

**Pobl & Gwaith** | **People & Work**

# Talwrn

## 2018 Report

**#talwrn**  
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# Talwrn Report 2018

Talwrn is an unconstituted network of voluntary organisations from across Wales. For the last two years we have had support from Garfield Weston Foundation to develop the impact of the network on the Welsh voluntary sector. We set out to use the support from Garfield Weston Foundation to focus on three areas of work:

- developing the voluntary sector infrastructure in Wales.
- helping voluntary organisations to become more 'fundable'
- getting more money coming into Wales (that is, more Welsh voluntary organisations securing funding from charitable trusts and foundations)

This report summarises the work Talwrn has done between May 2017 and April 2018 and its impact and builds on the interim report done in October 2017.

## History

The Rank Foundation provided support and a small sum of money to 'kick-start' Talwrn, covering meeting costs and travel and a small amount of development time in 2015. Garfield Weston Foundation provided a development grant in 2016 that allowed the group to undertake some pieces of work and also to work with the broader sector. In 2017 Garfield Weston Foundation provided a further grant which supported the role of Sarah Lloyd-Jones in Talwrn, enabling her to dedicate time to focusing on the three core areas over the year. It has also enabled Talwrn members to support their own networks, funding mentoring work, peer support, events and activities.

## Talwrn membership and reach

Talwrn members meet quarterly and have dates booked for the rest of this year. There are currently 26 members and 15 attended the last meeting. Membership is open to any interested voluntary sector leader in Wales. Meetings involve members updating on their work (which stimulates links, joint working, problem solving and support) and discussions on issues that emerge. Occasionally we have presentations, such as recent ones from the Wales Data Unit and from the Wales Institute of Fundraisers.

Members are all linked into their own networks and use these to further develop Talwrn work. Some of these are themed (for example environmental organisations or mental health support groups); locality based (people working in a particular community or county); partnership based (such as five voluntary organisations who work together, led by Credu Carers, in Powys); and/or programme based (such as the 13 communities supported by the Building Communities Trust or six communities with Create Your Space funding from the Lottery). These wider networks, along with contributions to events and policy, have allowed Talwrn's reach to spread beyond its members. We have used these networks and worked with the public sector to spread discussion and ideas.

*The network of new relationships developed through participation in Talwrn has led to other new opportunities. (Action Caerau Ely)*

### **Developing the voluntary sector infrastructure in Wales**

Wales has a large number of voluntary sector support bodies. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) has a national brief to represent the sector; there are 19 community voluntary councils (CVCs) and the Community Development Foundation for Wales. In addition, there are social enterprise support bodies such as the Wales Cooperative Centre, the Development Trust Association and UnLtd.

Talwrn members' analysis is that despite this network, there is a support and development gap, especially around medium sized organisations, that is those that employ more than one or two staff members. Local CVCs provide training in basic governance, financial management and safeguarding; help with some fundraising needs; and help with constitutions and setting organisations up. But they are rarely seen as able to support more complex needs, and sometimes even become competitors for funding. Larger charities either have their own support infrastructure or are linked to a UK 'brand' that provides guidance, challenge and support. The gap seems to be with medium sized groups that need more nuanced and sophisticated support than the CVCs can provide, but do not have the resources (time or money) to develop 'in-house' solutions.

Added to this is the problem that years of micro-managed funding from the public sector and some public funders (for example Lottery, Wales European Funding Office) has stripped the sector of some core skills. Trustees cannot set budgets if every penny is allocated by the funder; they cannot identify how to measure impact if they have been told what to count by outsiders. With changes in the way work is being funded, the sector in Wales is having to re-learn skills and Talwrn has been trying to encourage the support infrastructure to rise to the challenge this presents.

Talwrn has identified that voluntary organisations have support needs relating to:

- **change management:** for example when a major piece of work stops (such as the Communities First programme in Wales) what happens to the organisation and to the people it works with? How do organisations manage growth, or shrinkage? How do they prioritise what has to change and what should be protect? What happens when a key person leaves, or when the role outgrows that person?
- **changing contexts:** when public services retract, voluntary organisations find that they are needing to support people with more complex needs and this can challenge what they do and how; grants become commissioning processes, applications become tenders and different skills are needed to compete.
- **financial and risk management:** managing a mixed economy of grants, contracts, earnings and donations requires staff and trustees to have new skills, awareness and controls.
- **thinking time:** a leader is often involved in multiple roles. He or she can be a fundraiser, planner, manager, partnership worker, staff mentor, secretary to the board or committee and support worker, and taking the time to step back from urgent work and think about the future, critically assess what the organisation does and how, and challenge cultural or learned assumptions about the work, feels like a luxury. It can also feel a hopeless task when funding is drying up and the organisation has been led away from its core purpose. But without finding thinking time the only change that happens is that forced by outside organisations.

- **marketing:** one of the key barriers to raising funds and to developing the role of the sector, is how poor many Welsh voluntary organisations are at writing about their work. We found that Talwrn members could really inspire others when they talked about what they were doing, but in peer reviewing written applications often that excitement, passion and analysis was missing. And
- **measuring impact:** capturing the difference that their work makes to people's lives is one of the key challenges organisations face and, without that information, critically assessing your strengths and weaknesses is impossible.

Talwrn has worked with infrastructure organisations to raise awareness of these and other needs. Talwrn has also worked to raise the profile of the Welsh voluntary sector and its potential by making presentations at events such as:

- a Carnegie Trust 'Turnaround Towns' seminar, with the WCVA: arguing the importance of the community and voluntary sector in developing wellbeing
- Post Truth seminar – Royal Statistical Society and Alliance of Useful Evidence: arguing the need to promote critical thinking in voluntary organisations
- Policy Forum for Wales – Poverty Priorities for Wales: arguing for better investment in the community and voluntary sectors as a tool for tackling poverty
- Building Communities Trust 'A new economy for Wales' – looking at the role of communities and how they can be supported to underpin economic development
- Third Sector Support Wales (WCVA and 19 CVCs) meeting – talking about the need to stimulate thinking in the voluntary sector
- TEDx talk on the importance of supporting a community infrastructure. For the Welsh Government

Sarah has also met with the Wales Audit Office to talk about the concept of resilient communities and how community development could be better supported; the Community Foundation for Wales to talk about the need to support development in the voluntary sector; and UnLtd and TimeCentres UK to look at the role of social enterprise.

Sarah and other Talwrn members worked with the WCVA on a joint paper on Resilient Communities which was presented to the then Minister for Communities in the Welsh Government.

Thinking from Talwrn has been shared with funders (such as the Rank Foundation and the Lottery in Wales) and with public sector bodies such as Public Health Wales, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Commissioner's office and the Cranfield Trust Wales development officer.

### **Building Capacity – helping the voluntary sector become more 'fundable'**

Our work this year has focused on challenging and developing the thinking of voluntary sector organisations about what they could and should be doing. This is then related to how they think about funding and the ways they should use it; and on how they present their work.

Our approach is always that of peer support – all Talwrn members are themselves running voluntary organisations, seeking funding for their work, thinking about how to better support people; and facing the uncertainties and frustrations of a rapidly changing landscape for the people they work with.

### **Conferences, seminars and events**

During the last year Talwrn has contributed resources to member activities and events. This has included a session to support collaborative work between caring organisations in Powys, a national conference run by the Building Community Trust with CLES 'Building a New Economy for Wales' (<http://www.bct.wales/bnew2017-2/>); and an event run by Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog in Blaenau Ffestiniog which focused on how voluntary, public and private sectors are working together to regenerate the town. In addition, Talwrn has run three events itself, in Caernarfon, the Rhondda and Swansea, focusing on how to approach charitable trusts and foundations. Two of these events have been attended by CVC fundraising officers and Martin Price, Chair of the Institute of Fundraising Cymru, has joined Talwrn.

### **Collaborative working**

Talwrn members have written papers, articles and blogs that focus on the development of the sector and Talwrn provides a context and stimulus for members joining together to focus on an issue. As Simon James, Chief Executive of Interlink (CVC for Rhondda Cynon Taf) writes:

*We have ongoing work with Building Communities Trust (BCT) on community hubs and anchor organisations. This influenced the recent ADSS (Association of Directors of Social Services) Report, Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) local authority policy and led to the Welsh Government's Valleys Task Force identifying community hubs as priority, which they are now implementing. More importantly it enhanced our own thinking and we are now developing ways to support and develop local hubs in RCT in the community and voluntary sector.*

Talwrn creates links across the sector that strengthen the work of each. We identified early on that a key strength is that Talwrn members work in very different ways, tackling different issues and in different areas and this enhances the potential for collaboration, mutual support and uncritical challenge. These, in turn, have strengthened their work.

*Talwrn is unique in the thinking space it gives to voluntary sector leaders to look at some of the bigger issues in Wales and how the voluntary sector can respond and optimise its impact. In terms of social justice and the role of civil society, is hugely valuable. (Jen O'Hara-Jakeway, CEO, Credu Carers)*

*We have really valued the 'moral' support. It is very beneficial to be with people who share a similar vision/passion and who are openly discussing similar struggles and challenges. This has been very encouraging during what are difficult times (Action Caerau Ely)*

## **Peer Support and Mentoring**

Talwrn has provided peer mentoring support. For example:

- Val Williams from Sylfaen in Gwynedd has worked with Meithrinfa Morlo (a community childcare initiative in Anglesey) to help them increase their

fundraising skills, develop a funding strategy and support with the preparation of specific applications

- The CEO of a furniture and whitegoods recycling charity has been funded to mentor a Talwrn member who is setting up charity shops to try to earn some income and provide opportunities for work experience, socialising and employment in a rural area;
- Alison Hill from Caia Park Partnership in Wrexham has supported the chief executive of KIM Inspire, a mental health support charity in Flintshire, to focus on the charity's future and development.

*KIM has gone through a lot of change recently and is still in transition in many respects. As CEO I have benefitted greatly from the mentoring I have received through Talwrn both on a one to one basis with a dedicated mentor as well as through other Talwrn members through the change process. (Annie Donovan)*

Peer support work has also been done with:-

- Credu Carers, looking at how a long established carer support charity changes to focus less on service and more on empowerment
- Glyncoch Regeneration a community owned organisation near Pontypridd. Fortnightly visits continue to provide 'critical friend' support following the change from Communities First to the Communities for Work Plus Job Clubs scheme;
- Spectacle Theatre, which offers community theatre workshops and projects in South East Wales and beyond, to support planning as it picks up contracts and work around childhood sexual exploitation;
- Blaencwm Chapel – a chapel at the top of the Rhondda Fach that is developing its role in the community including plans for a café and training kitchen and arts studio;
- Welcome to Our Woods, Treherbert, Rhondda, a local initiative that aims to generate income from woodlands to support the community (now funded for seven years by the Big Lottery);
- Ynysbwl Regeneration Partnership, a very active community that is developing its local environment (funded for seven years by the Big Lottery)

- STAR (Splott, Tremorfa and Adamsdown Regeneration) in Cardiff – helped support transition as it closed most of the posts at the end of the Communities First programme;
- TABS in Porth: providing critical friend support to a long established (over 20 years) organisation that has significant financial difficulties but is providing a valuable role including developing a Men’s Shed for Rhondda;
- funding and critical friend support to Cardiff North Good Neighbours scheme;

In addition Talwrn:

- has supported the work of the Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Seren group, an initiative focused on encouraging and supporting academically bright young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access top universities. This has included liaising with the Oxford Society and providing support to young people to attend Seren events.
- has collaborated with several key partners to plan and organise Stronger Rhondda Gryfach – an initiative focused on bringing voluntary sector groups working in the Rhondda Valleys together. Stronger Rhondda Gryfach run events and promotes networking within the third sector and with others in Rhondda. At the last event over 40 groups and organisations came together to share their work and look at cooperation;
- has supported Citizens Cymru on promoting the Living Wage and other social justice campaigns;
- runs an action learning set for workers in the third sector in Cardiff; and
- regularly attends Cardiff Business School events, liaising with private sector and university colleagues to build engagement with the voluntary sector.

Talwrn has distributed three bi-lingual newsletters that provide information and external links on issues relevant to voluntary organisations and information about charitable trusts and foundations.

## **Getting more money coming into Wales**

Talwrn has worked with funders, fundraisers and voluntary organisations to get more charitable trust and foundation money coming into Wales. This has involved work on improving bids and understanding of how such grants can be used most effectively.

A short and simple paper outlining key thinking on approaches to charitable trusts and foundations was developed with input from seven funders. This was widely distributed and discussed and used to structure workshops with voluntary organisations in Swansea, Ferndale and Caernarfon. In addition, Sarah Lloyd-Jones worked with individual organisations to develop thinking about funding needs and/or peer review applications.

This approach has helped organisations (both within Talwrn and wider) secure funding from a range trusts and foundations.

*Talwrn has helped us build relationships with funders who previously appeared very 'out of reach'. This process has helped us learn the skills of approaching funders and nurturing relationships. Although the link with Esmee Fairbairn (and peer review of our application) did not lead to success, the skills and knowledge gained through the process influenced the outcome in other areas. For example, we made cold contact with a foundation recently, hosted a visit and have just been invited by the board to apply for one of their grants.*

*Peer review of funding applications has been one of the first opportunities we've had to get detailed, external feedback from people who are willing to be blunt and to say what needs to be said! We have valued this very much. (Action Caerau Ely)*

### **Sylfaen case study**

Since being part of Talwrn, we've secured the following funding:-

Literacy skill development project for workers - Garfield Weston £10,000, ICF - £6,600, Widening Access Funding - £3000 (one-off funding)

Development of Sylfaen and promotion of the SLA in North West Wales - Paul Hamlyn Foundation - £60,000 over 2 years

Rhwyd Arall project - targeting teenagers at risk of de-registration or recently de-registered from secondary school - Children in Need - £85,000 over 3 years, Lottery Funding - £232,000 over 5 years

Having support through Hibah (People and Work) with the research required and being able to talk through ideas with Sarah and others in Talwrn and just gleaning advice from listening to group members has been invaluable over the last couple of years, which have been a tough couple of years for us.

### **Credu Carers case study**

Talwrn has helped enormously with the development of our funding strategy and the following successes:

Recently (over year or so)

Rank Foundation - £75k

Tudor Trust £35k

Big Lottery Fund £718k

Lloyds Foundation £75K

Children in Need £120k

And 3 years back:

Triangle Trust £90k

Henry Smith Foundation £120k

Waterloo Foundation £45k

Talwrn also gave us loads of help with our Esmée Fairbairn application. We don't know the outcome but we have had positive feedback about how well written the application was.

## **Conclusions**

Talwrn has demonstrated the value of looking at **fundraising** as a sector and organisational development issue, rather than one of just writing bids. Our early analysis was that many organisations in Wales were not writing good bids because, too often, they did not have the context and support to innovate and develop. Our approach has been to stimulate thinking and encourage ideas for change and development and allow the development of new work to flow from that:

*Being part of Talwrn has really broadened KIMs' networks and helped us develop as an organisation from a small charity offering a mental health service to women to having a much wider community focus. We were recently awarded £250,000 from The Big Lottery fund to provide mental health support for men and describing our involvement in Talwrn in the bid was definitely a positive. (CEO KIM Inspire)*

Talwrn has focused a lot in its discussions on the **ethos, values and ethics** of the voluntary sector. At a time when there is increasing pressure for charities to behave more and more like businesses, to compete with the private sector for contracts and to strip out core work to focus on targeted approaches, we have looked at the need to recapture what defines our work. This has helped some organisations review their work, and others describe what they do and why in a much clearer and more focused way.

Talwrn works because it brings people together from different parts of Wales, different kinds of work, and different types of organisations. Everyone can **learn and share** and new kinds of partnerships and collaborations can develop. This is a unique experience for all of us. There is no other forum in Wales where people can come together, share learning and support each other that is not county, theme or programme specific. Some leaders who attend Talwrn meetings have been working in their roles for twenty or more years, they want to share what they know, be challenged on their assumptions and refresh their thinking and **peer to peer working** is very effective at doing this.

In some ways, Talwrn has been more **influential** than could be expected from its size and scope. We have met with the Welsh Government, worked closely with the WCVA, informed the thinking of bodies like Public Health Wales, the Institute of Welsh Affairs and Data Unit Wales. We have written papers about working with the

public sector; commissioning and its impact; leadership and how it can be supported and social care and communities. Talwrn has never claimed to be a representative body, but rather an informed and independent voluntary sector voice and its impact really comes from the fact that there is no other such voice in Wales. With no public sector funding and no requirement to sustain structures and staffing, Talwrn has been able to focus its efforts entirely on the role of the voluntary sector in Wales and how to develop its strength. This has not always been viewed positively by CVCs, but we see ourselves as playing a different, and complementary role to their work and enhancing the strength of the voluntary sector – which must be a shared goal. Ultimately Talwrn's work is about development and change rather than maintaining the status quo.

### **The future**

Talwrn members want to continue to meet and to continue to influence the Welsh voluntary sector. We will continue to offer peer review where helpful and will promote the papers that have been developed by members in the last two years.