



RWE



# Future Bright Empowering communities

Recognising and sharing best practice



# The Cynefin Project

## How our wind farms are uniting communities through educational innovation

In the heart of rural Carmarthenshire, a transformative educational project has taken root. Their mission began with an ambitious goal: to implement the New Curriculum for Wales through a unique local lens.

Spearheaded by Charlotte Evans of Ysgol Llanllwni and Sharon Phillips of Ysgol Nantgaredig, along with their counterparts from six local schools, and Richard Lashley from Carmarthenshire Council, they embarked on their journey. Their primary aim was to embed a deep sense of belonging, respect, and pride among pupils concerning their local area—Cynefin.

*“Starting the Cynefin project felt like planting seeds in uncharted soil. It was daunting at first, but as we met and shared ideas, those seeds began to sprout into something extraordinary. We aimed to give our students roots and wings: roots in their community and wings to explore and appreciate their world.”*

Charlotte Evans | Ysgol Llanllwni





Brechfa Community Fund film



## The Genesis of the Cynefin Project

Our funding programmes offer local residents the power to shape and directly influence the development of their communities. A prime example of this is the Cynefin Project, which was initiated by the community panel that decides the awards from the [Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm Community Fund](#).

The local panel members wanted to reach beyond funding local community buildings and existing community groups. So, they employed a specialist to bring together teachers from six local primary schools, and representatives from the Local Authority Education Department to identify the best way for the fund to support local schools over the long term. The result was the Cynefin Project which would design a programme that would benefit 500 students and their teachers.

Due to the pandemic restrictions, initially the leaders of the Cynefin Project struggled to build the bonds necessary to achieve their vision, however, once they could meet in person, starting with an invigorating hike through Brechfa's Keepers Forest, their collaboration flourished

They not only planned enriched learning experiences but also involved additional experts to bring the local themes alive for the students. For further insights watch the [Brechfa Community Fund film](#).



## Empowered by the Brechfa Wind Farm Fund

The financial backing from RWE's Brechfa Wind Farm Fund enabled the teachers from the six schools to collaborate effectively, for the first time, something that wouldn't have been possible otherwise given the limited school budgets. This support helped them to provide their pupils with extraordinary experiences such as composing poetry with Aneirin Karadog and performing with Welsh music icons Dafydd Iwan and The Welsh Whisperer for their 6-school choir.

Moreover, it facilitated a partnership with Natural Resources Wales and Pobl Y Fforest who support memorable outdoor learning in Keepers Forest, turning it into a thriving outdoor classroom where pupils take part in practical outdoor learning activities that help to bolster their confidence and respect for nature.

***"The support from the Brechfa Wind Farm Fund was like a lifeline. It enabled us to stretch ourselves further, reaching milestones we never thought possible under the constraints of tight budgets."***

Sharon Phillips | Ysgol Nantgaredig



## Overcoming challenges through teamwork

The initial virtual meetings were a hurdle, with the team finding it difficult to bond. The shift to in-person interactions marked a significant turning point. The team learned to trust the power of collective wisdom—realising that within their group, and engaging with external agencies, solutions to challenges could be found.

They enhanced their internal support by involving other school members in various training programmes such as fire-training, art printing and Google Sites training, which helped expand the project's reach and impact within the schools. These will be further developed in Phase 2.

***“In the face of early challenges, the strength of our project lay in our unity. When we started meeting in person, every challenge became a bridge, bringing us closer together. I learned that when in doubt, there is power in our little collective – because if you don’t know the answer, someone else will.”***

Charlotte Evans | Ysgol Llanllwni



## Sustainable practices and future planning

Looking towards sustainability and lasting impact, the Cynefin project team is being proactive in gathering feedback and strengthening their partnerships. Before advancing to Phase 2, they are engaging with their colleagues to reflect on the successes and learnings from Phase 1. Their collaboration with local environmental groups and ongoing engagement with outdoor spaces exemplify their commitment to a sustainable educational model.

***“Our commitment to sustainability isn’t just about using resources wisely; it’s about instilling a lasting respect and love for our local environment in every child. We’re planning not just for the next phase, but for the next generation.”***

Sharon Phillips | Ysgol Nantgaredig



## Looking to the future

The future of the Cynefin project is full of potential. The team is focused on teaching students not just about the past and present but also the future sustainability of their local area. They are exploring digital expansions and broader networks to amplify their impact, aiming to cultivate pupils who are not only knowledgeable about their heritage but also ambitious and passionate about their role in the world.

***“Our vision for the Cynefin project extends beyond the classroom. We envision a community where every pupil is an informed, respectful, and proactive citizen, deeply connected to their past yet eager to shape a sustainable future.”***

Charlotte Evans | Ysgol Llanllwni



## Creating bright futures for everyone

Through the Cynefin project, the teachers and pupils of Brechfa are crafting a model of educational excellence that celebrates local identity while fostering a robust, interconnected community spirit. We would love this approach to be shared with other schools/ communities in Wales and act as a blueprint to impact even more young people.

**Find out more: [uk.rwe.com/empowering-communities](https://uk.rwe.com/empowering-communities)**

