Circular Economy Sector Forum

15/06/2021 | **12:00 - 2:00** | **Online via Zoom**

Attendees:

- Robert Alexander - EEESafe
- Eifion Williams - Circular Economy Wales
- Bettina Gilbert - WRAP
- Lee Bazalgette - Colombo Designs
- Ronan - Local Area Coordinator, Swansea
- Gareth Davies, Paul Carroll - Business Wales
- Russ - Balance Zero Waste Shop
- Gavin Bunting - Swansea University
- Tony Burnett - CEIC
- Philip McDonell - Low Carbon Swansea Bay
- Vicky Mollier - Grwp.Wales
- Natalie Rees - Transport for Wales
- Oyewole Munideen - Engineering Graduate
- Chris Felices - Sustainability lecturer, UWTSD
- Mary Sherwood - Gower Power Coop
- Ellen - Greenstream Flooring CIC
- Fiona Neill - Gower College Swansea
- Sam Doyle - Amey Consulting

What's Happening?

- Circular Economy Wales rolling out community fridge projects over the summer. Agency for development of Precious Plastic. Launching a complementary currency Celyn over the summer
- Balance Zero Waste Shop is a refill shop based in Sketty.
- Low Carbon Swansea Bay is running a webinar soon surrounding WRAP and plastic.
- Grwp.Wales: Des' Cabin, summer open days on community gardens, repair workshops. Currently coordinating with local businesses to shorten the supply chain of fresh produce.
- TfW, £5bn invested in renewal of the public transport system and enabling it to be more circular.
- Gower Power is keeping local spending in Swansea via their energy tariff.
- Greenstream Flooring CIC developing links to see how we can reuse plastic material.
- Gower College are repurposing and upcycling single use items.
- CEIC is funded to run 14 cohorts in Swansea Bay.

Mapping the Circular Economy in Wales:

How can we make it easier and more convenient as consumers to spend our money with businesses and projects operating in sustainable methods. We're keen to play a role of connecting and showcasing these initiatives across South West Wales.

- WRAP Cymru: Mapped the supply chain of plastic in Wales.
- Terracycle has a map for public drop off locations.
- Refill Wales has a map for refill stations in Wales.
- EEESafe: Social business directory. Mapping needs to include consumers. Incentivise consumers to take part in responsible consumption.
- It's a challenge to encourage people to give their information out to mapping platforms. Social media seems to lead the way for consumers and micro businesses.
- Mapping resources such as Open Green Map, Terracycle Drop off Map, Circular Economy Club database.

What would a Regional Circular Economy Conference look like?:

What would be needed to run another conference, what would we focus on?
- We need all parts of society to participate. All aspects could be included.

- Circular Economy conference in the autumn over two days - one day for education and one business focused.
- A market forum/exhibition included, with a more focus on local SMEs.
- The solutions we need are local, small and immediate, but it requires a much larger scale to be effective.
- The scale of Precious Plastic is difficult to make on a large scale versus the scale that plastic is being produced. The scale of production and scale of the solution are highly off balance.
- We're 3rd in the world for recycling; we need to shout about that. Celebrate and champion organisations such as Smile Plastics, CWM Environmental.
- Ensuring the public sector is aware of what's happening. A specific ask for larger corporations. Breaking down the silos and get everyone around the table is important
- Engaging with communities, schools, and bringing the conference to everyone by making it interactive. Showcasing what's going on and education is key. Emerging project forming: Waste bus.
- Approach large organisations with CSR pots.

Can consumerism ever be sustainable?:

To reduce consumerism which people often use to fill a hole in their lives can we instead look locally to offer more courses, hobbies, past times, groups, which would then have a positive knock on effect to the waste created because life would be more about fulfilling experiences and not gathering physical objects?

- The current economic model causes over consumption and the need for businesses to adjust their profits and wages.
- The responsibility should lie with those up the supply line. It's difficult to move away from a consumer society.
- Littering is a complex issue; People may think that because local authorities will deal with waste, then it's "OK" to litter and turn it into someone else's problem. According to WRAP, one of the main drivers for littering could be shame and embarrassment at their purchase.
- Newport; Wastesavers, Recycle for charity.
- Look at what's happening on an international scale. Lee built a map called Getwater.lk in Sri Lanka and was involved in a precious plastics project in Arugam Bay: Established a waste segregation system for plastics based in repurposed shipping containers.

Next Steps/Actions:

Guests were invited to a number of events:

- Low Carbon Swansea Bay - Driving a Plastics Circular Economy on **Wednesday 23rd June** (10-11.45am) - click here.
- Sean McCormick discussion on Plastic to Oil in Anglesey - **Wednesday 30th June, 5.30** - register here.
- Circular Revolution Workshops - for businesses in West Wales who are keen to engage with more sustainable products, services and business models. Contact: g.t.m.bunting@swansea.ac.uk.

Connections:

- Zoe to link up Fiona with Ellen
- Zoe to introduce Lee to SPECIFIC and EV Recycling
- Eifion and Lee to connect over Precious Plastics projects
- Vicky & Mary - Asylum seekers apprenticeship opportunities
- CEIC looking for knowledge providers - contact: a.m.burnett@swansea.ac.uk
- Continue conversation on sustainable consumerism - Russ, Lee, Mary, 4tR

Resources & References

- 4theRegion: Circular Economy Impact Area Page
- Build Back Better - 4theRegion
- Low Carbon Swansea Bay Webinar via Eventbrite
- Circular Economy Plastics Mapping Tool for Wales
- Terracycle Drop off Map
- Refill Wales
- Green Map
- Repair Directory via Repair Efficiency Wales
- LocalitEEE Metrics Mapping
- Circular Economy Wales
- CEIC (Circular Economy Innovation Communities)
- Swansea Local Area Co-ordination
- Gower Power - Local Green Clean Energy
- EEEsafe