

Why we support your bid for AWC grant

To:- Claire Cressy (Head of Theaters and creative wellbeing)

My name is John Gates, I am the chair of the "Shedquarters" Men's Shed in Maesteg. Without Awen workers we would not be in existence. They came to us in the beginning with the idea of starting a male support group because of the high incidents of self harm and suicides in the Bridgend area and supported us during the critical first year.

During that year we the members decide we wanted to grow. To do that we voted to join under the umbrella of Men's Sheds Cymru. The Men's Sheds organization was started in Australia when a Health authority was concerned about men suffering with isolation and loneliness were self harming or committing suicide. The mental and physical wellbeing of our members is still our main priority. We do that by providing for the members a place to talk about their issues and spend time in a warm, safe environment.

We have reached out into the community to be able to help start other Men's Sheds in Caerau and Ogmore Vale. We have also help start a Shed in Parc Prison. It is so successful that G4S who run Parc Prison having won the contract to run four other prisons in Wales and are now wanting to start Sheds in those prisons. This week we heard that a Prison in Wellingborough in England was inquiring how to start a Shed.

We also run a Repair Café on the 4th Saturday of the month and are about to celebrate our first anniversary. This reduces the amount of waste going to landfill. Saves the community money and provides an activity for our members to help them to feel good about themselves

Without Awen's help and assistance we would not have been able to help our members and those in the wider community. It would be a shame if because of a lack of funding Awen was not able to expand on the good work they have already shown

John Gates.