Community Meals in Ponterwyd

Ponterwyd Village Hall wants to bring people together through food, friendship and shared experiences, helping strengthen community spirit for all ages and all parts of the community.

Context: Ponterwyd is a rural village near Aberystwyth in Ceredigion with a population of approximately 500 people. The area includes a number of dispersed settlements and households, with many people living some distance from village facilities and services. Community members highlighted that people often live independently and can find it difficult to come together regularly.

The community identified a range of local assets that could contribute to successful community meals, including local food producers, growers, hospitality businesses, community groups, community council and volunteers.

"People need to get involved more in the community - they are very independent. There's community here but not togetherness."

Issues include:

- Limited transport options
- Insufficient parking at venues
- Running community activities that appeal to all
- Accessibility challenges for older people and those with mobility needs
- Affordability

What did the community say about community meals? A relaxed community event was held at Ponterwyd Village Hall on 24 April 2026. Eight adults and four children attended to explore what successful community meals could look like. Participants used questionnaires, a community map, creative activities and discussion prompts to share their ideas and experiences. Community meals were seen as an opportunity to bring people together, create stronger local connections and provide welcoming spaces where residents could socialise and get to know one another.





What do people want most?

People wanted community meals to feel friendly, welcoming, relaxed and inclusive.

"Fun, friendly, intergenerational, kid-friendly."

"I'd like to be able to talk and share with local people, has to be welcoming."

"Like a village day where all people could gather together."



What is the recipe for success?

Key ingredients are:

- A warm and comfortable atmosphere
- Opportunities to talk, share and make connections
- Activities that include all generations
- Accessible venues, with mobility needs considered
- Local people actively involved in planning and delivery
- Affordable or free food, especially at the start

"Local people are involved, it will be calm and fun."

"Go out to entice people in. It has to be reasonably priced or free to start off so that people value it."

"Need to try them out to see how it feels and how it could work."



More than a meal.... opportunities for social activities, learning and entertainment:

- Local live musicians and singers
- Country music
- Barn dances
- Children's activities: quizzes; craft
- Summer fairs
- Walks followed by BBQs
- Treasure hunts for adults and children
- Food and cultural themed evenings
- Sheep shearing demonstrations
- Bringing together local arts, music and food

"Community spirit."

"Get the school involved - parents and grandparents."

"Joint community fayre, craft, food, music."

Background: This project emerged from the Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales project. Through Innovation Labs in 2025, participants explored how food can enhance wellbeing in rural communities. The vision was to support shared meal initiatives that use local produce, celebrate culture and bring people together, helping to strengthen wellbeing, community cohesion and rural prosperity. Acknowledgement: Special thanks to Ein Cegin and Sophie Bennett for providing mentoring and support to the communities. Contact: www.eincegin.org

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