

Networks and communication

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All photos from the Wales Town Booster Pilot Programme March 2026.
Credit: Creative Communities International, DCFW, Vale of Glamorgan Council.



Networks + communication

Placemaking is most valuable when people work collaboratively, across different departments and organisations; and when local communities and businesses are involved as much as possible. Collaborative working requires building and strengthening networks of people and resources, and good communication between parties. This guide gives advice on mapping your networks and communicating effectively with everyone involved.

Mapping what's available

A useful starting point is to map what resources – skills, assets, spaces and materials – are already available amongst your networks and within the local area. This will make it easier to match resources with the needs of quick-win placemaking and community-led projects. It might also identify gaps in existing networks which you can then seek to fill as delivery of the Placemaking Plan progresses. Knowing what's already available will help to prioritise projects and ensure change happens quickly.

A good way to do this would be to have a shared map alongside a written 'directory' of resources which can be regularly updated.

The map could be physical (printed out with markers to identify resources), but this will only be effective if it can be easily accessed, reviewed and updated by those who will need it. Alternatively, a shared digital map could allow more flexibility (for example, 'pins' and 'saved places' can be added to Google Maps). Consider who you want to have access to the map, and whether it should be shared with or editable by the public.

Your directory of resources could include the following:

- **Physical spaces** available to hire or use for free for meetings or workshops such as community centres, schools, club houses, cafes or church halls.
- **Community groups and organisations** that are willing to be involved, noting when and where they meet, the skills they have and the kind of activity they want to get involved in.
- **Local businesses** that are willing to give time, skills or donations of materials.
- **Individual potential volunteers**, noting what their skills and interests are.
- **Available materials and equipment** which might be needed to build projects or run events. Think about where you might be able to source recycled materials, borrow equipment, or businesses and organisations who might want to donate materials. There may be local shop or charity which sells off-cuts and scrap materials for craft and making projects at low cost which would otherwise go to landfill.
- **Skills** which are held by those in the community. There may already be people or organisations who can help with building, painting, planting and landscape, organising, design, public art, creative engagement, food and drink provision, entertainment and more.

Forums and networks

There may already be a forum for engaging with business in the town, and this could be a good place to communicate plans for upcoming placemaking projects, find out which businesses want to get involved, address concerns and listen to ideas from the businesses themselves.

You could consider setting up a local placemaking forum which meets a few times a year. This would provide an opportunity for businesses, community groups, town council, high street landlords and various departments of the local authority to come together to discuss plans and ideas, and create new connections which could lead to fruitful collaborations. Think about which time of the day/week is likely to suit the majority of people, remembering that some volunteers and participants may have a 'day job'.

A Placemaking Newsletter can help communication between meetings. (See **RAISING AWARENESS AND COORDINATING PLACEMAKING** for more on this).

Contacting Landlords

Landlords of high street and commercial properties in town centres can be notoriously difficult to contact. There may be instances where you want to get in touch with a property owner to discuss a pop-up in an empty unit or building and streetscape improvements. If this has been unsuccessful, try using the attached template letter to landlords.

Coordinating volunteers

When volunteers will be involved in delivering placemaking activities, it is important that their efforts are well coordinated, so that everyone is treated fairly, kept safe and enjoys the process.

Welsh Government and Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) have worked with leaders across Wales and with many volunteer-involving organisations to develop a 'New Approach to Volunteering in Wales'. The New Approach was launched in July 2025, and it covers three elements:

- A Vision
- A Delivery Framework
- An Implementation Plan

It provides a good starting point for thinking about how volunteers can most effectively be involved in community-led placemaking projects. The Vision is that:

- The well-being of people, their communities and environment is improved by volunteering
- Volunteering is safe, supported and sustainable
- Volunteering is inclusive of all parts of our society, and reflects our culture and language



All of these aspects could be addressed in the involvement of volunteers for placemaking. Find out more here: <https://wcva.cymru/projects/new-approach-to-volunteering-in-wales/>

The WCVA website has a host of other useful resources that can be used to plan, coordinate, manage and promote volunteering opportunities that come out of Placemaking Plans, including the Volunteering Wales Code of Practice for Organisations Involving Volunteers: <https://wcva.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Code-of-Practice-Cod-Ymarfer-1.pdf>

The Code of Practice includes important considerations, such as:

- Appointing a designated person with responsibility for providing support and supervision
- Advertising opportunities on www.volunteering-wales.net
- Catering for diversity of volunteers
- Preparing volunteers with proper induction and training
- Assessing risks
- Ensuring volunteers understand responsibilities relating to Safeguarding
- Providing appropriate protective clothing and equipment
- Offering reimbursement of out of pocket expenses
- Giving opportunities for volunteers to provide feedback
- Gathering stories and information to demonstrate the impact of volunteering.

