivery.

The Blaenau Gwent Health & Social Care Officer spoke on EPP's behalf at the NCN West in Blaenau Gwent regarding a piece of work

being pioneered before COVID, looking at partnerships with GP practices in bringing the intervention of EPP pain courses instead of GP's administering pain medications. These talks have secured an extra two days funding to deliver on line pain courses to their patients.

Staff also attended Planned Care Programme A&E Outpatient Transformation in Wales meetings and meetings with Welsh Government to share A&E Workforce case studies, during which the staff team explained how they had converted EPP courses to Virtual and highlighted the support obtained from GAVO.

Education Programme for Patients continued to



evolve as a service after the initial lockdown, continually developing new courses which have included Fibromyalgia and a Dealing with Pain course. Courses continue to be well received across Gwent with feedback very positive and funding confirmed to continue for the foreseeable future. GAVO is also ensuring support with equipment and resource where possible to ensure the growth of this project.

# Community Employability (Blaenau Gwent)

GAVO, working in partnership with the DWP, is the current Lead Delivery Body delivering the Welsh Government and WEFO funded Community Employability programmes across Blaenau Gwent.

GAVO employs 40 staff to deliver the programmes across all of the Blaenau Gwent communities had has a base in each of the 4 main town centres, Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr and Abertillery and has additional outreach venues within all of these areas to ensure that those participants who are unable to reach town centres can access the support they need to seek and secure employment.

During its time in delivering the community employability programme, and through the intensive one to one mentoring support that the team provide, GAVO C4W and C4W+ has:

**People enrolled onto programmes**                      **2135**

**People enrolled securing employment**                      **955**

During the current Pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, the team has continued to support people into employment using alternative methods of engagement and mentoring support and have been responsible for:

**Number of people engaged with**                      **1608**

**Supported into employment**                      **307**

GAVO, through the Employability Team has been responsible for the delivery of Training Academies which takes a participant through all associated training, work experience placement through to interview and employment. Sectors include:

- **Construction**
- **Care**
- **Health and Social Care**
- **Retail**
- **Teaching Assistant**
- **HGV/LGV**
- **Security**

## **Mental Health Support and prioritising Disabilities:**

In addition to the core delivery, the team have secured monies from the Legacy Fund to support participants with mental health needs through a service level agreement with MIND. It is a programme that is designed specifically to support job seeking residents of Blaenau Gwent in need of low level mental health support in light of the pressure and anxiety not only created by the extended period of Covid-19 lockdown and social distancing restrictions but also the pressures places on individual mental health from unemployment, debt and poverty.

As a priority, GAVO has also enabled all staff within the community employability programmes to undertake training which allows them to support people with disabilities into employment, and the GAVO team are, as we understand it, the only CEP throughout Wales where all of the staff have undertaken such significant training in order to ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to secure employment.



The latest group to complete the Blaenau Gwent Communities for Work Care Academy

## Congratulations! Case Study—BH

### Summary

BH joined the C4W+ programme aged 19 with low confidence and mental health issues, unemployed having left school after A Levels and finding it difficult to find work due to the pandemic. Naturally artistic and creative, the mentor encouraged her to volunteer in a creative role as a way of getting experience with a Mental Health charity and as a result she has found a permanent job with this same charity. She is happy in her new role, supporting others with Mental Health issues using art as a therapy and doing what she loves most.

### Story

BH presented to the C4W+ Programme last November 2020 aged 19 with very low self-confidence and mental health problems. Despite her excellent exam results and amazing artistic ability, she felt that a lack of understanding around her dyslexia and consequently a lack of appropriate support meant that she could not continue along the traditional educational route. She was keen to help others who experience problems with mental health so she was supported to volunteer with a Mental Health Charity, Growing Space so that she could use both her artistic skills (therapeutic for her) whilst helping others improve their own physical and mental wellbeing in the process. Lockdown meant that this volunteering was brief however, the experience was enough to

show her that there was a possibility she could use her artistic skills through paid work, an important career aspiration for her. In spring 2021 and coincidentally, an opportunity arose for BH to apply for a Kickstart vacancy with the same charity she had volunteered with, Growing Space.

Fully supported to apply for this role in terms of the application process, interview preparation and confidence building BH was successful in getting the job as a Trainee Supervisor – developing and providing artistic activities to promote wellbeing enabling people to achieve positive lifestyle changes. The CfW+ programme barriers fund was able to support her with transport to and from work for a period of 7 weeks until she passed her driving test. BH is loving her new role and this could be the first big step in what will be a successful career for a very able and talented young woman.

BH has been successful in not only finding a job, but one that combines her passion for art and creativity plus her empathy for others who are experiencing the mental health problems she has herself faced. She is now able to use art as a therapy for herself and others, through the work she does.

BH, Participant now working for Growing Space as Trainee Supervisor.

*"I would like to thank you for all the support you gave me through the C4W programme. I had lost all confidence in finding a job and was becoming more anxious feeling a statistic. You understood what work I was looking for and helped me fill out the application form and updating my CV helped a lot and I'm pleased to say that I got the job. I feel that people like me who struggle with Dyslexia are over looked by the work coaches in universal credit where as being able to speak with you on a more personal level as a great benefit. You're help with transport until I passed my driving test was also a great help."*

Massive congratulations to two Communities For Work Plus participants who both received bikes to travel to their new places of work. Both secured Full time employment through one to one support by our mentors, and Paul, pictured below, also completed The Blaenau Gwent Communities For Work Construction Academy.



The following Case Study shows how the pandemic has impacted on participants and how the team has had to adapt and persevere with their support.

## Case Study

The participant was engaged in August 2020, but after the initial consultation it was found that he had lost his latest job in March 2020 just before the national lockdown. The participant had been driving vans for over ten years, mainly for agencies or on short term contracts. He felt that if he were to gain a Class 1 HGV Licence he would be able to find more sustainable employment.

When first engaged onto the programme, the participant was quite down given that he had been working in driving jobs for over 10 years but none of them had given him any job security.

The employment he tended to work in was usually short term contract driving or driving work through agencies. He said that he had had enough of this way of working and felt that he would be able to find more sustainable employment if he had a Class 1 HGV Licence.

The participant had spoken to many employer but most were looking for some experience in driving Class 1 vehicles although he was told by some employers that his years of driving a 7.5 ton vehicle may help him to secure work if he had the required Class 1 Licence.

The training was requested and agreed and the participant had the medical he required for the licence and all the required paperwork was completed by the DVLA. This took longer than usual due to the limited number of staff in the DVLA offices. The participant was booked in to do his test but due to COVID 19 restrictions the training provider was limited to the number of tests they could do in a week so again there was a delay before he finally sat the test, although when he did eventually sit the test he passed it first time.

Following on from the test he was supported to look for longer term sustainable employment but local lockdown restrictions and the national lockdown that followed meant that employers were only taking on experienced Class 1 drivers. This was a little worrying at the time but with perseverance he kept on applying for advertised roles. On a few occasions he was asked to interview but failed the driving assessment as he was struggling with reversing the vehicle as he had not driven a Class 1 since passing his test. Following discussions with Heads of the Valleys training to see if they could put on a refresher course for him and they said they would be able to do that however, while in the process of setting that up, the participant contacted me and said that he had been successful in finding employment with a haulage company in Avonmouth.

He was due to start employment in June 2021 and although the process had been a long one, there is no doubt that if there had not been so many lockdowns and restrictions throughout the year he would have found employment much sooner.

He was thrilled that he has now found work that will be sustainable and give him a lot more security and he thanked the officers for their help over the past 10 months by saying:

"I wouldn't have been able to do this without your support and help".

# Children & Families

**What we do:** We support young children and families in Caerphilly, through fun-filled groups where they can explore, play, learn & love language. We provide support to parents and carers in Newport, by getting their voices heard to ensure that decisions are made with parents and not for them.

## Caerphilly Early Language Team

The Team at GAVO are continuing to provide a service in the COVID era, even though the service previously was community centre based and one to one with families and children.



The Team have adapted by changing the focus to Zoom and Teams get together, whilst continuing to promote the service and aid families through Facebook videos. The Facebook page has been fundamental to sharing ideas and activities during this period of lockdown and staff have produced videos of themselves sharing stories, singing and making simple resources at home for families.

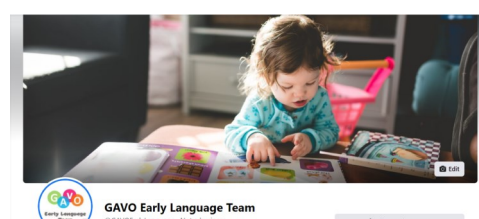
Some families have continued to be signposted

or referred to additional services such as the health team, foodbank and speech and language therapy. This shows the importance of checking in with families and identifying individual needs of children even when they are



not physically with us. The contact with families via phone, Facebook and email which has enabled the Team to refer certain children onto Speech and Language Therapy.

Staff have safely delivered over 100 book packs to families across Caerphilly which included books to enjoy together at home as well as activities and a supporting speech and language at home booklet. This gave staff an opportunity to engage and check in with families who appreciated the visit and the packs. Additionally, through previous phone calls with families some were identified as needing further resources and these were delivered to families alongside their book packs.



## Newport Parent Network

The Officer's role has changed dramatically since the pandemic but has been proactive in providing new kinds of support. The Officer has been heavily supporting a new Afterschool and Holiday Club for children attending the ASD school, Ysgol Bryn Derw which is now a constituted organisation and Registered Charity.

Links were made with the new Welsh Development Manager for the UK wide organisation, Grandparents+ to continue work started with Children in Wales to continue to promote the issues facing Kinship Carers in Newport.

The Officer proactively campaigned for digital inclusion action for families disadvantaged by poverty and low income who are being expected to home-school their children without access to IT and Wi-Fi and has also raised awareness with partners and colleagues about how some families do not have access to credit on their mobile phones to call if they need to access health services, mental health support or help with shopping if shielding etc. This was raised at various officer led forums and the Public Service Board. The Parent Participation Officer took part in a UK wide meeting facilitated by the Carnegie Trust UK and has since raised these issues with Newport MP's. The response was positive and was given as advance notice of Kirsty Williams' (Education Minister) statement on

what the Welsh Government intended to do. As a result, laptops were repurposed through schools and loaned to families in this situation with 3 months' worth of unlimited Wi-Fi connection.

The Officer remains involved in the Bettws Early Learning Community, an initiative by Save the Children. It's purpose is to look at strengthening statutory and third sector relationships for the benefit of increasing the life chances of disadvantaged children in the area of Newport and developing the work as a model for other communities across Wales in the future.

The first online meeting of the Children, Families and Young Persons Forum was held

which had 50% increase in attendance, which could be put down to the use of Zoom.

The appeal to local organisations to make presentations to the Newport Children & Families Forum for its meeting on 5th November demonstrated that organisations value the opportunity that GAVO provides to bring them together on common subjects and to share information.



The Newport Children & Families Forum on 16th Feb with 58 registered for the event and 39 attended on the day, which is a record for the event.

The Families Love Newport event was held between 29th and 31st March through Zoom including a reading of "The Adventures of Chester and Jeff" written by a 7 year old boy.



Partnership opportunities have included:

- ◆ ABUHB Community Psychology Team (CPT) and Infant Mental Health team to look at ways to develop and deliver the Circle of Security relational based parenting programme in a virtual way.
- ◆ Community House Eton Road/Newport City Council virtual event for Community House Group Leaders & Local Community Officers exploring ways to support asylum seekers, refugees and those with no recourse to public funds.
- ◆ BABI Group (Bump and Baby Improvement). Discussed the issues of expecting a new or first baby in the Covid-19 climate. As a result, agreed to set up a virtual New and Expectant Parents Group via Zoom for June.
- ◆ Meetings with the G-PIMHS (Gwent Parent and Infant Mental Health Service) aiming to set up a support group for parents who have recently had babies etc.
- ◆ Head Teachers and senior staff from all three Bettws Primary Schools and the new Head of Newport High School to look at how schools can be involved with supporting the general wellbeing of the Bettws Community.



## Projects

**What we do:** From time to time GAVO, like other CVCs across Wales, is invited to work in partnership to develop and deliver projects, sometimes specific to one county sometimes Gwent-wide. Reference has already been made to some project work throughout the report, and others are highlighted here.

### Food Poverty Project – Caerphilly

During the last quarter of 2019-20 GAVO appointed a short term post of Food Poverty Officer in partnership with Caerphilly County Borough Council utilising WLGA funding to support food initiatives in the county borough. As we went into lockdown the officer had just started to develop relationships with the food banks, and third sector organisations running luncheon clubs etc. As a result of the lockdown and the response to supporting vulnerable residents, the Officer worked with Community Regeneration and other council staff to support the food bank provision and the safe delivery of food whilst promoting the food poverty grant scheme and supporting organisations with their applications. There was successful contact with

some food-related projects and groups, resulting in additional grant applications being submitted and awarded.

Towards the end of the period the Officer worked with Community Regeneration staff with a view of planning for their gradual withdrawal of support for the food banks across Caerphilly. Virtual meetings have started to discuss some of the options for going forward with the Rhymney Valley Foodbank being involved in discussions. Numbers of people accessing food banks across the borough had begun to reduce, indicating at least on the surface, a reduction in need. However, the reason/s behind the reduced numbers were unclear. The temporary process of offering access to the main Trussell Trust Foodbanks (coordinated by CCBC) could in itself be a barrier for some as more rigorous

eligibility checks were required. A number of organisations set up during the period to use the Fair Share system were planning on continuing longer term and support to develop their governance structures being given.

## Community Transport

Towards the end of the year, GAVO received £114k to employ an officer to support the mapping of Community Transport across the Gwent region focused on Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly. Recruitment took place in conjunction with partners and the Community Transport (CT) Coordinator was due to commence in April 2021. The main focus of the role would be to look at where CT organisations could support the requirements of Health and is funded by the Aneurin University Health Board. The role will focus on the issues in BG and Caerphilly initially with the view of expanding out over the coming months and provided a small grant scheme to support the work.

## Monmouthshire Carers Project

During the initial lockdown period the Officer updated the Carers Database and contacted members to ensure they could be contacted individually via telephone to provide support, received with much appreciation by the carers. 1,000 Carers received the bi-annual Carers Newsletter and information about the Small Grants Scheme, as well as information on re-assessment and emergency planning.

Communication with them continued through the new GAVO Carers Facebook page as well as direct contact and support.

As part of Carers Week, carers were asked to send in memories of the lockdown period - a photo, favourite recipe, poem, personal story or drawing and GAVO will use these memories as evidence of the time carers spent in lockdown and maybe collate a book of memories. The Officer also looked at creating a card to be sent out to carers in December 2020 and a thank you for their efforts through difficult times when external support might not have been accessible.

A questionnaire was circulated to carers on digital inclusion and future planned events helping the Team to understand how carers, and older carers in particular, could be encouraged to access on-line activities in the future. The Officer also worked in collaboration with the Health and Social Care Worker in respect of the Digital Inclusion Action Group, with carers recognised as a group that need support to get 'on line' and use technology to access help and advice. The Carers Officer continued to build bridges for carers and improving on links with young people by working specifically with the South East Wales Carers Trust to increase the knowledge of the care sector and involvement of young people. The Young Carers Project was taken in-house by MCC and there has been much closer working relationships and transition between young carers/ adult carers, benefitting adult and young carers links that was missing to date.

## Corporate Services

**WHAT WE DO:** We provide a range of support to GAVO's core operation and its projects, to ensure we maintain a high quality delivery of services.

### Training

During 2020/21, GAVO continued to deliver targeted interventions linked to our core TSSW delivery and welcomed the development and launch of the TSSW Knowledge Hub.

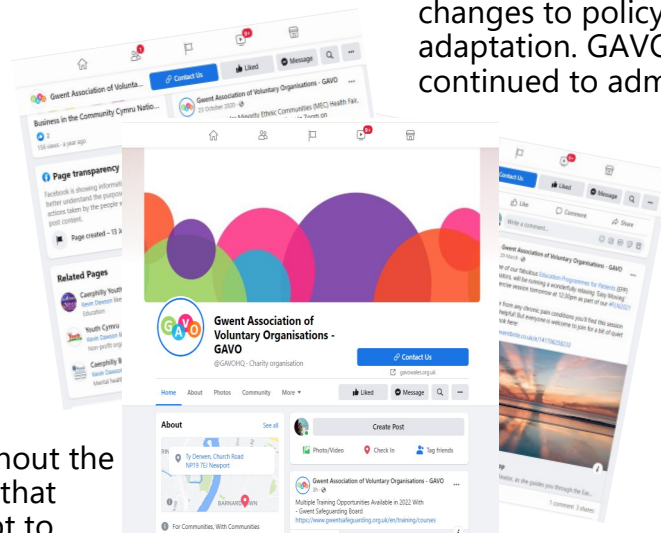
We have continued to source and provide training opportunities with a view of positively upskilling voluntary and community

organisation members in line with the demand of the Third Sector.

### Marketing and IT

During the COVID Pandemic, our social media platforms have been pivotal for continued communication and marketing and, with the necessary changes to our ways of working, these platforms will continue to be a focal

point and expand through our new post COVID horizon. We continue to use our brand for all current documentation and promotional materials, ensuring we have continued our strong and consistent visual identity. We continue to use the brand positively on any information documents aimed at the Third Sector, leaflets and marketing materials including selfie frames and business cards. These marketing materials have also been fully embedded into GAVO's social media and digital content which is aimed at improving quality of service, content and engagement. The Marketing Officer has supported staff in utilising social media to promote third sector activities throughout the year, particularly those that have been able to adapt to offering their services on line.



With our move to working from home because of the pandemic, the IT Officer role has been pivotal in the support of staff through improved accessibility and functionality to meet the needs of the organisation whilst continuing to monitor, review and update a number of online platforms such as Yammer, the GAVO website and generic use of Microsoft 365. The need for virtual meeting platforms has allowed the organisation to provide support to members and the sector in an even more agile way than ever before, with the use of Teams and Zoom to enable forums and meetings to continue, whilst recognising the challenges faced by some in our communities without the skills or equipment to participate in that way. The IT Officer has been key to the installation and continued management and support of the new Cloud Sage Finance package which has ensured additional safety of data and use for the Finance Team. The upgrade programme continues with the key outcome of allowing staff to work easily and more efficiently, resulting in GAVO being more accessible in our communities.

## Finance and HR

The Finance Department continues to ensure

the finance function for GAVO is managed in line with the required legislation. The Finance Team continues to work with the newest Sage Cloud package which has improved data safety and the management of Purchase and Sales Ledgers. The online systems have allowed the team to continue the processing of Payroll for GAVOs staff, Projects and various Third Sector partners during the pandemic, with minor changes to policy allowing for this adaptation. GAVOs finance team has also continued to administer grants to the Third Sector, greatly increased to support organisations through the pandemic, and continuing through COVID recovery, providing advice and support when needed.

GAVOs Human Resources function still plays a pivotal role in the Corporate structure to ensure support is

continually available to staff, providing advice and guidance to line managers and continually ensuring that the legislative context is acknowledged through our policies. The Human Resource function has been vital during the pandemic to offer support to GAVO staff and organisations and, acknowledging this GAVO has invested in Human Resources and will continue to show its support to this vital function post Covid recovery.

## Facilities

As previously reported, GAVO has taken the opportunity to review its buildings during 2020/21 in line with the restructure planned for 2021/22. GAVO has targeted the provision of GAVO offices in each of the regions of our Gwent footprint to mirror this restructure. Information on locations and the services provided from these buildings will be located on the website when implemented and in place.

