

Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm & Local Community Join Forces to Deliver Clinical “RED AREA” For Vale of Neath Practice



During these unprecedented and challenging times due to the Coronavirus outbreak, we have all heard of numerous heart-warming stories from across the UK, about local communities coming together to help one another during these times of adversity. It is with great pleasure that the Vale of Neath Patient Participation Group (PPG), can report on another outstanding community effort that has delivered a bespoke clinical solution for the Upper Neath Valley in the fight against COVID-19.

The past few weeks have been extremely difficult for everyone, as people adjust their usual lives and routines whilst observing social distancing rules and staying at home guidance. The Doctors and staff at the Vale of Neath Practice have also undergone massive changes to the way in which they deliver General Medical Services, and they would like to say a sincere thank you to all registered patients for their understanding and cooperation as they too adapt to the rapidly evolving pandemic situation.

One of the key Government messages of this crisis has been “Protect The NHS and Save Lives”, and the GP Partners at Vale Of Neath Practice have been working tirelessly to come up with solutions that will facilitate face to face assessments for patients suspected of being COVID-19 positive – whilst minimising the risk of cross contamination to themselves, other staff and other patients.

Following a recent “brain storming session”, Senior Partner Dr Paul Westwood made contact with local businessman and former Mayor of Glynneath Mr David Pugh to enquire if he had any ideas or contacts that could create a “temporary shelter or marquee” within the grounds of the Medical Centre, that could be used as a “clinical red area” for dealing with suspected COVID-19 patients.

Amazingly within the hour Dr Westwood received a return call from Mr Pugh, who had managed to mobilise a stakeholder group consisting of local councillors, members of the PPG and local businessmen, all eager to attend a site meeting early on a Sunday morning.

The site meeting was extremely productive as the local businessmen pitched their ideas and proposals that would satisfy the requirements outlined by Dr Westwood. Following a brief deliberation amongst the stakeholders the project was awarded to “Bramwood Timber Products” who are based in Derifcah Lane, Glynneath.

The topic of conversation quickly moved onto how this project would be funded. Councillor Del Morgan suggested that the Vale of Neath Practice PPG submit an application to the new Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm COVID-19 grant scheme. Following this, Mr Pugh graciously offered to seek sponsorship funding through his local network of business associates if the grant application was unsuccessful.

Everything now appeared to be falling into place, Huw and Ian Watkins of Bramwood Timber Products began to design the components required for the project, while Councillors Del Morgan and Carolyn Edwards frantically gathered the information required to submit the grant application to Pen y Cymoedd.



The stakeholders had a nervous wait for a number of days whilst the Pen y Cymoedd decision making panel considered the grant application submitted by the PPG, but thankfully all of the hard work was a success as the grant application was approved in just under a week which gave Bramwood Timber Products the green light to press ahead with production.



Only a couple of days after receiving confirmation of the grant funding, Ian Watkins and his Bramwood team (supported by South Wales Fork Trucks) arrived at the Vale Of Neath Medical Centre to erect the bespoke timber drive through car port and connecting work cabin, that will not only enable patients to receive General Medical attention and be assessed for suspected COVID-19 from the comfort of their own vehicles, but also help protect Practice staff and other patients against potential cross infection of this highly contagious virus.



The Doctors and Staff at the Vale of Neath Practice have been extremely impressed by the speed at which the local community reacted to deliver this vital clinical facility. In addition a special mention and thanks go to the following parties that have been directly involved:



- ❖ Mr David Pugh
- ❖ Mr Phil Thomas
- ❖ Mrs Morwen Owen –Evans
- ❖ Cllr Del Morgan
- ❖ Cllr Carolyn Edwards
- ❖ Vale Of Neath Practice Patient Participation Group
- ❖ Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm COVID-19 Grant Scheme: *The independent Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund CIC is responsible for managing the £1.8 million a year fund set up by Swedish energy company, Vattenfall, the operator of the wind farm. The Fund will be in place until at least 2036.*

Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund: <https://penycymoeddcic.cymru/home/>

Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm and Vattenfall: <http://penycymoedd.vattenfall.co.uk/>

- ❖ Liz Selby (South Wales Fork Trucks): www.southwalesforktrucks.co.uk
- ❖ Huw & Ian Watkins (Bramwood Timber Products): www.bramwoodtimber.co.uk

We are extremely fortunate to have people with the passion and desire to make a difference living within our communities, and we can all be grateful for the speed in which this project was transformed from an initial concept to the amazing clinical facility which has been delivered for the Upper Neath Valley.

Well done and thank you to everyone involved.

The Vale of Neath Practice Patient Participation Group.