



RWE

Future Bright Empowering communities

Recognising and sharing best practice

The origins of Abergele Community Action

"In 2001, facing a rise in youth antisocial behaviour, our community's response was swift and unified. We established Abergele Youth Action to channel youthful energies positively, setting the stage for a community-driven future that has grown to include all ages and backgrounds." - Abergele Community Action

Abergele Community Action was founded against a backdrop of increasing social challenges, particularly among the youth in Abergele, North Wales. It was 2001 when a significant escalation in antisocial behaviour spurred a group of volunteers to organise a community meeting. This meeting, which drew nearly sixty people, led to the formation of Abergele Youth Action, an initiative focusing on providing constructive activities and opportunities for the area's young people.

The group evolved substantially over the following years. In 2005, they opened a popular internet café in a former hotel, later expanding this into a comprehensive community hub which included digital skills training and employability support. Funding from various sources, including the Welsh Government and Big Lottery, facilitated these expansions. Over time, the group broadened its focus to include all age groups, prompting a name change to Abergele Community Action. They also started to tackle other local challenges including food insecurity by establishing a food bank in 2013, money problems by introducing a community money advice service in 2018 and fuel poverty by making fuel vouchers available since 2022 all crucial resources for the community.





Impact of renewable energy community funds

"The community funds from Rhyl Flats and Gwynt y Mor wind farms have allowed us to enhance our facilities and expand our reach, proving that with the right support, community projects can thrive and adapt to ever-changing local needs." - Abergele Community Action

The support from local renewable energy projects, like the Rhyl Flats and Gwynt y Mor wind farms, has been vital. These community funds have helped with capital funding to enhance facilities as well as harder to find revenue funding to support key positions, such as a project manager who spearheads initiatives to combat social isolation and improve educational and economic opportunities. This funding has not only enabled the group to deliver targeted help effectively but also allowed for flexibility in meeting the community's evolving needs.

The power of collaboration

"Collaboration is not just about bringing together resources; it's about weaving these resources into the fabric of our community. Our partnerships with local and national organisations enable us to deliver comprehensive support that truly makes a difference in the lives of our residents." - Abergele Community Action

Collaboration has been central to Abergele Community Action's approach. Partnering with organisations like the Trussell Trust, Community Money Advice and the Fuel Bank Foundation have enriched their service provision, ensuring they don't duplicate efforts but instead enhance existing community services.

Working with local partners has also facilitated a variety of initiatives, from youth activities with the Outdoor Partnership and Ffit Conwy to broader support networks involving local employability hubs and educational resources. Linking with a network of local referral partners including Citizen Advice, housing associations, substance misuse, homelessness and domestic abuse charities and statutory services is helping the group to provide holistic support which is key to helping move people out of crisis.



Community leadership to build sustainability and Long-Term Impact

"Maintaining sustainability in community projects is an ongoing challenge, but it's one we embrace with the help of our dedicated volunteers and supporters. Our approach ensures that we're not just doing for the community, but with the community, fostering a sense of ownership and lasting impact." - Abergele Community Action

Sustainability is a continuous challenge. The group relies heavily on a mix of volunteer support and funding sources, constantly seeking new funding to maintain and expand their services. They place a strong emphasis on community involvement in both planning and executing projects, ensuring their actions remain closely aligned with local needs. A steering group of people with 'lived experience' of food poverty, financial insecurity and social isolation is at the core of the groups development approach. This has led to innovations like a more personalised approach in their food bank, and the introduction of a community shop where individuals pay a small subscription to receive a larger budget and can then select their groceries, enhancing the dignity and choice for as well as combating food waste.

Looking to the Future

"Our future is rooted in our values of compassion, justice, community and dignity. As we move forward, our focus is on reducing the need for food banks and building a fairer society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Every step we take is a step towards a future filled with hope and dignity." - Abergele Community Action

Looking ahead, Abergele Community Action remains committed to their core values. Their main goals include reducing the need for food banks and creating a more equitable society.

They are leveraging digital platforms to enhance their reach and effectiveness, continuously seeking to share their successful strategies and learn from others. This commitment to improvement and community empowerment stands as a powerful model for similar community action groups across the UK.



abergeleaction.co.uk

Creating bright futures for everyone

