

Food Vale

Promoting sustainable food with a local identity

Food Vale started in 2020 and has now secured funding from the National Lottery's Community Fund for a five-year project, awarded in July 2022. Food Vale is one of a number of food partnership which are spreading across Wales, which aim to be sustainable in operation and owned by the community. The partnerships are supported by the Soil Association, Sustain and Food Matters. Food Vale will put in place a network of localised delivery across the Vale, through the spread of food partnerships.

The aim is to create a self-sustaining and community driven food hub that looks at: addressing food poverty, supporting local food, zero waste, access to food and fresh & nutritious food. Core to this is ensuring that the healthy choice is the easy choice, whilst celebrating locally grown food, making produce available seasonally and creating space for residents to develop the confidence and skills to cook a balanced meal. The Llantwit Food Project is working on the root causes of health inequalities and has set up a 'More Than Food' hub, at the CF61 Community Centre, with the intention that it is accessible to as many people as possible.

The Hub, launched in October 2022, operates alongside the existing food pantry run by Glamorgan Voluntary Services and regular 'Chatty Café' run by More In Common Llantwit. A number of organisations take part to increase value to local people: Hafod Housing Association, Age Connects, Citizens Advice, Benthylg (cooking equipment loans), Care and Repair and the Vale Healthy Living team, with more likely to join in the future. Visiting the hub is intended to be a dignified experience without stigmatising accessing support, making for a comfortable environment empowering people to support themselves.

Significant research and community engagement was undertaken to ensure the design and delivery methods were right, with focus groups, engagement with local schools to understand pupils' perspectives on food, and interviews with the very knowledgeable services already working in this area.



The model and delivery are being refined in response to the experiences of those involved to improve accessibility, the support offered and maximise value to the local community.

Cookery demonstrations form part of the model, working with the ingredients that are available from the pantry, as well as the delivery of a Get Cooking course in collaboration with Health Board Dietetics. This recognises that making good food available needs to be in conjunction with developing the skills and confidence to make use of it. Food Vale is also supporting local food growing projects which run volunteer sessions within the community and play a vital role in raising awareness of food-related issues.

Fiona Kinghorn, Executive Director of Public Health at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board:

“It's great to see the hard work from all the partners behind this project being put into action. It is so important that everybody has access to the support they need, particularly when it comes to access to affordable and nutritious food, and especially during these challenging times”

Cllr **Eddie Williams**, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health said:

“I'm pleased that we're able to develop much needed services such as the Llantwit Major More Than Food Hub. Access to affordable, healthy and nutritious food is one of the core principles underpinning Food Vale's work.

“The cost-of-living crisis is currently affecting many families and individuals throughout the Vale and there are some fantastic groups and organisations that are working hard to alleviate the stresses associated with it.”



The Llantwit Food Project will act as an example for expansion into other parts of the Vale, informed by the experiences in Llantwit Major whilst adapting to the needs and situations of the other locales.

Bringing together a range of services to collectively offer a broad range of support to increase the impact and value to the local community. This has been central to the success of the Llantwit Food Project, which is a great example of spread and scale adopting an idea and adapting it to be successful locally.