

# VC

## GALLERY

Charity registration number: 1172407  
WWW.THEVCGALLERY.COM



# IMPACT STATEMENT 2020 - 2021

# About Us

## OUR VISION

Combating Loneliness & Social Isolation for Veterans Community.

## OUR MISSION

To help service veterans and those in the wider community by getting them engaged in a variety of art projects we passionately believe that art and culture can improve health, wellbeing and overall quality of life.

## Meet The Team



Barry John  
CEO



Steph Cross  
Project  
Manager



Tim Phillips  
Peer Mentor



Dan  
Backhouse  
Counselor



Sean Golder  
Dig For Victory  
Co-ordinator



Ann Mills  
Artist in  
Residence



Victoria Jones  
Volunteer Carer  
Lead/IT Support



Lyn Edwards  
Volunteer  
Veterans Officer

And Many Other  
Volunteers

# TRUSTEES

Mr Mark Jolly

Chair

Rhian Gainfort

Treasurer

Mr S L Hancock

Mr John Warlow

Mr Joshua Beynon

Secretary

Mrs Michelle Bateman

Mr Mark Shuttleworth



# Foreword

The charity was originally set up to help members of the armed forces and veterans cope with the issues arising from time spent in war zones. This was achieved through the medium of art as a therapeutic outlet for the anxieties that had developed due to their experiences. It soon became apparent that what was being achieved could also be extended to the wider community.

From its humble beginnings, the charity now operates from two community hubs a retail gallery and a community garden.

These hubs enable the charity to be accessible to the North and South Pembrokeshire and serve more of the community. Running workshops on site as well as exhibiting work produced by the beneficiaries, gathering donations to help fund art materials and running costs.

The charity actively encourages members of the local community and veterans to engage with the arts. They are supported to develop their creativity through weekly workshops run by artists. Working with groups such as the elderly, disabled and people from minority background. The VC Gallery provides a safe and caring environment for individuals to be creative and express themselves.

Though this impact report addresses activity through 2020-2021 we cannot fail to acknowledge that it has been created in a time of unprecedented uncertainty due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In order to recognise the work we have undertaken through the pandemic, which has so powerfully impacted the lives of our team and service users, we have broadened the scope of reflection to further acknowledge our value and witness our impact.



Never has the work of the VC Gallery been more important and necessary than in these most recent months with the pandemic. Our delivery of services has been adapted to enable sessions and communication to continue to combat loneliness, and improve health and wellbeing throughout the pandemic.

Our purpose has been refreshed and COVID -19 has showed us that our work is needed even more and our strength is our ability to adapt quickly and with compassion.

The VC Gallery's continued success is a source of great pride for all who are part of it.

# Achievement and Performance

The charity has a high profile within the community and is often featured in the local press. This current year, over half of the charity's income was from awards, donations and grants, most from local organisations. The charity would like to thank:-

Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

ASCONA

Valero Energy

Community Foundation Wales

Pembrokeshire County Council

Dyfed Powys Police Crime Commissioner

The Baring Foundation

South Hook LNG

The National Lottery Fund

The Veterans Foundation

The Arts Council of Wales

Hywel Dda UHB

West Wales Care Partnership

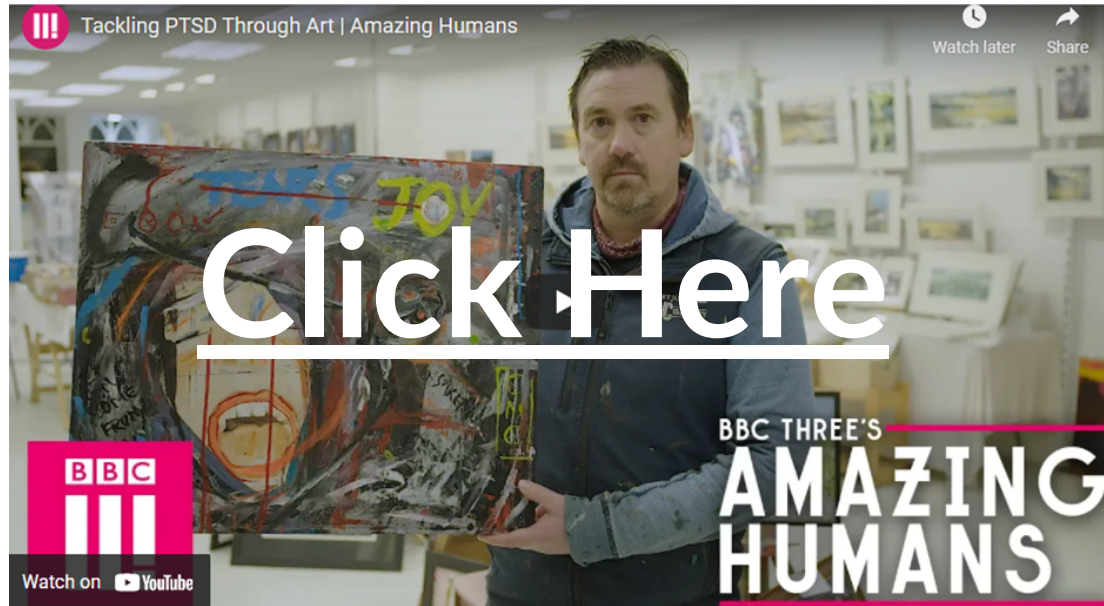
Bluestone Foundation

Thanks are also given to the numerous other individuals and organisations who have provided gifts of money or their time. Unfortunately, there are too many to mention everyone but the charity is grateful for all amounts, no matter how small. The combined efforts of a lot of people do make a difference.



# The Baring Foundation

The VC Gallery was delighted to be featured in The Baring Foundation, Creatively Minded: The directory, which identifies around 250 organisations working in the field of arts and mental health. Being a grant holder with the Baring Foundation celebrated our Arts and Health focus, how we take pride in creating bespoke workshops for our beneficiaries living with mental health problems and weave artistic practice into all our activities. It also gave us the opportunity to connect with other organisations working in the same field to learn from each other and share best practice thanks to their innovative networking sessions.





# ENHANCING PEMBROKESHIRE



This project has been funded by Pembrokeshire County Council The Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant, using the funds raised via the Second Homes Taxes available to provide funding projects that help address the negative impact of second homes and in doing so adds value to our community. As a result of this grant, we were able to employ a full-time Digital Media Officer to join The VC team. They were able to create a user friendly website to enable users to sign up to the vast variety of projects and on line sessions. electronic news letters have been created and are e-mailed monthly to advertise what's on this month, and Facebook and Twitter accounts have been utilized to advertise The VC gallery activities, share photos, press releases etc..



# THE VETERANS FOUNDATION



**VETERANS'  
FOUNDATION**

Awarded The VC Gallery funding to employ an administrator for 12 months which relieved the CEO of many office tasks. This gave him more time to focus on veterans affairs and manage his personal caseload of up to 50 veterans with complex issues along with managing charity.



# THE ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru  
Arts Council of Wales

Funded our 'Brightside' project which allowed us to innovate and offer online art sessions, online creative writing sessions, an Art Club for groups and one to one art mentoring. We delivered art packs within the local community being responsive to each individual situation. This creative practice supported people's wellbeing and helped them to connect through WhatsApp and Facebook groups even after the sessions had ended, creating a legacy of great work and friendships. staff learnt new skills and gained confidence in online tuition and technology.

They also funded contracts for staff to manage our retail art gallery space in the heart of Haverfordwest which was vital as many of our volunteers are elderly and were vulnerable at tis time which prohibited them from working. This funding where possible sustained the turnover of sales and donations yo the charity but also brought comfort to artists who exhibit their work in the Gallery.



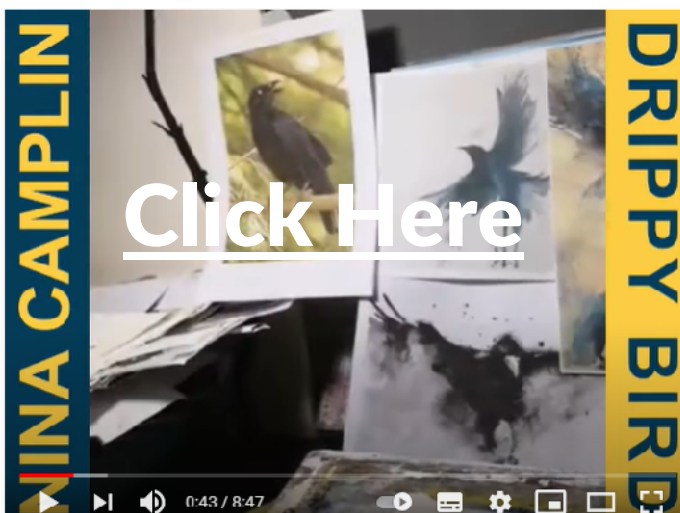
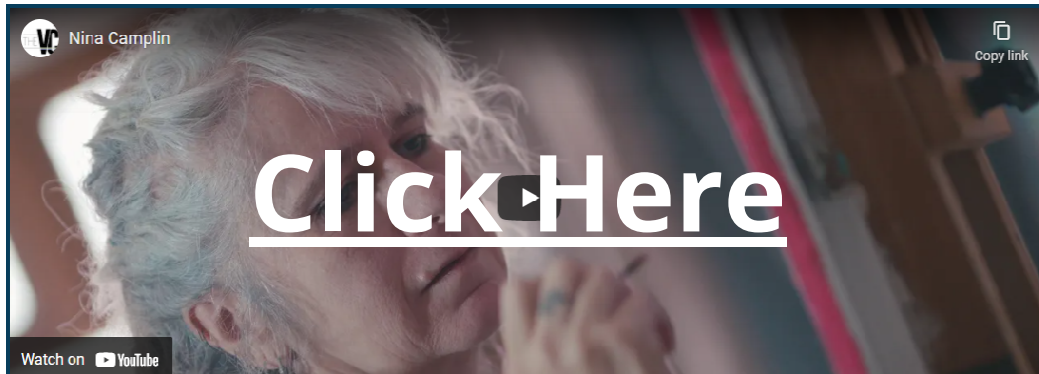
The National Lottery Fund with this funding we also offered online classes and support those with digital issues to reduce the isolation faced by many who do not have access to equipment. Learning from our Brightside project and adding value to our itinerary

*'People were keen to introduce their own pets to each other in the (online) sessions, which is lovely. Nothing beats getting together and having a good laugh. We have just had to find different ways to do that in these challenging times'*  
- Artist Facilitator

*'I expected to be in good company, learn some new skills maybe and get a chance to play. It really lifted my mood which was pretty low and I have felt happier for the rest of the day. Thank you - Participant*

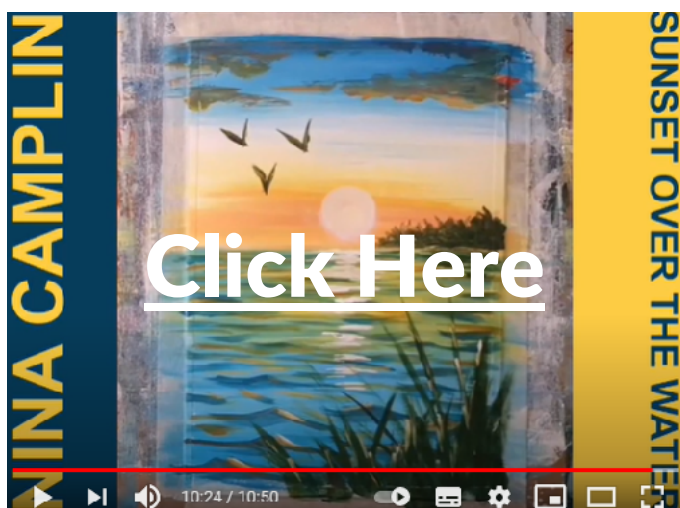


# THE BRIGHT SIDE



"To paint together with others to reduce feelings of isolation and to learn painting techniques" - Participant

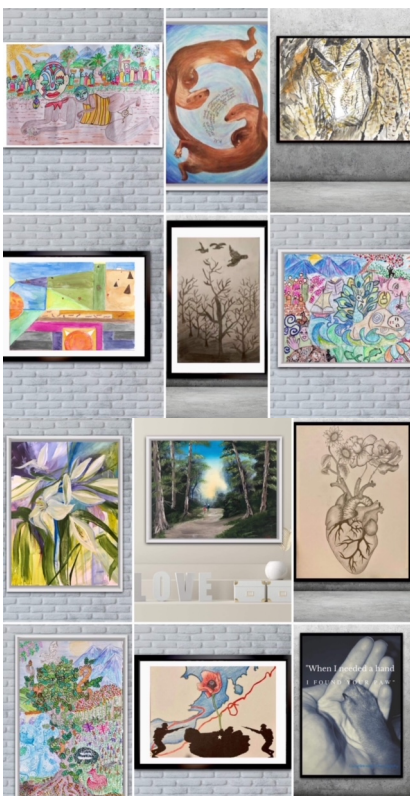
"It has exceeded my expectations, I expected to struggle with the painting but Nina is wonderful" - Participant



"Very Informative. Beautifully explained by Nina for water colour and acrylics. Result better than expected" - Participant



# ART CLUB



"It was amazing to have a social connection and have something positive to focus on" - Participant

"Anna is so encouraging and supportive. The group is really inspiring and enthusiastic really gives a creative boost" - Participant

"Meeting old friends and new people is always refreshing. I have discovered just how absorbing and soothing art can be which means you leave the session there is no I'm back alone feeling as you have a project to do. It has met all my expectations and beyond" - Participant



# HYWEL DDA UHB



Funded salaries of a mental health Befriender and a Financial worker at the start of 2021-22, through Tier 01 Funding building support systems within the community to prevent mental distress. This enabled the charity to offer bespoke, individual packages of support to our members either face to face, online or on the telephone. Thanks to this funding we were able to accept more referrals to our service from Secondary care, Community Connectors, GP's and the Local Authority.

Along with arts provision we offered walking groups, photography, tea club, chess club and many more activities. We used our strong networking links to signpost to other organizations for the benefit of the member and we are very proud of our strong bond with the Health Board.

"My CPN referred me to the gallery. I was very nervous but they made an appointment, met me at the door and were so welcoming. Initially we just chatted and worked out what I wanted to get involved in. Now I drop into the gallery and can't believe how much my confidence has grown". - VC member

"My Befriender is so understanding of my needs. I meet such wonderful people and aslo learning new skills. Painting etc... Thank you so much - VC member"

"After a few months of attending I remember wondering about having a purpose which felt likw a whole new feeling and I began to recognise the fact that I was feeling a bit better, stronger". - VC Member

Walking group for mixed abilities, which incorporated photography of the scenery. The walks were tailored to specific groups - longer 5-6 mile walk to short strolls along flat ground so all abilities could take part.



## Walk - Talk - Shoot

Interested in walking, talking and photography?



Contact us at:

[www.thevcgallery.com](http://www.thevcgallery.com)





# ZOOM SUPPORT SESSIONS

The project was delivered via zoom sessions during the Covid-19 pandemic. The VC Gallery is passionate to ensure that the health and wellbeing is maintained to isolated veterans throughout this difficult time.



"These have helped so much through COVID to feel connected to people and not feel isolated"

"Having contact with people and having a laugh helps me get through these tough days" - VC Member



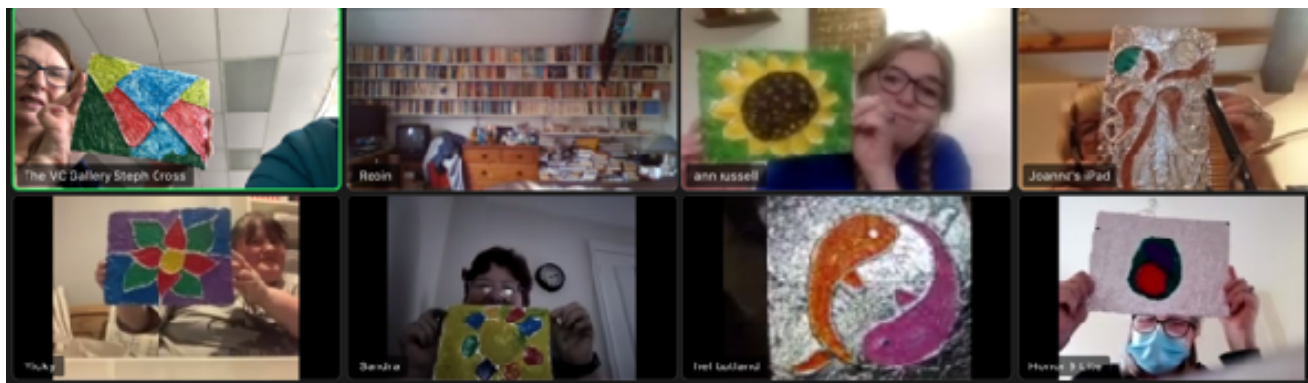
# WEST WALES CARE PARTNERSHIP; CARERS SUPPORT INNOVATION GRANT



Thanks to this grant the VC Gallery ran a weekly online Carers session bringing together unpaid carers of people with mental health problems. This project 'Caring with The VC Gallery' was both touching and creatively rewarding. 21 participants met weekly for art, conversations and educational talks spanning carers rights, grants and how to self care. This project brought a deeper understanding for staff to identify and support carers and started our journey towards the Investors in Carers scheme run by Hywel Dda UHB.

"Your approach has really demonstrated how flexible and responsive the sector can be'  
Pembrokeshire  
Action for Voluntary  
Services (PAVS);  
Fund Administer

*"So nice to talk to people who are going through the same thing, so enjoying the different art classes it certainly lifts my mood" - Participant*



"I enjoyed the session today. The DWP worker was helpful and makes them feel more approachable. I was feeling really down and cut off but the session really helped, thank you" - Participant

" There are no other weekly sessions to get together like workshops. The shared knowledge is valuable. I really love the distraction doing art gives me from stress of being a carer" - Participant

"Another enjoyable class. Lovely ladies to chat to. Interesting chat with the fire officer to" - Participant

# POSITIVE PATHWAY PROGRAMME



Part of the Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, the program awarded fixed grants of £35,000 or £70,000 for projects developed by and for veterans that focus on improving veterans' mental health and wellbeing by getting veterans out and active.

Round 2 saw The VC Gallery awarded funding for the 'Art of Memories' a two year project to collect and record stories from serving personnel, veterans and their families. These stories from the military lives will be used to inspire participants to create artwork and poetry, culminating in a tour of artwork and poems to locations across Pembrokeshire, identify new veterans, making connections and supporting where needed through our peer mentor network to provide welfare. Over 200 poems and 100's of artworks have been produced and the project so far has connected with over 150 veterans, either face to face or virtually.

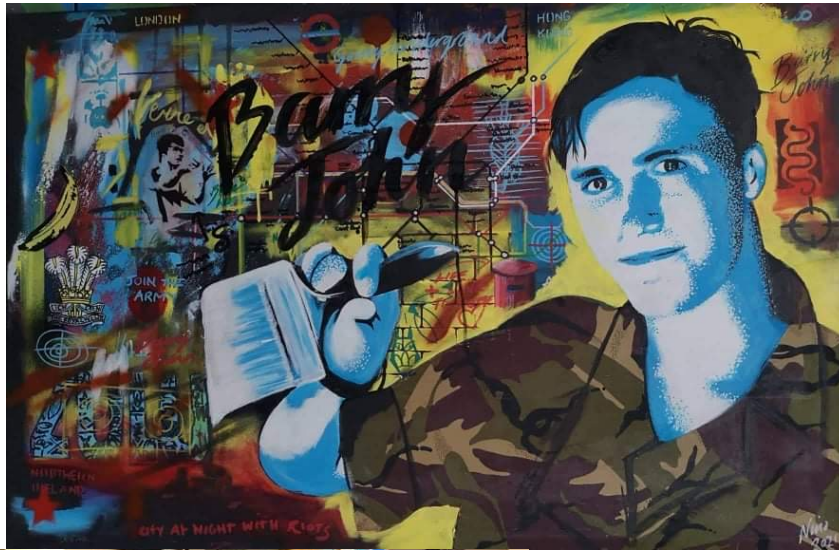
Round 4, The VC Gallery were granted funding for a one year project Dig for Victory, bringing our long held wish to offer more outdoor green therapy to fruition. The site on the edge of the Pembrokeshire National Coast Path was once a WW2 coastal battery, kindly leased to us by the present landowner for the benefit of the local community and our veterans. The project commenced January 2021 and has seen over 80 Armed Forces community members accessing the gardens.

" The stunning views and good company plus the opportunity to do something productive and fulfilling with my day"- Veteran Participant

" Individuals have brought many skill sets to the project and the 'get stuck in' attitude has really moved forward" - Project Lead



# ART OF MEMORIES



"Thank you for having me over the past 2 Fridays, but more importantly thank you for listening to my army life. It was a pleasure to share it with you all"- Participant

"You have made the last two sessions very special, such a privilege to hear your stories from 24 years of service. We are so lucky to have you at The VC Gallery, Thank you" - Participant



# DIG FOR VICTORY



"This site and project offers a variety of challenges which those who attend get great benefits from both mentally and the working with others. There is always work going on and progress is made on every visit, I feel privileged to work and attend this project. Diolch"- Participant

"The stunning views and good company plus the opportunity to do something productive and fulfilling with my day"- Participant

## Covid-19 Impact Programme

This program was designed to ensure that people from Armed Forces communities could keep accessing important services, where resources for these services have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The VC Gallery successfully secured this funding towards our sustainability over this time when traditional fundraising efforts and revenue would be compromised so that delivery of services and the welfare of The Armed forces Community could be maintained across the full spectrum of activities, support and person centered care that we pride ourselves in.

## Veterans Should not be Forgotten; Project Lifeline

In the March 2020 budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer awarded additional funding for veterans' mental health. Some of this funding was made available to provide immediate support for vulnerable veterans with reduced social contact via grants to members of ASDIC, Age UK branches and eligible and invited Cobseo members.

Groups could apply for up to £20,000 for a six-month project focused on supporting veterans who are isolated and unable to access services or have limited social contact during the period of self-isolation and restrictions relating to the pandemic. Being proud members of Cobseo we applied and were awarded this funding to continue our military peer mentoring which supports those most in need, vulnerable and isolated. We found new and innovative ways to keep veterans connected during this difficult time.

488 home visits were made by our military peer mentors for welfare checks, shopping, medication deliveries and support with digital tech issues. 28 zoom 'Naafi breaks' were held with many veterans attending from all over the UK. 28 Zoom quiz sessions delivered, advocacy and support with PIP tribunals, liaising with statutory services including referrals to Veterans NHS Wales along many other military charities for the benefit of our members.

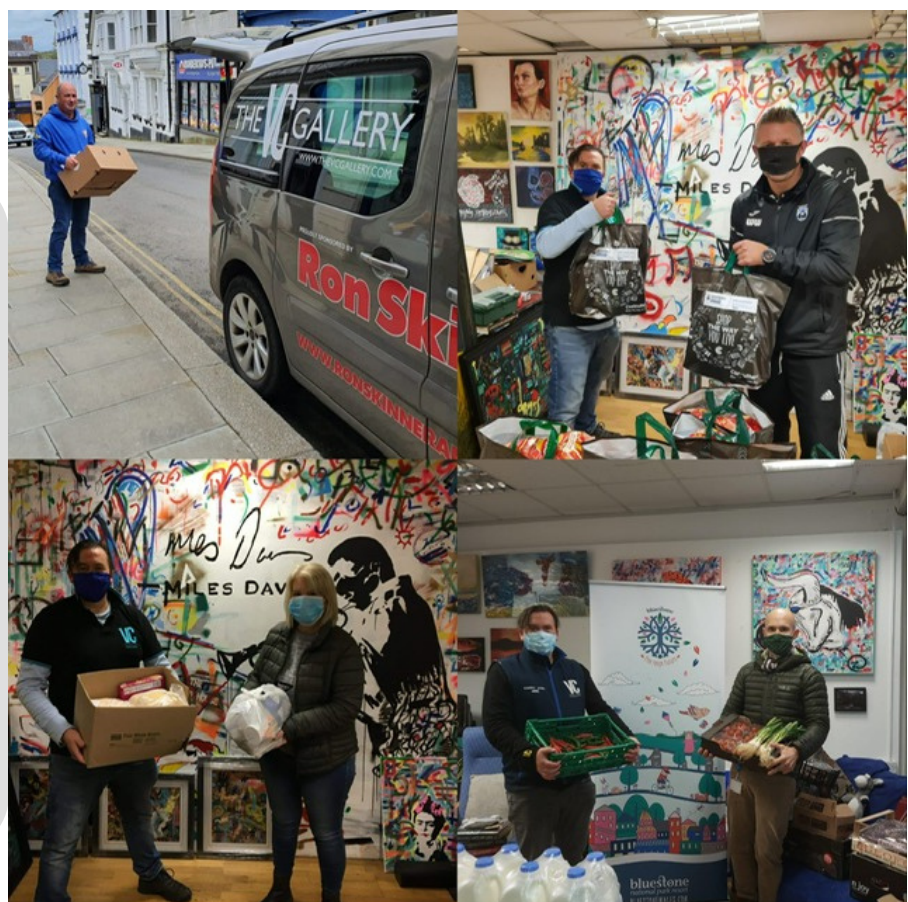
A Highlight of our work was facilitating a zoom conversation between WW2 Royal Marine Ted Owens (94) and Mark Drakeford our First Minister on VJ Day.





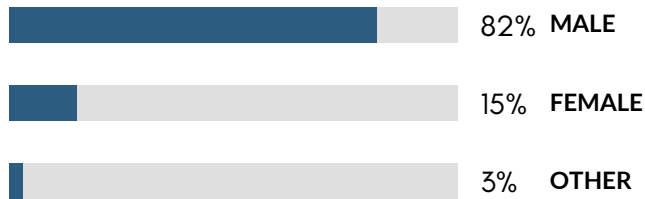
"These have helped so much through COVID to feel connected to people and not feel isolated"  
- Naafi break attendee.

"Having the chance to go to photography club, Dig for Victory and coffee in the VC is such a great level of community for me and stops my family in England worrying about me being lonely since my wife died" - Veteran

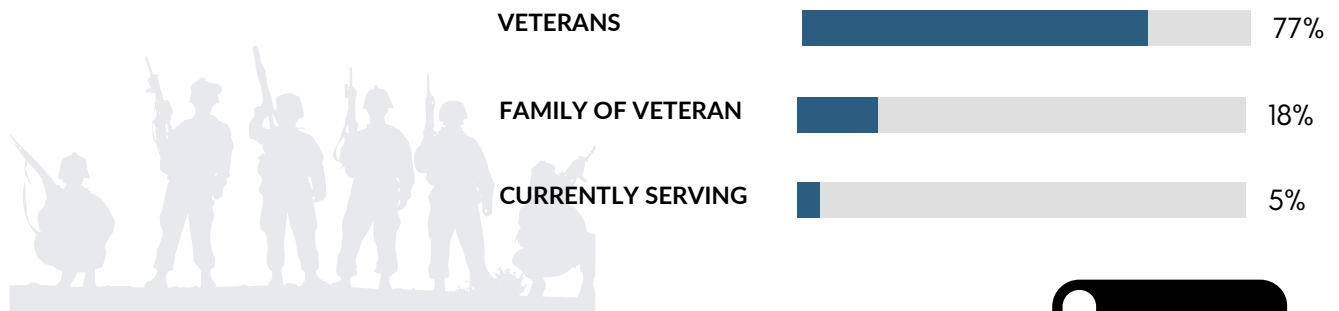


# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

## Demographics of Service users



## MILITARY ASSOCIATION



## LEGAL ASSISTANCE



10

SUPPORTED IN COURT

15

SUPPORTED PEOPLE IN  
CUSTODY

ASSISTED IN PRISON

3

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

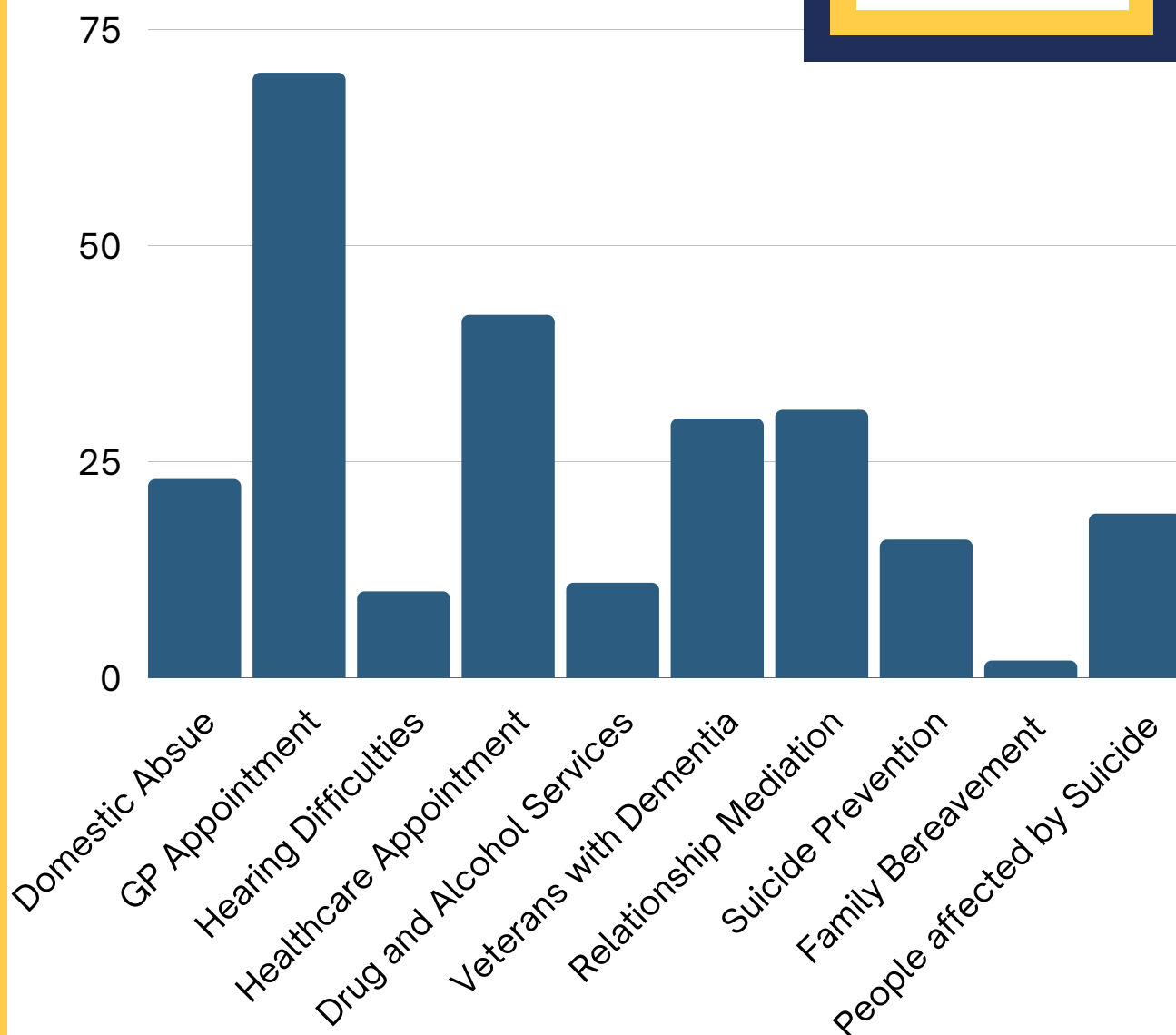
528

ONE TO ONE SUPPORT



### COUNSELLING SESSIONS GIVEN

170





## Employment Help



47

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

101

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT ALONGSIDE  
DWP

VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED

81

RECRUITED BACK INTO THE ARMED  
FORCES

3

16

VETERANS HELPED INTO EMPLOYMENT

## ARTS

20

ART LESSONS



36

VIRTUAL POETRY SESSIONS



104

VIRTUAL ART SESSIONS

40

FORCES FAMILY WORKSHOPS



YOUTH PROJECTS

4

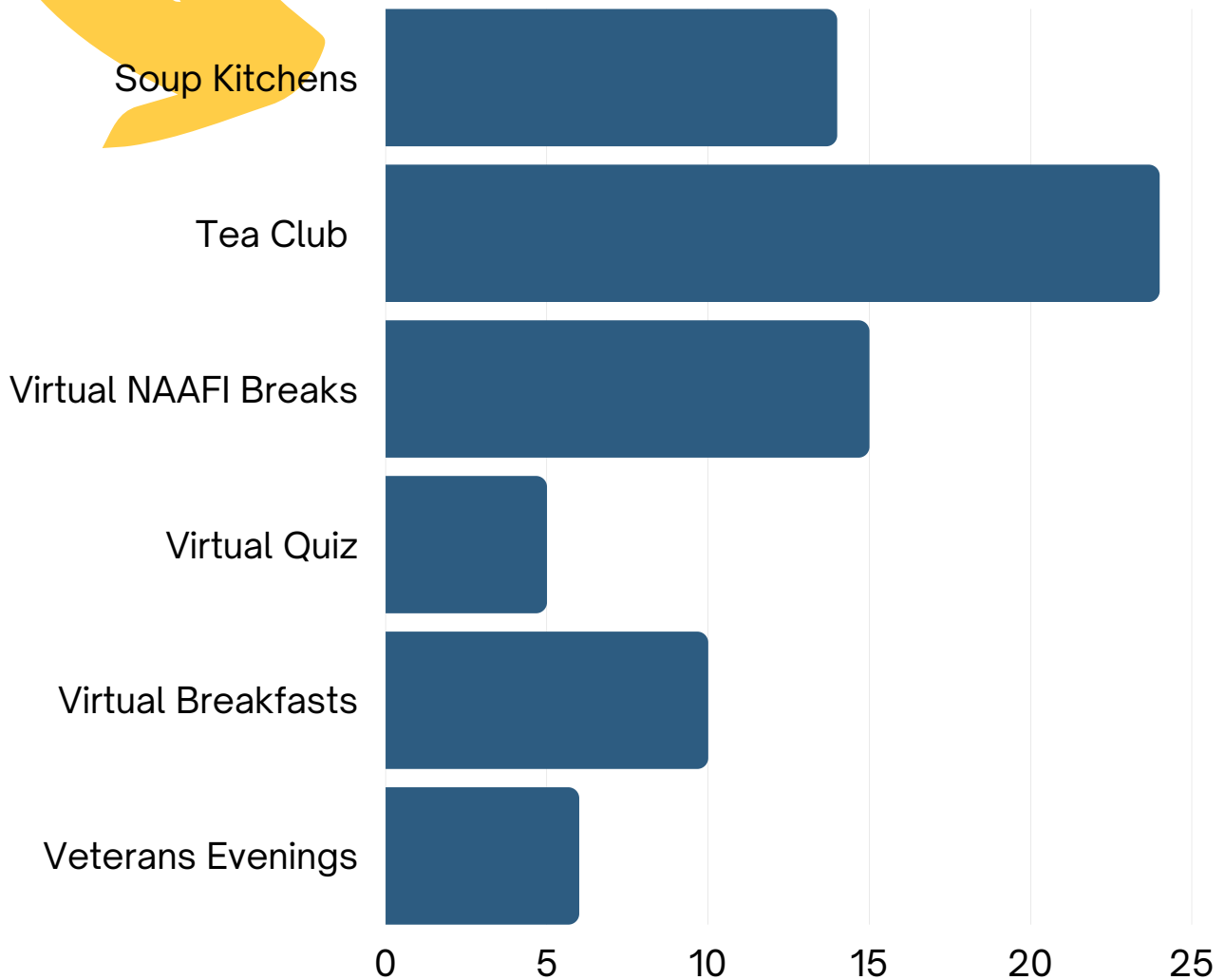
16

CREATIVE WRITING SESSIONS



[illegible]

## TOTAL NUMBER OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS



## SUPPORT



Assisted with food parcels  
and food bank referrals

**308**

Helped when homeless

**12**

Helped into housing

**28**

Helped back into fitness

**28**

Helped gardening and  
clearing gardens

**11**

Virtual meetings

**51**

Homeless veterans housed

**9**

Christmas packs delivered

**122**

Veteran assisted house  
moves

**12**

Help with PIP claims and  
tribunals

**6**



## Referrals and Visits



488 Outreach home visits



41 Referrals to other 3rd sector organisations



49 Referrals to NHS services

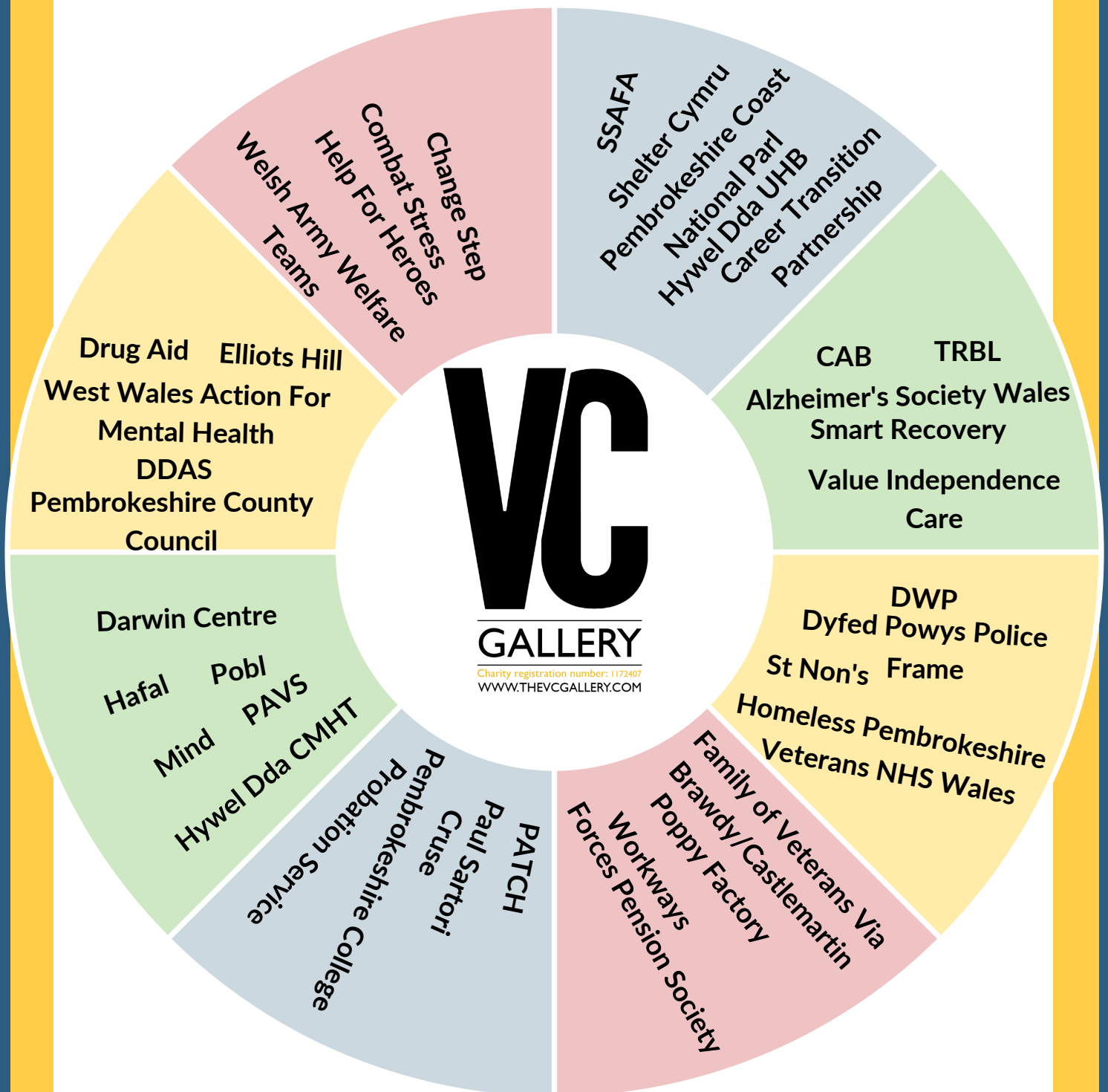


114 Partnership and joined up working




14,000 Miles covered

# ORGANISATIONS THE VC GALLERY WORK WITH ON A REGULAR BASIS




## **PARTNERSHIPS WORKING WITH THE VC GALLERY ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS**

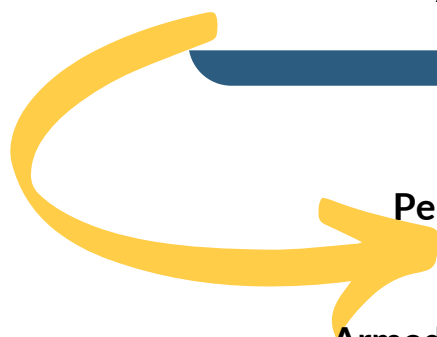
Endeavour wing, Parc Prison  
Warrior Program  
PATH  
Ty Hafan  
Horizon Wales  
RNLI  
Communities First



Arts Care Pobl  
Barnardos Forces Children  
Officers Association  
Army Widow Association  
Veterans UK  
Surf Tonic  
Green Links Wales



ABF  
Blesma  
South Pembrokeshire Hospital  
Pembrokeshire Youth Service  
WRVS  
British Red Cross  
Advocacy West Wales



Pembrokeshire Care Society  
Carers Wales  
Seafair Haven  
Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust  
Tall Ships Wakes  
Change Steps  
Hywel Dda Charity

# OUR PROMISE

As a charity already passionate about wellbeing, we recognise that whilst it is not a mandatory obligation, as a charity we are constantly aware of the wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) Wales. This Act is unique to Wales attracting interest from countries across the world as it offers a huge opportunity to make long-lasting, positive changes to current and future organisations. It's essentially about the long-term impact of decisions to work better with people and to prevent ongoing problems.

At the VC Gallery, by working with people we create prosperity, resilience, equality, healthier lifestyles, cohesive communities, vibrancy through different cultures and responsibility in our communities and in the galleries.



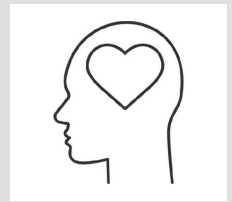
**A Prosperous Wales**



**A Resilient Wales**



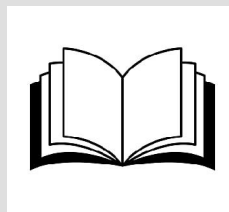
**A More Equal Wales**



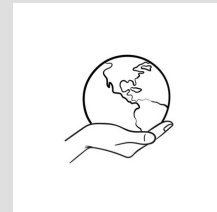
**A Healthier Wales**



**A Wales Of Cohesive  
Communities**



**A Wales Of Vibrant  
Culture And Welsh  
Language**



**A Globally Responsible  
Wales**

**Contact:- Barry John MBE**  
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**Tel:- 01437 765873**