



PURPLE
SHOOTS



A member of one of our SRG groups said:

“This group saves my life every week!”

NEWSLETTER

Another 6 months have whizzed past, when we have seen the last of the lock-down restrictions finally lifted and businesses being able to get back to normal, but also seen the worrying rise in the cost of living and increasing numbers of people struggling financially. Purple Shoots has seen steady numbers of people applying for funds to start new businesses and a big upsurge in demand for our self-reliant groups. July was our 9th birthday and the start of the 10th year of Purple Shoots – keep an eye out for events and celebrations in the coming year!

Some of our highlights over the last 6 months:

- Our first loans in Purple Shoots Yorkshire have completed, with a steady stream of enquiries building and potential now to launch something in Lincolnshire.
- “Peaced Together” courses completed and new self-reliant groups started in Barry, Aberdare, Penrhiwceibr, Swansea, Treherbert, Pontypridd and Cheltenham.
- New partnerships growing developing self-reliant groups together – with Cynon Taf Housing, Rhondda Housing, and churches in St Athan, Barry and Rhoose with others coming on board shortly. We’ve also been working with Valley’s Kids and Men’s Sheds in Treherbert developing our groups there (with support from PenyCymoedd Windfarm Community Fund).

- New community café opened in St Peter’s Church in Rhoose, run by a developing SRG which is including people with additional needs.
- Completion of the CORE project – our partnership with the Wales Co-operative Centre (now Cwmpas) and Aberdare BID, which has seen us support 11 social enterprises and run some very informal courses for people thinking about starting a business but not sure where to start. We plan to offer these in other locations
- Started a partnership with the Welsh Refugee Council supporting groups of refugees locally who want to start their own business
- Lots of successful workshops run in our new shop – which is full of a wide range of products made by our SRGs and borrowers
- Some new videos on our website made by Datrysiaid Media



We are still grateful to the Moondance Foundation for the Purple Moon Fund which has provided much of our lending capital this year. We are also delighted that Ceniarth Foundation, a Wales based foundation, has supported us with a grant which has enabled us to pursue our scale-up plans with more confidence. They have offered further finance if we can match it with other investment – so any potential investors could double their impact if they support us now!

We began on the Cinnamon Network incubator programme in January with a two day residential which gave us quite intensive training as well as a chance to get to know the other great charities which are in our cohort, many of whom we could partner with in the future.

Team Changes

Bob Shepherd is retiring! I knew it would have to happen at some point but he will leave a hole – he has been with Purple Shoots since the planning stage and his contribution over the years has been utterly invaluable. He will be sorely missed – although we are hanging on to him for half a day a month!

We are delighted to welcome to the team Owain Williams who will take Bob's role, although with a North Wales slant as he is based up there. We have done lending in the North, but we hope that Owain's presence will help us to be more widely known so that we can reach more people who need us. Owain has a banking background, but has set up his own business advice company (Owain Talks Business) which he will continue to run alongside working for us. He is also a Welsh speaker. He is a great personality and a fabulous addition to the team.



Pictured left to right: Bob, Karen and Owain.

We have achieved an awful lot in the last 9 years:



47%
of loans to
women



60
self-reliant
groups started
in Wales and the West
Country, supporting
more than 500
people.



Many of our existing borrowers are going from strength to strength – employing people, adding things to their businesses, supporting their communities. Here are a couple of examples:

Jonothan Page was living in a hotel room when we met him. He is a qualified football coach and an author of football books for children and adults. Our loan helped him restart his business after having worked abroad as a coach and come back to the lockdowns when he couldn't work and wasn't eligible for help. It also helped him bring his books to market. He has recently taken a contract to work in Ghana, training up young boys there to trial for some of the big European teams. See him on our website video.



Amanda Wood, the Micro Greengrocer, has moved to a new base in Splott where she has two containers, one continuing to grow her greens for her business, the second teaching refugees how to do it.

SAM NOBLE – Air we go Balloons

Sam Noble from Pontllanfraith was haunted by her past and felt she would never amount to anything, but with the support of her husband Stuart & friends Kate, Donna and personal trainer Claire Morgan as being 'her rocks' & the finance support from Purple Shoots, she has set up her own business Air we go Balloons.

Sam had always wanted to run her own business but was held back with very low confidence. Sam said - "My childhood was horrible. I was told by my parents that I couldn't do anything and because I am dyslexic, I was made to feel like I was stupid. At the age of 13, I was raped, and my parents never took it any further with the police and made it seem like it was my fault."

All of this had a profound effect on Sam but has also spurred her on. In 2018, she spoke out about what happened to her and went back to the police with the support of husband Stuart. Unfortunately, it didn't have the outcome that she wanted, but it started her on a positive path and she began to develop her business idea. She began with cards and gift sets selling online but then she had requests for balloon arches for birthdays & celebrations. She kept putting that off because of her low confidence, but eventually did some, put them on Facebook and found that people loved them!



So Sam formed Air We Go Balloons. She lacked finance to be able to launch this herself so approached Purple Shoots. Sam was so pleased that Purple Shoots were able to help her with a loan to start the business. She now has the support of a number of local businesses who use her regularly, a diary full of weddings, parties and other events. In November Sam provided the balloon arch for the opening of the Purple Shoots premises in Pontypridd.

She is so pleased at how well the business is going & its success has helped to transform her life. She says - "I want people to read my story and say, if she can do it, then I can do what I want to do too!"
"I am so proud of myself as I have come so far & I can't wait to see what I can do in the next 12 months. I love being back in work, It's the best thing I ever did!"

Air We Go Balloons is on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Air-we-go-balloons-106675011891158>



PURPLE
SHOOTS

SARAH BEAUMONT - Our first Yorkshire Loan

Sarah and Purple Shoots were put in touch with one another by Doncaster Chamber of Commerce after Sarah approached them in search of funding for her business. Sarah had approached other finance providers but had sadly been rejected due to a couple of missed direct debit payments that appeared on her account history. She had been told to wait a few months and re-apply, but with a go-live date of the 1st of June, this wasn't an option.

Sarah's business, Sarah Beaumont Inspires, focuses on inspiring, motivating, encouraging, and supporting people to successfully achieve their lifestyle goals, in both weight loss and in living with a chronic illness. Sarah wants to help people to realise their true potential both domestically and commercially.



Sarah had previously held high level management and teaching positions and had enjoyed a stint of employment in Dubai. Sadly, Sarah had to give all of this up due to a chronic condition that left her bed bound, in constant pain, and unable to cook, clean and drive, let alone work. Feeling like a burden, especially to her daughter who became a full-time carer, Sarah reached out to her husband and mother for help. Heartbreakingly and in her time of greatest need, Sarah's husband left her for another woman and so it was down to her mother to help her and ultimately save her life.

Awoken with a new determination, Sarah was diagnosed with Ehlers Danlos syndrome and Fibromyalgia. She was told she would never work again, that was something that she could never ever accept. Sarah was able to lose 100lbs of weight that she had put on due to her unavoidably sedentary lifestyle. Four years after her husband had left her, Sarah took on a 1:1 job as a weight loss consultant under the permitted work allowed while in receipt of benefits.

Having fought and won her battle with her chronic illness and weight loss, Sarah felt empowered to use her own experiences to help others! She can approach clients with empathy, coming to them from a position of experience. In short, she was perfectly suited to deliver motivational and functional support for clients who were facing similar battles to the ones she had faced and conquered.

Sarah Beaumont Inspires was born. Her aim is to help clients work through the acknowledge, accept, and rebuild process with the right support in place. She wants to help educate and make anyone's journey through weight loss or chronic illness a positive one.

Requiring a small loan to help get her plan in place so she could purchase bespoke course materials and begin to market her plan, Purple Shoots were delighted to step in to support her where others had considered Sarah too risky to lend to.

Website: <https://sarahbeaumontinspires.com>

There are so many other stories like these of people turning bad circumstances around and creating something good for themselves. If you would like to donate to support us to keep doing this, either as a regular donor or a one-off, please go to <https://localgiving.org/charity/purpleshoots/>

Thank you to everyone who follows and supports us!

