



1977

THE BIKE CLUB

Howell Edwards working in the Probation Service set up an initiative to work with young people in groups. Margaret Jervis and Richard Morgan help establish the organisation in December 1977.

After a number of name changes (C.A.L.O.R.Y. - Penygraig Basement Project) it was registered as Penygraig Community Project.

Locally it was known as the Bike Club as one of the first activities was motorbike scrambling. It is still known locally as 'The Bike Club'.



1978

OPEN DOOR YOUTH WORK

It became clear that there was a need for all young people in Penygraig to have place to meet with friends. A youth club was opened in the old coal cellar of the Probation Office and all young people were made welcome.

Volunteers were crucial to the development of the Project and to help meet the needs of the young people. Ralph and Keith, the first volunteers were motor bike enthusiasts and scrambling became one of the first activities. Photography also became a key activity with Mike taking the lead.

After a donation from the Prince's Trust Prince Charles presented the young people with a second hand scrambling bike. The 'Bike Club' was established.

The Rainier Foundation awarded a grant for our work with teenagers.



1979

SUMMER PLAYScheme

From the start we believed that the opportunity to play was an important ingredient in children's lives. In 1978 we organised the first summer play scheme in Penygraig in the old church hall on Amos Hill. It was a great success with over 100 children and parents attending.

In 1979, because of the demand we ran the summer playscheme on the waste ground on Balaclava Terrace behind the Labour Club.

The parents requested play opportunities all year round and we agreed as long as they volunteered to help.



1980

CROSS STREET BUILDING

The youth club soon had over 80 members and larger premises were needed. The headquarters of the old Penygraig Industrial Cooperative Society which was now owned by the Rhondda Local Authority was empty. The Local authority gave it to the Project for a pepper corn rent. It needed some renovation before it could be used as a community building. Most of the work was done with volunteers and the young people.

With new premises it was possible to meet more of the needs in the Community.

Weekly Junior Youth Club sessions for 5-11 years and pre school playgroups were started alongside the sessions for teenagers.



1980

SOAR FFRWDAMOS

While looking for larger premises the congregation of Soar Baptist Chapel offered us their magnificent main building in the centre of Penygraig.

The original chapel building was one of the first large chapel buildings in the Rhondda in 1832, but the imposing 1905 building was in 1980 in a sorry state.

The congregation still met in the Vestry and Mrs Parry, the Chapel Secretary, was enthusiastic that the building should find it's former roll as the centre for the whole community.

Work started on the 7 year restoration mostly completed by volunteers and the restored building was opened by Prince Charles in 1987. Paul Williams drew up the plans which included a new second floor.



1981

WORKING TOGETHER

As the funding from the Rayner Foundation came to an end we were supported with a grant from Mid Glamorgan Further Education Department for our youth activities throughout the year.

A key development was the partnership with Education Social Services and Penygraig Community Project to provide an Intermediate Treatment Centre based in Cross Street. Phil Evans was appointed Leader of the Centre.

While the work with children and young people continued the emphasis was on ensuring that all were welcome. A policy was developed to ensure that everyone was welcome and the involvement of those with additional needs was established from the start.



1981

RHONDDA PLAY FORUM

Play is an important part of children's development and we helped establish Rhondda Play Forum to promote play activities throughout the Rhondda.

The Play Forum became a key player in the development of local play organisation in the area.



1981

INTEGRATION

While the work with children and young people continued the emphasis was on ensuring that all were welcome and to support this an Integrated Policy was developed. This encouraged the integration of children and adults with additional needs into all activities.



1982

REDEVELOPMENT OF SOAR

With little financial resources the renovation of Soar had begun mainly through the Job Creation programme with one experienced leader working with unemployed young people to learn skills and benefit the community.

We had the support of the Princes Trust to fund this work and this led to the visit by then Prince of Wales.



1982

HRH PRINCE CHARLES

HRH Prince Charles first visited the construction work at Soar. With few financial resources the renovation of Soar had begun mainly through the Job Creation programme one experienced person working with unemployed young people through this scheme were doing the work.

The construction of a new floor relied on the voluntary contribution of one of our first supporters - Ralph Benjamin. He was an experienced steel fabricator and worked for months on the fabrication of the new first floor.



1983

NEW YOUTH WORKER

As Penygraig Community Project grew it was clear that there was a need for more staff.

We were now running preschool provision, after school play sessions and youth sessions and providing visits and residential for longer stays.

Pauline Richards had been a volunteer since the basement days and she was appointed as a play and youth worker.



1983

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

While the Play Forum was going well there was a need for a wider remit and Rhondda Community Development Forum was formed we were founder members and chair of the new organisation.



1984

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARTS

From the beginning arts had played a role in our work particularly in youth work. Photography was still very black and white. Young People were introduced into taking photos through lending good quality cameras. Then they had to develop them and print them. If young can do this what else can you do - our job was to enable the young people to have high expectations and aspirations. So using art we were able to get them to think differently about themselves.

Using the Local Labour Club, we brought the first Professional Community Theatre Company - 7:84 to the Project.



1985

MISKIN PROJECT

The Welsh government had a new programme – Alternatives to Care and Custody for young people. Penygraig Community Project was allocated a grant from this scheme. Five staff were employed one administrator and four probation and social workers. The aim was that young people going to court could be directed to the project and could stay at home.

The Miskin Project was established.



1987

PRINCE CHARLES AT SOAR

The redeveloped Soar Ffrwdamos Centre opened by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. The limited funds meant we had to be enterprising and the conversion took eight years and relied heavily on volunteers.

Having a new wonderful building the programme offered to the community was further developed. Activities for young people expanded and the play work had a large indoor space and memorial garden to utilise throughout the year.

Working with Rhondda Community Arts a programme of dance was offered. As well as pantomimes performed in the Maes-Yr-Haf Centre Trealaw written by Dennis Stallard, we produced annual children's shows written and directed by our youth worker - Pauline Richards in the Soar Centre.



1988

A MODEL EXAMPLE

While the community and youth work continued to be developed this year we had a return visit from Lord Hunt who said.

“Right from the beginning we spotted the need for this project. It is a model example and there is nothing quite like it in the Principality”.



1989

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS

After an intensive inspection by two HMI Inspectors their report concluded:

“The Penygraig Community Project has a good reason to be proud of its achievements and the progress it is continuing to make in responding to the communal needs of the district it serves. The development of the project and its clientele is enhanced in particular by the quality of its premises, the effective developed deployment of resources, the collaboration achieved among the core team and volunteers, and the pervasive vitality, commitment and warmth of those involved.”

The garages between Cross Street and Soar were purchased again enabling us to broaden the activities that we were able to offer to the community.



1990

SOAR HALL UPGRADED

The large hall in Soar Ffrwdamos is upgraded into a theatre space with their curtains and lighting. This allowed the development of more ambitious youth theatre and dance productions.

Visiting groups were also able to make use of the new facilities.



1991

TECHNICIAN EMPLOYED

We received a grant from Rhondda Borough Council to employ a Technician.

A visit from actor Russell Gomer who said, "My favourite venue for community theatre is the Soar Ffrwdamos Centre Penygraig."



1992

CAT ESTABLISHED

Community Access to Technology project established to encourage local people to become computer literate and familiar with modern communication technology. As well as developing weekly classes in a new computer room in Penygraig courses were offered throughout Mid Glamorgan including community premises such as community centres and local pubs.

We appointed a Play Development Worker with a Rhondda wide remit to support local groups to develop open access play.

First Youth Theatre Performance took place in Soar Ffrwdamos Theatre space.

Penygraig Community Project became a founder member of Rhondda Youth Unemployment Forum.



1993

MOTOR PROJECT

Valley's Motor Project establish in the garages in Penygraig in partnership with Probation and Social Services to work with young people offenders and non-offenders.

Our first International exchange with Irish community in Wexford.



1996

BRIDGES PROJECT

We established Bridges' Community Support Scheme to support community development work throughout Rhondda Cynon Taff.

A part time Youth Theatre worker was appointed to develop the arts work with young people.

We were asked to co-ordinate the consultation conference for the Social Services department using theatre and arts techniques.

Penygraig Community Project became a founder member of Rhondda Cynon Taff Play Association.



1997

PENYRENGLYN PROJECT

The Penyreglyn Community Development Project opened its premises on the Mount Libanus estate in Treherbert in two 'converted' houses.

The Project was developed in partnership with Rhondda Housing Association, Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority, the Heath Visitor, the local GP practice and a number of local groups.

A number of the houses were derelict and the estate was in decline.



1998

RHYDYFELIN PROJECT

Community Support Scheme enabled the community of Rhydyfelin to produce a three year Development Plan that established the Rhydyfelin Community Development Project.

1998

ARTWORKS ESTABLISHED

ArtWorks team established and Youth Theatre groups established in our three key communities.





1999

VALLEYS KIDS ESTABLISHED

Valleys Kids was established as a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. The day to day work became the responsibility of the Company and the staff moved to the new Company.

After an external review of our fundraising by external consultants we appointed a Development Co-ordinator to take forward the Funding Strategy developed as a result of the consultation.

Local Government Conference Award for the most Innovative and Imaginative use of European Funds.

UK National Play Awards, runners up in the Open Access Play section.

Growing Out of Poverty scheme funded by a Grant from the National Lottery Charities Board.



2000

SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

Seven day a week youth work established in two key communities and first youth work in a third community.

Community/Play Bus purchased, funded by our first corporate partner 'Buy as You View'.

Welsh rugby Squad and Graham Henry launched the Play Bus in Penyrenglyn.

"Neil Appeal" first individual donor appeal launched.

All training computers and printers replaced by corporate partner.

Treherbert and District Regeneration Partnership established. One of only two voluntary organisations in Wales to make a successful bid for 'People in Communities' scheme. This was forerunner to the Communities First Welsh Government Scheme.



2001

LITTLE BRYN GWYN

Little Bryn Gwyn, situated in the Gower acquired as residential property.

First groups of young people visit in February.

First Community Advocate appointed

Rhydyfelin Regeneration Partnership established.



2002

DINAS DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Community Development Worker appointed for Dinas.

Penygraig & District Regeneration partnership established.



2003

NEW PENYRENGLYN BUILDING

HRH Prince Charles opened the new Penyrenglyn Community Centre.

The work in Penyrenglyn - "The Proj." goes from strength to strength with the opening of the new building.

Time Banking established in partnership with The University of South Wales. A Time Banking Development.



2004

LITTLE BRYN GWYN

Purchased Little Bryn Gwyn from Barnardo's. A cottage and 6 acres of land in a beautiful area of the Gower. This supports an important area of our work offering residential experiences to families and young people.

Community Rugby Project hosted by Valleys Kids. The project involved children and young people from across the Rhondda offering opportunities in sport to a wide range of young people and encouraging them to "Be the Best you can be".

£2.3 million secured for renovation of Soar Ffrwdamos Centre.



2006

SOAR REOPENING

Soar reopened by The First Minister Rhodri Morgan.

Valleys Kids won the UK Champion of Champion Arts and Business Award in partnership with one of our corporate sponsors Hugh James.

£700,000 secured to renovate the vestry of Soar creating a community skills centre and a Chapel Room for the congregation.



2007

BURA AWARD

Valleys Kids won the British Urban Regeneration Award. The judges commented:

“The refurbishment and conversion of four council houses in Penyreglyn into a community resource, which then resulted in a complete makeover of the whole estate, transforming it from a highly deprived, no-go area to a desirable and attractive place to live”

The panel was particularly impressed by its complexity and the quality of the services it provides.”



2008

PRINCE WILLIAM VISITS

Prince William visited Valleys Kids on his first official visit as Prince of Wales.

“There's a real prince coming to Dinas”

Local girl explaining to Prince William when he visited Valleys Kids.



2008

FIRST PEOPLES FELLOW

Margaret Jervis, Operational Director made the First Community Fellow of Cardiff University in recognition of her contribution to Community Development in the Valleys of South Wales.

Launched Rhondda Lives digital story project in partnership with the BBC and the National Library of Wales.

The refurbished Vestry of Soar Centre was opened by writer Elaine Morgan.



2009

CULTURAL OLYMPIAD PROJECT

Launched the Mzansi Cymru Cultural Olympiad Project. This was a three year project in partnership with the organisations in Cape Town South Africa. This resulted in a number of exchanges with people from Cape Town. It involved three years of workshops and performances culminating in a performance with 50 performers from Cape Town and 50 performers from Valleys Kids.

Received Beacon funding from the Arts Council. This recognised the work of ArtWorks.

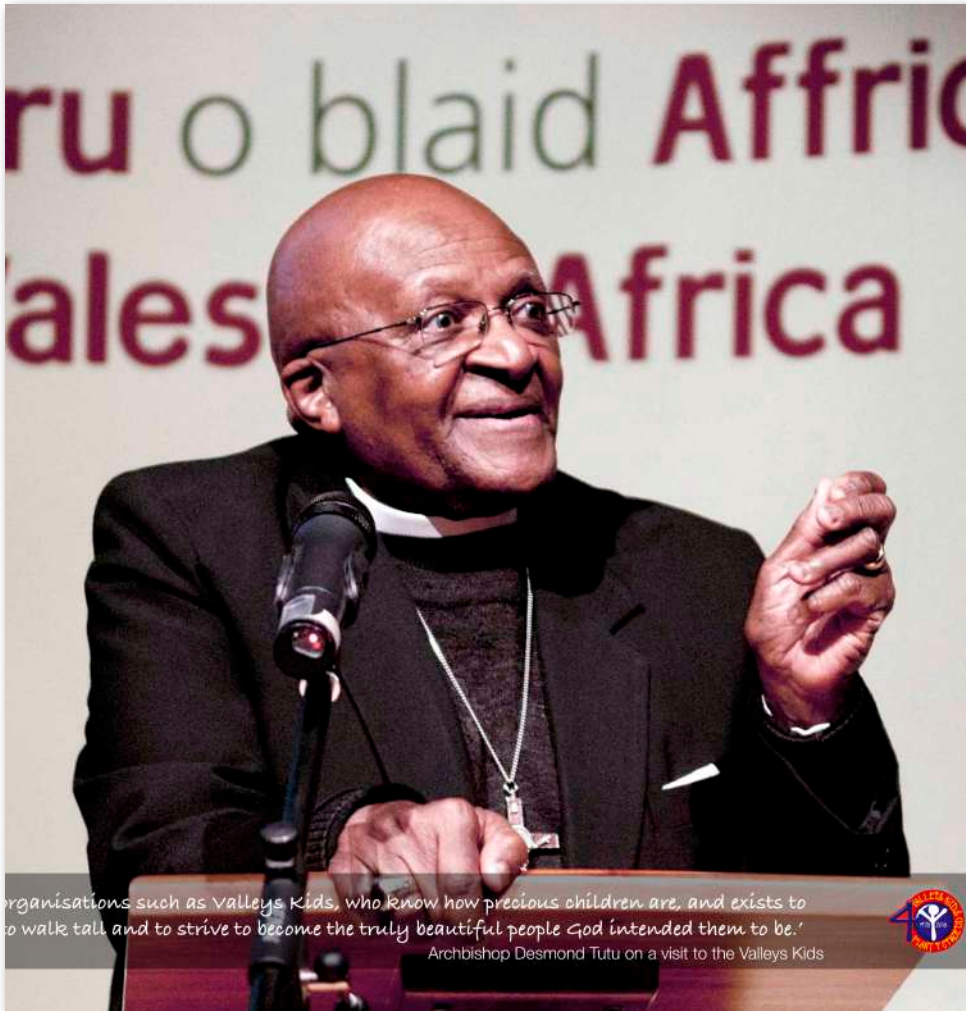
Appointed our first post graduate ArtWorks apprentice.



2011

THE FACTORY

Purchased The Pop Factory building to develop as a hub for Arts and the Cultural Industries.



2011

DESMOND TUTU VISIT

The Most Reverend Desmond M Tutu, O.M.S.G. D.D. F.R.C.
Anglican Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town

P.O. Box 1092, Milneron, Cape Town 7435
Suite 44, Frazzetta Business Park, Koeberg Road, Milneron 7441
Tel: (+27) 021 532 7534
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e-mail: angel@valleyskids.com

VALLEYS KIDS

On the opening of Soar Ffrwdamos, Rhondda, Wales

There are many miles between our two countries, South Africa and Wales.

But there is only a short distance between the diamond mines of Kimberley and the coalfields of the Rhondda Valleys. I know that the coal (your black gold) has all but gone and one day, there will be no diamonds in our mines.

But it is not what lies beneath the earth that makes a country rich. It is the children who live on the earth, our gold and diamonds, that make a country rich. And a country that looks after its children, is a rich country indeed.

Wales is blessed to have organisations such as Valleys Kids, who know how precious children are, and exists to encourage them to grow, to walk tall and to strive to become the truly beautiful people God intended them to be.

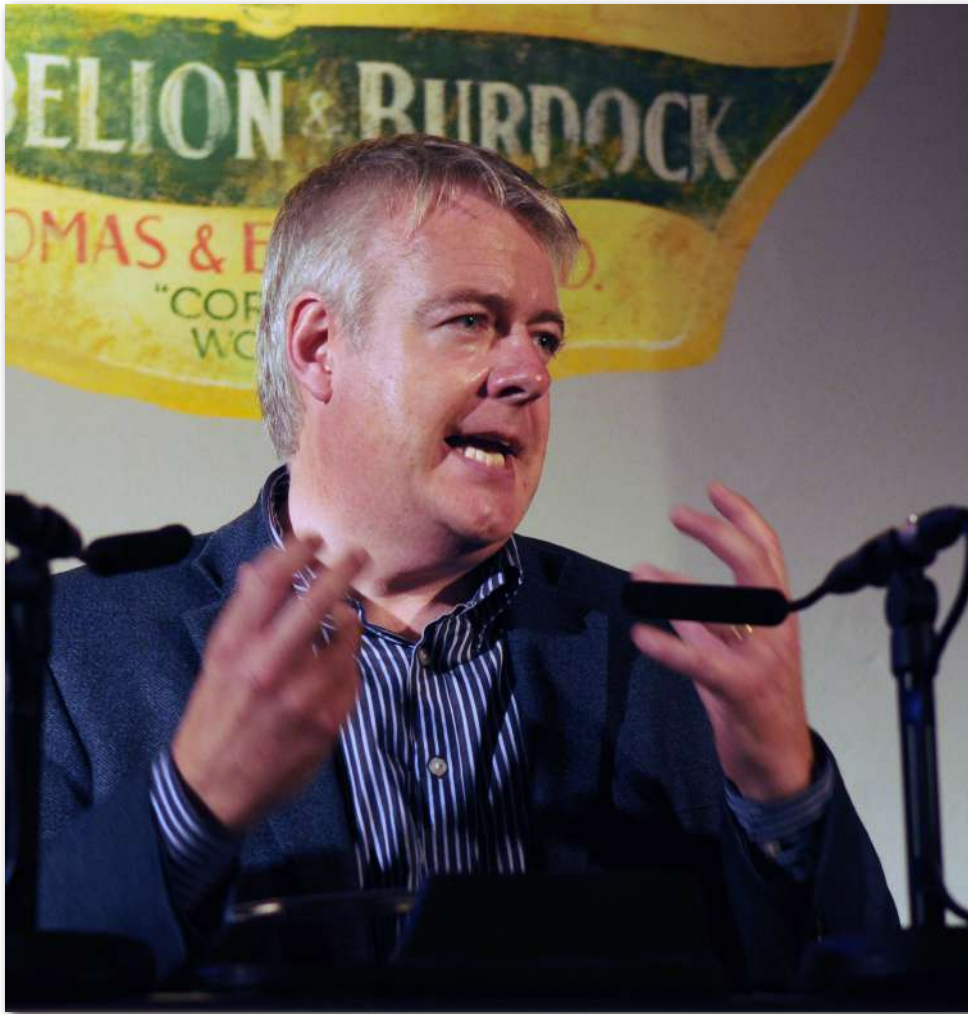
I wish you well in your wonderful new home, Soar Ffrwdamos Centre, in Penygraig, where, I am sure the children will shine like diamonds and blaze like black gold.

I look forward to the time when your children will link with us: Welsh gold and African diamonds.

God bless you

+Desmond M Tutu Archbishop Emeritus

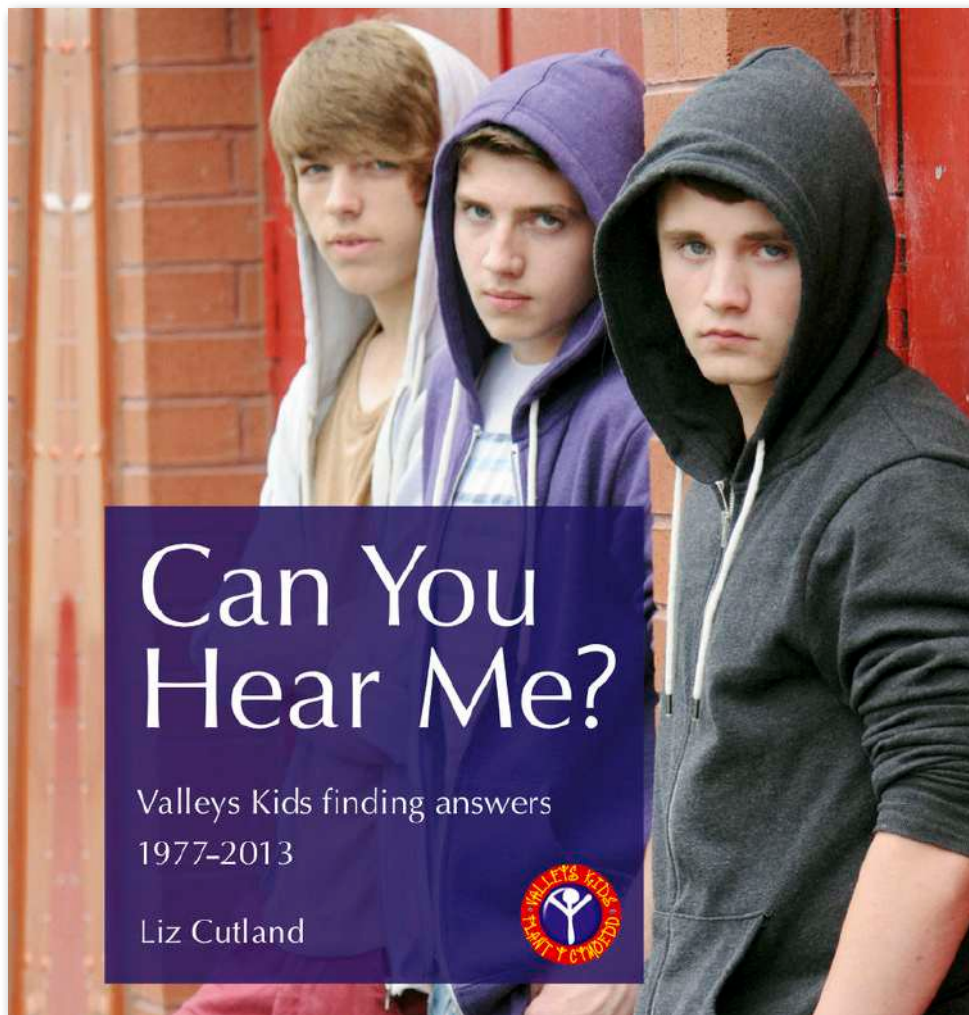
Valleys Kids, 1 Cross Street, Penygraig, Tonypandy, Rhondda, CF40 1LD
Tel: 01443 420870 www.valleyskids.org e-mail: denise@valleyskids.org
Valleys Kids is a registered charity no: 1070890



2012

LAUNCHING THE FACTORY

The Factory was opened by the First Minister Carwyn Jones.



2013

CAN YOU HEAR ME

Liz Cutland wrote a book recording the work of Penygraig Community Project and Valleys Kids from 1977 to 2013.

The book was launched by Professor Dai Smith, Chair of the Arts Council who said of the book -

“Let me tell you about the book first. It is researched and written with such depth & sensitivity that it truly gives voice to those who have been heard in their silence and their frustration. Which Liz Cutland has written with care, subtlety and passion. It is more than a record of Valleys Kids – it is a witness, a testimony that knocks most educational and sociological tracts and surveys into a cocked hat.

For 35 and more years since Howell, Margaret, Richard and then Pauline and a plethora of inspirational and dedicated staff decided to make a difference to many young lives, by Listening to them ,by empowering them, by learning from them”



2014

ART IN THE ATTIC

First Artist in Residence appointed to curate the Exhibitions "ART in the ATTIC."

Regular art sessions run weekly at all Valleys Kids Community Hubs.

Art exhibitions at the gallery include International, National and local artists and students.

Artist in Residence supported and mentored university students on placement.

Partnerships established with other arts organisations including Artes Mundi, Royal Academy and Tate Gallery.



2014

PENYGRAIG STREET FESTIVAL

The first street festival in the main street in Penygraig. The street was full of stalls, children's rides and music. The shop keepers dressed up in traditional costumes and choirs performed on a small stage.

"I've met people I haven't seen for thirty years."



2015

CLORE FELLOWSHIP

The Artistic Director of Valleys Kids ArtWorks Team awarded a CLORE Fellowship.

The Attic Gallery in the Factory completely refurbished.



2017

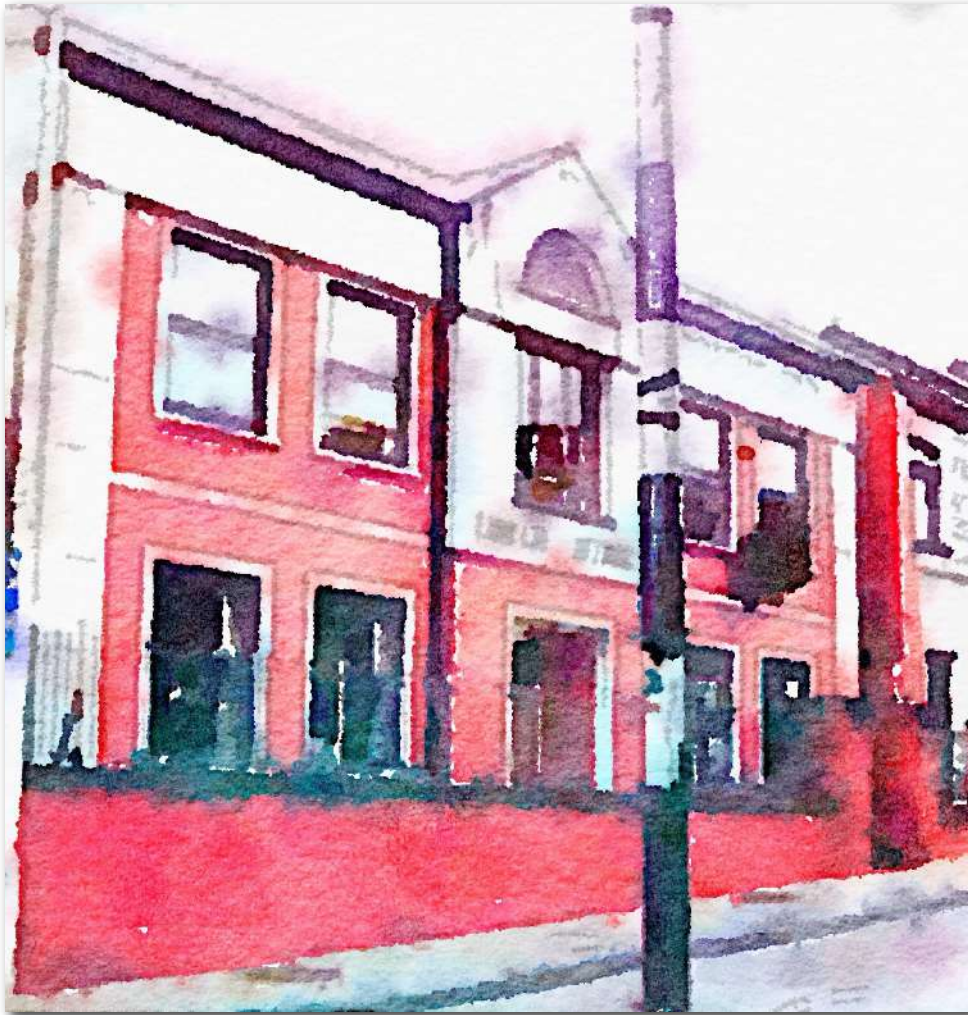
THE PLAY YARD OPENED

The Play Yard was opened in April.

The Art in the Attic Gallery at the Factory, renamed Art In the Attic the Robert Maskre Gallery.

Our café brand 'Coffi Red' was established.

The Old Library Penygraig opened in September – Coffi Red Café, Charity Shop and Book Exchange.



2017

OLD LIBRARY OPENED

The Old Library Penygraig opened in September – Coffi Red Café, Charity Shop and Book Exchange.

Relying on a band of volunteers to run facilities it retained a library in Penygraig and developed new facilities for Penygraig.

A childcare facility was also developed in the first floor offering services for children from the area.



2018

LITTLE BRYN GWYN CENTRE

The redevelopment of Little Bryn Gwyn was completed. Groups start using the new residential centre.

Celebrated 40 Years with an event in the Factory in September and Christmas event in Soar.

Partnership with the Wales Millennium Centre “Together Stronger” developed.

A Soft Play Centre was opened in July in the Factory.

Successful BIG Lottery bid for development of Family Work.



2018

CELEBRATE 40 YEARS

Celebrated 40 Years with an event in the Factory in September and Christmas event in Soar with one planed for Spring 2019.



2020

VALLEY AID

Valley Aid was a three day benefit concert pre-pandemic in the week of Storm Dennis to support local flood victims.

Events featured some of the biggest names in Welsh music including James Dean Bradfield, Mike Peters, Charlotte Church, Amy Wadge, and Andy Fairweather Low.

A total of £41,000 was raised to help people whose lives were impacted by devastating flooding.



**THE DEMAND HAS BEEN
OVERWHELMING AND
HUMBLING**



Valleys Kids - Impact Report 2020/2022

2020

COVID PANDEMIC

'I REALLY CANNOT PUT INTO WORDS THE DIFFERENCE YOU HAVE MADE.'

When Wales went into lockdown at the end of March 2020, we found ourselves entering uncharted territory. Suddenly, our Community and Family Hubs were closed to the public. Potentially, the impact on our ability to support local people facing unprecedented difficulties was devastating.

It soon became clear that there were multiple issues facing children, young people, families and adults: social isolation, food poverty, declining mental health and wellbeing and digital exclusion.



2020

PULLING TOGETHER

‘THE SUPPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM VALLEYS KIDS WITH THE FOOD PARCELS HAS BEEN BRILLIANT. WE REALLY NEEDED IT AT THIS TIME.’

An important part of Valleys Kids’ approach to community development is to encourage local people to get involved as volunteers. We could not have delivered the programmes without their input and sustained commitment.

The pandemic was no different; without the 100+ volunteers, the packed lunches, food hampers, activity and feeling good packs would not have happened. Without the support from local business, we would not have had enough food to make the lunches and food hampers. As always in the Valleys, everyone pulled together to help each other.