

The Arts Factory

(Wales)

www.artsfactory.co.uk

Organisational profile

Arts Factory is an independent Development Trust that was established in 1990 by a group of local people to increase the range of opportunities available for people with learning difficulties. The group soon recognised that the problems faced by this client group are also faced by a great many other people in the area and in 1993 the trust refocused its mission to develop opportunities for all local people, regardless of any label, to help build a stronger community. Arts Factory is based in the Rhondda, South Wales, a typical post-coal industry area that has seen the closure and withdrawal of many community facilities – in particular working men's institutes, clubs, chapels, and non-sport based facilities for young people. Arts Factory is a membership organisation. Local people pay £1 a year to show that they support the trust's work. Arts Factory currently has over 1,500 members. Arts Factory is a company limited by guarantee without share capital.

Asset Base Programme

- **Trerhondda:** Arts Factory purchased Trerhondda, a derelict chapel, in 1996 after fighting a long campaign to save the building from demolition which culminated in a public enquiry ruling in the trust's favour. Arts Factory redeveloped the building into a multi-use community facility which the trust now uses to provide a pre-school learning programme, a youth drop-in, electronic job points, a credit union collection point, a local produce market, advice and guidance surgeries, and a wide range of learning opportunities for local people. Trerhondda also contains managed workspace which is let to other organisations including an open-learning centre run by a local FE college, and the Young Builders Trust.
- **Power Factory:** Power Factory is a joint venture between Arts Factory and EON-UK, a major private sector utilities company, to develop a 10.4 Megawatt wind farm in the Rhondda. The project aims to generate enough clean, green electricity to meet the annual needs of 6,500 homes, and provide Arts Factory with a long-term income stream to fund future work in the community. Arts Factory initiated the project in 2000. In March 2005 the project won planning consent after a public enquiry ruled in Arts Factory's favour. The trust is currently raising finance from European structural funds and lending banks to enable it to own 50% of the joint venture company that will own and operate the wind farm. Construction will take place in 2007.
- **Parc 21:** Parc 21 is a project that aims to create Tomorrow today a new way of learning, working and living. Parc 21 will be a complex of state-of-the-art buildings made from reclaimed materials, powered by renewable energy generated on site, and utilising a range of green technologies to minimize its environmental impact. The complex will contain a learning centre for local people, high-quality managed workspace available to rent, and affordable green housing for people with specialist support needs. Arts Factory will own the complex and will raise the necessary finance through grant funding and loans. Parc 21 is currently in the concept phase. An in-depth feasibility study has been undertaken, architects' drawings produced, and Arts Factory are currently looking to identify an appropriate site to develop the project.

Benefits

- **Trerhondda:** The campaign to save Trerhondda from demolition significantly raised Arts Factory's profile and demonstrated to local people that the trust is serious in pursuing its own independent agenda. Membership of Arts Factory grew significantly as a result. Owning Trerhondda has

strengthened Arts Factory's balance sheet and has enabled the trust to use the building as security against overdraft facilities necessary to smooth the company's cash flow. Trerhondda has provided Arts Factory with a high street location from which to engage with, and provide opportunities to local people. Trerhondda is the prominent building in the townscape of Ferndale and provides a highly visible demonstration of the power of ground-up community action. At least 500 local people use the building every week. Rental income is generated through the provision of managed workspace to other organisations. Additionally, the tenants provide services that are highly valued by Arts Factory members.

- Power Factory: Power Factory will generate enough clean, green energy to meet the annual needs of 6,500 homes (approximately one in five households in the Rhondda), and will make a significant contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Power Factory will provide Arts Factory with a significant new income stream over a twenty year period, enabling the trust to launch a range of new community regeneration projects. These projects will create jobs and provide new services for local people.
- Parc 21: Parc 21 will be a high profile project that will clearly demonstrate that it is possible to put