



Trustees' Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Accounts

for year ended 31 March 2025

footholdcymru.org.uk

**FOOTHOLD
CYMRU**

NEWID BYWYDAU CAM WRTH GAM
CHANGING LIVES STEP BY STEP

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Welcome

from our Chairman and CEO

As we reflect on 2024/25, Foothold Cymru stands firm in our commitment to a Wales where social, economic, and environmental justice are within everyone's reach. This has been a year defined by resilience-both in the challenges faced by Welsh communities and in the ways our collective strength continues to transform adversity into action.

The year brought new and evolving pressures; economic uncertainties, environmental risks, and persistent inequality continued to test our resolve. Yet, what emerged most powerfully was the extraordinary adaptability, solidarity, and resourcefulness shown by individuals and community groups alike. These qualities - born out of difficult times - have become the bedrock of the resilience we've seen prosper across Wales.

Responding to these realities, Foothold Cymru has deepened its emphasis on building long-term resilience. We championed green skills initiatives, fostered opportunities for young people, and worked with our partners to develop creative responses to emerging needs. Across our services, the focus has been on equipping people and communities not just to cope, but to thrive, grow, and lead sustainable change.

This year, we are especially grateful for the continued support and fresh commitment shown by new and longstanding partners, supporters, and volunteers. Your faith in our mission reinforces our drive to innovate and to ensure that our services remain rooted in the lived experiences and strengths of local communities.

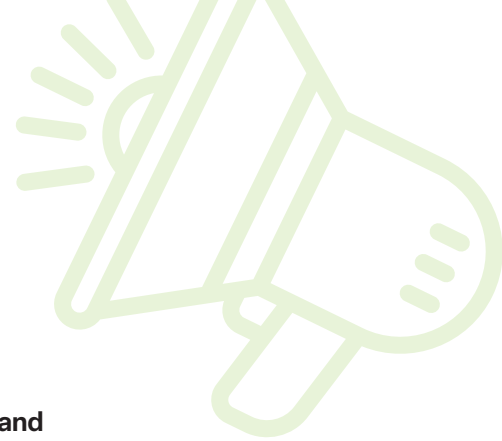
The progress documented in this report is a tribute to the compassion, persistence, and vision of everyone involved with Foothold Cymru - staff, volunteers, Board and Steering Committee members, partners, funders, and the many supporters who walk alongside us. Each contribution has made a tangible difference and helped lay the groundwork for a more resilient, equitable, and hopeful Wales.

Thank you for your belief in our work. By building on our shared resilience, together we are shaping a future in which every person and community in Wales can flourish.

Mike Theodoulou
Chief Executive Officer

Fred Roberts
Chair of Trustees

About us



Foothold Cymru is a social justice charity operating in West Wales with a 30+ year history of supporting communities to overcome challenges. Established in 1991, we have, over that time, supported over a quarter of a million residents through various initiatives designed to tackle the causes and consequences of hardship. We recognise that solutions and skills are found in the lived experiences of the people and communities affected by these challenges

Our Vision

A world where people, communities and the planet flourish because our society is equitable, caring and collaborative. This vision builds on our existing commitment to creating a Wales “where people are thriving and not just surviving”. It recognises the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental well-being, and aspires to a future where everyone can fulfil their potential within healthy communities and a sustainable environment.

Our Mission

We enable people and communities to design and implement grassroots projects that enhance their capacity to overcome challenges and create sustainable solutions, building long-term community resilience.

This mission reflects our strength-based approach, working with local people and communities to co-produce projects that build on their experience and insights. It acknowledges that communities possess the wisdom and agency to address their own challenges when provided with appropriate support and resources. Our role is to facilitate, enable, and amplify community-led initiatives rather than imposing external solutions.

Our Values

Our values guide how we work with communities, partners, and each other. They reflect our commitment to social justice and community empowerment:

Community Wisdom

We believe that communities possess invaluable knowledge and expertise based on lived experience. We recognise that “local people know their community the best and that everyone has something valued and unique to contribute”.

Collaboration

We work alongside communities, partners, and stakeholders, recognising that together we can achieve more than we can alone. We build relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual benefit.

Empowerment

We support individuals and communities to develop their capabilities, confidence, and agency to create the changes they want to see. We believe in people’s inherent strengths and potential.

Innovation

We embrace creativity and new approaches to addressing complex challenges. We learn from experience, adapt our methods, and continuously seek better ways to serve our communities.

Sustainability

We consider the long-term impact of our work on people, communities, and the planet. We develop solutions that meet current needs without compromising future generations’ ability to meet theirs.



What We Do

In West Wales, we believe learning should be accessible, relevant, and life-changing. Our programmes help children, young people, and adults build confidence, gain new skills, and discover their potential.

We deliver practical, community-based learning that meets local needs and tackles barriers to opportunity.

- School clubs and after-school activities that help children and young people explore creativity, teamwork, and community volunteering.
- Life skills sessions that build confidence, motivation, and independence—equipping participants to make positive choices at home, at school, and in the workplace.
- Employment and career guidance to connect learning with real opportunities, helping people explore local job paths, apprenticeships, and training routes.
- Hands-on workshops in cooking, gardening, and arts and crafts that nurture wellbeing, creativity, and sustainable living.
- Financial literacy and parenting support workshops that strengthen family resilience and promote financial wellbeing.
- Digital skills training to close the digital divide—enabling people to learn online, access services, and connect with others with confidence.

Each activity is designed to inspire learning and open new possibilities. By combining practical skills with confidence-building experiences, we help people break down barriers, move forward, and shape stronger, fairer communities across West Wales.

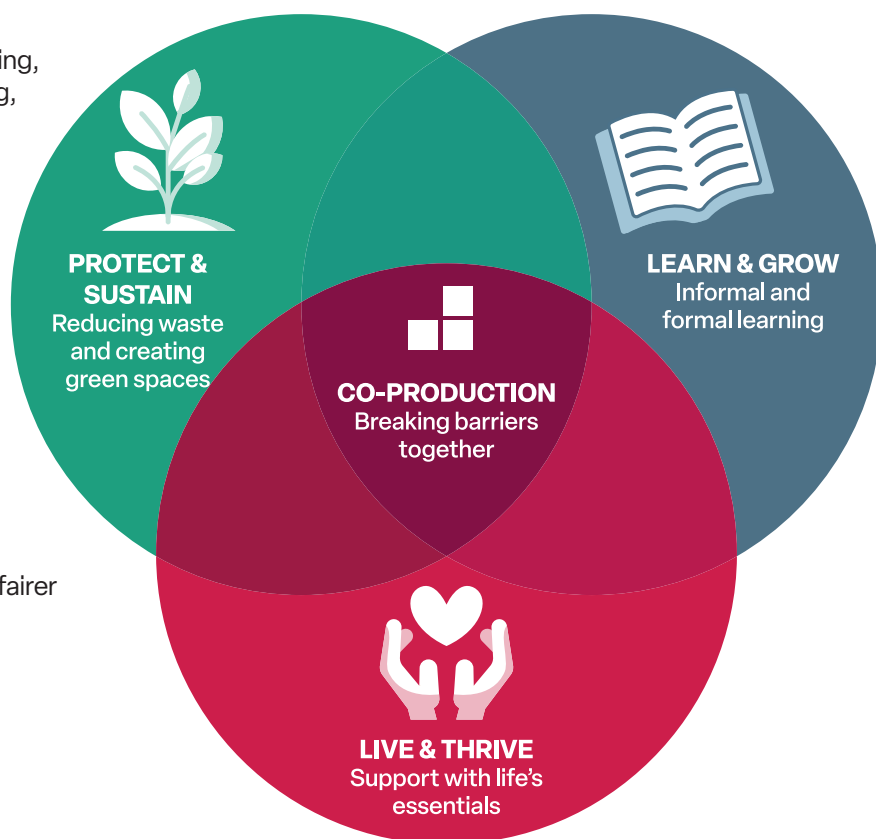
Our Services

Our services change lives and are grouped under the three themes:

LIVE AND THRIVE **LEARN AND GROW** **PROTECT AND SUSTAIN**

These are the areas which our community members tell us present the biggest challenges for them and where our evidence and feedback show we are making a positive, sustained impact.

Each one is a vital part of our journey towards our vision of a Wales with social, economic and environmental justice for all; each area is connected, so our response must be too.



Our Principles

Community:

strong communities as loci for mutual support and the realisation of individual potential. Human enterprise and endeavour drive individuals and communities to address the challenges they face.

Sustainable Development:

through which the security of future generations is protected by the responsible practices and use of resources of the current generation.

Education:

both formal and informal, as a means by which individual potential can be realised.

Our Strategic Priorities

Collaboration:

We believe partnerships are essential for creating meaningful change. By working together with communities, businesses, other charities, and the public sector, we can pool resources and develop comprehensive solutions to social, environmental, and economic challenges. Collaboration makes our efforts more effective and inclusive.

Transparency:

Openness builds trust. We maintain transparency in our operations and decision-making to keep our stakeholders informed and involved. This approach reinforces our commitment to a just and fair Wales.

Sustainability:

We focus on long-term solutions that benefit current and future generations. By integrating sustainability into our work, we aim to create lasting positive change for people and the environment in Wales.

Empowerment:

We empower individuals and communities to shape their own futures, amplifying voices that are not always heard. Through education, skill-building, and advocacy, we provide the tools to support people to overcome hardship and inequality. This enables everyone to actively participate in achieving social justice.



October 24

Cwtch Cynnes

Our new project, Cwtch Cynnes, supported by the Energy Redress scheme, helps households reduce energy costs and cut heat loss, sharing practical advice and support with the community.



September 24

Village Store

We launched our brand-new Village Store, offering surplus, healthy, low-cost food and Llanelli's first refill station – supported by Shared Prosperity funding.



August 24

Summer Club

Helped by funding from the King's Charles Fund, our annual summer club returned, offering free fun, games, friendship – and breakfast, lunch, and snacks for every child! By doing so, we're supporting local families and helping stretch budgets during the costly summer months.



November 24

Tesco Community Champion

A big thank you to Tesco Community Champion Lisa for delivering surplus food to our store, received by our wonderful volunteer and trustee, Kath.



December 23

Our Volunteers

A wonderful opportunity to thank every volunteer for their incredible support and dedication this year!



April 24

Full Circle

20 amazing volunteers joined the Full Circle project to clean our local beach! In just over an hour, they collected 33 bags of rubbish – an incredible effort on a stunning spring day!



May 24

Green Warrior Day

At Green Warrior Day, our team chatted with the community about protecting the environment and helped children and young people learn all about recycling, reuse and repair.



July 24

Bike Library

Our bike library opened, lending refurbished bikes to the community to promote green transport, reuse and repair, and healthy, affordable fun for families.



June 24

Room Transformation

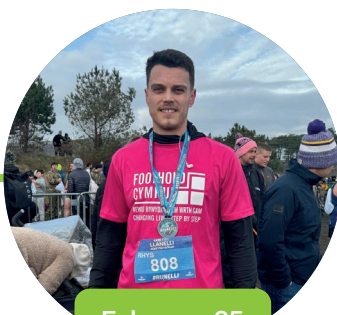
With help from Crest Ceilings and Partitions, we transformed two ground-floor rooms into one large, accessible meeting space – ready for our Summer of Fun Children's club!



January 25

Volunteers in the Garden

Our young volunteers rolled up their sleeves to weed, clear, and prep the community garden, ready for spring planting.



February 25

Llanelli 1/2 Marathon

Rhys from Just Financial Services and Sam from Two Can Properties, ran the Llanelli Half Marathon, in support of our work.



March 25

Community Kitchen

Cooking Cannellini in our community kitchen – supporting the community to cook healthy, low-cost food from scratch.

Trustees' Report

Achievements and Performance

Reducing Hardship

Our vision of a poverty-free Wales drives us to alleviate hardship by addressing both immediate needs and the deeper root causes of deprivation. We empower local people to develop their own solutions - from community-run food hubs to sustainable gardening projects - creating a nurturing environment where individuals and families can thrive. Our priority is to build long-term resilience, ensuring everyone can reach their potential, with no one left behind.

Why Are We Needed

West Wales continues to face rising levels of poverty and deprivation, frequently exceeding national averages. The relentless increase in living costs has brought unprecedented challenges, especially for households already under financial strain. The ongoing increases in energy and food prices are putting pressure on family incomes, making our work more vital than ever.

What We Do

Alleviating Household Financial Pressure

- Our Community Store, community fridge and holiday clubs help family budgets to go further.
- Provide personalised energy and budgeting advice to help households reduce bills and improve both financial and environmental sustainability.

Building Skills and Confidence

- Deliver money management courses, equipping people with the financial literacy and skills they need to manage their resources effectively
- Offer mentoring from Family Guides who provide tailored support to families living on low incomes, helping them overcome challenges and develop resilience.

Amplifying Lived Experience and Collaboration

- Co-produce services in partnership with people with lived experience of poverty, ensuring our support remains accessible, relevant, and truly effective for those we serve.

Our Impact

- Generated **£612,214** in individual household savings, directly improving the financial stability of people across our communities
- Supported over **500** households through our various services, reducing food insecurity within communities
- Conducted over **250** advice sessions, resulting in an average increase of **30%** in household incomes
- Delivered financial literacy training to nearly **200** individuals, with **75%** reporting improved confidence in money management
- Advocated for local policy changes to address poverty, contributing to government initiatives that improve support for low-income families.

Through these efforts, we've not only provided immediate relief but also empowered our community to build a stronger, more secure future. Our work remains essential amid ongoing economic challenges, and we remain committed to realising our vision of a poverty-free Wales.

Increasing Environmental Justice



We envision a Wales where economic progress goes hand in hand with environmental stewardship, creating communities that thrive without compromising future generations. By leading strategic zero-waste projects, delivering initiatives such as our e-waste programme, and supporting community activities like local food growing and litter picks, we champion environmental justice and amplify the voices of those rarely heard. While coherent government policies are essential, meaningful change happens locally. Our work promotes the circular economy by empowering communities to repair, reuse, and reduce waste - providing practical opportunities for everyone to play their part.

Why Are We Needed

Foothold Cymru is essential as West Wales deals with mounting impacts from the climate crisis—from droughts and water shortages to air pollution, biodiversity loss, and declining green spaces. Many people in our communities want to adopt more sustainable habits, such as recycling, repairing, or reducing waste, but often lack the practical resources, skills, and platforms to get involved, leaving them excluded from both climate conversations and solutions.

Persistent littering, poor air quality, and threats to natural spaces—including beaches and rivers—compound these challenges and affect people's wellbeing. Foothold Cymru bridges these gaps by supporting local action, making zero-waste and circular economy practices accessible, and empowering residents to shape a more sustainable future together. The result is healthier neighbourhoods and greater resilience for all.

What We Do

Repair, Reuse and Resource Sharing

- Run e-waste repair programmes for young people, providing refurbished devices for digital inclusion and diverting electronics from landfill
- Facilitate a library of things, a bike library and swap events, encouraging sharing, borrowing, and exchange of resources
- Operate repair cafés and upcycling workshops, giving people skills to fix or creatively transform items
- Host clothes and uniform exchanges, supporting families while promoting reuse.

Community Resource and Waste Reduction Initiatives

- Manage a community repaint store and arts and crafts scrap store, making reused materials available for home improvement and creative projects
- Support community composting, offering both a site and practical education.

Greener Living and Environmental Education

- Deliver zero-waste education sessions to empower sustainable living
- Cultivate a community garden for sustainable food growing, supporting our community fridge and home gardening skills.

Our Impact

Diverted significant quantities of e-waste, food, textiles, and paint from landfill

- Educated more than **500** households on zero-waste principles, with **82%** reporting reduced household waste
- Organised exchange events where over **2,000** items found new homes
- Diverted nearly 25 tonnes of waste from landfill, including e-waste, food, textiles, and paint.

Through these activities, we have not only reduced waste and resource consumption but also fostered a stronger sense of community and environmental responsibility. Our work remains essential in building a more sustainable and equitable Wales, demonstrating that environmental action directly contributes to social and economic well-being.

Building Strong Communities

At Foothold Cymru, strong communities are the foundation for lasting positive change. We empower local people to come together, identify shared challenges, and craft their own solutions by building skills, fostering collaboration, and unlocking the community's existing strengths.

Why Are We Needed

Across West Wales, social isolation remains a serious challenge—especially among older adults living alone and people in rural areas where access to services is limited. As our population ages, opportunities to connect and feel part of a thriving community become even more important.

Young people, meanwhile, often face barriers to getting involved in community life and volunteering. The latest figures show that only 25% of 16 to 24-year-olds and just 21% of people in the most deprived areas volunteer, compared to much higher rates among less deprived and older groups. This means too many young people miss out on the chance to gain skills, build confidence, and take their first steps into active citizenship.

At the same time, many people of all ages can feel unsure about how to contribute or lack understanding of their role in community decision-making and local democracy. Building this knowledge is critical for stronger, more engaged communities.

By addressing these issues, Foothold Cymru helps bring people together, unlock local potential, and ensure everyone can play an active part in building a connected, resilient, and democratic Wales.

What We Do

Volunteering and Social Connection

- Develop diverse volunteering programmes, enabling individuals to contribute their time, gain new skills, and build lasting relationships
- Host community cohesion events - in partnership with Llanelli Multicultural Network - that celebrate diversity and understanding.

Shared Spaces and Collaboration

- Establish and maintain physical spaces and support groups for residents to gather, socialise, and share experiences
- Facilitate co-production workshops that bring together diverse voices to design solutions which reflect true local needs.

Training and Capacity Building

- Deliver capacity-building programmes including training, mentoring, and hands-on experience in leadership, project management, and problem-solving
- Focus on recognising and leveraging existing community strengths and resources.

Our Impact

- Supported over 500 households through volunteering, training, and peer support opportunities—82% of participants reported stronger connections in their communities
- Our volunteers, of all ages, contributed over 5500 hours during the year
- Empowered local people and communities to shape local projects through regular co-production forums

By supporting local people, building connections, and investing in community assets, we're creating more resilient and engaged communities across Wales. Our ongoing work continues to drive greater civic participation and nurture a sense of belonging and shared purpose.



Increased Engagement With Learning



In Wales, education and lifelong learning are critical for enabling social mobility and economic justice. Increased engagement with learning empowers individuals to build valuable skills and knowledge, supporting their ability to succeed and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Education opens pathways out of poverty and helps everyone aspire to and achieve a better future.

Why Are We Needed

In West Wales, education is a vital bridge to opportunity- but too many are being left behind. The number of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) continues to rise, reaching 15.1% for those aged 16–24 in 2025. Persistent child poverty in areas like Carmarthenshire-where nearly a third of children grow up in hardship-remains a stark barrier to achievement and aspiration. Many adults lack basic digital skills, widening the digital divide in our rural communities. West Wales trails the rest of the UK in core subjects like reading, mathematics, and science, with ongoing challenges in raising standards and closing attainment gaps. Only two-thirds of working-age adults in the region have achieved Level 2 qualifications, compared to nearly four in five across the UK-limiting access to meaningful work and cutting too many off from brighter prospects. These persistent inequalities demand a community driven response. A response that supports learning at every age, tackles disadvantage and gives everyone in West Wales the tools to thrive.

Our Impact

- Enabled over 300 children and young people to take part in afterschool clubs and volunteering, with 86% reporting improved skills and confidence
- Supported 350 households through life skills, parenting, and financial wellbeing workshops, empowering them to make positive changes. 89% of participants left with practical skills they could use immediately in daily life or work
- Partnered with local schools, businesses, and community groups to connect learning with real opportunities-leading to new internships and placements.

Every programme delivers not just new skills, but renewed hope, confidence, and ambition-helping people break the cycle of poverty and shape their futures.



Looking Forward to 2025/26



As Foothold Cymru enters 2025/26, our commitment to building resilient communities in West Wales is stronger than ever. Guided by our five-year strategic plan, we are focused on empowering communities to thrive in the face of complex social, economic, and environmental challenges.

In the coming year, our work will centre around four interconnected strategic priorities:

Financial Resilience:

We will continue to help households reduce expenses, increase financial literacy, and access employment and enterprise opportunities. Our initiatives will provide affordable food, resource-sharing schemes, and targeted advice-enabling families to build sustainable livelihoods and strengthen local economies.



Environmental Resilience:

Our zero-waste programmes, local food production initiatives, and climate adaptation projects will expand, helping communities lower their environmental impact and improve access to healthy ecosystems and green spaces. Together, we will champion environmental justice and equip people to adopt more sustainable practices.



Civic Resilience:

Social cohesion, volunteering, and active citizenship remain at the heart of our community approach. In 2025/26, Foothold Cymru will offer more opportunities for people to connect, participate, and shape local governance. We will support the growth of a skilled volunteer base and foster effective mechanisms for collective decision-making, ensuring no voice goes unheard.



Growing a Healthy, Values-led Organisation:

To continue delivering positive impact, we will invest in our staff, volunteers, governance, and internal systems. This includes promoting wellbeing and skills development, maintaining rigorous evaluation, and refreshing our strategies in response to changing needs.



Throughout the year, we will stay true to our values: community wisdom, collaboration, empowerment, innovation, and sustainability. Our approach will be shaped by the lived experience and aspirations of local people, placing community voices at the forefront of everything we do.

By moving forward together, Foothold Cymru will help create a Wales where people, communities, and the planet flourish. We look ahead with a clear purpose, confident that our collective action will deliver lasting change for present and future generations. Our monitoring and evaluation process will continue to guide improvements and inform our partners, funders, and stakeholders, keeping our work transparent, accountable, and rooted in real-world outcomes.

Strategic Report

The Organisation

Objectives and aims of the organisation

The charity's objectives are to develop the capacity and skills of members of socially and economically disadvantaged communities in Wales, enabling them to better identify and meet their needs, and to participate more fully in society. This is achieved, but not limited to, the following:

- Equipping disadvantaged or excluded individuals with the skills and competencies necessary to take responsibility for meeting their own needs and those of their communities
- Delivering formal, informal, and community education programmes that offer disadvantaged individuals' opportunities to gain nationally recognised qualifications or develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for independent living and the labour market
- Promoting, providing, and facilitating volunteering, training, and work experience opportunities for unemployed or underemployed individuals facing challenges in the labour market.



The Board

Functions of the Board

The Board of Trustees fulfils the following functions:

- Control of the charity, its property, and funds
- Responsibility for the charity's overall governance and strategic direction
- Development of the aims, objectives, and organisational goals in line with the legal and regulatory framework of the sector and the charity's governing document, striving for best governance practices
- Upholding the fiduciary duty, ensuring public confidence and trust
- Interviewing, appointing, and monitoring the work of senior staff. All trustees must sign a Code of Conduct and a Declaration and Register of Interest form.

Main Responsibilities of the Board

- **Managing performance and risk:** Developing and reviewing the organisation's strategy, objectives, performance, statutory compliance, and risk while ensuring ongoing impact measurement
- **Leadership and strategy:** Leading the organisation's vision, mission, values, and strategic direction
- **Strategic planning and implementation:** Agreeing on coherent strategic plans and timetables, monitoring performance, and reviewing outcomes and impact
- **Communication:** Promoting the organisation's work to external partners, stakeholders, and audiences
- **Equality and diversity:** Championing equality and diversity throughout the organisation, particularly when working with disadvantaged communities
- **Safeguarding:** Monitoring the charity's conduct to ensure safeguarding standards are upheld.

Appointment and Induction of Trustees

The articles of association state that the number of Trustees shall be no less than 3 and (unless otherwise determined by ordinary resolution) with no upper limit. During 2024/25, there were 12 Trustees on the Board, who serve as both charity Trustees and Directors of a company limited by guarantee, governed by charity and company law.

Appointments are overseen by a committee of the Board, and Trustees serve an initial three-year term, with the option to be reappointed unless exceptional circumstances apply. Attention is paid to ensuring a wide range of skills and diversity, including gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and sexuality. We also prioritise the recruitment of local people with lived experience, which enriches the board's skills, knowledge and experience.

All new Trustees undergo an induction process that includes meetings with the Chair, CEO, and Senior Management Team, visits to projects, and detailed briefings on legal obligations under charity and company law, as well as Foothold Cymru's specific policies. An annual skills review informs training and recruitment strategies.

Board and Committee Structure

The Board of Trustees plays a crucial role in the governance and oversight of our organisation.

Board Meetings

Our Board meets quarterly. These regular meetings allow the Board to stay informed about key developments, make timely decisions, and maintain effective oversight. Throughout the year, average attendance was 82%.

Committee Structure

To enhance efficiency and provide focused attention to specific areas, we have established a committee structure that supports the Board's work:

■ Finance, Risk, Audit, Governance and People Committee

Meeting quarterly, this committee oversees financial management, risk assessment, audit processes, and human resources matters. It ensures financial stability, monitors potential risks, and reviews audit findings to maintain organisational integrity. It is also responsible for maintaining and improving governance practices. It reviews policies, assesses Board performance, and ensures compliance with relevant regulations and best practices. This includes safeguarding

■ Remuneration and Conditions of Service Sub Committee

This subcommittee meets once a year to set the salaries of senior staff and review conditions of service across the organisation.

Board Effectiveness

The structure adopted by the organisation allows our Board to:

- Maintain regular oversight of organisational activities
- Delve deeply into specific areas through committee work
- Make informed decisions based on comprehensive reports and recommendations from committees
- Respond promptly to emerging challenges and opportunities
- Ensure a balanced focus on various aspects of Foothold Cymru's governance.

Further details on Board and committee membership are available on our website.



The Senior Management Team

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is appointed by the Trustees to oversee daily operations and has delegated authority for operational matters such as finance, employment, and performance management, as approved by the Board. The Board monitors and controls all delegated work through regular reporting. The CEO is supported by a Deputy Chief Executive and a Senior Management Team.

As of the financial year-end, Foothold Cymru employed 20 staff members on part-time or full-time contracts. The organisation is a Real Living Wage employer and is committed to transparency, maintaining an 'open door' policy that encourages staff to engage with organisational activities, strategy, and performance.

Additionally, a wellbeing officer supports staff by providing information, organising wellbeing events, and offering general support.

Volunteers

The charity was supported 22 active volunteers in 2023/4. Their skills and knowledge have been crucial in delivering our activities.

Good Governance

We comply with the Charity Governance Code in all material respects and have a programme for continual improvement.

Raising Concerns

Foothold Cymru has a whistleblowing policy that allows staff and volunteers to report concerns, alongside other processes such as grievance procedures. Complaints, grievances, and whistleblowing matters are fully investigated, and appropriate management or disciplinary actions are taken when necessary.

Ethical Policy

Our ethical policy provides a framework for the ethical execution of our charitable purposes. It helps the charity and its Trustees recognise and address ethical issues and conflicts.

Safeguarding

We have established systems to protect vulnerable individuals. This includes a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, a Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy, a safeguarding code of conduct, and an online safeguarding policy. Trustees, staff, and volunteers undergo Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) checks and safeguarding training, depending on the role. The organisation's work is overseen by a Safeguarding Committee, chaired by a Trustee. The committee oversees safeguarding policies and reports to the Board annually with an action plan.

Fundraising

Foothold Cymru raises funds from individuals, donors, and companies. Fundraising activities accounted for 2% of our annual income, and no complaints were received regarding our practices during 2024/25.

Risk Management

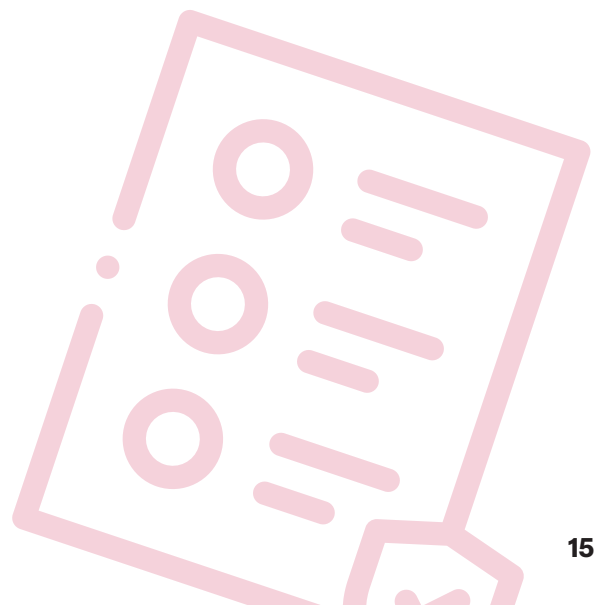
The Trustees have identified the major risks faced by the charity, aided by a robust risk management process. Risks are prioritised based on likelihood and impact, with mitigation strategies in place. Adequacy of protection measures is reviewed by the senior team and Trustees quarterly.

Public Benefit

Trustees refer to the Charities Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities. As required by the Charities Act 2011, the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

Pay Policy

Trustees do not receive remuneration but may claim reasonable expenses. The charity has a remuneration policy to ensure fair pay for staff. A revised pay structure was introduced in April 2023, based on recommendations from our Remuneration and Conditions of Service Sub-Group to the Board of Trustees.



Case Study: **Matthew and Emily's Family**



When Matthew and Emily first contacted Foothold Cymru, their main concern was completing a Disability Living Allowance application for their two-year-old daughter, Sarah, who has a significant disability. As staff got to know the family, it became clear that their needs extended beyond the application. Financial pressure, social isolation, and anxiety were placing considerable strain on the household.

Foothold Cymru carried out a full benefits check, resulting in successful claims for Universal Credit, Child Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, and Disability Living Allowance for Sarah. The family also received budgeting support and joined the Community Pantry, providing access to affordable food. At Christmas, the children were delighted to receive gifts donated by a local supermarket, easing the financial burden during what is often a stressful time.

Recognising the family's wider needs, staff referred them to a Flying Start Social Worker to resolve urgent housing repairs and encouraged them to attend community and family events. This helped rebuild confidence, strengthen peer connections, and create moments of joy together. Referrals were also made to young carers' services to ensure the older children received appropriate emotional and social support.

The impact has been life changing. The family's income has increased substantially, they've developed stronger budgeting habits, and their home environment is more stable. The children have enjoyed new experiences, and the parents report feeling less anxious and more hopeful about the future. As Matthew and Emily put it, "Overall, we feel more positive now, more hope for a positive change in the future."



Case Study: **The Jones Family**



Lisa, a single mother raising two teenage sons, turned to Foothold Cymru after losing her job through ill health. With debts mounting and bills overdue, tensions at home were growing. Anxiety and feelings of isolation began to take hold, leaving Lisa overwhelmed and unsure where to turn.

Staff began by offering tailored debt advice and helped Lisa connect with StepChange, supporting her through the process of collecting paperwork and preparing for appointments. A full benefits check was completed, uncovering eligibility for several entitlements, including Personal Independence Payment, Employment and Support Allowance, and housing benefits.

To ease immediate financial pressure, Lisa was given access to fresh produce through the community fridge and encouraged to join wellbeing workshops to boost her confidence and sense of connection. Regular check-ins provided emotional support, while her sons were welcomed into youth activities that helped them develop social networks and stability during a difficult time.

Gradually, the situation improved. The family's income increased, debts were brought under control, and Lisa's anxiety began to ease. Home life became calmer, and she reported sleeping better and feeling more in control. "Having someone who's got your back, having someone to message has made such a difference to me," Lisa shared, reflecting her renewed sense of hope and belonging.



Case Study: **Yasmin's Journey to Belonging**

Yasmin arrived in Wales through a resettlement scheme, seeking refuge and a fresh start after fleeing conflict in her homeland. Settling into her new community, Yasmin faced significant challenges, including difficulties in sourcing affordable halal food, which was essential for maintaining her cultural and religious identity.

The discovery of Foothold Cymru's Village Store marked a key turning point for Yasmin. The store's focus on sustainability, community, and affordability quickly made it her go-to destination for pantry staples and household essentials. What made the biggest difference was the store's occasional supply of reasonably priced halal food options, along with its fresh produce and wide variety of spices.

The store's consistent approach to the Eatwell Guide helped Yasmin achieve a balanced diet with healthier, more sustainable choices. This was particularly important as she adapted to a new country and prioritised her health and well-being.

More than just a shop, Foothold Cymru's store became a true community hub for Yasmin, offering opportunities to engage with others and cultivate a sense of belonging within the local community. The store's dedication to environmental sustainability also resonated deeply with her personal values, bringing an extra layer of meaning to her everyday shopping.

For Yasmin, the store's commitment to affordability, inclusivity, and community connection has made a profound difference — helping her feel more settled and supported as she builds her new life.



Case Study: **Cooking Up Smiles -**



A family's journey of growth, connection, and confidence

"Cooking Up Smiles" has made a lasting difference for families in Llanelli, including siblings Georgie and Annie and their mother, Gail. Their story highlights how the project tackled food insecurity while building confidence, skills, and community spirit.

Each session began with a shared breakfast, giving families time to relax and connect. For Gail, this was more than a meal—it became a space to meet other parents and share experiences. Children then joined physical activities designed to boost teamwork and coordination. Georgie, who lives with autism and ADHD, first struggled to join in but soon began to flourish, growing from quiet participant to confident leader. Annie, once shy, gradually found her voice, gaining self-belief and new friends.

At the heart of the project were hands-on cooking and nutrition sessions. Guided by staff, families learned to prepare healthy, low-cost meals. Annie took to cooking with enthusiasm, while Georgie moved from reluctance to excitement, even trying new foods. With added nutrition education, they all developed a clearer understanding of balanced, affordable eating.

By the end of the summer, their transformation was clear. Georgie proudly helped prepare meals, Annie supported younger children, and Gail discovered a new circle of friends. "I feel like I can come here and relax, that I'm welcome and know my kids are safe and happy," she said.

Support also came through the Foothold Village Store, with meal vouchers and recipe cards easing financial pressure during the holidays. "Access to the community fridge has made such a difference," Gail added. "It's allowed us to eat well and not worry so much about money."

"Cooking Up Smiles" shows how combining food, friendship, and learning can truly change lives.

Case Study: Keeping Warm with Cwtch Cynnes



Margaret, age 78, lives alone in Llanelli in a modest bungalow. With rising energy prices and a pension stretched to cover essentials, she found it increasingly difficult to heat her home during winter. Margaret was worried about her energy bills and anxious about her health, as she struggled to keep warm in the colder months.

Margaret learned about Cwtch Cynnes through a neighbour and decided to reach out for help. After completing a simple registration form and a phone conversation with Lucy, the project coordinator, Margaret was welcomed into the programme. She soon received tailored support, including advice on energy usage and practical tips for adopting more efficient practices at home.

The support made a big difference to Margaret's daily life. Lucy explained simple changes—like using draught excluders, switching to LED bulbs, and adjusting her heating schedule—which began to reduce Margaret's bills. Margaret was also encouraged to join group information sessions, where she met others facing similar challenges and found reassurance in sharing experiences.

Margaret now feels more confident managing her energy costs and takes pride in being able to stay warm independently. She noted,

"I never thought a little advice would help so much. It's good to know I'm not alone."

Through Cwtch Cynnes, Margaret has not only saved money and improved her comfort, but she has also gained a renewed sense of belonging in her community. The initiative's commitment to supporting vulnerable older people like Margaret shows how practical energy advice can empower individuals and enhance wellbeing.



Case Study: The Foothold Bike Library



Before the project began, many unwanted or broken bicycles in Carmarthenshire were being sent to landfill, while residents struggled to find safe, affordable transport. Repairs were often out of reach because of high costs or a lack of parts, particularly for older models. At the same time, local volunteers were eager to learn hands-on repair skills but lacked the facilities and guidance to do so.

Foothold Cymru's Bike Library created a community repair-and-reuse hub, run by trained mechanics and volunteers. Donated bikes are restored for loan or reuse, and those beyond repair are dismantled so that usable parts can support future projects. Through public events such as Fix It Fairs, residents learn how to maintain and restore their own bikes rather than replace them. The project also offers young people and adults the opportunity to gain mechanical experience, practical skills, and confidence.

One Fix-It Fair visitor brought in a bike that needed a rare, costly component. Our Mechanic, Tony, recalled an unrepairable donation that had been stripped for parts—and among them was the exact piece required. It was cleaned, fitted, and tested, restoring the bike to full use without cost or waste.

The repair saved money, reduced landfill waste, and demonstrated the library's circular-economy model in action. Over the past year, dozens of bicycles have been repaired or reused, reducing emissions and improving community mobility. Sourcing older parts remains a challenge, but an organised inventory and local partnerships with bike shops and recycling centres now help meet demand.

Each repair saves up to 20 kilograms of material from landfill while supporting sustainable travel. As one user said: "It's brilliant to know the part came from another bike that would have gone to waste."

Financial Review

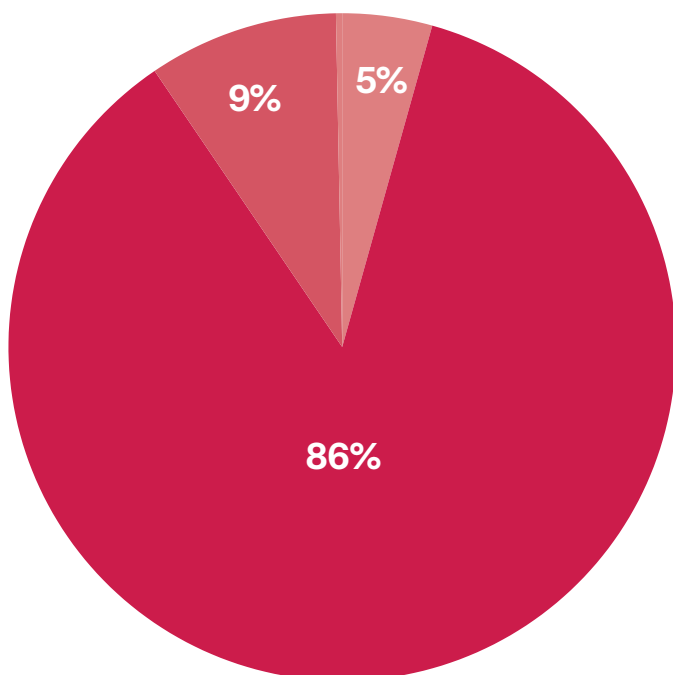
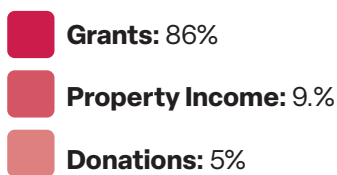


Where our income comes from



We rely on the generosity of all our supporters to fund our charitable activities. Our income is made up of grants, donations, trusts and foundations, investment income and in-kind contributions, e.g. food donations.

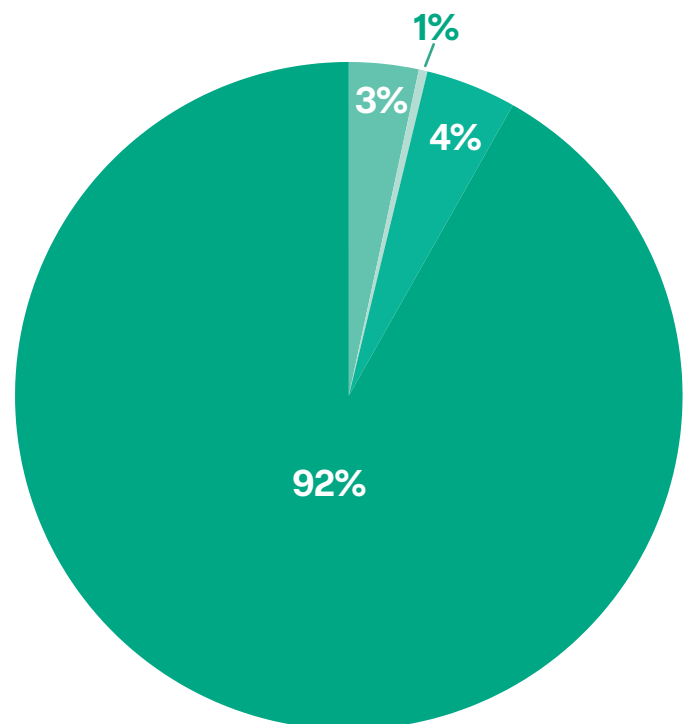
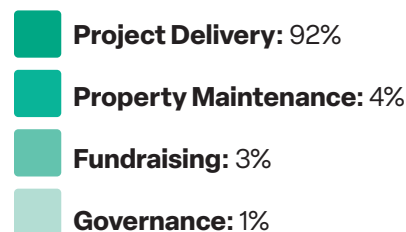
Total Income: £610,162



Where we spend our income



Total Expenditure: £790,518



Financial Performance 2024/25

Foothold Cymru delivered robust financial performance in 2024/25, despite ongoing economic uncertainty, increased competition for grants, and reduced funding availability. Total income for the year was £610,162, down from £877,188 in 2023/24, while total expenditure stood at £790,518, compared with £844,145 the previous year. The lower income levels from grants reflect the time spent on developing a large new funding bid of 3.2 million, which was approved in April 2025. The charity recorded a deficit of £180,356 for the year—a position anticipated by trustees and aligned with the strategic drawdown of restricted funds received in advance from the prior year.

Strategic Financial Management

Our approach to financial strategy this year was shaped by our business plan commitment to:

- Diversifying income streams
- Securing essential grants to maintain services
- Minimising central and core costs
- Maximising income from our property portfolio
- Leveraging additional support through in-kind and corporate donations
- Ensuring each project includes a costed, sustainable exit strategy so that many services continue beyond their grant funding, primarily via social enterprise development.





Financial Position and Reserves

At the year's end, net assets totalled £855,416, comprising £720,489 in unrestricted funds and £134,927 in restricted funds. Our net assets include free cash reserves of £68,029, with the remainder invested in income-generating rental properties. The negative movement in restricted funds reflects our planned use of grant income received in 2023/24 and spent during 2024/25.

The Board operates a formal reserves policy, which was reviewed and updated during the year. Foothold Cymru's revised target reserves figure is £250,000: £100,000 to cover six months' center running costs, £50,000 for new business development, and £100,000 to bridge gaps in project funding. The policy aims to ensure business continuity, respond to unexpected challenges, and support long-term sustainability



Risk Management and Financial Sustainability

Trustees regularly assess key risks and uncertainties to maintain financial resilience. Principal risks identified include cyber protection, ongoing income generation, and talent recruitment. Controls in place include a robust risk register, diversification strategies, scenario planning, and regular audit processes. These measures enable the charity to maintain effective oversight and adapt to emerging financial and operational challenges.

Impact, Value and Priorities

Our financial resources have enabled us to generate substantial social impact. This year, support provided through food stores, advice services, and financial literacy training resulted in an estimated £612,214 in household savings and directly contributed to improving community wellbeing. More than 5,500 volunteer hours further extended the charity's reach and efficiency, demonstrating the value and leverage that our financial resources achieve. This value is reflected in the fact that for each £1 invested in the charity we generate in the range of £6.03 and £6.43, in social value.

Looking ahead, our priorities for 2025/26 are to:

- Continue diversifying income, securing new grants, and building social enterprise models
- Maintain and grow our cash reserves levels
- Mitigate emerging risks through robust financial planning and risk management
- Invest in staff, volunteer capacity, and internal systems to strengthen delivery and accountability.



Thank you

In conclusion, we would like to thank the funders, foundations, trusts and business partners that have supported us:

Aviva

BBC Children In Need

Shared Prosperity Fund

Comic Relief

Crest Ceilings

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Garfield Weston Foundation

Henry Smith Charity

Hubbub Foundation

Julia and Hans Rausing Trust

King Charles III Charitable Fund

Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme

Lloyd & White Insurance Brokers

Masonic Charitable Foundation

Moondance Foundation

National Grid

People's Postcode Lottery

The National Lottery Community Fund

Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

Vinci Construction

Vinci Foundation

Building Communities Trust

WCVA, Volunteering Wales Strategic Grants

Welsh Government





Our Volunteers

Foothold Cymru's volunteers continue to be the heartbeat of our charity, shaping the impact we deliver across West Wales. Every day, their generosity, dedication, and skills energise our operations-whether collecting and distributing food, supporting our community kitchen, tending the garden, helping in our Pantry, or championing our Circular Economy projects.

This year, our volunteers have stepped up not only in these vital roles but also in many behind-the-scenes tasks, ensuring that our services remain accessible and responsive. Their involvement has helped us meet the evolving needs of local people, while each volunteer has gained new skills, built friendships, and grown in confidence and purpose.

Recognising the shifting landscape of volunteering, we have reimagined our volunteer programme, offering greater flexibility and a wider range of opportunities. People can now choose between short "mini volunteering" experiences, taster days, ongoing traditional roles, or specialist placements. This approach ensures everyone can contribute in a way that fits their lives and interests, making volunteering more accessible and rewarding.

We are also proud to continue to welcome volunteers with lived experience of hardship into our team. Their perspectives have guided our work, deepened our understanding, and helped us tailor our support to what matters most to our community. This inclusive approach strengthens our organisation and affirms our mission to work alongside those we serve.

To all our volunteers-long-standing or new, Foothold Cymru thanks you sincerely. Your passion and commitment drive real change, and your contributions reverberate through every success story from the past year. Your continued involvement is truly valued and makes a world of difference.



Our People

The strength of Foothold Cymru lies in the skill and dedication of our 20-strong staff team, whose commitment drives our mission. We strive to reflect the diversity of our communities, creating an inclusive workplace where every individual is valued for their unique experiences and expertise.

Our staff bring a wealth of backgrounds - from coordinators and outreach specialists to admin professionals - each playing a pivotal role in ensuring our programmes and services make a tangible difference. Every member of our team contributes to achieving our goals, providing crucial support at every stage.

Recognising that ongoing investment in people is essential, this year we have prioritised opportunities for professional growth. Team members have accessed a variety of development and training pathways, building skills that enhance both their own careers and the charity. This culture of continuous learning drives our organisational resilience and effectiveness.

Collaboration and open dialogue form the foundation of our workplace culture. By encouraging the free exchange of ideas and regular team discussions, we ensure that everyone's voice can shape how we work. Staff frequently join in team-building activities and cross-functional meetings, deepening our shared sense of purpose.

The partnership between staff and volunteers amplifies our reach and impact in West Wales. As we look back on the last year, we are grateful for the professionalism, adaptability, and hard work shown by our entire team. Their efforts have helped us navigate challenges and achieve meaningful progress. Continuing to invest in our people will remain a priority, as we build a positive, motivated environment dedicated to making a difference in our communities.

References

In Conclusion

The Trustees are pleased to present their Annual Report, together with the Charity's financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2025.

They are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts under the Companies Act. The Charity Commission entered the Company onto the Register of Charities with the Registered Charity Number 1188696 in March 2020.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) as amended for accounting periods from 1 January 2016.

Administrative Details

Registered Company Number

02633128

Charity Number

1188696

Registered Office

The Lord Arthur Rank
Centre
Trostre Road
Llanelli
SA14 9RA

Trustees

F. S. Roberts (Chair)
J Lewis
D J Powell
P Freeman
Rev J E Phillips
K L Owen
P R Piana
S Kays
Dr M Goodfellow Smith
J Rees
K Thomas

Company Secretaries

Janice Morgan
Mike Theodoulou

Bankers

HSBC

Accountants

Charles & Co
Chartered Certified Accountants
3 Murray Street
Llanelli, SA15 1AQ



“

Before joining the Bike Library, I hadn't ridden in years. Now I cycle each week with my children—it's brought us together and given us a healthier routine.

Bike Library Parent, 2025

“

Attending the Cooking Up Smiles group helped us learn new recipes and save money. My kids love cooking now, and we eat better without worrying as much about cost.

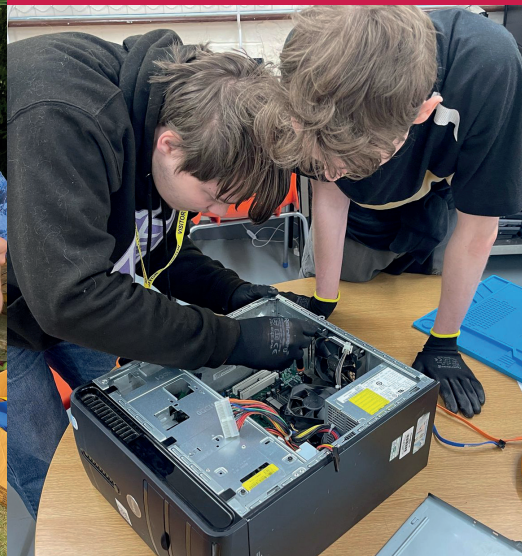
Cooking Up Smiles Participant, 2025



“

When my heating bills got too high, I felt lost and anxious. The support from Cwtch Cynnes made my home warmer and my life less stressful—I even made new friends along the way.

Cwtch Cynnes Member, 2025





The Lord Arthur Rank Centre,
Trostre Road, Llanelli,
SA14 9RA



01554 779910



Foothold Cymru



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footholdcymru.org.uk

All images are Foothold Cymru stock photographs and do not relate to our Volunteering in Wales project

Foothold Cymru is a charity registered in England and Wales number: 1188696. Company registration number: 02633128.