



PLANT DEWI

Lle mae Teuluoedd yn Bwysig
Where Families Matter

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 – 2020



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Meithrin Gobaith
ESGOBAETH TYDDEW
DIOCESE of ST DAVIDS 
Growing Hope

Introduction

We have had such a busy year in Plant Dewi with so much change.

The year began with a big refurbishment to the Plant Dewi Charity Shop – it was unfortunate that we had to close the shop, however, the space looks great now that the work has been completed.

An exciting fun day was held in St Davids Cathedral back in September for families that attend Plant Dewi projects. 200 individuals from around the Diocese came together to enjoy arts and crafts, singing and dancing, drum playing and puppet shows. The event was supported by a host of partners including the Mothers' Union, the Cathedral staff, Siani Sionc and Samba Dock to name a few.

Sue Fletcher left her post as Manager and Catrin Evans took over in October 2019. The management team was then joined by Christina Jenkins, Family Support Manager who started in November to oversee the Plant Dewi projects and to manage the staff.

We were successful in gaining support from a fundraising coach later on in the year, which has promoted us to develop a new Fundraising Strategy to move the organisation forward.

At the beginning of March 2020, we brought 35 staff members and Plant Dewi trustees together for a team building day. We got down to business in the morning with a Safeguarding refresher session, an introduction to St David DCSR and enjoyed a wellbeing session in the afternoon, focusing on the NHS 5 Ways to Wellbeing.



It was unfortunate that the projects had to close on the 19th March due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, in a short space of time, staff adjusted to working remotely and continued with the excellent provision by utilising web-based platforms and social media to keep in contact with all families. This has presented a completely new way of working for all, created new opportunities to engage with families and organisations and developed skills across the team.

This year, we are pleased to report that a total of 31 projects have been delivered and a total of 2227 families have been supported across the Diocese of St Davids.

The Plant Dewi projects are split into 5 areas of work – Family Centres, Families Together Groups, Young Parents project, Dads project and Baby Bundle.

Family Centres

There are 13 family centres across Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion and they have supported 1757 families between April 2019 and March 2020.

A wide range of activities, sessions, courses and workshops have been delivered across the network of Family Centres in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. These include:

Activities/sessions	Courses	Workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Messy play - Mindfulness – parents and children - Bumps and Baby groups - Cook and play - Gardening - Breastfeeding support - Infant Feeding support - Toddler groups - Active sessions - Young parents’ groups - Dads groups - Walking groups - Health Visitor drop in clinics - After School / Family Fun clubs - Cymraeg i Blant Welsh language sessions - Midwife clinic - Cylch Ti a Fi - Intergenerational sessions - Food Co-op 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language and Play - Baby massage - Baby yoga - Resilience - First Aid - Nurture programme - Helping me, Helping you - Babbling Babies - Fit in Five - Active Story time - Busy Feet - Get That Job - Play Work Level 2 - Healthy Eating on a Budget - Mental Health and Well Being - Walk Leader Training - Level 2 Food Hygiene - Getting to know your baby - Introduction to Childminding - Christmas on a budget - Emotional Wellbeing - Child development - Key Messages - Family Links - Clwb Cwtsh - Incredible Years - Handling Children’s behaviour - The Recovery programme - STAR programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car seat safety - Home safety - Baby weaning - Drama for children - CAB fuel saving - Alcohol Awareness - Child Accident Prevention - Design to Smile - Safer Sleep - Employment workshop - Fire Safety - Road Safety - Sewing



Families have also enjoyed trips and outings to a whole variety of places throughout the year including: Folly Farm, Dinefwr Park, St Fagans, Tenby Dinosaur Park, The National Botanic Garden of Wales, New Quay Lifeboat station and beach, Llanerchaeron, Dre Twt, Fantasy Farm, Little M'zzz soft play area, Pantomime events, Forest School in Ferry Side travelled by Train, Wiggleys Fun Farm, Wild Fowl and Wetlands, Strawberry picking on the Gower, Tenby by Train, Swansea to the Marina and Museum, Carmarthen Winter Wonderland Event, Blackpill Lido,



You can already see that it's been a busy year for the family centres and so much has happened with constant developments and growth. Below are some highlights from around the network:

Through a successful grant by the WCVA Landfill, Betws Family Centre were able to renovate the garden by putting artificial grass down, having 3 new raised beds for gardening and new gardening tools. The staff were able to deliver outside activities all year round, it has been a huge success with the families and families have reported that they are more physically active because of this.

Thanks to the Co-op Community Fund, Burry Port Family Centre brought a pantomime to the community with a total of 220 attending, experiencing a live performance which was a new experience for many. The Manager at Burry Port Family Centre also received the Trinity Saint David Students' Union "Woman of Recognition" Award after being nominated by a family supported at the family centre. Well done Mrs Shan Cheesman.

Two parents at Carmarthen Family Centre have nearly completed their Level 3 CCLD qualification, organised by the centre, and have been volunteering in the centres too. Support has been provided by the staff with course work and observations and they're nearly at the completion stage.



The progress made on the Helping Working Families project this year at Felinfoel Family Centre has been a definite highlight. It has been really motivating and interesting to work with the families to identify issues for working families and brainstorm ideas to help and write the project plan. Beginning to deliver this plan in October was an exciting time. 10 families, which included 50 individuals in total, signed up to the first term of affordable family activities which began with a visit to the fireworks display at Parc y Scarlets, an event that they hadn't accessed before due to cost.

Garnant Family Centre has been delighted with the increase in outdoor activity. This was achieved through families being involved in the Community Garden, where children and parents have eaten strawberries and peas straight from the plants, while harvesting produce to be used in the Make and Eat sessions. The children enjoyed the carrying of the vegetables, pushing around the wheelbarrows and watering the plants. When the weather has been wet and damp, the centre has continued to get families outside by facilitating several small outdoor activities for around 15 minutes each.



Lampeter Family Centre had a wonderful opportunity, working with a local artist, Rhiannon Roberts to create a large mural of Lampeter. This brilliant opportunity, allowed different individuals from the community to get involved. Along with the families from the family centre and Rhiannon Roberts, children from Carreg Hirfaen Ysgol Meithrin and residents from Hafan Deg Day Centre were also involved to help create the beautiful mural seen below.



Borth Family Centre continue to expand on their volunteer base. Young Volunteers have signed up to Wales Volunteering and one young person assists in the lunch club every Wednesday. She volunteers in her spare time as has Wednesdays off from her Coleg Ceredigion course. She has been volunteering since September.



Llandysul Family Centre ran a very successful programme over the 6 week summer holidays, with new families attending, and also a lot of families they had not seen for a while coming back to the centre (as their children are now attending school/Cylch). Activities included trips out, breakfast and lunch clubs, a movie day, a visit from Animal Encounters, art and craft sessions and an active day at the local leisure centre.

A trip to the Gower Heritage Centre is a highlight for Morfa Family Centre staff and families. This was the first trip held with the new team of staff at the centre and all families enjoyed a day out to somewhere many of them had not visited previously.

Due to the demand for a Baby Group, Llanybydder Family Centre were fortunate to be in a position to open a Baby Room. This gives parents with babies an opportunity to enjoy a range of age appropriate toys in a peaceful room, away from the busier sessions. It was officially opened in October 2019 by one of the residents of Cwm Aur Residential home, where the family centre is based, and has had a lot of use.



The Food Co-op has been run by Pencader Family Centre for many years and this year it grew considerably by providing affordable fruit and vegetables for 40 weeks of the year and 50 to 100 children and parents benefitting at any one time. There are clear benefits to the scheme, which include creating good habits of eating healthy food for the whole family, opportunities to try new fruits and vegetables, and giving the children a chance to learn about fruit and vegetables, where they come from and how they are distributed.



Families at St Pauls family centre have enjoyed a total of 36 Language and Play sessions throughout the year. These sessions are open to all preschool children and activities can be tailored to the child's age or ability, where staff have provided support and ideas to help develop the child's language skills. One parent has said "Since coming to the course, my son has made big improvements with his speech and concentration. It's given me lots of ideas of different activities I can do at home".

Tregaron Family Centre were fortunate to take part in a project with Aberystwyth Art Centre, Bryntirion (local residential home for the elderly) and Pontrhydfendigaid primary school. The theme was 'Home' and what home meant to the different age groups involved. Families made 3 tepees for the centre and took part in various workshops, including screen printing, block printing and a very messy painting session which the children absolutely loved. An exhibition of everyone's work was held at the end of the project at the art centre, which both staff and families attended.

Through their involvement with the family centres, parents are reporting feeling less isolated, have improved wellbeing, have improved relationships with their children and have improved confidence.

Parents tell us:

- *I've been fortunate enough to receive help from the family centre when it comes to food banks, emotional support, and support and advice with money and outside agencies.*
- *They have supported me and my children greatly, not only by supplying activities and a safe environment for the children to play and develop. I felt that I have had people that are willing to listen when I have had a rough time. They have supplied courses that have helped not only my family dynamics but have helped me learn so much more about my children. My daughter is a selective mute and the staff have been so accommodating to this and made her feel at ease. The days out that they have put on have been amazing and we love attending.*
- *They have provided a safe and friendly place for my children and I to visit during the week with no obligation to stay for the whole day. The staff are great with the children and offer support to us when needed.*
- *Having a regular group of parents that attends gives a sense of community. It gives me peace of mind knowing that the Centre is there when I need it.*
- *The Family Centre has been a lifeline in times where being at home alone with a new-born has been very lonely. Staff have been very friendly and accommodating and made me feel at ease there. The resources available to my child have been wonderful and I can see the excitement on my little girls face when we arrive. Keep up the good work.*
- *Having the centre gave me a reason to get dressed every day, I didn't feel so alone anymore*
- *The centre has been a vital part in allowing me to live my life without medication for anxiety issues. I've learned to deal much better with the triggers and being able to leave the house and attend the centre has been the key element in doing this.*

Funding

Without so many supportive and generous funders throughout Wales and the UK, it would not be possible for the projects to deliver the sessions and support the hundreds of families over the past year. The following funders have enabled the work to continue and grow at the family centres:

- Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion Families First
- Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion Flying Start
- Children in Need
- The National Lottery
- Coalfields
- Mynydd Y Betws
- Tesco
- Williams Brown Hill
- WCVA Landfill
- Archbishop of Wales fund for Children
- Sports Wales
- CAVO Youth Led Grant
- Co-op Community Fund
- Santander Foundation
- Awards for all
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Prince of Wales Charitable Fund
- Foyle Foundation
- Rainscape
- Money Saving Expert
- Trusthouse
- Masonic Charitable Foundation
- Goodness Knows
- Dr Dewi Davies
- Pobl
- Nineveh Trust
- HDH
- Henry Smith
- Enterprise

Families Together Groups

There are 4 Families Together Groups across the Diocese – Llandeilo, Newcastle Emlyn, Pembroke Dock and The Mount, Milford Haven. 84 families have accessed the groups between April 2019 and March 2020.

Activities/sessions	Courses	Workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly craft - Cooking - Games - Magician - Positive Lifestyle - Skill sharing – sewing and knitting - Forest school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic Food Hygiene - First Aid - Money Matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decoupage - Card Making - Jewellery Making - Nutrition - Health eating on a budget

The trips to St Fagans Welsh National Museum, Cardiff Bay and St David’s Cathedral have been very well attended.

In this year, 121 individuals have accessed the service.

The Project Worker has continued to build a positive working relationship with schools and other agencies. During the year, 7 families have benefitted from the Team Around the Family approach. Extensive support has been provided to these families through collaborative working with Action for Children, the Domestic Abuse Team, IDVA, local Schools, Health Visitors, Tim Camau Bach, Youth Service, Education Welfare officer, Area 43, Mental Health team and Hafan Cymru.

A Christingle service delivered by the local clergy saw families celebrating together and joining in the activity with their children.



Outcomes:

- 100% report reduced isolation
- 91% report improved well being
- 80% report improved relationship with child
- 87% report increased confidence

Parents tell us:

- *It's so lovely to speak to other people, cheers me up. I take anti-depressants, coming to this group is the highlight of my week, I don't know where I'd be without it.*
- *Coming to the group makes me feel as if I belong, I'm on my own most days and it's nice to chat to others, see a friendly face.*

The groups have been funded by Carmarthenshire County Council Families First, Dr Dewi Davies, South Hook, Margaret and Gwendoline Davies Trust and Garfield Weston in this 12 month period.

Young Parents' Project

During the year 5 hubs have been running; Ammanford, Pencader, Pembroke Dock, Milford Haven and Llangennech. Llangennech and Milford Haven hubs closed its doors after successfully moving on young parents into education, employment or volunteering. 79 families have been supported through the Young Parents' Groups.

Activities/sessions	Courses	Workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Craft - Clay modelling - Cooking - Christmas activities - Quizzes - Team Building games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First Aid - ASDAN Mindfulness journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glass and ceramic painting - Pyrography - Fire Safety Awareness - Wellbeing - Mindfulness - Future Prospects - Social Enterprise

Three trips have taken place in the last year. A summer trip to Cardiff Bay, October half term trip to St Fagans and a Christmas trip to Swansea.

It has been excellent to see that numbers accessing the project are increasing on a monthly basis.

The project has been working closely with the Mothers' Union in the community and the partnership with them has been wonderful. With support from the Mothers' Union the Social Enterprise project was a huge success, all handmade 'bags for life' were sold in their Christmas fayre. They have been in the group encouraging young parents to get involved in activities and they have also been positive

role models. The support we have received from the Mothers' Union has been overwhelming and we are already planning our next project together.



Our trips throughout the year have been well attended and it's been lovely to see fathers and even grandparents coming on the trips. Seeing them all spend time together and creating wonderful memories has made a difference in their lives.

Outcomes:

76% report reduced isolation

52% report improved relationship with their children

69% report improved confidence

Parents tell us:

- *I have met so many friends by coming to the group*
- *There's always a friendly atmosphere*
- *If I didn't come to the group, I wouldn't have known about other services in the area*
- *I feel confident coming on my own now*
- *Group is the only thing I do in the week*
- *I'm so grateful to have the support of my project worker*
- *My daughter was clingy when I first started coming to group, now she goes and plays on her own or with other children*
- *Staff are so easy to talk to; I feel comfortable talking about my problems to them*
- *I was new to the area; my health visitor took me to group and I have so many new friends now*

The Young Parents' project has been funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and The Bluestone Foundation over the past 12 months.

Dads Project

The Dads project is based in Hwb Plant Dewi, Pembroke Dock and is delivered over 3 days. 99 families have accessed the project between April 2019 and March 2020.

Activities/sessions	Courses	Workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal drop in - Team building games - Lego and construction - Building bird boxes and bug houses - Crab hunting - Nature walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Christians Against Poverty - Parenting – Time out for Dads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bicycle upcycling - Energy saving - Drugs Advisory - Wheel of life



The Dad & Me project undertook a time of focused outreach in the local primary schools and organised 'Bring your Dad to Breakfast' events. Invites were taken home by the school children inviting their fathers to come and enjoy a 'bacon bap' with them before the start of school. The sessions attracted many fathers and children with over one hundred participants at one event.

A pancake day was held at St Johns Church in Pembroke Dock in February, organised by the Plant Dewi Support Group in conjunction with Reverend Alex Grace. The Men cooked the pancakes, organised the serving of the food, cakes and refreshments and running the raffle. All proceeds went to Plant Dewi.

The regular litter picking sessions have been particularly appreciated by the local community. Fathers suggested that we should be doing something more for the environment which gave birth to the litter walks, often around the coast / estuary areas of Pembroke Dock

Outcomes:

100% of fathers felt that as a result of attending the project that they experienced reduced Isolation

93% of fathers felt that as a result of attending the project that they experienced improved wellbeing

88% of fathers felt that as a result of attending the project that they experienced improved relationships with children

100% felt that as a result of attending the project that they experienced improved confidence

There is a Baby Bundle hub in each archdeaconry – St Johns Church in Carmarthen, Plant Dewi Hub in Pembroke Dock and The Well in Aberystwyth. Smaller bases are also being set up in the diocese, The Community Hall in Steynton and Impact 242 in Cross Hands are storing necessary essentials, maximising the delivery of the project.

A wide range of issues impact on parental ability to provide what is needed for their baby, but more often than not, poverty is at the core of all requests. Parents have faced financial difficulties, have been homeless, some have fled from domestic abuse and some have learning difficulties. Others have anxiety and depression and many have little family support around them. These issues impact on their ability to provide the essentials for their baby.

We are so fortunate to be supported by a range of volunteers and donors for this project. It has been a busy year for the project and without generous donations from the likes The Mothers' Union and Williams Brown Hill Foundation as well as many individuals across the Diocese, the work would not have been possible.

Flying Start Nursery provision

St Paul's Flying Start Nursery, Llanelli

We provide care for 16 children aged 2 to 3 years. We work in partnership with parents and carers to meet the needs of the child. Parents are welcome to come in and talk to a member of staff before and/or after each session. This allows the parents to express any issues or concerns of their child or be given reassurance from a member of staff of their development.

There is access to the book corner, home corner, board games, puzzles, art, music, toys, dressing up area, sand/water, outdoor play, large scale equipment and free play opportunities.

The staff strive to provide a happy, caring, stimulating and friendly environment. Staff work alongside children giving them the opportunities to play, learn and develop at their own pace.



Staff have observed children and followed the Foundation Phase Profile (FPP). Each child has their own FPP and information gets recorded within 6 weeks of joining the nursery, after six months and again just before they leave. 99% of children reached their expected Foundation Phase Profile (FPP) outcomes.

Each child has had a daily opportunity to access the Core Vocabulary Programme which was a Flying Start recommendation, and is done in small groups of children in order to develop language skills, is working well to encourage the children's speech and language in a fun, social environment. All children's speech was improved by the time they transitioned to school.

Children have had visits to the local primary school this enables them to have the best possible transition to school and helped them to gain positive experiences of their new surroundings. The Nursery Manager also had transition meetings with the Head Teacher and shared information about the children who were due to start.



Staff have taken children on local walks to experience the wider community, recent walks have included nature walks around local area, outings to the local nursery school, visits to our off site allotment, the local post office to post letters, visits to local shops including having a small shopping list and to the town centre to watch the primary aged children singing in the school choir. The staff supported the children daily in active song time, story time or dancing and promoted physical activity both indoors and out. Weather permitting staff took the class room experience outdoors. Staff also take a group of children for nature walks on a daily basis which allows the children to experience the outdoor environment which also covers all areas of learning.

During school holidays the families were encouraged to take part in the Family Centre events such as the Easter Fun Day, playdays, trips, outings and family days, as well being welcomed to join the parent and toddler group and courses during term time afternoons. Everyone has enjoyed these; and the sessions were often well attended.

Parents tell us:

- Thank you so much for everything you've done for ... and for us as a family, we'll miss the nursery but will look forward to continuing the afternoon sessions
- She skips into nursery now and comes home bubbling with everything she's done and played with
- Behaviour and speech really improved since attending
- Thanks for helping him grow, I look forward to the baby starting here next year

Meithrinfa Plant Dewi, Carmarthen

We are a close team of 3 staff here at Plant Dewi, Flying Start Nursery, Claire- Play Leader, Toni – Play Worker and Lydia who is a Helping Hand and Sessional Worker.

Over the past year we have provided support for at least 24 children and their families, some with complex needs. We have provided 210 sessions over the year either through childcare sessions at the setting or family open days/ Summer activity days. Our highlights this year have been our annual Christmas concert where the children practice several Christmas songs and we invite families to come and watch them perform these songs before having a Christmas party for the all children and families to enjoy, this is a great chance for parents to meet each other and share experiences and support one another as well as us as staff having the opportunity to get to know our families better to support their needs. Other highlights include St David's day where all the children came in costume and we made welsh cakes, World book day, again all the children engaged and dressed as characters from a book and my favourite high light was the Mini Beasts theme and Snail racing!

We carried on working from home throughout the pandemic keeping in close contact with all of our families through phone calls or online, providing support, sharing information and most importantly sharing activity ideas daily to keep the children busy whilst staying home safe and sound. Although working from home was completely out of our normal working life we as a team embraced the challenge head on and very successfully.



Parents tell us:

- Thank you for a beautiful year spent with you in which (our little boy) has learned a lot
- Thanks for your patience and understanding, you helped me overcome my struggles with speech delay, I'm so lucky to have you 3 as my helpers (Mum wrote card in her daughters words)
- Thank you for everything you have done for us, (our little boy) has had the best time with you here, it's like having a big family! We will miss you lots'

Closing remarks

As previously mentioned, all projects sadly closed their doors to families on the 19th March 2020 and new challenges were faced at the end of this period. Families, staff, trustees and the wider communities have already come together to support each other and it is humbling to see everyone come together at a time of immense need. Plant Dewi projects will continue to support families and will develop and grow through these difficult times to always nurture families and strengthen communities across the Diocese of St Davids.