Recovery Strategy 2025 – 2028

1. Introduction

This document provides the overarching recovery strategy for the Cletwr for the next three years. It will be reviewed regularly as a standing item at monthly Board meetings. The development of this plan follows varied discussions held amongst the Board and with individuals, staff, volunteers and customers. It aims to present the framework for recovery to provide a steady and sustainable trading balance.

Ideas are plentiful and varied but given the likely changing nature of a voluntary Board and staff, it is important the business has clear overriding directions to work to, ensuring continuity of purpose and ethos. This enables us to prioritise our resources (time, money and people) in the face of competing demands and to communicate that direction with our staff and community.

2. Current context and overview

Cletwr is a not-for-profit company set up in 2012 to re-establish the privately owned shop and café closed for the previous three years, and to reintroduce and revitalise local services.

Trading began in 2013 and since then with the aid of grants awarded by various funding bodies (Welsh Government, European Union, Big Lottery, Ashley Foundation and Santander) the company has built a new award winning shop and café, and offers a wide variety of services, events and activities.

None of this could have happened without the committed and substantial support of the community and volunteers fulfilling a wide range of tasks. We are also fortunate to have a dedicated staff team who enrich the work of the Cletwr immeasurably.

Our broad aims are based on the **Memorandum and Articles of Association:**

> ***"the objects of the company shall be to provide a community shop and other facilities for the benefits of residents of Llangynfelyn as well as visitors to the area, as a social enterprise"***

Over the last ten years the vision for both the community and environmental aspects of our project has deepened and much has been achieved. The growth of this vision though, depends on the sustainability of the business which must underpin any other developments.

The challenges of COVID and subsequent cost of living crisis have required significant adjustments across the business. However, the company still holds firm to these original aims, and the Board works to ensure day-to-day operations and strategic decisions enable these aims to be met. Given our current financial issues, this strategy is focused on areas for monitoring, consolidation and development.

3. Management

Cletwr is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors who come from different walks of life and offer a range and depth of experience to the company. They normally meet monthly and maintain regular communication through email. Individual Directors also meet informally with the Business Manager and contribute to the business in a range of ways, including volunteer shifts in the shop, cafe, garden.

The shop and café are run by a Business Manager with overall responsibility for the whole business who reports to the Board.They are supported by a staff team which flexes in strength depending on the business needs across theyear, comprising adults and young people. Sourcing local staff, thus benefiting the business and thelocal economy, is a key business principle.

The staffing structure and operation should bemonitored and reviewed to respond to changing business needs with a close eye on both service standards and financial realities. This is an ongoing process undertaken by the Business Manager and Financial Controller in conjunction with the Board.

4. Volunteers

As well as the staff we have up to 50 volunteers listed who work shifts in the shop, do front of house in the cafe or bake in the kitchen, maintain the garden, do repairs, help with events, run the Welsh library and the fuel club, advise on environmental issues etc.

Some individuals volunteer on a regular basis, others ad hoc as they can. Without the volunteers the business could not offer the varied local services and products it does and the community aspect would be much diminished. It also brings extra responsibility for staff getting to know a range of people, managing expectations, ensuring inclusivity amongst volunteers, training individuals, supporting young people and volunteers with special needs.

We aim to recruit new volunteers and bring back volunteers who withdrew post covid, focusing on training, support and reward to encourage commitment.

5. Finance

The business operates on a non-profit basis. Directors do not take any remuneration for their time supporting the business. Profit is reinvested into company activities which include community activities and/or supporting further employment via business operations.

Grants are used for designated purposes such as major new building work, capital items and energy future proofing. We have received some revenue grants for specific things such as developing events and other activities and continue to access grants as appropriate for the business.

The financial position is overseen by a subgroup of the Board, consisting of the Treasurer, Financial Controller, the Business Manager and one other Board member. Additional expertise may be co-opted to this group from time to time as needed. They meet outside of Board meetings but report at least monthly to the Board.

In the current economic climate we view tight financial control of costs and expenditure as a priority over the coming years. An overriding objective is to ensure that we offer a business which succeeds financially and earns sufficient funds to maintain our aims and ambitions. ***Our decisions therefore about what we can support for our community must be within the context of sustainability.***

Costs are monitored and reviewed daily by a team including the Financial Controller and the Business Manager. Balance sheets are prepared and discussed as standing items at monthly board meetings.

We aim to pay our staff the real living wage, but this depends on whether the business itself has sufficient turnover to realise this.

We aim to return to a reserve balance of approximately 5% of turnover as a contingency fund. The volume of business in the summer period is welcomed but it requires tight management to ensure costs balance our income over the year as a whole, covering reduced trade over the winter period. Energy costs have risen significantly in the period running up to 2024 and impacted heavily on business profitability. *We monitor energy costs continually and aim to increase our self-sufficiency in energy provision.*

6. Shop and café provision

From the outset the ethos of the company was to operate in an environmentally responsible way. This applies to product sourcing, minimising waste, reduce, reuse and recycling. Working within the local economy is also a key principle, using local suppliers and providing local jobs wherever feasible.

Our buying strategy

- ✓ to keep supply chains as short as possible, sourcing goods first locally, regionally, then throughout Wales as our priority
- ✓ to stock everyday products at affordable prices
- ✓ to offer quality produce and keep packaging to a minimum
- ✓ to respond to requests e.g. for specialist products such as vegan, non-dairy, organic
- ✓ to offer bulk ordering for individuals
- ✓ to manage supply relationships positively.

These principles, whilst maintaining our ethos, do have financial consequences. For example, having many local suppliers means increased administration costs processing orders and invoices, and time from volunteers unpacking goods, filling shelves etc.

Our focus moving forward is to ensure that we maintain lively displays and tight stock control, ordering as sales happen rather than a maintaining regular ordering pattern prior to sale.

The café works to the same principles offering affordable food, usually homemade and organic where feasible, using local or Welsh suppliers. The types of menu are driven by the customer, e.g. vegan cake, breakfast, etc. Welsh coffee is promoted front of house, volunteers help with baking cakes and making jam and chutneys when available. We work hard to ensure as little waste as possible. *Tight costing and popularity of dishes offered, considering other ways to increase sales e.g. takeaways, frozen ready meals,will receive greater focus moving forward.*

To underpin these activities for the shop and café, we will undertake market research to ensure we are providing products and services needed and wanted, as well as seeking new streams of income.

7. Communication and publicity

It is critical we keep in touch with our community and respond to views and requests appropriately. There are regular staff meetings and volunteer evenings; we ask for feedback in the premises on the suggestion forms and in the comments book. The ethos of Cletwr itself is open and friendly to encourage dialogue and ideas.

We have a varied social media presence e.g. Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and our web site.Regulare-bulletinsare sent to volunteers and supporters covering a range of subject areas, including shout outs for volunteers and event promotion. There are regular reports in local newsletters (e.g. Papur Pawb).

We have received several awards which also serve to publicise our services. We are often asked for advice from other organisations looking to develop a community shop or community service.

We aim to update our web site and to improve our social media presence and local advertising. We will revise our communications policy for internal guidance and external information, ensuring clear factual messages checked for accuracy which support effective advertising for our services and products.

8. Community activities and support services

The café and shop continue to provide a focus for a genuinely inclusive community. Our range of events and the Cletwr space itself provides opportunities to share skills and activities. Acting as a community hub, Cletwr is a venue where neighbours connect and get to know each other. These activities and events enrich our lives, mitigating against loneliness and social isolation.

The events and activities we offer include (depending on resources available)music evenings, nature walks, running groups, mental health and wellbeing, yoga, art and textile displays, Welsh language books honesty library and conversation groups, book launches, IT skills, fuel syndicate, gardening, environmental activities, provision of an electric car charger. In addition to the activities organised by Cletwr we host other groups e.g. Knit and Natter, Dal Ati, children's game groups. These again will ebb and flow depending on demand and resources available.

We frequently act as a liaison to find 'someone who can…'. Cletwr will continue to help residents, particularly the elderly, as needed, for instance delivering newspapers and groceries to someone unwell and linking people interested in similar projects. Ongoing feedback suggests all these things have given individuals confidence, skills and friendships.

We aim to continue providing events and support for our community. Given financial constraints, all events need to be cost effective and draw in funds to facilitate future events and support provision.

9. Skills Development

We continue to monitor processes and outcomes to maintain consistency of service and manage expectations and pressure on staff and volunteers. We want to do what we are doing well and not seek to overreach the capacity of the organisation. We aim to provide staff and volunteers, including Board members, access to professional and skill development as relevant to them and the company.

*We commit to following and developing induction processes particularly for volunteers and Board members.*It is important to maintain the involvement of our young people and the experience and training we can offer them.*We also commit to identifying training opportunities for staff to both deepen business development and to support individual progress. We recognise the cost and time needed to complete training and commit to providing cover (usually from volunteers) and training costs where necessary.*

This document is intended to provide a framework for decisions and forms the basis for our recovery action planning. However it is dynamic and where circumstances demand it will be revised by the Board.

Strategic recovery action oversight plan 2024-28

To fulfil our strategic aims individual Board members are responsible for developing and overseeing appropriate action plans. The table below indicates lead responsibilities to ensure follow up and to enable us to achieve our aims.

Top line actions	Timescale	Responsibility for action planning
▪ The staffing structure and operation kept under review. ▪ Staff and volunteer rotas regularly reviewed against activity and costs.	Monthly	Financial Controller (FC), Business Manager (BM),Team Leaders for Kitchen, Front of House and Shop (TL)
▪ Consolidate clear communications to volunteers. ▪ Invite individuals to return, clarity about commitment and reward. ▪ New posters and publicity to recruit. ▪ Ensure clear pathways to induction and support.	Started - ongoing	Board Volunteer Co-ordinator + volunteers members of the community with Team Leader support
▪ Matching buying/ selling data such that profit margins monitored. ▪ Ordering as sales happen, focus on known good sellers. ▪ Looking for new and seasonal products of interest to the community. ▪ Maintaining lively displays and tight stock control.	Initial phase by end April 25in preparation for the summer, thereafter ongoing.	Treasurer, FC, BM, TL
Regular monitoring of reserves	Ongoing	FC
▪ Tight monitoring of costing and popularity of dishes offered. ▪ Development of other income streams e.g. takeaways, frozen ready meals	Ongoing, according to season Plan trials for spring 25, ongoing.	Kitchen manager, FC, BM
▪ Update our website; ▪ improve our social media presence; ▪ review local advertising	Started with FB By spring 25 Develop annual plan for advertising	Webmaster, Chair(2)
Providing events/activities. Ensure events cost effective and draw in funds	As required	Board member organising event
▪ Maintain /develop skills and expertise for financial management ▪ As appropriate for staff and volunteers	Each area to identify immediate gaps, develop plans by Spring 25	Chair (1), Secretary, Vol Coordinator, BM, TL

Top line actions	Timescale	Responsibility for action planning
Access funding support for additional renewable energy installation and air flow management systems.	Over next 12- 18 months	Chair (2)
Revise communications policy	In progress By mid March	Webmaster/ Secretary
Actions for immediate financial focus - see direct cost reductions table.	In progress	FC, BM, Board