

Cadwyn Ogwen

Key Facts

The seeds of this food hub come from the covid lockdowns and difficulty in accessing food, but is now helping customers identify local produce and have easy access to it.

Based in: Bethesda, Gwynedd, North-West Wales

Established in: 2022

Business type: Food hub

Company type: Limited by Guarantee

Yearly turnover: £12,695 (June 2022 - June 2023)

No. of employees: 3

Background & Values

Enterprise Structure

The Cadwyn Ogwen food hub sits within the wider Partneriaeth Ogwen group that describes itself as “a social enterprise working for the benefit of the economy, environment and communities of Dyffryn Ogwen.”

The Journey

The food hub was created to develop what had been set up during the covid lockdowns.

Bringing all the producers together to work closely during covid and helping them out created a nice partnership, a strong team and they wanted to keep it going. This was a way of trying to adapt it to a post-covid world and help local producers and help local customers to get their hands on really great local produce.

Robyn Meredydd, Project Manager, explains that the goal of the food hub is in helping customers identify local produce and have easy access to it.

Robyn says the success factors to help them get to where they are now include support from the Open Food Network.

Having a great website supported by a team who are able to take care of that side of things lets us focus on working with our producers and making Cadwyn Ogwen food hub work within Dyffryn Ogwen.

Cadwyn Ogwen also opted to fund an order & customer dashboard, a custom [add-on built by Open Food Network](#), to monitor their order volumes and customer statistics. This provides the hub with quick glance information about hub success and areas for attention.

Robyn also says that working really closely with a team of producers who see the value in Cadwyn Ogwen and who want it to work has helped them become a success.

Values

The food hub's values are the environment; so less cars on the road, less vans on the road and using electric vehicles to do their deliveries.

And it's about valuing their local produce and the local economy, and finding ways to bring producers together.

Impact

Robyn feels one impact of the food hub on the community is it's brought the producers closer together.

I think it has raised awareness of local produce - of what's made literally on our doorstep. And it's given people somewhere to go where they know they can buy locally easily.

Communication

Cadwyn Ogwen use the following to communicate with the community:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Mailchimp to send out email updates to their contact list
- Regular feature in a local community paper, Llais Ogwan
- Regular posts on [Ogwen360](#) which is a community website
- Posters up around town
- Posters up at pick-up points

The food hub recently organised their first "producers market" where nine of their producers came along to meet the public. Cadwyn Ogwen had a stand and were handing out flyers and offering discounts for new customers.

Getting feedback from customers

We try to get feedback from customers and do shoutouts on social media and through campaign emails using Mailchimp, which then takes people to a [simple google form](#).

At the recent producer event, we asked attendees to complete a questionnaire about what is keeping them from ordering through the hub. We will analyse that data - and we have given everyone who answered 10% off their Cadwyn Ogwen order.

If we have new customers who we think might have some good feedback we will contact them directly to ask 'how did it go?'

Hub Operations

Location

Everything to do with the Cadwyn Ogwen food hub is based in the Cosyn Cymru dairy in Llaethdy Gwyn.



We have an arrangement with Cosyn Cymru that allows us to use their shop on Thursday mornings to accept deliveries and prepare orders. In return we assist in the shop when Carrie is busy making her cheese in the dairy. We don't store many products on site - only a few long shelf life products for producers who have difficulty bringing deliveries weekly - and the only frozen items are prawns which come in on the morning of packing day and they stay in cool boxes with ice packs. While we're packing and preparing everything is kept in Carrie's fridges and chiller room.

Ordering & Deliveries

Order cycles run from Tuesday to the following Tuesday at midday. Produce will then be ready to collect at one of the collection points or for delivery or collection every Thursday afternoon.

Delivery is free if orders are over £25, and there is no charge for customers who collect from one of our three collection points.

Deliveries used to be made just within the villages of Dyffryn Ogwen but Cadwyn Ogwen were inspired by [the Good Food Loop project](#) and have now partnered with another Open Food Network food hub in a neighbouring village. This means they are able to offer their customers products from both hubs. So now every other week deliveries from Cadwyn Ogwen are also going to Penygroes.

We receive all our orders on the Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning, and we sort out what produce is for Cadwyn Ogwen and what needs to go to Hwb Bwyn Dyffryn Nantlle. We take weekly turns meeting up either in Llaethdy Gwyn, Bethesda or Yr Orsaf, Penygroes, where we swap products to enable us to fill our orders. On the way back, we call into Tyddyn Teg, a farming cooperative in Bethel, with any orders that customers want to collect from the pick up point there. Once back in Dyffryn Ogwen, we carry out our deliveries in that area, which is within a few miles of us.

This means customers from both hubs are able to purchase from further afield and get a wider choice of products and prices.

Robyn downloads a delivery report from the Open Food Network platform, then has a look at a map of the local area to plan out a sensible route for the drivers.

We definitely put some thought into planning the route so the drivers go in a loop, but sometimes they have better local knowledge than me or fit in other jobs on the way, so they amend it.

Waste & Recycling

If customers have had a veg box the next week they will leave the empty box out for collection and reuse. Cadwyn Ogwen use branded paper bags and their drivers will collect



glass milk bottles and cardboard egg boxes and deliver those back to the producers to use the next week.

Infrastructure

We are very lucky to be working in partnership with Cosyn Cymru, as being based in the dairy at Llaethdy Gwyn gives us access to fridge facilities as well as being a handy place for producers to drop off their orders.

We use the Partneriaeth Ogwen electric vehicles for deliveries. We have a community van as well as a 7 seater car which can be used if needed with the seats folded down at the back.

Team Structure

Robyn is the Project Manager and Esme who has recently joined is the Project Co-ordinator. They also have paid community drivers from Partneriaeth Ogwen who do the deliveries and some volunteers.

Community Involvement

The food hub uses the community drivers to do the deliveries when available. They also have a team of volunteers to fill in where possible. There is a volunteer coordinator at Partneriaeth Ogwen who aims to match people with different projects.

Their Producers

Currently Cadwyn Ogwen have 23 producers and by joining up with Hwb Bwyd Dyffryn Nantlle their customers have access to products from their 22 producers as well.

When asked how they recruit producers, Robyn said most of it has been through word of mouth and they have producers recommending other producers to them regularly. But they have done some active recruitment.

We've been trying to target specific producers to fill in gaps, for example, when I started there wasn't a producer making cakes. So I approached Cegin Karen, who had recently started selling in Marchnad Ogwen, the monthly market in Bethesda, and now she's making cakes and biscuits and different sweet things for us.

Robyn went to a producer event but found that a lot of them were too far away and she doesn't currently have the resources to pick up produce from them. They weren't able to deliver the produce to her on a specific day. She hopes that they might be able to work with producers further afield in the future.



Benefits of the Resilient Green Spaces project

[Resilient Green Spaces](#) was a £1.27m partnership project led by Social Farms & Gardens to pilot alternative re-localised food systems using communities and their green spaces as the driving force for change across Wales from March 2022 until June 2023.

This project was funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

The project consisted of six workstreams, with the Open Food Network partnering with [DTA Wales](#) and [Landworkers' Alliance](#) to support five food hubs in Wales.

Cadwyn Ogwen applied and was successful in becoming one of the supported hubs. Through the programme they received a salary for a part time food hub manager and funding to purchase new food-standard flooring for their premises and some marketing items, as well as mentoring from all the partners to help their food hub thrive.

Looking to the Future

Robyn reports that the food hub's current struggles are attracting new customers and getting back old customers, specifically those that used the hub during covid but have now gone back to previous ways of food shopping such as supermarkets.

Without being topped up by funding Robyn admits the food hub is not sustainable at current levels. They have secured some more funding and are looking to build partnerships within the wider region to overcome this.

In terms of opportunities, Cadwyn Ogwen are focusing at the moment on developing the relationship with their neighbouring hub, Hwb Bwyd Dyffryn Nantlle. Robyn hopes it will strengthen both hubs to offer more products, attract more customers and get more sales for the producers.

Their next step is to hopefully target large local employers in the area to add them to the existing pick up points to enable more customers to order.

Follow Cadwyn Ogwen on social media:

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086141688560

