

Newtown – A Reuse and Repair Pioneer Town

A partnership proposal from Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council alongside Circular Economy Mid Wales.

Further partners and collaborators shown in **BLUE TEXT** within the document.

Exec Summary

A partnership proposal that draws on the pioneering heritage of Newtown and which builds on the reuse and repair foundations already laid to create a town-wide movement for change toward a zero waste society and circular economy. From the community up.

Newtown's heritage of cooperation and of recycling underpinning a circular economy

Newtown has a deep heritage to draw upon as it puts itself forward as a one of Wales most dynamic towns for reuse and repair. Birthplace and resting place to the cooperative movement pioneer Robert Owen it can boast a more recent pioneering track record in reuse and repair:

- ✓ Cwm Harry pioneered domestic food waste collections (and processing) here in Wales, a practice now taken up as policy by WG and as standard practice in every local authority.
- ✓ Cae Post similarly pioneered kerbside collection of dry recyclates in Wales, also a practice now taken up as policy by WG and as standard practice in every local authority.
- ✓ The pioneering Zero Waste settlement of Presteigne and Norton – a WG action research contract that gave evidence to the Zero Waste strategy for Wales – was developed and delivered by Cwm Harry in collaboration with the Town Council.
- ✓ Now with our track record combined and experience uploaded in to Circular Economy Mid Wales, Newtown has joined the pioneers again by opening up one of Wales first 'salvage sheds', the reuse and repair service at the towns HWRC.
- ✓ Under the banner of SkillShop – and in partnership with NPTC Group of Colleges – established a MakerSpace* Enterprise Village on college campus land to support and incubate young enterprises based on the unwanted goods and materials of our town.
- ✓ Elsewhere in town fellow social enterprise Open Newtown has emerged as a land trust pioneering the community ownership of land and, within its first two years, has secured funds to animate a circular economy through:
 - Building a showcase Sustainable Development venue – for locals and visitors alike – on the riverside in the town centre;
 - Instigating a Circular Economy Survey of the towns 750 businesses.

About Circular Economy Mid Wales (CEMW) Ltd

A young not-for-profit social enterprise CEMW has inherited the pioneering history of recycling in the community and with it built up a series of emergent reuse and repair operations - outlined elsewhere in this brochure – with ambitions to scale and / or replicate across the region.

About Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council (N<C)

The Town Council is the largest of its kind in Powys employing professional team and offering trusted leadership, helping provide a community and town which is sustainable, prosperous, resilient and with a strong sense of identity in which people chose to live, learn, work and to visit. The Town Council has in recent year undertaken similar sized projects related to community asset transfers, visitor centre development and currently a town centre green infrastructure project.

All of these make CEMW – and Newtown - ideally placed to invest in, accelerate and deliver a zero waste reuse and repair culture across the whole town; and to position Newtown as one of the 'go to' places to witness all aspects of a reuse and repair economy run through a wide variety of partnerships.

Current 'components' of our reuse and repair economy

CEMW has secured and gone on to build three components of the reuse and repair circular economy. We wish to build on the three components of:

1. Salvage Shed

In partnership with Wales' largest recycling company **POTTERS GROUP**, CEMW has installed and operates a Salvage Shed which collects, sorts and sells items previously destined for the skip. This third sector re-use and repair facility within a HWRC is precisely what WRAP Cymru's July 2018 'Preparing for re-use: a Roadmap for a paradigm shift in Wales' called for when it identified the very first thing that should be done as being *"likely to primarily be driven by local authorities working in partnerships with existing and new TSROs to introduce preparation for re-use through the HWRC"*. This foundation stone is already in place in Newtown and operated by CEMW.



2. MakerSpace* @ PD

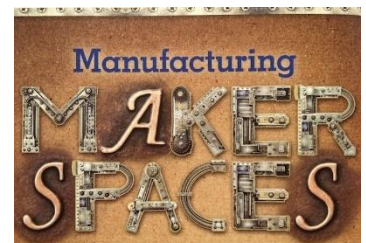
In partnership with **NPTC GROUP OF COLLEGES** (who run the Newtown Campus) CEMW holds the lease on Pen Dinas (@ PD) – meaning 'head of the town' - a 2 acre holding which it operates as an enterprise hub and MakerSpace* which hosts a range of community enterprise partners including:

- ✓ **BIKE TO THE FUTURE** – bike refurbishment and youth training enterprise
- ✓ **MEN IN SHEDS** – newly set up and fitting out to upcycle and restore from the Salvage Shed
- ✓ **CULTIVATE COOPERATIVE** – running the community garden but now also the commercial grade teaching kitchen being let to start up local food businesses.
- ✓ **PRECIOUS PLASTICS** workshop – currently being re-equipped
- ✓ Coming shortly – *AN AQUAPONICS ENTERPRISE*

* MakerSpace

DEFINITION

A makerspace is a collaborative workspace inside a school, library or separate public/private facility for making, learning, exploring and sharing that uses high tech to no tech tools. These spaces are open to kids, adults, and entrepreneurs and have a variety of maker equipment including 3D printers, laser cutters, cnc machines, soldering irons and even sewing machines.



3. Market Hall shop/ pop up repair cafes

Making use of the community-owned Market Hall in Newtown CEMW has run a series of pop-up Repair Cafes* (building on Repair Café's run locally on and off for five years). CEMW has recently invested in a market stall and trialling:

- ✓ Direct sales of goods salvaged from the Salvage Shed, especially recovered WEEE.
- ✓ **GREENER STEPS** – zero plastics refill shop.

* Repair Cafes

DEFINITION

Repair Cafés- A repair café is a meeting in which people repair household electrical and mechanical devices, computers, bicycles, clothing, and other items. They are organised by and for local residents. Repair cafés are held at a fixed location where tools are available and where they can fix their broken goods with the help of volunteers. The objectives are to reduce waste, to maintain repair skills and to strengthen social cohesion.



Building up the components required for a circular economy & positioning Newtown as a pioneer reuse and repair economy for Wales.

What we are asking for?

We would like to use the Repair and Reuse Fund to bring all of the components within Newtown in to a coordinated part of the town’s economy, delivering reuse and repair services seamlessly and to as many people as possible, establishing a culture of reuse and repair across the town.

We have the foundations in place - and have the opportunities available to us - to do this across the domestic, retail and commercial sectors in town. And to achieve this in partnership with public, private and third sector partners.

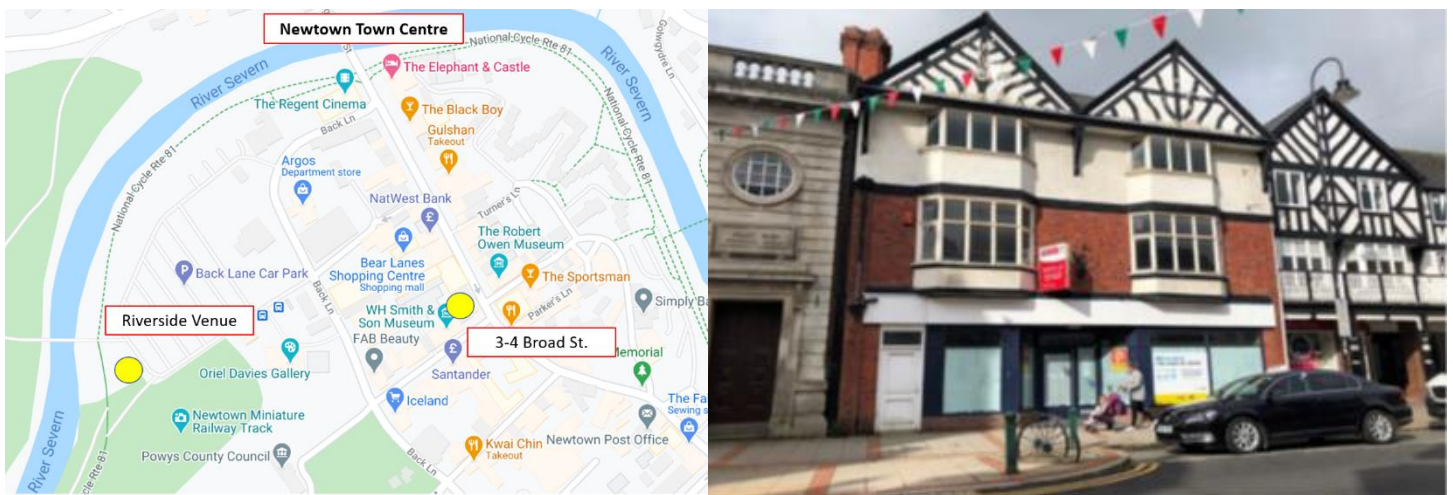
Achieving this also sets Newtown up as exemplar in Wales, as a ‘destination’ to experience and learn about a reuse and repair settlement.

We are seeking support from the Reuse and Repair Fund to achieve three interlinked elements. Each can stand alone but together they make the whole substantially greater than the sum of its parts, creating a culture of reuse and repair across the town.

A. Town Centre Reuse & Repair Hub - salvage shed sales / repair café (permanent) / library of things / zero plastics shop

We would like to bring ownership of a prominent Broad Street retail property into community ownership and dedicate its use – in perpetuity – to unlocking a circular economy based around reuse and repair.

Having been empty for around three years it occupies perhaps one of the best locations in town, at the central crossroads of the town’s principle retail streets.



3-4 Broad Street is on the market for £325k. The ground floor is 3000 sq. ft and suitable for immediate occupation.

CEMW has set up and successfully runs the Salvage Shed at the HWRC. So successfully that there is a surplus of perfectly usable furniture / electronics / sports good etc. and a growing call from the public (including volunteers) to get involved and get access to the material. As importantly they are seeking access to the skills associated with reuse and repair.

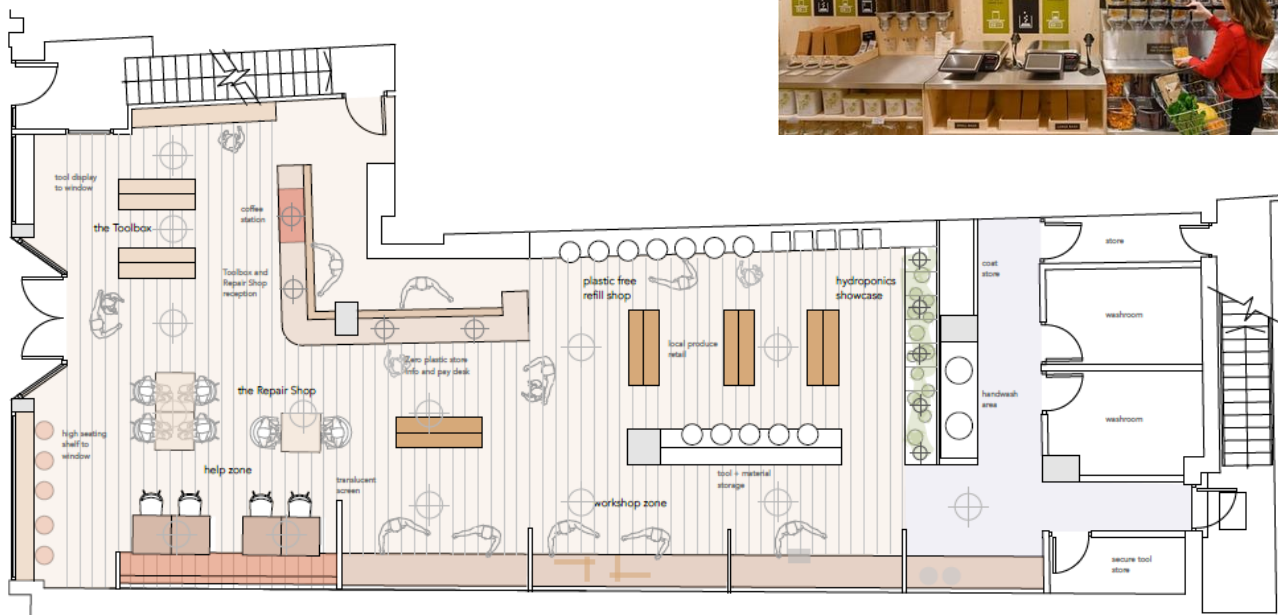
Additionally CEMW has already carried out several Repair Cafes in the town until these were suspended by Covid. Our experience to date is that this has a strong appeal to the public and there is scope for considerable expansion of this work.

The ground floor is of sufficient size to allow it to be split to provide space for several emergent enterprises (with potential sharing of staff). We would intend this building to be used in the following ways:

- i. Retail space for Salvage Shed. The Salvage Shed has been operating successfully for 6 months but is accumulating stock and does not have adequate retail facilities. Currently, the only retail opportunities are to sell direct from the HWRC, and to sell from a small stall in the Market Hall. More space is needed to display and retail stock (WEEE, some furniture, sports goods etc). This would be the “anchor” tenant of the retail space.
- ii. A semi-permanent Repair Café* operation, with dedicated workshop space that allows the public to drop in and get support in bringing unwanted or unworking goods back in to use.
- iii. A tool library – sometimes referred to as a ‘share shed’ – that enables people to borrow and not buy.
- iv. Retail space for a plastic free “refill” store such as Greener Steps (currently sharing our stall in the Market Hall).
- v. Community Fridge



We have initial layouts and images, and the following illustrates how we might fit this in to the ground floor.



B. Reuse and Repair – making it part of the commercial world; in full view of the public at Riverside Venue

OPEN NEWTON – a social enterprise in town specialising in enhancing unlocking green assets – is already seeking to commission CEMW to undertake a consultation with the town 750 key businesses to help them look at how they can move toward a circular and sustainable economy. Making reuse and repair a commercial ‘norm’.

Open Newtown is building a major new town centre destination venue for Newtown in Mid Wales, under the title of Riverside Venue. It is built to near Passivhaus standards and is destined to open in early 2022 as a regional – and national – showcase of sustainable development. It will form a pivotal role in sustaining and developing the local economy yet also act as a class leader within Wales for demonstrating how achieving policies such as zero waste, zero carbon and the wellbeing agenda can all be met through everyday operations. Making reuse and repair a public ‘norm’.

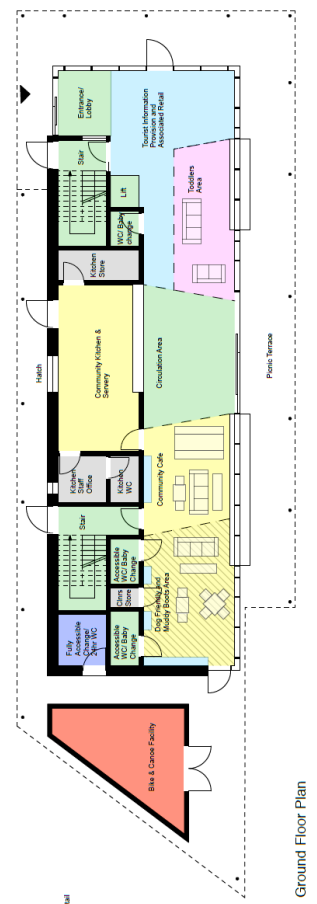


The building sits in a prime location for delivering health and wellbeing as it sits at the gateway between the retail centre and the town parks; and will be adjacent the new Health & Wellbeing Centre being planned for Newtown. Its energy supply will be renewable, and they are working on making it a modest ‘generator’ i.e. exporting surplus to the town. The food it will serve will all support the local supply chain and high environmental standards. The idea being that locals and visitors alike - while visiting the town, the play park, the river – will be immersed in sustainability from the moment they arrive.

CEMW – if supported by the Reuse and Repair fund – has the opportunity to take the Riverside Venue ‘that extra mile’ when it comes to how the building is constructed and fitted out. Open Newtown will allow CEMW to achieve class leading standards for reuse and repair in a brand-new public building, a massive public showcasing the circular economy and an amazing achievement for Mid Wales and for the Welsh green recovery.

There are three elements of the building that we would like to deliver through a 100% reuse, repair or upcycle procurement process. We would like to demonstrate that we can achieve higher quality results at no extra costs simply by procuring from the materials and products that are currently set aside by our economy as ‘waste’ or ‘unwanted’. Without dropping a single element of quality – in fact adding a degree of ‘bespoke’ design – we are proposing that in three areas we can install and showcase the Reuse and repair agenda:

- i. Fixtures and fittings – so all furniture across the whole building.
- ii. Catering equipment – so the commercial grade community benefit kitchen.
- iii. A range of the external build materials / ICT equipment.



Without spending more than the 'buy new' price we propose investing not only in materials that are reused / repaired / upcycled but that, along the way, invests in people's time and skills to repurpose all those materials back in to high quality public use.

We want to show the world that quality is not compromised by not buying new, in fact how we get a more bespoke and inspiring building as a result. We want to detail out how investing in people's time and craftsmanship we can achieve the same or better quality outcomes

This brings Repair Café Culture to a whole new level and does so whilst forming part of the town's economic regeneration and establishing it as a major and publicly accessible Repair Café.

- ✓ Delivers a showcase fit out
- ✓ That record and publishes the process widely
- ✓ That defines how future procurements could follow in its footsteps.
- ✓

C. Prepare for Reuse – supporting the supply chain across the HWRC Salvage Shed & MakerSpace @ Pen Dinas

To ensure we cannot more fully 'vertically integrate our supply and sales operations, and to allow us to provide the relevant reuse and repair services from the tight locations, we have four sub-components to bring up to standard.

Ci. Short term support for online sales / click and collect systems

With more stock than we can currently sell with a town centre retail space available to us we would like to invest – in January to March – in developing all our online sales platforms, from a dedicated eBay store to 'click and collect' infrastructure.

Cii. Improve Salvage Shed at HWRC for receipt of goods and triage of items.

We already have a shed at the HWRC on the east of town, but with the volume of material available to us from the Salvage Shed for reuse and repair we require additional facilities here including:

- ✓ Keep material dry – so we are seeking a hard-top gazebo covering to allow us to store 'outside' properly
- ✓ Triage and PAT testing on site – allowing us to assess and sort all WEEE so a small equipped 'shed'
- ✓ Shelving – to improve storage and on-site sales area.

This allows us to maximise the quantity and quality of goods and materials we can retrieve from the HWRC skips.



Ciii. MakerSpace at Pen Dinas

We already have a MakerSpace village located adjacent to the college campus on the west of town. It already hosts a range of enterprise partners all focused on reuse and repair, so it is already a vibrant shared space. However we need it to be able to receive more of the salvaged goods, to upcycle and improve them to add value to them and finally to improve the space so that many more people can use it as a public space. We are therefore looking for the following additional facilities:

- ✓ A much bigger 'Men In Sheds' workshop, storage and covered outside area to allow us to process a lot more material.
- ✓ A toilet 'block' – we have a single compost loo and would like to expand this to allow for disabled access etc.
- ✓ Installing a three-phase supply to allow us to get rid of the diesel-powered generator solution, to go green and to allow more machines to be installed.



Civ. Moving between sites and running outreach
To connect these all up we are hoping for the purchase what is needed to both move materials around efficiently and provide a mobile advertising hoarding in the form of:

- ✓ An electric van branded and used principally by Repair & Reuse Community but that will also be pooled in the town centre **COMMUNITY CAR CLUB** coming to town.
- ✓ Electric Cargo Bike for out town based 'shop & drop' operations.



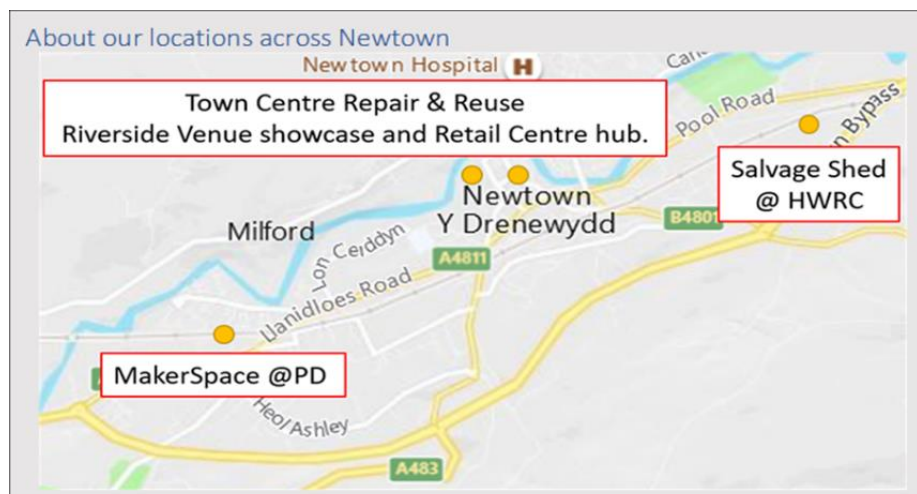
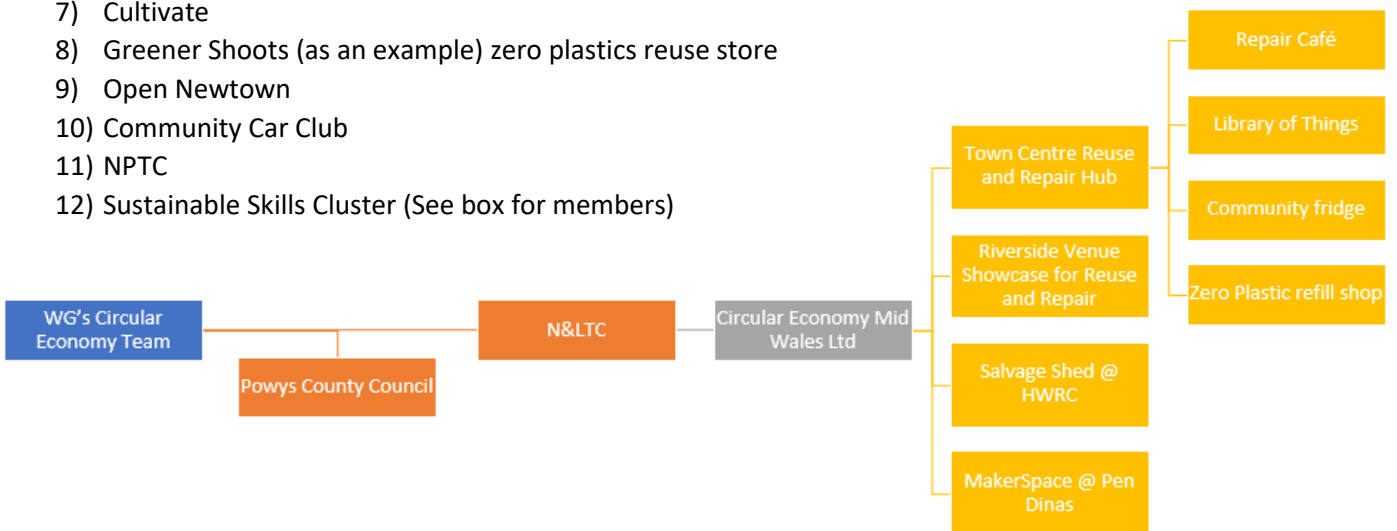
By bringing all of these together we make the whole greater than the sum of its parts, creating a culture of reuse and repair and re-establishing Newtown as a pioneer town for Wales.

Partners – and how this investment forms part of an ecosystem of sustainable development.

Newtown Town Council is the bid maker and CEMW is the lead delivery partner, but behind CEMW and connected to CEMW are a number of public, private and commercial sector partners who will help deliver and help make Reuse and Repair the DNA of the economy and culture of Newtown.

Partners who will be connected to this project.

- 1) Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council
- 2) Powys County Council
- 3) Potters & Salvage Shed
- 4) NPTC Group of Colleges & MakerSpace @ PD
- 5) Men In Sheds
- 6) Bike to the Future
- 7) Cultivate
- 8) Greener Shoots (as an example) zero plastics reuse store
- 9) Open Newtown
- 10) Community Car Club
- 11) NPTC
- 12) Sustainable Skills Cluster (See box for members)



Sustainable Skills Cluster

CEMW is one partner in a new consortium developing Powys (with Newtown as one of the three 'nodes') as a destination for skills needed for a sustainable future.

Partners include:

- Mid Wales Manufacturing Group.
- NPTC Group.
- Centre for alternative Technology.
- Young Farmers Cymru.
- Black Mountains College

