

Un Llais Cymru



One Voice Wales

# National Awards Conference Report 2025

**Main Conference Sponsors:**



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# Introduction



**Lyn Cadwallader,  
Chief Executive**

“Welcome to the One Voice Wales National Awards Conference 2025, to our delegates, suppliers, exhibitors and sponsors, including Clerks and Councillors who are attending for the first time. I hope you find our conference informative, thought-provoking and stimulating, and that you will take a lot of valuable information and learning back to your communities.

It is great to see so many of you engaging with this year’s National Awards and a new record number of applications were received, making it a difficult task for the independent assessment panel. We have a list of Council delegates who have given up their time to showcase their projects at today’s Council Presentation workshops, which always prove very successful and enjoyable for the delegates. The conference outlines the positive outcomes achieved by One Voice Wales and Community & Town Councils during 2024-25. We will discuss the challenges and opportunities for the sector, as well as update you on some of the new thematic programmes of work we will be undertaking in the coming year; we hope our newly-launched website will become a central digital repository for our member Councils.

There has been a healthy level of membership numbers during the last twelve months, with now over 92% of all councils in membership of One Voice Wales. This is the highest membership level since our formation in 2004. Plans are already in place to drive increases in membership in 2025-26. We continue to argue that local councils should be the bedrock to bringing about a renaissance of our communities in Wales. Additionally, we will be engaging in closer working relations with Welsh Government, Audit Wales, WLGA, NRW, National Parks, Police & Crime Commissioners, NALC, SLCC, Planning Aid Wales, WCVA and others to make this a reality in 2025-26. We continue to drive new organisational developments including improved communications channels and a revised and improved governance structure for One Voice Wales.”

# Main Conference Sponsors: Unity Trust Bank

“Prynhawn da!

We are very proud to be here this afternoon for the first time, attending the One Voice Wales National Awards Conference, as main sponsor for 2025.

Since setting up a dedicated Public Sectors team last June, Unity Trust Bank has been working very closely with local councils, NALC, SLCC and One Voice Wales to have a greater insight into what you do, and how we can best support you.

The work you all do with and for councils is no mean feat, especially in today's climate; and we would like to make banking as seamless and straightforward as it possibly can. Working in tandem to provide a banking proposition which is fit for purpose, and is one which you are able to help us shape, is our end goal.

We not only support councils by providing transactional banking, but we provide solutions of deposits and savings, and lending too.

Your dedication to delivering positive impact in local communities is aligned to Unity's own ethos and values. You also support many deprived areas that would otherwise be unreachable; and provide a vital service, and a lifeline to many.

We're here today to acknowledge all the hard work you've done, and I'd like to congratulate you, and thank you for everything you do, and the sacrifices you undoubtedly make.

Diolch yn fawr.”



For Businesses. For Communities. For Good.

# Conference Agenda



**One Voice Wales National Awards Conference Wednesday 30 April 2025**  
**Hafod a Hendre, Royal Welsh Showground, Llanellwedd LD2 3SY**



## Agenda

<b>09:30 – 10:30</b>	<b>Registration / Networking / Exhibitions</b>
<b>10:30 – 10:35</b>	<b>One Voice Wales Chair's Address</b>
<b>10:35 – 11.15</b>	<b>Keynote Address:</b> Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive of One Voice Wales: 'Future Developments at One Voice Wales and the Community and Town Council Sector'
<b>11:15 – 12:20</b>	<b>Innovative Practice Sessions Part 1</b> Use of Digital Resources (A, B, C) Sustainability Initiatives (Councils A, B, C) Environmental Projects (Councils A, B, C) Governance Initiatives (Councils A, B, C)
<b>12:20 – 13:30</b>	<b>Lunch and Exhibition</b>
<b>13:30 – 14:30</b>	<b>Innovative Practice Sessions Part 2</b> Devolution of Services or Assets / Cost of Living Initiatives (Council A, B, C) Tourism / Heritage & Culture Initiatives (Council A, B, C) Youth Engagement / Older Persons initiatives (Council A, B, C) Community Engagement / Democratic Health Initiatives (Councils A, B, C)
<b>14:30 – 14:50</b>	<b>Event Sponsor's Address:</b> Unity Trust Bank
<b>14:50 – 15:50</b>	<b>Awards Ceremony</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Best Governance Initiative</li><li>2. Best Democratic Health Initiative</li><li>3. Best Use of Digital Resources</li><li>4. Best Sustainability Initiative</li><li>5. Best Environmental Project</li><li>6. Best Heritage and Culture Initiative</li><li>7. Best Tourism Initiative</li><li>8. Best Community Engagement Initiative</li><li>9. Best Youth Engagement Initiative</li><li>10. Best Older Persons Initiative</li><li>11. Best Devolution of Service or Asset Project</li><li>12. Best Initiative addressing the Cost-of-Living Crisis</li></ol> <b>Caerwyn Roberts Best Local Council Service of the Year</b> award – sponsored by Unity Trust Bank
<b>15:50 – 16:00</b>	<b>Chair's Closing Comments</b>
<b>16:00</b>	<b>End of Conference</b>

Conference sponsored by:



# **Award Categories**

**1.Best Governance Initiative**

**2.Best Democratic Health Initiative**

**3.Best use of Digital Resources**

**4.Best Sustainability Initiative**

**5.Best Environmental Project**

**6.Best Heritage and Culture Initiative**

**7.Best Tourism Initiative**

**8.Best Community Engagement Initiative**

**9.Best Youth Engagement Initiative**

**10.Best Older Persons Initiative**

**11.Best Devolution of Service or Asset  
Project**

**12.Best Initiative addressing the  
Cost of Living Crisis**

**The Caerwyn Roberts Best Local Council  
Service of the Year 2025**



<b>Award Category</b>	<b>Best Governance Initiative</b>
<b>Joint Winners</b>	<b>Pontypool Community Council and Blaenavon Town Council</b>
<b>Highly Commended</b>	<b>Cwmaman Town Council Criccieth Town Council</b>
<b>Commended</b>	<b>Bedlinog and Trelewis Community Council Abergavenny Town Council St. Bride's Major Community Council</b>
<b>Winning Submissions</b>	<p>Pontypool Community Council:  Link to PDF on website: <a href="https://pontypoolcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/PCC-Annual-Report-2024.pdf">https://pontypoolcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/PCC-Annual-Report-2024.pdf</a>; link to Issuu:<a href="https://issuu.com/pontypoolcommunitycouncil/docs/pcc-annual-report-2024">https://issuu.com/pontypoolcommunitycouncil/docs/pcc-annual-report-2024</a></p> <p>Blaenavon Town Council:  In May 2024, Blaenavon Town Council published their annual report for the period 2023/24 in compliance with their duty under s52 Local Government (Wales) Act 2021. As the first tier of local government, the Council were committed to demonstrate that they are a firm advocate for its residents ensuring their views are heard across all levels of government. Visit: <a href="https://blaenavontowncouncil.co.uk/">https://blaenavontowncouncil.co.uk/</a></p>
<b>Award Sponsors</b>	<b>CCLA Investment Management</b>

## Joint Winners: Pontypool Community Council

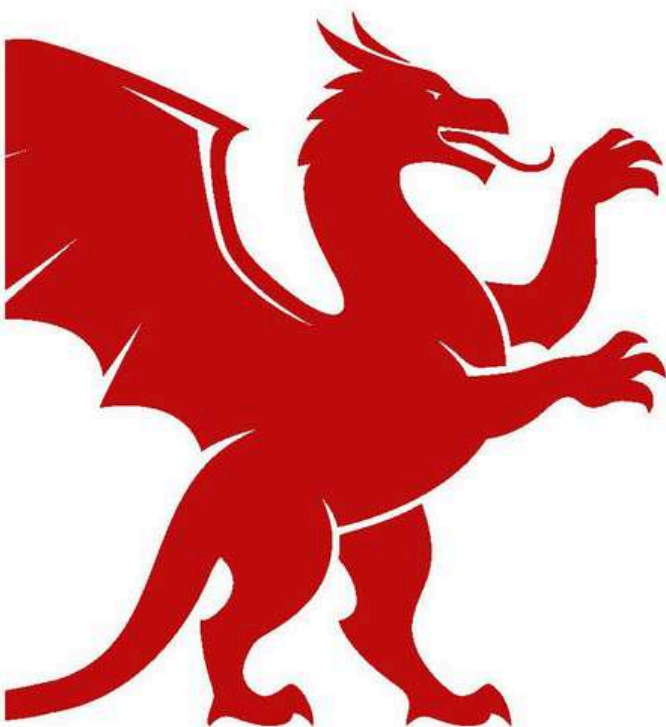


## Joint Winners: Blaenavon Town Council





# Even a dragon needs help with bears and bulls



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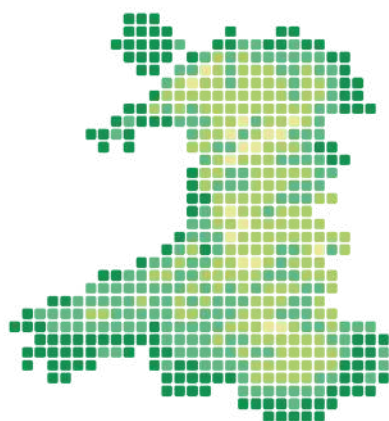
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**CCLA**  
GOOD INVESTMENT

Award Category	Best Democratic Health Initiative
Winner	No outright winner
Highly Commended	Blaenavon Town Council
Commended	n/a
Winning Submission	n/a
Award Sponsors	Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru

# Highly Commended: Blaenavon Town Council



Comisiwn  
Democratiaeth a  
Ffiniau Cymru

Democracy  
and Boundary  
Commission Cymru

Award Category	Best use of Digital Resources
Winner	Rhossili Community Council
Highly Commended	Abergavenny Town Council Cwmbran Community Council
Commended	Bedlinog and Trelewis Community Council
Winning Submission	<p>We believe Rhossili Community Council (RCC) deserves the <b>Best Use of Digital Resources Award</b> for how we've embraced digital resources; visit our website (<a href="http://rhossilicc.org.uk">rhossilicc.org.uk</a>) and our community Hwb (<a href="http://www.rhossilihwb.wales">www.rhossilihwb.wales</a>) to see why! In 2022, with new leadership (chair, clerk, and councillors), supported by local volunteers, we secured Welsh Government funding to overhaul the RCC website and develop a complementary community website. The RCC website update aimed to make all aspects of council business more accessible whilst also providing a useful resource – from navigating the Planning process to reporting potholes! The livelier interface presents our 'core business' information along with a more light-hearted video summary of council activity.</p> <p>The Hwb was developed by the community, for the community using innovative, interactive approaches to engage all stakeholders. It is core in promoting local initiatives such as our foodbank and beach cleans, providing a vibrant, dynamic digital noticeboard “for all things Rhossili.”</p>
Award Sponsors	Data Cymru



## Winners: Rhossili Community Council





Award Category	Best Sustainability Initiative
Joint Winners	Mumbles Community Council and Carmarthen Town Council
Highly Commended	Carmarthen Town Council Cyngor Cymuned Llanengan
Commended	Abergavenny Town Council
Winning Submissions	<p><b>Mumbles CC:</b> is committed to sustainability through its Sustainable Procurement Policy, approved on 11th February 2025. This policy ensures procurement decisions align with carbon reduction, responsible sourcing, and local economic development. Working alongside The Big Climate Leap through Swansea Environment Centre, the initiative embeds sustainability in council operations, ensuring long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits. MCC has committed to reducing its carbon footprint by 25% by 2028, supporting the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Environment (Wales) Act 2016.</p> <p><b>Carmarthen TC:</b> in 2024, the Children's Climate Conference returned, bigger and better than ever. In collaboration with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and the National Botanic Garden of Wales, and with the support of Menter Gorllewin Sir Gâr and Carmarthen Together, the event was hosted at the Halliwell Conference Centre. This venue provided spacious rooms, breakout areas for group activities, and outdoor spaces, all of which contributed to an outstanding experience for the nine participating primary and secondary schools.</p>
Award Sponsors	Blachere Illuminations UK

## Joint Winners: Mumbles Community Council



## Joint Winners: Carmarthen Town Council





# The Power of Winter Lighting

**Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow:**  
We created a ceiling of light in the square and subsequently received an email from the police asking if it could stay up all year round as it had reduced crime in the area.

## THE BENEFITS OF WINTER LIGHTING FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY

Winter brings shorter days, longer nights, and reduced visibility, making proper lighting essential for ensuring safety and security

### KEY BENEFITS

#### • ENHANCED VISIBILITY

For Pedestrians: Well-lit pathways reduce the risk of trips and falls, especially on icy or uneven surfaces.

#### • IMPROVED SECURITY

Deterrence of Crime: Bright, strategically placed lighting deters theft, vandalism, and other criminal activities by eliminating shadows and hiding spots.

#### • SAFE COMMUNITY SPACES

Public Confidence: Brightly lit parks, streets, and communal areas encourage outdoor activities and foster a sense of safety.

Emergency Response: Adequate lighting aids emergency responders in navigating and operating effectively in any situation.

#### • ENERGY-EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS

Modern LED lighting options are cost-effective and environmentally friendly while providing sufficient brightness for safety and security.



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Award Category	Best Environmental Project
Winner	Mumbles Community Council
Highly Commended	Criccieth Town Council
Commended	Carmarthen Town Council Pyle Community Council Kerry Community Council Mold Town Council Rhossili Community Council
Winning Submission	<p>The Four Seasons Sensory Garden – A Sustainable and Inclusive Green Space: the Sensory Garden was developed to create an accessible, engaging, and environmentally beneficial space for the local community. Led by the council, the project was made possible through National Lottery grant funding and undertaken in partnership with Llanfair House in Mumbles, a rehabilitation centre. This collaboration not only supported the garden’s creation but also provided valuable engagement opportunities for individuals at Llanfair House, fostering a sense of community and environmental stewardship. Designed to provide year-round sensory stimulation through a diverse selection of plants, textures, colours, and scents, the garden ensures inclusivity for all visitors, particularly those with sensory processing needs. A standout feature is the Rain Garden, a nature-based solution that enhances the sensory experience while contributing significantly to local environmental resilience. Community engagement and publicity play a central role in this project. As a community council, we are committed to actively promoting and raising awareness of this initiative, particularly in recognition of our key funding partners.</p>
Award Sponsors	Cotton & Sons Cleaning Supplies Ltd

# Winners: Mumbles Community Council







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<b>Award Category</b>	<b>Best Heritage and Culture Initiative</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen Community Council</b>
<b>Highly Commended</b>	<b>Mold Town Council</b>
<b>Commended</b>	<b>Abergavenny Town Council Buan Community Council Pontypridd Town Council</b>
<b>Winning Submission</b>	<p>Our Council has owned the Bedwas Workmen's Hall for over 40 years, the building has just had its 100th Birthday and to coincide with the celebrations we were able to start major restoration work on the building. The building is run by a volunteer management committee on behalf of the Council, and the Council employs a caretaker to look after the day to day running of the building and open for members of the public. The hall was opened in 1924 for the Miners and their families of Bedwas Colliery, the Miners paid their penny a week towards the costs of the building. The hall was built on two levels and is a magnificent building, which is listed. The Community Council purchased the building off Rhymney Valley District Council in 1979.</p> <p>The hall is a very busy local amenity, the upstairs is now used for many different events with bands, the arts, local school productions, award ceremonies and private parties. We installed a modern Cinema projector in 2024. Downstairs all rooms are hired out throughout the day and evening with an eclectic mix of classes from Slimming world to pottery. The hall is not subsidised by the Council. Time and weather had taken its toll on this grand building with water ingress through flat roofs being a major issue over the past decade, and another big issue was the access to the upstairs area for our elderly and/or disabled residents as there was no lift.</p> <p>In 2022 we formed a Lottery Application committee, and called the project Bedwas Workmen's Wind tight, Water tight and Accessible.</p>
<b>Sponsors</b>	<b>AT Creative Ltd (at-creative)</b>

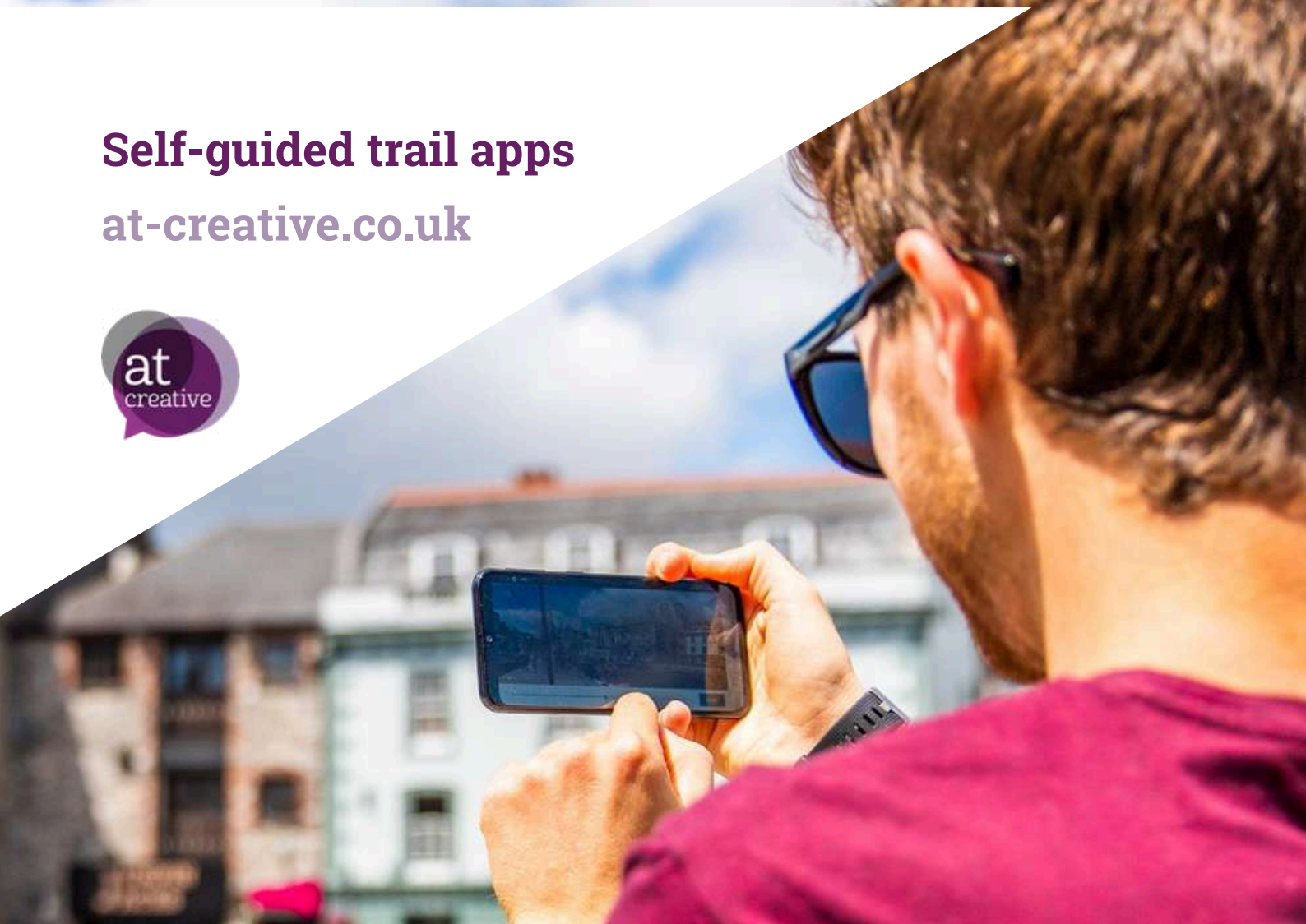
**Winners: Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen  
Community Council  
(were not present to receive the award)**





# Self-guided trail apps

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## Transform your indoor and outdoor tours into multimedia visitor experiences

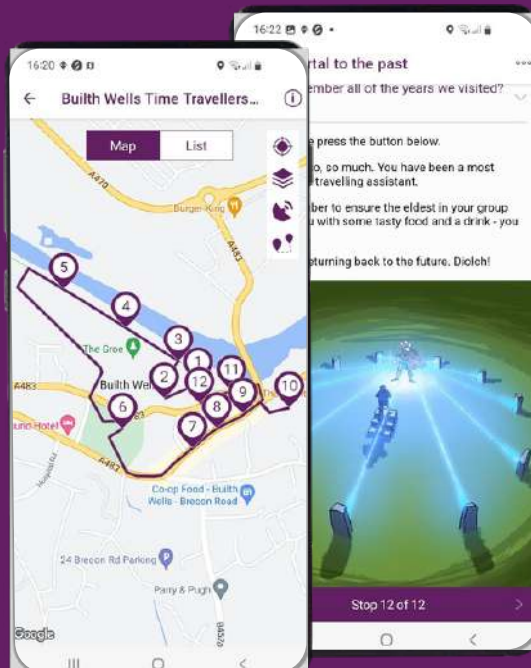
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<b>Award Category</b>	<b>Best Tourism Initiative</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Guilsfield Community Council</b>
<b>Highly Commended</b>	<b>Abergavenny Town Council</b>
<b>Commended</b>	<b>Cyngor Cymuned Llanengan</b>
<b>Winning Submission</b>	<p>Guilsfield's Winter Fayre, held on 30th November 2024, represents a highly successful tourism initiative that actively supports the local tourism economy while promoting the unique cultural heritage of the village. Guilsfield is a rural village with much to offer, but until recently, it lacked an organised tourism strategy. The Winter Fayre was introduced as a way to highlight the village's rich history, attract visitors, and support local businesses through tourism-focused activities. The Council identified the need to provide an accessible, engaging event that would showcase the village to a wider audience, increase footfall, and contribute to the local economy.</p> <p>The event took place across multiple key locations in the village, including the Community Centre, Old School, Kings Head, and Guilsfield Parish Church of Saint Aelhaiarn. These venues were selected not only for their accessibility but also because they reflect the village's heritage, making the Fayre a true representation of Guilsfield's identity. The Church's clock tower tours were a key feature, offering visitors a unique glimpse into the village's history, further enhancing the tourism appeal of the event.</p> <p>The Winter Fayre has proven to be an effective way of boosting the local tourism economy, and there has already been discussion among residents and businesses about making the event an annual fixture. The success of the Fayre has also led to the exploration of additional tourism initiatives, such as guided walking tours and collaborations with local accommodation providers to offer special packages for visitors.</p>
<b>Award Sponsors</b>	<b>Visit Wales</b>



# Winners: Guilsfield Community Council



Award Category	Best Community Engagement Initiative
Winner	Blaenavon Town Council
Highly Commended	Aberporth Community Council Cyngor Cymuned Llanengan Crickhowell Town Council
Commended	Rhossili Community Council Guilsfield Community Council Cwmaman Town Council Buan Community Council Llanfairfechan Town Council Maesteg Town Council
Winning Submission	<p>Blaenavon Town Council is committed to strengthening community ties and ensuring local voices shape the town's future. The Council organised two key engagement events in 2024: the Community Wellbeing Day in May and the Blaenavon Civic Event in October. These initiatives represent a proactive approach to community engagement, demonstrating a commitment to genuine partnership with residents. We sought to foster genuine dialogue between residents, community groups, and public sector partners. The aim was to create a platform for collaborative and constructive conversations, empowering residents to actively participate in shaping their community.</p> <p>The events served multiple purposes: gathering valuable insights directly from the community, celebrating the contributions of local individuals and organisations, addressing pressing community needs (including the cost-of-living crisis), promoting available local services and support networks, and raising awareness of the Council's role, especially significant during its 50th anniversary. This approach allowed engagement with a broad community spectrum.</p>
Award Sponsors	Co-production Network for Wales and Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)



# Winners: Blaenavon Town Council



<b>Award Category</b>	<b>Best Youth Engagement Initiative</b>
<b>Joint Winners</b>	<b>Pontypool Community Council and Mold Town Council</b>
<b>Highly Commended</b>	<b>Guilsfield Community Council</b>
<b>Commended</b>	<b>Carmarthen Town Council Llanelli Town Council</b>
<b>Winning Submission</b>	<p>Pontypool Community Council: the Council has allocated a budget of £90,000 for youth provision in the 2024/25 financial year and for planned this into our budget for future years. This funding, in partnership with Torfaen Play Service and Torfaen Youth Service, aims to provide accessible and engaging youth clubs across the Pontypool area. These clubs held throughout the Pontypool district, cater to young people aged 8 to 18, offering a range of activities designed to support personal development, well-being, and social engagement. There are significant benefits of this investment, demonstrating how youth provision positively impacts young people, their families, and the wider community. By providing safe spaces, skill-building opportunities, and social support, this initiative helps create a stronger, healthier, and more cohesive community. The funding covers staffing, resources, activity costs, and venue hire, ensuring that services remain accessible and free at the point of use.</p> <p>Mold Town Council Youth Council Initiative - the Council has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to youth engagement by establishing and reinvigorating the Mold Town Youth Council. This initiative ensures that young voices within the community are heard and represented. Recognising the importance of engaging with young people at different stages of their education, Mold Town Council has introduced two Youth Councils. The Youth Councils meet quarterly with representatives from Mold Town Council. Mold Town Council have worked hard to engage with schools over the last 12 months, encouraging participation and ensuring that young people feel empowered to influence change and decisions within their community. This initiative is a shining example of how local councils can engage and inspire the next generation to become proactive members of their community, making Mold a safer and more cohesive place for all.</p>
<b>Award Sponsors</b>	<b>Children’s Commissioner for Wales</b>



## Joint Winners: Pontypool Community Council



## Joint Winners: Mold Town Council





Award Category	Best Older Persons Initiative
Winner	Mumbles Community Council
Highly Commended	Llandough Community Council Blaenavon Town Council
Commended	Pontyclun Community Council Cwmaman Town Council Llandrindod Wells Town Council
Winning Submission	<p><b>Coffee with Friends</b> was launched to address social isolation and improve community engagement among older residents after Covid. Recognising the challenges many seniors face in staying connected, the Council created a welcoming, inclusive space where older persons can meet regularly, enjoy conversation, and build relationships. The initiative was designed to be simple yet impactful providing a relaxed setting where participants could gather over coffee, share experiences, and engage in meaningful discussions. Council staff and volunteers facilitate sessions, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all attendees. However it does have be said that our volunteers are simply amazing week in and week out they turn up to ensure the sessions run smoothly. The project has since grown into a vital social lifeline, offering companionship, support, and a sense of belonging. Coffee with Friends has become more than just a social gathering—it is a vital initiative that fosters friendships, combats loneliness, and enhances the well-being of older persons. We are proud of the positive change this program has brought to our community.</p>
Award Sponsors	Age Cymru

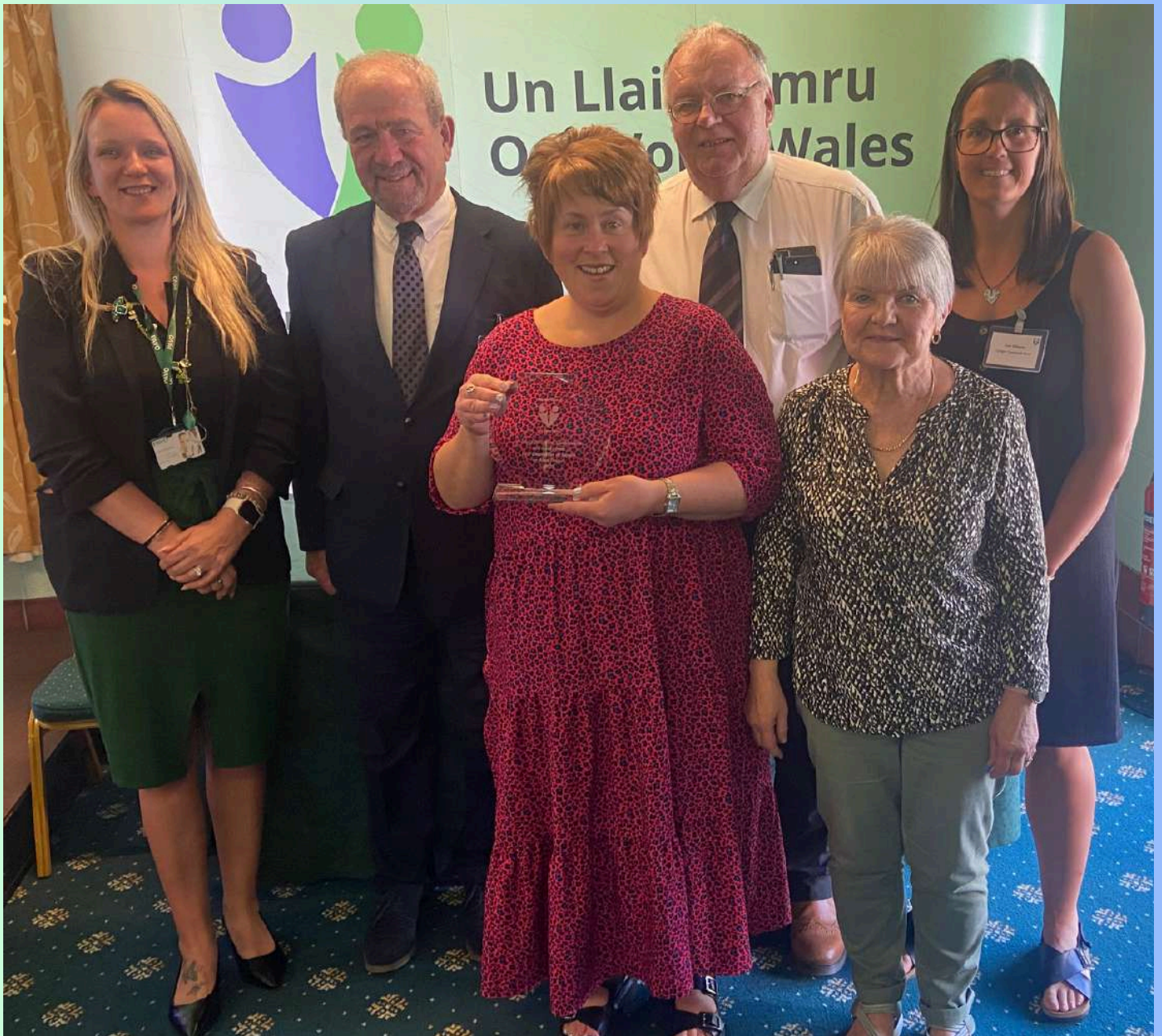
## Winners: Mumbles Community Council



Award Category	Best Devolution of Service or Asset Project
Winner	Buan Community Council
Highly Commended	n/a
Commended	Abergavenny Town Council Pyle Town Council (Environmental Project)
Winning Submission	<p>Buan is a small community on the Llŷn Peninsula, including the villages of Rhydyclafdy and the areas of Boduan and Cheidio. There are 3 wards in the area, 10 councillors, with 5 from the board on Bachellaeth Ward which is in the Rhydyclafdy area. Rhydyclafdy is a small village near the traditional Llŷn Peninsula in Gwynedd County. It lies 2.8 miles to the West of Pwllheli. The village is part of the population of Buan with Boduan, and together there is a population of 469. During September 2023, a letter was received from Eleri Williams who lives in the village, regarding the development of the old school field into a playground for the children of the area. The members of the Community Council were invited to join them on the Playground, and it was up to our Deputy to decide the Council and its group. Community officials, Gwynedd Council visited the site, noting in general that the site is a suitable and safe site. Gwynedd Council owned this field, but Buan Community Council paid the tenancy on it annually. There were discussions between the County Councillor, Estates Department, and Gwynedd Council in order to obtain clear guidance. This project was funded by the UK Government through the UK Common Prosperity Fund and Mantell Gwynedd who administered the Gwynedd Voluntary Sector Fund Grant; there was a contribution from the Sustainable Development Fund and AONB (Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the Welsh Government funded the benches, the tables on the planting beds for the Playground. Buan Community Council also contributed financially to the Project.</p>
Award Sponsors	Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)



## Winner: Buan Community Council





Award Category	Best Initiative addressing the Cost of Living Crisis
Winner	Mumbles Community Council
Highly Commended	Gwernyfed Community Council Bedlinog and Trelewis Community Council Cwmaman Town Council Cwmbran Community Council Haverfordwest Town Council Mold Town Council Welshpool Town Council
Commended	Llanfairfechan Town Council Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council Aberporth Community Council
Winning Submission	<p>1. With the support of grant funding from Swansea City Council, we developed an innovative, community-focused initiative to enhance social, physical, and emotional well-being through free play-based activities. Recognising the post-Covid challenges of social isolation, financial strain, and limited access to enriching experiences, we transformed community spaces into hubs for inclusive, outdoor play sessions. These events create opportunities for children to engage, socialise, and learn, while reinforcing a sense of community spirit in safe, welcoming local spaces.</p> <p>2. Mumbles Crop Collective (MCC) is a community-led initiative designed to combat the rising cost of living by empowering residents to grow their own food. With economic uncertainty and increasing food prices affecting households, MCC provides accessible, sustainable solutions to food security challenges. The initiative offers hands-on learning opportunities for individuals of all ages and backgrounds, ensuring that growing food is both achievable and sustainable.</p> <p>3. Support Café is a welcoming community hub designed to provide residents with free advice and support over a cup of coffee and a slice of cake. Launched at The Ostreme Centre, the café offers a relaxed environment where individuals can access essential services and information.</p> <p>By combining play-based solutions, food support, and key funding partnerships, this initiative exemplifies a collaborative approach to tackling the Cost-of-Living crisis, delivering lasting benefits for families and the wider community.</p>
Award Sponsors	Wales Centre for Public Policy & Welsh Local Government Association

# Winner: Mumbles Community Council



Award Category	The Caerwyn Roberts Best Local Council Service of the Year 2025
Joint Winners	Mumbles Community Council and Guilsfield Community Council
Highly Commended	N/A
Commended	N/A
Winning Submission	n/a
Sponsors	Unity Trust Bank PLC



## Joint Winners: Mumbles Community Council



## Joint Winners: Guilsfield Community Council







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## **Press Release**

### **One Voice Wales National Awards Conference 2025 shows best of Welsh Councils!**

**Community and Town Councils across Wales, met up recently for their 2025 awards ceremony at the Royal Welsh Showground in Llanelwedd, sponsored by Unity Trust Bank. The annual ceremony, hosted by One Voice Wales - the national representative body for Community and Town Councils - celebrated and showcased the work of local Councils across many strategic and operational categories. A rigorous assessment process was evidence of the integrity of the awards.**

**In opening the event, Councillor Mike Theodoulou, Chair of One Voice Wales, paid tribute to the achievement of so many Councils who delivered grassroots services at the heart of their communities. He also spoke of changing times and the importance of establishing a true understanding of the role and purpose of Community and Town Councils.**

**Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive of One Voice Wales, thanked Councils for engaging with the event and praised their commitment to sharing their innovations. Lyn described the challenges facing Councils across Wales, which included helping communities recover from COVID-19 and respond to the Cost-of-Living crisis. Supporting biodiversity, managing community asset transfer, and delivering vibrant, sustainable place-based services were further significant challenges. Councils could also play a key role in driving local economies.**

**Community and Town Councils were subject to more scrutiny than ever. Issues arising from external audits had brought increased focus on their work, alongside a recent Senedd Inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector and a review of the democratic health of community and town councils. Community Boundary Reviews also painted an uncertain future for many Councils.**



Lyn reminded delegates of how One Voice Wales supported Councils in meeting these challenges. The Awards provided a unique opportunity to show how Councils had performed against independent, third-party assessment. Lyn described record membership levels, increased funding from Welsh Government and a Memorandum of Understanding with the WLGA to help manage an important partnership. Important governance changes were also being put in place within One Voice Wales.

Lyn looked forward to attending the forthcoming WLGA Annual Conference, which would be an opportunity to showcase the work of One Voice Wales and the achievements of many Community and Town Councils. Other partnership work was also continuing.

A comprehensive programme of training was in place to help local Councils navigate a rapidly changing world, as Lyn encouraged Councils to take advantage of the development opportunities provided by One Voice Wales. He also commended the Finance and Governance Toolkit as an important resource to help Councils manage their affairs.

The conference launched the new One Voice Wales website. The new site was a repository for Community and Town Councils to access important information, developed in collaboration with colleagues at CORE Internet Solutions. Many delegates took the opportunity of a digital “site visit” facilitated by One Voice Wales staff. A refreshed and rebranded logo had been developed alongside the new site.

Lyn took questions across such as the governance arrangements of One Voice Wales, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, anti-racism policies and how to ensure representation on Councils from young people. Inspired by the Chief Executive’s words, delegates soon knuckled down to a series of thematic Workshop Practice Sessions, which identified and disseminated Best Practice in areas such as environmental projects, digital solutions, youth engagement and tourism.

A workshop about community engagement and democratic health was typical of the lively sharing of information sharing that took place on this busy day. Delegates listened with interest as the Mayor of Blaenavon Town Council, Councillor Nathan Matthews and Sophie Johnson, Community Well-being Development Officer, skilfully described how community engagement helped inform Council strategy in this historic Gwent town.

All eyes were on the awards though, and the afternoon session lifted the lid on the winners. Record entry levels had set a tough task for the judges, but the trophies were eventually allocated. Here is the full roll of honour:

**1. Best Governance Initiative**

**Pontypool Community Council and Blaenavon Town Council  
(Joint Winners)**

**2. Best Democratic Health Initiative**

**No outright winner**

**3. Best Use of Digital Resources**

**Rhossili Community Council**

**4. Best Sustainability Initiative**

**Carmarthen Town Council and Mumbles Community Council  
(Joint Winners)**

**5. Best Environmental Project**

**Mumbles Community Council**

**6. Best Heritage and Culture Initiative**

**Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council**

**7. Best Tourism Initiative**

**Guilsfield Community Council**

**8. Best Community Engagement Initiative**

**Blaenavon Town Council**

**9. Best Youth Engagement Initiative  
Mold Town Council and Pontypool Community Council**

**10. Best Older Persons Initiative  
Mumbles Community Council**

**11. Best Devolution of Service or Asset Project  
Buan Community Council**

**12. Best Initiative addressing the Cost-of-Living Crisis  
Mumbles Community Council**

**13. The Caerwyn Roberts Best Local Council Service of the  
Year, sponsored by Unity Trust Bank:**

**Mumbles Community Council and Guilsfield Community  
Council  
(Joint Winners)**

This had been a celebration of local council life. A celebration of the people and communities of Wales. Councillor Theodoulou drew proceedings to a close, describing a wonderful day. But he issued a final challenge. Councils needed to return to their communities and “shout” about their achievements, he declared! These were challenging times for local democracy and Community and Town Councils were ideally placed to engage and galvanise communities.

Delegates left the arena, thrilled at what they had heard and excited about the future.

The 2025 Awards Conference was sponsored by Unity Trust Bank PLC.



**A special thank you to Unity Trust Bank PLC  
for being the Main Sponsor of this year's  
National Awards Conference.**



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**A special thank you to Clover Rodrigues of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) for once again organising the independent assessment panel for this year's Awards.**

**Thank you to the following organisations for giving their time and effort to assess a record number of applications:**

**Age Cymru - Victoria Lloyd**



**CADW - Polly Groom**

**Children's Commissioner for Wales - Lewis Lloyd**



**Co-production Network for Wales - Rachel Wolfendale**



**Data Cymru - Chris Beck**

**Future Generations Commissioner's Office - Helen Nelson**



**Visit Wales - Manon Phillips**

**WCVA / Third Sector Support Wales - Sara Selleck & Alun Jones**



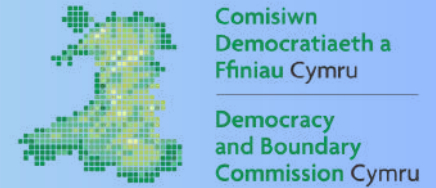
**Wales Centre for Public Policy - Amanda Hill-Dixon**



**Welsh Local Government Association- Clover Rodrigues & Richard Lewis**



A huge thank you to the following for sponsoring individual Awards this year:



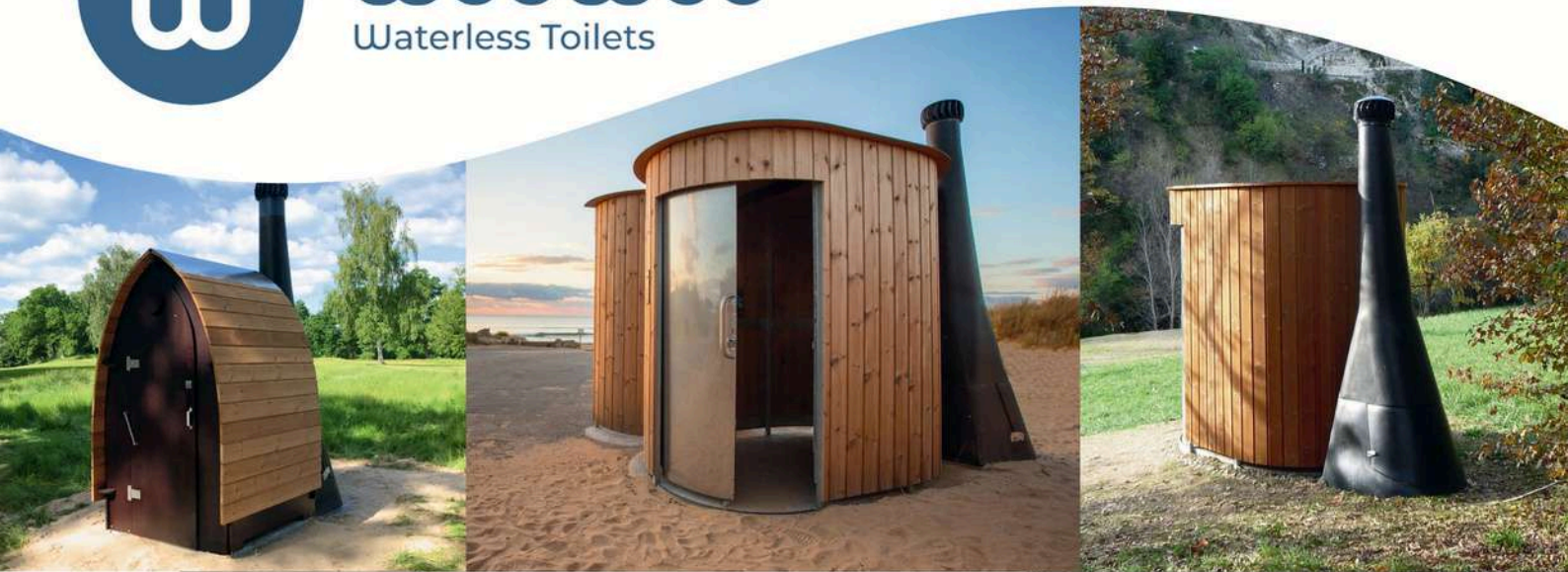
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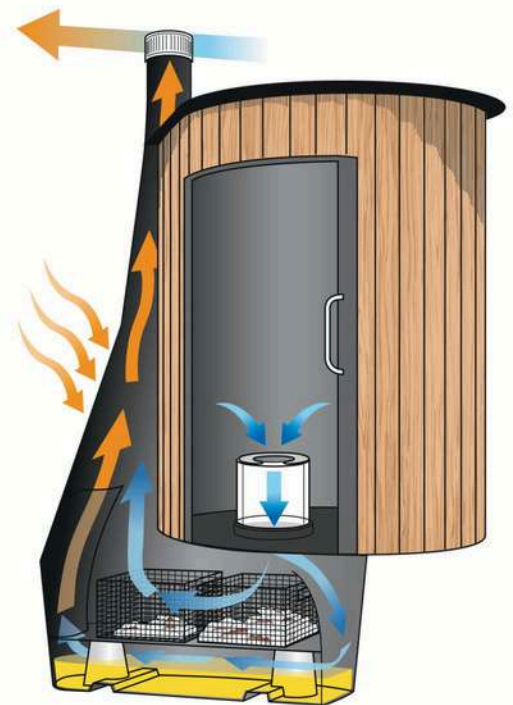


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**Thank you to the Exhibitors that engaged with us  
at this year's event:**

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**Audit Wales**

**Blachere Illumination UK**

**CCLA Investment Management**

**Cloudy IT**

**Cotton & Sons Cleaning Supplies Ltd**

**Democracy & Boundary Commission**

**Scribe**

**Sovereign Play**

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**One Voice Wales would like to express its appreciation to everyone who contributed to the hugely successful Annual National Awards Conference 2025.**

**Thank you to the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show Society for their continued co-operation in organising the Hafod a Hendre venue.**

**Many thanks to Shirley and her team at 'Fingers and Forks' for the wonderful catering, and to 'Technegol' who set up the audio and technical services for the event.**

**Thank you to Nerys Hurford for the simultaneous translation throughout the day during the event.**

**Visit our brand new website for further stories, case studies and photographs of the 2025 Conference:  
<https://www.onevoicewales.wales>**

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