

REPORT TO THE PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Introducing MM

Menter Môn was established as a 'not for profit' company in 1996 to deliver the EU LEADER programme, which sought to develop solutions to challenges faced in rural areas. There was a recognition that the things that make us different make us interesting, whether its the Welsh language, our natural environment, or our heritage. There was also an emphasis on adding value to local resources while keeping the benefit local.

Projects in the early years included the Ynys Môn Red Squirrel project, the restoration of Swtan cottage, the establishment of a Gwyl Cefni, and the development of the coastal path and Lôn Las Cefni.

The company has developed over the years, delivering regional and national projects, but the range and emphasis of work on Ynys Môn has remained constant. Schemes such as Menai Rivers, which protects the Water Vole, the work of the Menter Iaith, maintaining Aberlleiniog Castle, supporting Anglesey Youth Theatre and organising Gwyl Cefni are testament to this.

The company now employs 85 people, who work on projects and contracts ranging from business support, renewable energy, to environmental conservation and SMART technology. We are an important employer in the area, with an emphasis on the Welsh language in our projects and within the workplace – as is Anglesey County Council

Most of the work carried out regionally and nationally are through contracts, with any 'surplus' retained within the company to support its various projects. One example is the Business Wales contract, the Welsh Government's business support service, which is being delivered in collaboration with the Business in Focus, in south Wales and M-SParc. Although a pan Wales service, there are benefits to Ynys Môn that a local company delivering the contract as it can ensure that local businesses benefit fully from the service.

Another example of a regional contract is Llwyddo'n Lleol, which is part of the Welsh Government Arfor programme. This aims to highlight opportunities in the area among young people, and to encourage them to stay or return to areas of west Wales.

One of the largest projects is Morlais, which aims to add value to the tide and bring Benefits to Ynys Môn by creating jobs, supporting supply chains and generating income for community projects. It could generate 240MW of renewable energy, however there is more to Morlais than the MW's. As a result of Morlais we have developed expertise within the energy sector and are looking to develop other opportunities within the sector while keeping the benefit local.

2. Menter Môn Objectives Priorities

Brexit posed a significant threat to Menter Môn. Between 1996 and 2023, Europe was the main source of funding for most company projects. As a result of this uncertainty we expanded the company's portfolio, going into new areas and developing income generating activities. The fact that we are still here suggests that this has worked, although significant uncertainty remains.

A potential impact of diversifying the portfolio was a loss of focus or being seen to lose focus. This was a company that is delivering a digital scheme in south Wales, protecting the Water Vole, generating renewable energy and distributing food to schools.

In reality the grassroots activity in communities has continued, and the company's values are consistent. However, without a broad portfolio the company would not have survived. After a period of transition, we recognised the need to revisit our aims and objectives, and ensure these were clear to our staff, partners, funders, and communities.

We are in the process of publishing the company's vision which sets out the following objectives:

- Supporting and nurturing people
- Strengthening the economy
- Improving the environment
- Invigorating our culture

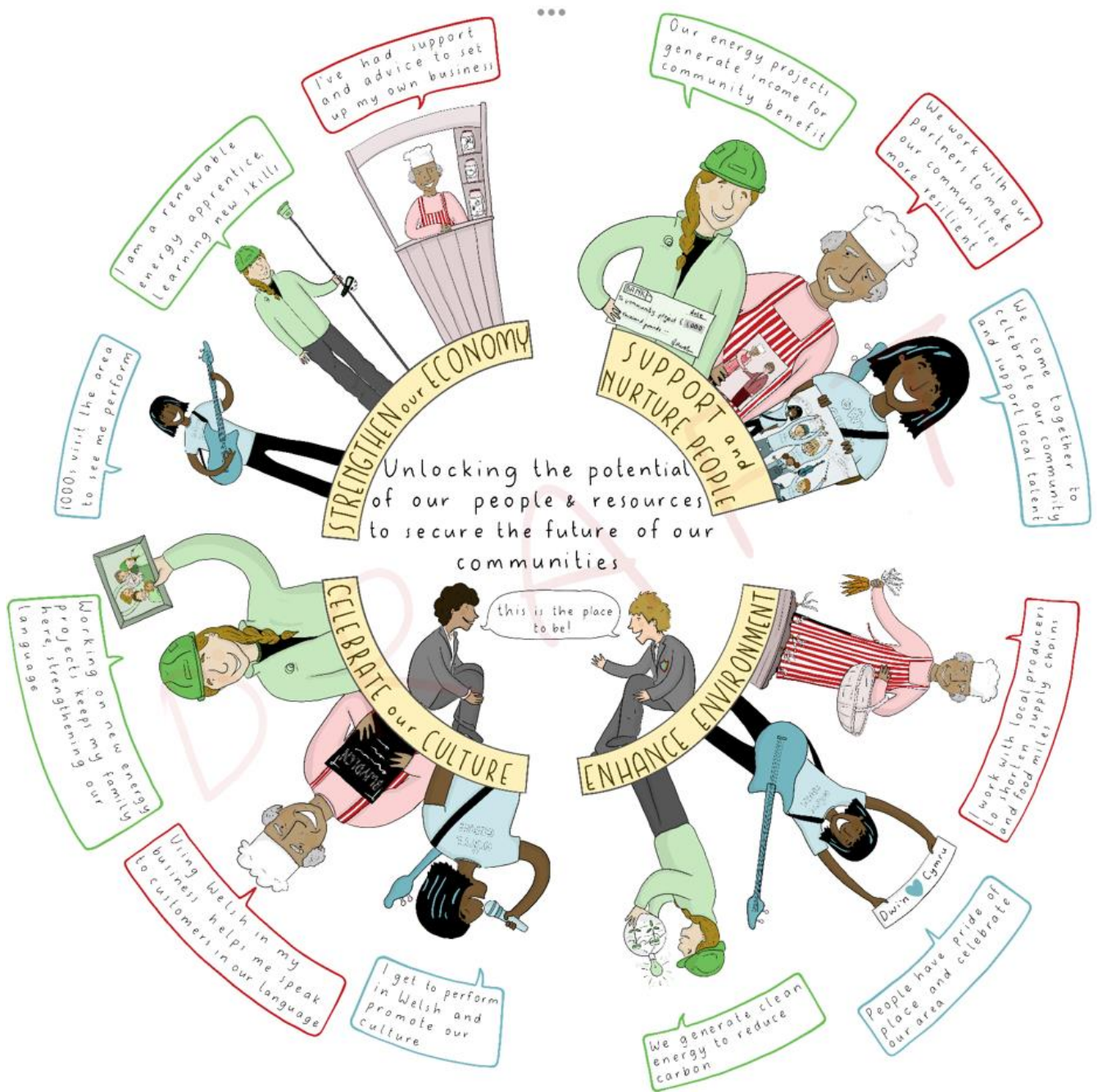
We will deliver at these objectives within 3 areas, namely

- Community – environment, language, heritage
- Economy – business support, supply chain
- Energy – tidal, hydrogen, solar

We have produced a company statement to summarise the vision, which is

'Unlocking the potential of our people and resources to secure the future of our communities'.

Menter Môn Objectives



3. Menter Môn Challenges

The EU was not a guaranteed income source, but the programmes were familiar and ran over 7 years. This offered security for staff and a period of stability to develop plans. For example, Morlais received around £50 million of European funding over 10 years.

The biggest challenge the company has faced was securing our future beyond 2023, and in that respect we have succeeded. However, the uncertainty is now ongoing, especially when it comes to community activities (Welsh language, young people, environment, heritage, community). As things stand SPF project run until December, and ARFOR until March. These schemes employ circa 25 people, with the majority being young Welsh speakers from the area.

There is talk of new programmes but no guarantees. The result is:

- It is hard to plan ahead
- It creates instability within the company
- Experienced staff look for alternative employment opportunities

There is more stability within the Energy and Economy portfolio, but the Community projects are central to our purpose. For example, one of the reasons we developed Morlais was to generate income to sustain the work in the community. Menter Môn is not an energy company, but rather a company that seeks to protect the future of our communities. This needs to be kept going.

We are confident Morlais will generate income in the middle future, but community activity needs to take place in the meantime.

4. MM commitments on Anglesey and how they align with the Council's Plan 2023 – 2028

We have outlined the company's objectives of supporting and nurturing people, strengthening the economy, improving the enclave, invigorating our culture. These align with strategic objectives set out within the Council's Plan, and in particular Welsh language, the economy and climate change.

CSYM Strategic Objective – Welsh Language

Increase opportunities to learn, breed and use the Welsh language

- MM administer the **Ynys Môn Language Forum** in partnership with Anglesey County Council. The Forum has celebrated its 10th anniversary this year and we are committed to continuing our support and working with our partners. The Ynys Môn Language Forum also contributes to the **strategic objective of education**.

- MM runs the **Ynys Môn Youth Theatre (TIM)** which provides opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh socially, and outside the classroom.
- We **organise events** ourselves e.g. **Gwyl Cefni** and offer support to communities to organise their own activities that celebrate language and culture. Examples include St David's Day parades, egg clapping, concerts and shows.
- We support the use of **Welsh in business** through the **Hwb Menter a Busnes Cymru**. This also includes working with YMCC to deliver grant schemes that encourage the use of the Welsh language.
- We work with CSYM to deliver **Arfor projects**, which seek to develop the economy to support the Welsh language.
- We **promote the use of the Welsh language** through all Menter Môn activities, including renewable energy, environmental and economic schemes.
- **Welsh is the internal administrative** of the company and 85% of staff are Welsh speakers. We also provide support for Welsh learners, and staff that want to increase their confidence to use the language.

CSYM Strategic Objective – Economy

Ensuring opportunities to develop the island's economy.

- Offer business support through the **Enterprise Hub** and **Business Wales**. We collaborate with Anglesey County Council to ensure they complement and add value to partner activities.
- Strengthen **local food supply chains**, by working with public bodies, the catering sector, and food suppliers and producers. Projects include Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Food Partnerships, and Larder Cymru.
- Support towns and high street businesses to **utilise SMART technology**, to collect data and use it to make informed decisions.
- Identify and develop **renewable energy projects** in order to create high quality local employment. This aligns with the Energy Island programme and ensures that Anglesey develops into a global centre of excellence for the tidal power industry.
- Identify and develop **supply chain opportunities** arising from Menter Môn's energy schemes. Also work with other developers to ensure the Ynys Môn economy benefits from the investment in renewables.
- Work with Anglesey County Council and other key partners to develop the **Holyhead Freeport**.

- **Develop Menter Môn's commercial and consultancy services** throughout Wales to strengthen the company and offer stable, high quality employment on Anglesey.

CSYM Strategic Objective – Climate Change

Respond to the crisis, address change and work towards becoming a net zero organisation by 2030.

- Develop community owned **energy projects** to generate renewable energy, create high quality jobs, and provide opportunities for Ynys Môn businesses. Our primary focus is on **Morlais** and **Holyhead Hydrogen Hub**, but we are open to collaborating with, and influencing, other developers to deliver benefits to the island.
- **Establishing Ynni Cymunedol Môn (Anglesey Community Energy)** as a single purpose vehicle with independent governance to work with, and on behalf of communities, to deliver community benefit from energy developments.
- Working with Anglesey County Council on plans to **decarbonise their services** through the production and use of green hydrogen in transport.
- Working with Anglesey County Council to raise **awareness among Ynys Môn residents** of energy developments, their own energy use and how communities can benefit. This also includes **engaging with children and young people** through schools, as we do with Morlais.
- Collaborate with Anglesey County Council and other partners to develop the **Glasfordd multi-use green corridors**. These will provide active travel opportunities, cycle paths and biodiversity habitats.
- Continue to **protect habitats and native species** on Ynys Môn and provide practical and funding support for stakeholders. This to include preserving Local Nature Reserves owned by Menter Môn.
- Provide opportunities for communities to participate and benefit from Ynys Môn's green infrastructure and **provide well-being activities for residents**. Aberlleiniog nature reserve is a case in point.
- Working with Anglesey County Council to deliver the **Cylchol project**, a **circular economy project** that works communities to increase levels of re-use and repair on Ynys Môn.

5. Plans to engage, collaborate and communicate with communities

Menter Môn consistently engages with a range of groups and communities across the island. We have always collaborated with partner, stakeholders and residents as we develop and implement projects, and build almost 30 years relationships and networks.

Below are examples of ongoing engagement in relation to various projects. These were established and are led by Menter Môn staff.

- **Morlais Community Engagement Group** – An open forum which allows us to report on Morlais progress and respond to any concerns.
- **Cefni Festival Voluntary Committee** – This is the organising committee for Cefni Festival which has representation from Llangefni, as well as other area of the island.
- **Welsh for Families Partnership** – A widely represented forum that ensures that messages around the Welsh language to communities, parents and families are consistent.
- **Cwlwm Seiriol Steering Group** – A local steering group that provides guidance on the lottery funded Cwlwm Seiriol project.
- **Anglesey and Gwynedd Food Partnership** – A group with representation from the public, voluntary and private sectors offering guidance on local food supply chains and food poverty in Anglesey and Gwynedd.

Engagement and collaboration also happens organically and ad-hoc. This allows us to adapt our activities to meet the requirements of the community. These are often short-term and linked to specific projects.

- **Balchder Bro Groups (SPF)** – We have worked with 30 groups to develop a range of projects that celebrate the identity and culture of their areas. The work involved working closely with communities and co-designing the activities. The financial support is only one element of the support.
- **St David's Day Parades** – Each year Menter Môn works with local committees to organise parades in towns across the island. Partners include Town Councils, Schools, elected members, and residents.
- **Ein Hanes Ni (Our Story)** – We are working with 12 communities on Ynys Môn to record and celebrate local history. Representation differs in each area, but usually includes the local school, community or town council, local clubs and members of the public.

The diversity of work, and current funding instability make developing a single engagement and collaboration plan challenging. Reference has already been made to the short-term nature of community projects, which have a budget up to

December 2024. Also, Menter Môn does not receive core funding and therefore all activities (including engagement) have to relate to a contract or grant scheme. We don't have the resources for an ongoing engagement plan.

Nevertheless, we are keen to build stable relationships with Ynys Môn communities and improve communication. We therefore propose the following as a starting point and build on it if the resources allow.

- **Circulate information** to all elected members by November 2024. The information will include the company vision, an overview of current projects, contact details of senior staff, and an outline of future plans.
- **Arrange a meeting with elected members of** electoral wards over a period of 12 months. We will circulate an invitation to elected members and offer to meet in their areas or in Llangefni. The Managing Director and one member of the senior team to attend each meeting. These will be an opportunity to outline an overview of the company's work, highlight relevant plans in their areas, and discuss the opportunities and concerns.