

# **Ceredigion 360: Operational Survey**

**Prepared on behalf of Bro 360 (Golwg Cyf.)  
January 2022**



**y ganolfan cynllunio iaith**  
welsh centre for language planning

Prepared by

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# 1.0 Background and context

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## 1.1 The Project: Bro 360

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Bro 360 is a project promoted by Golwg Cyf. since 2019.

The Golwg company was established in 1988 to provide independent Welsh language journalism which combined the issues of the day with magazine elements within a quality weekly publication. With the growth of digital journalism at the turn of the century, Golwg 360 was established as a digital platform for sharing Welsh-medium news. Golwg 360 operates in parallel and independently of the BBC Cymru Fyw service – the BBC’s equivalent digital Welsh news and magazine platform.

Again, with the digital world continuing to increase in reach and influence, in 2015 it pioneered a project at local level in conjunction with the Lampeter community paper, Clonc. The project was called Clonc 360. The intention was to establish a digital platform for ‘hyperlocal’ news, in line with common developments in contemporary journalism. The success of that pilot has resulted in the establishment of Bro 360 in 2019 with the assistance of £1.1 million from the EU Rural Development Programme fund.

The project has now established eight Welsh language digital platforms for ‘hyperlocal’ news produced in partnership between the company’s journalists and local volunteers. The existing platforms are:

Clonc 360	Bangor Felin 360
Bro Aber 360	Caernarfon 360
Caron 360	Ogwen 360
Dyffryn Nantlle 360	Bro Wyddfa 360

The websites are also linked to related *Facebook* pages.

The project’s central idea is to create simple, user-friendly digital media that facilitate people to produce their own local Welsh-language news content, contributing to the social vibrancy of their native communities and the vitality of the Welsh language. In that respect the project responds to several current challenges that can be seen in a number of public policy contexts, e.g.:

- general shortcomings in Welsh journalism, particularly through the medium of Welsh;
- challenges facing community newspapers (papurau bro) in terms of their readers moving to digital platforms and the traditional readers getting older;
- challenges in terms of maintaining and increasing the use of Welsh by individuals and as a social medium;
- general challenges in maintaining social involvement and a culture of volunteering locally,
- challenges in terms of sustaining local economies, particularly in areas where the Welsh language is a significant social feature;
- challenges in terms of maintaining many of the core values expressed in the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

The above contextual issues are discussed in more detail in the two evaluative reports prepared by Wavehill Consultancy in 2020 and 2021.

Bro 360 has been implemented to date through the guidance of a Project Co-ordinator under the leadership and management of one of the executive directors of Golwg Cyf. The Co-ordinator led a team of two Local Motivators – in Arfon and north Ceredigion. Additionally, technical input was obtained via a freelance arrangement and input was also obtained from member(s) of the Golwg and Golwg 360 journalism team. Key to the project, however, are the local groups of volunteers who contribute stories, edit and check text and promote the content locally in their localities. The support and sustenance the voluntary team receives from the professional team is vital to the project's modus operandi.

Bro 360 is currently operating in Arfon and north Ceredigion. The purpose of this report is to contribute to a specific discussion regarding the intention of Golwg Cyf. to consider extending the Bro 360 project to four other areas in Ceredigion, namely – Aeron Valley, Bro Siôn Cwilt, Bro Teifi (namely the Llandysul and Newcastle Emlyn areas) and the Cardigan area.

It is presumed that Golwg Cyf. intends to maintain and increase the 5 Bro 360 areas in Arfon to other parts of Gwynedd in due course, as well as to expand to new areas in other counties. For the purposes of this report, however, the main focus is the maintenance of the project within the context of Ceredigion and adjoining Teifi Valley areas. A brief description of the four target areas in South Ceredigion is given below.

## **1.2 The Target Areas**

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### **Aeron Valley**

The Aeron Valley is an area that follows the river Aeron from Aberaeron to Abermeurig and Penwuch and covers the electoral ward of Aberaeron, Llansanffraid, Ciliau Aeron and Llanfihangel Ystrad. The seaside town of Aberaeron is a prominent commercial and tourism centre. The Felinfach area is an economic and cultural hub with its various factories, famous theatre and County Council campus. According to the 2011 Census, it had a population of 7,819 with 4,193 (54%) being Welsh speakers. The area is served by the Llais Aeron community paper.

### **Bro Siôn Cwilt**

For the purpose of this project Bro Siôn Cwilt is synonymous with the ancient commote of Caerwedros and includes the electoral wards of Llanarth, New Quay, Llandysiliogogo and Penbryn. New Quay is a hub for the tourist industry but there are rural neighbourhoods which revolve around villages such as Llanarth, Talgarreg, Caerwedros, Sarnau and Pontgarreg. Unlike the other areas there is no urban centre for this area and tourism is a prominent feature of the economy of the coastal villages. The area is served by two area primary schools – Ysgol Bro Sion Cwilt, Synod Inn, and Ysgol T Llew Jones, Brynhoffnant – and three primary schools in Llanarth, Talgarreg and Ceinewydd. According to the 2011 Census, it had a population of 5,106 with 2,383 (47%) being Welsh speakers. The area forms the northern part of the catchment area of Y Gambo community newspaper.

### **Bro Teifi**

Bro Teifi is an extensive geographical area, extending along the Teifi from Capel Dewi to Cenarth and from Ffostrasol in the north to Pencader in the south. It includes areas on both sides of the Teifi, namely in the counties of Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Llandysul and Newcastle Emlyn

are the two central towns. Both are hubs for the area's shops, businesses and services and each has a secondary school. The area comprises 8 electoral wards. According to the 2011 Census, it had a population of 8,492 with 4,445 (52%) being Welsh speakers. The area is broadly equivalent to the catchment area of Y Garthen community newspaper, although some western areas are covered by Y Gambo.

## Cardigan

The town of Cardigan is considered to be central to this area. It follows the Teifi as far as Llechryd. To the north it can extend through Pen-parc to Aber-porth. The communities of St Dogmaels and Cilgerran, both located in Pembrokeshire, also gravitate towards Cardigan as a market town. According to the 2011 Census, it had a population of 6,650 with 3,037 (46%) being Welsh speakers. The community newspaper Y Dwrgi serves the town of Cardigan, whilst villages on the Ceredigion side of the river tend to be covered in Y Gambo. Clebran would be the community paper for St Dogmaels and Cilgerran.

### 1.3 Welsh speakers

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The bare statistics of the areas in terms of population and Welsh speakers are as shown in the table below.

**Table 1: Population and Welsh speakers of the four target areas.**

Area	Population 2011	Number of Welsh speakers 2011	% Welsh speakers 2011
Aeron Valley	7,819	4,193	54%
Bro Siôn Cwilt	5,106	2,383	47%
Bro Teifi	8,492	4,445	52%
Cardigan	6,650	3,037	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,067</b>	<b>14,048</b>	<b>50%</b>

It is seen that there are approximately 14,000 Welsh speakers in the target areas (based on the 2011 Census) and that they are 50% of the local population. Relevant wards in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire have been included here.

Considering Ceredigion as a whole, according to the 2011 Census, around 73,000 people lived in the county with around 35,000 (47%) being Welsh speakers. However, the Welsh Government Statistical Bulletin published on 29 May 2019 notes that the 2018 Annual Population Survey estimates that the percentage of Welsh speakers is higher than that, namely 60.1% of the population – around 44,000 people.<sup>1</sup> As reporting on language skills is a subjective matter, there is no doubt that the real estimate is somewhere in the middle.

More information about the Welsh language in Ceredigion can be found in the Ceredigion Language Profile document<sup>2</sup> commissioned by Cered: the Ceredigion language initiative (menter iaith) in 2016.

<sup>1</sup> [Results in relation to the Welsh language: Annual Population Survey, 2001 i 2018 \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Ceredigion Language Profile - Ceredigion County Council](#)

## 2.0 Requirements

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### Aim of the research

It is understood that the triple aim of the project is to:

- discover whether there is a desire to create and maintain vibrant, sustainable community websites across the whole of Ceredigion, and
- create a sustainable commercial model to make a difference to more communities – in terms of the Welsh language, community development and the local economy.

Also, the consultant was required to study the project's potential for further growth and to prepare for technical or other developments in the field.

### Objectives of the research

In accordance with your brief the operational objectives include:

- To identify and become familiar with the Bro360 project and the potential of community websites, and to adapt the previous modes of operation to match the new audience.
- To engage and hold creative conversations with organisations, community leaders and businesses in the following areas: Aberaeron and the Aeron Valley, Bro Sion Cwilt, the Llandysul area and the Cardigan area, to help them identify their own needs and their potential to create and maintain websites for local stories.
- To explore the demand from businesses and customers to take advantage of a new Welsh language platform to promote local commerce.
- To explore ways of funding the maintenance of highly local websites sustainably.
- To identify existing capacity locally to develop of this plan in the short term and any gaps in capacity that need to be filled.
- To advise on the production of a business plan that will enable extension of the network of Bro360 websites in the above communities, but which will be suitable for use as a scalable model for the project in the long term.

### Research project outputs

Again, in accordance with your brief the expected outputs of the project are as follows:

- A clear report outlining, briefly, the outcome of the engagement and research with stakeholders in each neighbourhood.
- A list of key partners who have agreed to collaborate on the further development work, including a 'steering crew' for each area.
- A detailed summary of the existing capacity and capability in the areas in question, and any gaps that need to be filled.
- A clear action plan for extending the existing Bro360 website network to include the communities of South Ceredigion, and a plan for extending the network sustainably more widely than that geographical area.
- In conjunction with Bro360 staff team, to consider potential future changes in terms of emerging online platforms and other technological changes.

## 3.0 Modus Operandi

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To achieve the objectives of the project an approach described generally as action research has been adopted. Action research is a research approach that focuses on practical intentions whilst also taking into account theoretical aspects of the process. It is a method of work that allows researchers, the client and the subject of the research to collaborate in order to reach realistic, sensible and sustainable conclusions about the purposes and outcomes of the research.

Therefore, in that context, the following approach has been implemented.

### 1. Becoming familiar with the project and its context

The research team have familiarised themselves with the Bro 360 project by:

- holding a project initiation meeting with the client to agree the scope of the work and the nature of the outputs,
- holding follow up discussions with project staff on current and historical methods of work, including identifying lessons learned;
- desktop research:
  - into the websites themselves;
  - strategic documentation in the form of the project's internal plans and reports,
  - external evaluative reports prepared by Wavehill Consultancy, and
  - relevant strategic documentation in the area of language planning and economic development.
- informal talks with key volunteers.

### 2. Engaging with key individuals locally

#### 2.1 Interviews with key individuals

Approximately twenty community leaders were engaged with directly within the four areas:

- Aberaeron & Aeron Valley (20),
- Bro Siôn Cwilt (17),
- Llandysul and Newcastle Emlyn area (19), and
- Cardigan area (20).

A total of 76 key individuals were questioned. These individuals are active in their areas and represent a range of local bodies and organisations, e.g.

- the local community newspaper,
- primary and secondary schools
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Y.F.C.,
- youth clubs,
- village halls,
- sports clubs,
- chapels and churches,
- county councillors,
- town and community councils,
- cultural societies,
- rural shows and other agricultural groups,
- community and economic development organisations.



Conversations with the above sought to gauge the desire and potential to establish local news websites, gathering information on the following:

- their views on the need and appropriateness of establishing a local 360 website,
- the type of material that may be attractive and appealing to potential 'readers' and contributors,
- the skills that may be available locally to maintain a local 360 website,
- the challenges and opportunities the project would face going forward, and
- other individuals who would be likely to have an interest in the project.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with them on the telephone and answers fed into an electronic questionnaire framework. In addition, field notes of relevant points made by the participants were kept.

Interviews were conducted between 1 November and 22 December.

## 2.2 Electronic questionnaire

In addition to the direct conversation with key individuals, an open invitation – via local community newspapers and social media – was circulated to interested individuals to contact us directly to express an interest and opinion via an online questionnaire.

There were 39 direct responses as a result of the open invitation.

## 2.3 Brainstorming workshops

Following engagement with the interviewee, along with receiving the names of other interested individuals, online opportunities were held, via the Zoom meetings, for interested individuals to share their ideas and hopes with others. Thus the nucleus of a potential working group (Local Steering Crew) was established for each locality. The online discussion session provided an opportunity to share the results of the local questionnaire, to explain the plan and its potential in more detail and to develop the local discussion further.

The online meetings also provided an opportunity to reflect on the capacity and enthusiasm within the individual areas in terms of maintaining a local website, identifying any potential gaps in skills and resources.

These virtual meetings took place between 10-13 January 2022. The following number of individuals were convened to the brainstorming workshops:

- Aberaeron & Aeron Valley (17),
- Bro Siôn Cwilt (7),
- Bro Teifi – Llandysul and Newcastle Emlyn area (6), and
- Cardigan area (5).

## **3. Engaging with local businesses**

35 local businesses throughout the four areas were contacted to discuss the potential of being able to gain financial support for the proposed local websites by placing advertisements or by offering sponsorship or other possible means.

- Aberaeron & Aeron Valley (10),
- Bro Siôn Cwilt (6),
- Bro Teifi – Llandysul and Newcastle Emlyn area (10), and
- Cardigan area (9).

These were mainly retail, service and hospitality businesses. Efforts were made, however, to question businesses representing a range of different areas of business. In order to achieve meaningful and authoritative solutions, we chose to question businesses where the owners or key managers were present at the time. Face-to-face conversations were held with these individuals and the answers fed into an electronic questionnaire framework in order to analyse them as a body of data.

The owners and/or key managers were asked about:

- the appropriateness and suitability of the idea of establishing a local 360 website for their areas,
- their willingness to consider advertising and/or sponsoring a local website and/or other 360 websites,
- their current advertising and sponsorship patterns, together with their
- interest in joining an online business club as part of a package of services offered by the project.

Given the time pressures on small local businesses, representatives of all the businesses are thanked for giving their time to this research project.

#### **4. Drawing up a report**

As a result of the above exercises, the information gathered was collated in order to produce this report.

The report provides a brief description of the findings of the fieldwork in both quantitative and qualitative form.

The report also provides a basis for a suggested business model for the future running and expansion of the project across the whole of Ceredigion, together with suggestions for an action plan for realising the future proposals of the project.

It is also hoped that it offers a model that will be suitable to be replicated and adapted for the consolidation and development of Bro 360 in other areas.

## 4.0 Findings

### 4.1 Interviews and on-line questionnaire

The findings below are the result of semi-structured telephone interviews undertaken with community leaders in the four areas. In addition, an open invitation was issued via advertisements in local community newspapers (Llais Aeron, Y Gambo, Y Garthen and Y Dwrgi) along with social media and local networks for interested individuals to complete an online questionnaire.

76 telephone interviews were conducted:

- Aeron Valley (20)
- Bro Siôn Cwilt (17)
- Bro Teifi (19)
- Cardigan (20)

In addition, a further 39 people responded to the online questionnaire. Making a total of 115 contributors.

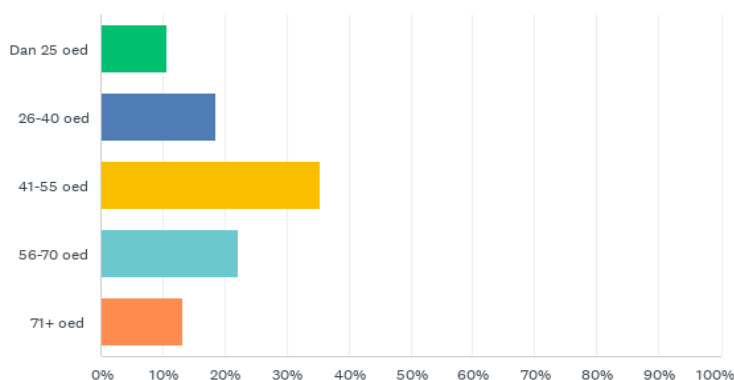
**Table 2: Record of interviews and questionnaires completed**

Area	Interviews	On-line questionnaire	Total
Aeron Valley	20	14	34
Bro Siôn Cwilt	17	4	21
Bro Teifi	19	8	27
Cardigan	20	6	26
Other	-	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>115</b>

#### Demographic profile

77 (67%) of the contributors were female and 38 (33%) were male. The age profile leaned towards middle age but with consistent representation across the age range, as follows:

Q4 Beth yw eich oedran?



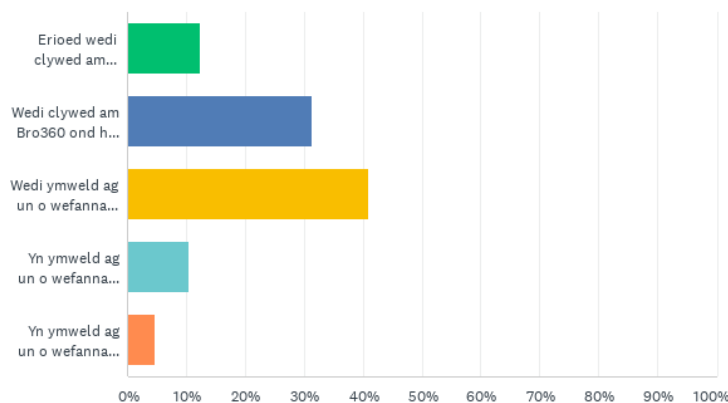
## Awareness

Participants were asked about their awareness of the Bro 360 project. The answers profile was as follows:

- Never heard of Bro 360 (12%)
- Heard of Bro 360 but had not visited the website (31%)
- Visited one of the Bro 360 websites occasionally (42%)
- Regular visitor to one of the Bro 360 websites (10%)
- Frequently visit one of the Bro 360 websites (5%)

Overall, participants' awareness of the Bro 360 project was high, with 88% of the individuals questioned being aware of it and 57% had visited the website on at least one occasion.

### Q5 Cyn y cyswllt hwn, i ba raddau oeddech chi'n ymwybodol o wefan(nau) Bro360?



During the interviews a significant number noted that they accessed Bro 360 by following links on *Facebook* or *Instagram*.

## **The Core Idea**

Participants were asked about the core idea of expanding the Bro 360 project into their own local area. The vast majority of them (97%) thought it was a good idea. Only three answered negatively. Two noted that they feared there would not be enough volunteers to maintain a website in their area. However, despite reservations, only one of the three did not want to be included in the establishment process.

Although the vast majority of the individuals questioned were fully supportive of the idea, many noted concerns and reservations about the proposal. The concerns can be summarised as follows:

- Concern about the project's ability to attract local volunteers to maintain the website and contribute stories – particularly from among the younger generation.
- Concern about taxing existing community leaders with new burdens.
- Concern about the impact of the website on the sale of the local community newspaper, with many keen to combine the provision with the traditional community paper.

- Concern that it would cut across existing local resources, e.g. online event calendars from other bodies.
- Concern over ensuring an adequate number of users and readers.
- Concern over the availability of the technical skills required to contribute to the project.
- Concern about rules and laws regarding allowing photographs on-line.
- Concern that the social network of the project would be too narrow.
- Concern that local *Facebook* groups were already platforms for local news.
- Concern as to whether there would be adequate support for a Welsh only platform.
- Concern as to whether a project being delivered from above would generate local ownership successfully.
- Concern about the project's ability to maintain quality and standards.
- Concern that it could be a platform for local political debates.

Despite these concerns the participants saw strong benefits to the project.

- A good, modern, current and accessible platform to carry local news in Welsh.
- A timely plan to spark community action following COVID-19.
- A very good way of attracting young people to journalism, getting them to use the Welsh language on-line and improving their language and IT skills.
- An effective educational resource to make use of pupils' language skills.
- An opportunity to raise issues of the day in a local context, e.g. the environment, the economy, housing etc.
- An opportunity to expand the audience for Welsh-medium news to new networks.
- An opportunity to engage Welsh learners in a contemporary way.
- A good platform to carry out public consultations. (An example was noted from Aber 360).
- An opportunity to work with and reinforce traditional community newspapers.
- An opportunity to promote community vitality and draw new people into community activity.
- A good opportunity to bring together a number of local networks and societies.
- A good opportunity to share information about local campaigns, e.g. co-operative pubs.
- A contemporary Welsh medium that could compete with the local English language papers.
- A medium to offset the English influence of local *Facebook* groups.
- A great way to create a digital archive of local news.
- A means of getting local news without having to use *Facebook*!

## **The Area**

Contributors were asked about their perception of the local area. Varied responses were received, with some limiting the area to the very local and others extending the catchment area beyond the normal assumptions.

### Aeron Valley

All were of the opinion that the rural villages on the floor of the valley from Ciliau Aeron to Tal-sarn were at the heart of the area. Although there was no unanimity of opinion, the vast majority would include the town of Aberaeron in the area and a large majority would also extend the area to other villages on the fringes of the area, namely Llwynycelyn and Derwen-gam to the south, Cribyn to the east and Nebo and Llan-non to the north. That area corresponds to the current catchment area of Llais Aeron and is considered to be a convenient operational area by the majority.

### Bro Siôn Cwilt

Some saw this area as being limited to Caerwedros and Synod Inn only. Others, on the other hand, saw its boundaries as extending further, including the villages of New Quay, Llanarth, Talgarreg, Ffostrasol, Rhyd Lewis, Brynhoffnant, Llangrannog and Penbryn. Others would extend the area to the south as far as Aber-porth. Although less populated and more rural than the other areas, it appears from the response received that it has social credibility. (However, if the project is proceeded with, it would be appropriate to reconsider the name given to the area, as a number of people consider that it reflects the catchment area of Ysgol Bro Siôn Cwilt only.

### Bro Teifi

Again, some favoured limiting the area to Llandysul and Pont-tyweli only. However, a clear majority were in favour of including a larger area that would extend from the fringes of Llanllwni through Llanfihangel ar Arth to Pencader and then down through Rhos Llangeler and Bryn Iwan to Newcastle Emlyn and Cenarth. North of the river Teifi, the area would include the villages on the northern side of the valley up to Horeb and on to Capel Dewi and Pont-siân. Others would also include the Troed-yr-aur area as far as Ffostrasol to the north.

The area described includes the area of Y Garthen community newspaper and parts of the southern catchment area of Y Gambo. Mention was also made of the catchment areas of Ysgol Bro Teifi and Ysgol Emlyn as definitive areas. One comment suggested that the area should also include Bro Siôn Cwilt in order to create a wider, more extensive area in its reach, in terms of the voluntary team.

### Cardigan

Similarly, there were some voices here too in favour of limiting the area to the town of Cardigan and the adjoining villages such as Y Ferwig and Pen-parc. Others saw the relevant area as being wider, following the river Teifi to Llechryd and back to the south through Cilgerran and St Dogmaels – with some also including Boncath, Blaen-ffos and Crymych as a possible catchment area. To the north, some suggested extending as far as Aber-porth and parts of the neighbourhood of Troed-yr-aur. Others saw local networks extending further again.

### General

One comment was received stating that it was one Bro 360 website that was needed for all four areas in their entirety, including Bro'r Preseli with them as well.

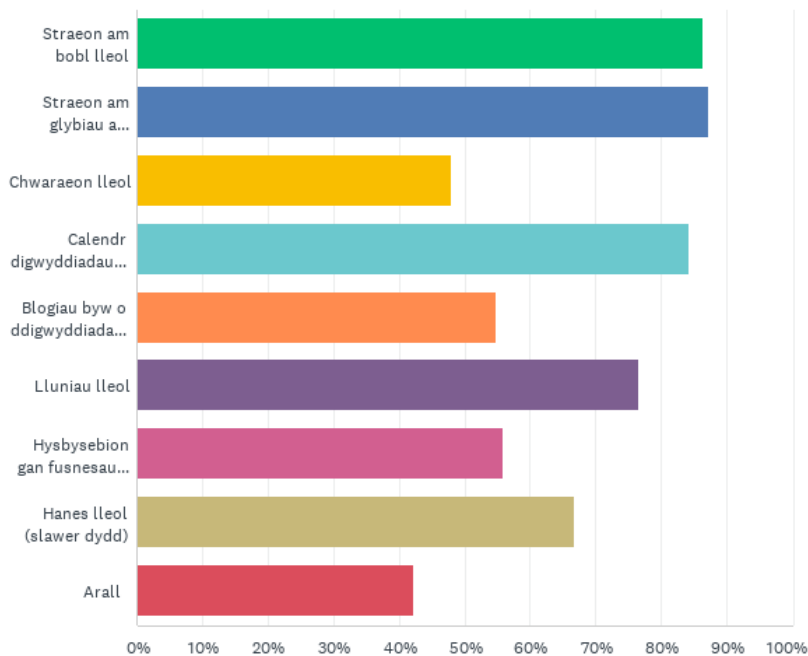
In defining areas a number of key factors must be considered as well as the ideas of indigenous residents regarding the make-up of their areas. The population is a factor. Commercial centres in an area are a factor. The number of Welsh speakers in the area has significance in terms of attracting volunteers, the potential to attract advertisements and the ability to attract readers and users.

Overall, given that some areas such as Ffostrasol and Aber-porth are on the outskirts of more than one area, it is suggested that the areas suggested on page ? are a useful starting point. People will no doubt define these areas themselves in due course through their involvement with the website over time.

## **Contents**

The participants were asked about what would attract them personally to the local Bro 360 website. A number of ready-made options were provided along with an opportunity to add ideas. The replies are as follows:

### Q10 Beth fyddai'n eich denu i ddarllen Bro 360 lleol?



The 'other' aspects include:

- 'Hard' news and topical issues in a local context.
- A platform for local councillors – county and community.
- How to join local clubs and societies.
- Private or family ads (*classifieds and personal ads*).
- Local walks.
- Cooking and gardening tips.
- Local arts coverage.
- Profiles of local individuals.
- Profiles of people who have been successful after leaving their community.
- Aspects of our local heritage – place names etc.
- Welsh in business tips.
- 'How-to' videos such as those seen on *Youtube*.

## Participation

The participants were asked about their intentions in terms of contributing to the project in the future.

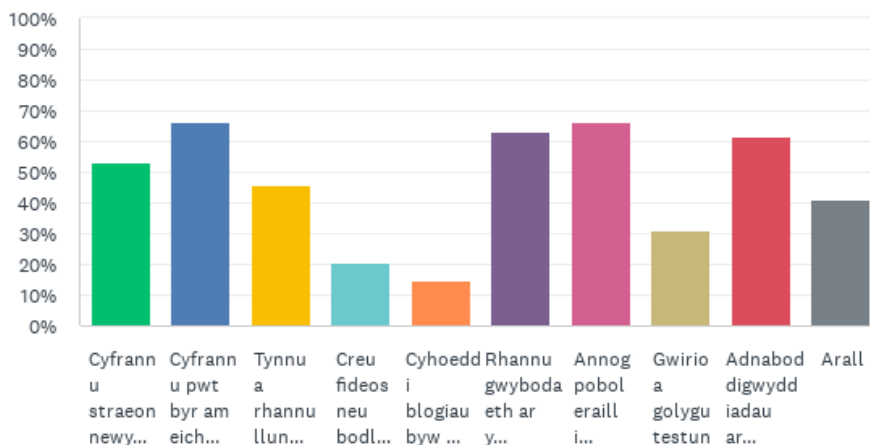
74 of the contributors (72% of the 102 who answered the question and 63% of the total sample) indicated that they would be willing to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of a local Bro 360 website in some way or another – not possibly as a leader.

They were asked how they would be prepared to do so by offering a list of ready-made options. The results were as follows:

- Contribute local news stories (36)
- Contribute a short snippet about your organisation or club (45)
- Taking and sharing local photos (31)
- Creating videos or podcasts (14)
- Publishing live blogs from events (10)
- Sharing information on social media (43)
- Encouraging others to contribute stories (45)
- Checking and editing text (21)
- Identify events for the calendar (42)
- Other (28)

Answers are conveyed in graphic mode below:

### Q12 Os 'byddwn', nodwch ym mha ffyrdd y gallech chi gynorthwyo:



There was also an opportunity to add other ideas. Here is a summary of the additional response received:

- Help young people to get involved – including within local schools.
- Maintain a partnership through the language initiative (menter iaith).
- Maintain a partnership through the community paper.
- Network with other local organisations and events.
- Assist with IT.
- Assist in looking for sponsors.
- Contact with the area's sports clubs.
- Contact with the area's learners.
- Establish a local *singles club*, one that is not *sleazy* (!)
- Contribute a theological corner.



59 (61% of the 96 respondents who answered the question, 51% of the total sample) indicated that they would be prepared to be part of a Local Steering Group and 84 (73%) individuals wanted to be kept in the information loop regarding further developments.

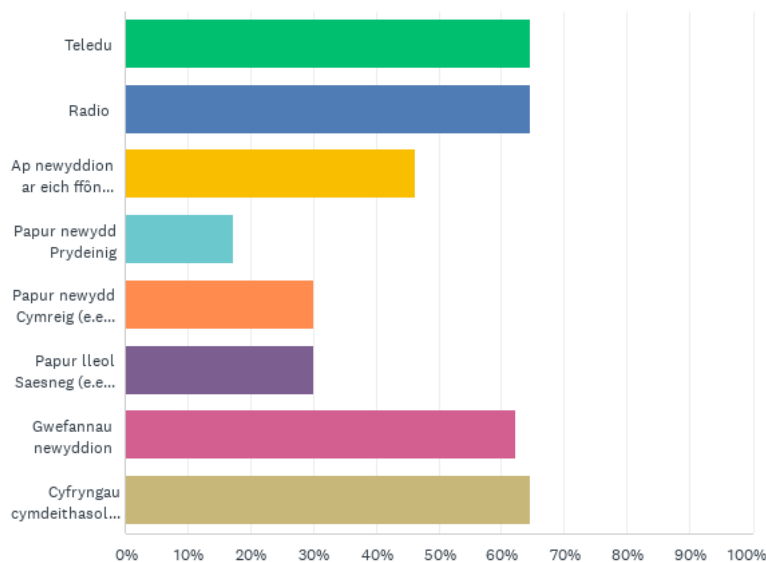
## Receiving news

The participants were also asked about how they currently received their news. It was an opportunity to take a quick snapshot of current social practices in this regard.

71 of the 95 who answered the question (75%) read their local newspaper – 55 read a hard copy, 4 read a copy on-line and 9 read both formats.

Further questions were asked about which platforms and media were used to obtain news. These were the results:-

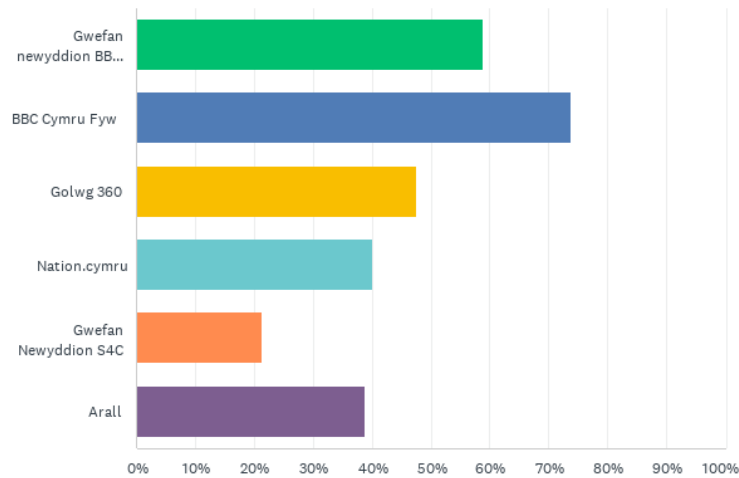
### Q19 Sut ydych chi'n derbyn eich newyddion yn gyffredinol?



65% received news via social media links, e.g. *Facebook* and *Instagram*. This confirms what we were told when interviewing individuals about the way in which many of them access Bro 360 websites. Promoting Bro 360 on these platforms is therefore key.

In terms of news websites the overall consumption pattern was as follows:

## Q20 Os ydych yn derbyn eich newyddion drwy wefannau, pa wefannau ydych chi'n eu defnyddio?



The above patterns of consumption confirm Bro 360's basic assumption that the future belongs to digital news media. However, it is significant that the percentage reading their community newspaper remains strong amongst participants in this exercise – 75% of those who answered the question.

## Conclusions

From the above fieldwork we can draw the following conclusions:

- The idea of establishing a local Welsh news website in the four areas was widely welcomed without exception.
- Some concerns were expressed – regarding the availability of volunteers and the relationship of the project with local community newspapers – but there was general recognition that the project was needed in order to ensure a modern digital Welsh language platform that could offer the opportunity to use the Welsh language as a lively and dynamic social medium – especially in relation to the younger generation.
- There was consensus that the four areas proposed by the project made social sense. There is no doubt that they will define themselves in due course, after they have been established.
- There was also a desire to recognise the county identity and the relationship with adjoining areas.
- In terms of content, there were a range of proposals but local 'news' about local people and societies was attractive as a core element. A number also noted their desire to see more 'hard' journalism that could raise awareness of the issues of the day locally. This highlights the importance of ensuring that a journalist is part of the Ceredigion 360 team.
- The importance of being able to promote Bro 360 on social media platforms was highlighted.

- The response in terms of participation was positive with 63% of the total sample indicating that they would be prepared to contribute in practical terms to a local Bro 360 project and 51% of all questionnaire respondents were prepared to be part of a Local Steering Group.

## 4.2 Questions for local businesses

The second aspect of the fieldwork was to ask local businesses about the following:

- the appropriateness and suitability of the idea of establishing a local 360 website for their areas,
- their willingness to consider advertising and/or sponsoring a local website and/or other 360 websites,
- their current advertising and sponsorship patterns, together with their
- interest in joining an on-line business club as part of a package of services offered by the project.

35 businesses across the area were questioned through a face-to-face interview during December 2021 and January 2022. Efforts were made to include businesses representing a range of different business areas. In order to ensure meaningful and authoritative answers, we targeted businesses where the owners or key managers were present at the time, in order to obtain reliable answers.

Short face-to-face conversations (15 minutes) were held with these individuals and the answers fed into an electronic questionnaire framework in order to be able to analyse them as a body of data.

When noted according to individual localities the following pattern is observed:

- Aberaeron & Aeron Valley (10),
- Bro Siôn Cwilt (6),<sup>3</sup>
- Bro Teifi – Llandysul and Newcastle Emlyn area (10), and
- Cardigan area (9).

It is hoped the sample is sufficient to get an initial flavour of the commercial possibilities.

### Support for the idea

All but two interviewees (33 out of 35) welcomed the idea of establishing Welsh language news websites locally.<sup>4</sup> One Welsh-language bookshop was unsure about adding to existing media and a local butcher, although not opposed, did not see an obvious business opportunity for them as a company.

30 out of 35 (86%) were likely to use the website news page to write a story (free of charge) about an aspect of their business. 10 of them would need some assistance to do so in terms of translation or training or technical support.

### Ad placements

As a market testing exercise, an example of Bro 360 'Y Farchnad' page was shown to the individuals asking if they would be likely to place an advert on such a local page.

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<sup>3</sup>There is no urban centre in this area. There is heavy reliance on tourism and the majority of businesses in Llangrannog and New Quay were closed in January or did not have their owners present.

<sup>4</sup>Care should be taken in case of the Hawthorne effect here, which is the tendency of people to offer the solution that they feel is expected by the person asking the question.

*“Would you be prepared to place an advert on your local Bro360 website – (e.g. MPU 300x250 pixels = 3” x 2.5” on a normal monitor screen)?*

29 out of 35 (83%) responded positively to the possibility.

They were further asked whether they would be interested in placing a similar advert on the local websites of nearby areas. 21 of the 35 (60%) responded positively to that possibility. Further discussions highlighted that the possibility of being able to advertise on a Ceredigion-wide scale would be widely welcomed.

Despite the positive response, only 12 companies noted that they already advertised locally:

- Community newspaper (7)
- Local shows and events programmes (6)
- Free advertising papers (1)
- County paper (English) (5)

Of those that did not advertise locally, a number noted that they used social media to promote themselves – mainly *Facebook* and *Instagram*. The opportunity to advertise in a digital format appears attractive to them.

One retail business noted that they were able to purchase an occasional Facebook advertisement for £10 a week which boosted them locally. That was seen as value for money.

One food production business had been paying £33 per month to *Wales & the Borders* to be included on their specialist food market website – but they were going to stop doing so because of doubts about the cost-effectiveness of the platform.

Larger companies (e.g. car sales companies) tended to advertise within the industry and on a much wider scale than the local area. However, they would be open to discussing a sponsorship scheme if they could see the full details.

A good number of companies reported that the normal marketing they did was to disseminate their reputation verbally on the basis of the good quality of their service. A number noted that they advertised in their community newspaper in order to demonstrate community support rather than as a business tool.

10 out of 35 (29%) noted that they would need help with placing an advert on Bro 360 – either in terms of translation or IT support.

### Paying for adverts

Given the format of the Bro 360 ‘Y Farchnad’ page and the possibility of installing a link to a website or social media there, businesses were asked about the size of the budget they would consider allocating for advertising on that platform.

The majority of businesses were reluctant to suggest a robust budget without seeing full details – including statistics regarding traffic and reach. Of the nine who offered comments, their replies ranged from between £5 and £30 per month.

One owner noted that the model would be more productive for on-line businesses (e.g. craftspeople and local artists) who could benefit from an on-line presence more than local shops and services.

It was also noted that a willingness to advertise could depend on the season of the year and how busy the business was.

### Sponsoring Bro 360 pages

Questions were also raised regarding the possibility of paying for a more substantial advertisement, e.g. sponsoring a page or placing a headline advertisement on the local website.

*“Without committing yourself, would you be prepared to sponsor your local Bro360 website for a longer period, e.g. 6 or 12 months? (e.g. by placing a ‘leaderboard’ banner 728x90 pixels = 7” x 1” on a normal monitor screen)?”*

13 (41%) noted that they would be prepared to consider doing so, with the benefit of having wider coverage than the local area only – a number noted a desire to advertise on a Ceredigion-wide scale and some others on a national scale.

Only 5 offered a budget for this, namely between £20 a month and £50 a month. Others noted the need to see the details of the proposal before venturing a firm budget.

The large businesses in the area were not questioned as part of this survey but there are a number of very successful businesses in the area – in tourism, clothing manufacturers, biotech, construction, agriculture services and many other areas. Attracting funding from those directions would be possible if a bespoke strategy was developed.

### Comparative advertising prices

Some desktop research was carried out on local advertising. Some comparable advertising prices are set out below in the *Cambrian News* and *The Monthly Advertiser*.

An advert corresponding to the standard advertisements of Y Farchnad Bro 360 in the *Cambrian News* (5cm x 3 columns) would cost £85 per week (+VAT). A corresponding sponsorship ‘banner’ (10cm x 2 columns) would cost £170 per week (+VAT). The advertising rates are higher in relation to jobs (£300+VAT) or public notices (£350+VAT). These amounts are examples and the rates can be flexible and reductions are offered on regular advertising.

Current *Cambrian News* sales are around 10,000 copies in 5 regional editions. Over 20,000 ‘like’ their *Facebook* page. Between 6,000 - 7,000 purchase Ceredigion and Montgomeryshire editions, giving an estimated 20,000 readers in Ceredigion.<sup>5</sup>

*The Monthly Advertiser* – A5 advertising paper – claims it is distributed to over 41,000 households in Ceredigion on a monthly basis. The number reading it is unknown. Advertising space equivalent to standard adverts in ‘Y Farchnad’ Bro 360 (7cm x 5cm) would be £89 (+VAT) for one month or £73 (+VAT) per month for a period of 3 months.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Cambrian News advertising section (December 2021).

Of the community newspapers only Y Gambo publishes their advertising rates in the paper. The placing of a similar advert in Y Gambo would be £5 a month or £45 a year. Y Gambo has sales of 750 and on that basis approximately 2,250 readers. In the November editions of Y Gambo, Y Garthen and Llais Aeron, 25, 8 and 6 advertisements were placed.

There is more discussion on the reach of Bro 360 and potential advertising income below.

### On-line Business Club

The idea was suggested to the businesses that membership of an on-line local business club could form part of the advertising package. Such a club would offer an opportunity to share experiences and receive guidance and training on aspects of running an e-business, marketing and the Internet. In addition, it could offer the following services and opportunities:

- Adverts on local community websites
- Adverts on regional community websites
- An opportunity to advertise on golwg360.cymru and in the Golwg magazine at a discounted rate
- Digital skills training workshops
- Networking sessions and sharing ideas with other businesses
- Presence in a local and national business directory
- An opportunity to promote special offers in the form of a short advert (*promoted posts*)
- Ability to publish news about your company in a local and national business section

19 businesses (58%) expressed an interest in the idea of an on-line business club – but no enthusiasm was seen. These positive responses were largely from individuals from the younger generation who were more comfortable with IT. 10 responded positively to opportunities to network with other businesses, with 7 responding positively to training opportunities, a place on a directory and an opportunity to advertise more widely.

### **Conclusions**

Having asked the local businesses, we can propose the following conclusions:

- That the idea of establishing local news websites is generally welcomed among the area's businesses.
- Local businesses see the opportunity to highlight themselves on the website's news pages (free of charge) as engaging.
- That local on-line businesses need to be targeted as well as retail, hospitality and service businesses to attract advertising.
- That the opportunity to advertise on a local digital platform is generally welcomed – but that a significant number of businesses would need linguistic or technical support to do so (25-50%).
- Based on the answers received, the initial price point for placing a basic advert on the local Bro 360 website, with a link to the company's digital platform, would be around £25 (+VAT) per month - £250 (+VAT) per annum. It could be cheaper without the reference link - say £20 (+VAT) per month or £200 (+VAT) per year.

- That the possibility of advertising outside the local area – particularly at Ceredigion-wide level – was welcomed although guidance was not offered on the price point of price for that sponsorship.
- That there is a market locally for attracting substantial funding if a bespoke strategy is developed.
- The need for Bro 360 to develop a clear and simple advertising offer that offers value for money to advertisers and sponsors. The advertising and sponsorship package could operate at two (or three) levels – local, Ceredigion 360 (and Golwg 360) – depending on the company’s business catchment area.
- The project would need to significantly promote use of the website, monitoring traffic through local websites and increasing it regularly to test value for money for advertisers.
- That inclusion of job advertisements and public notices as part of the Bro 360 advertising strategy needs to be considered.
- Careful consideration needs to be given before introducing an on-line business club scheme. Establishing and maintaining such a club would involve considerable investment in staff time and effort. As such, it may not be cost-effective and would not add value to the project. It is suggested that the idea of a business club should be reviewed in year 2 of the business plan. It is suggested that such a club would be a project to be publicly funded, not a commercial venture.
- The project needs to allocate a dedicated member of staff within Ceredigion to sell advertisements and maintain contact with businesses – in conjunction with local teams of interested volunteers.

### **4.3 Brainstorming workshops’ discussions**

4 brainstorming sessions were held via Zoom between 10-13 January 2022. The following number of individuals were convened to the brainstorming workshops:

- Aberaeron & Aeron Valley (17),
- Bro Siôn Cwilt (7),
- Bro Teifi – Llandysul and Newcastle Emlyn area (6), and
- Cardigan area (5).

The Project Officer gave a presentation on the Golwg 360 project. One of the cwmni IAITH team presented the initial findings of this research. A discussion was led on the possibilities, answering questions raised.

No matter was raised that has not already been noted above. Participants were unanimous in their view that the idea was a good one and that there was a need to go ahead with establishing the websites – in the four areas – at the earliest opportunity.

A full record of the meetings and a recording of them are in the client’s hands.

## 4.4 Contextual issues

### Reach and sustainability

When considering ways of developing the project for the 4 new areas and maintaining the current 3 areas, an estimate has to be made of the reach and financial sustainability of any scheme.

Whilst grants from public bodies or charitable organisations would be required to maintain any business plan for the scheme, certainly in the short term, income from advertising and sponsorship are likely to be the main support of the project in the medium term. That depends on being able to persuade local businesses of the value of the project to them in either attracting additional business and/or maintaining or developing their public profile locally, on a county basis or nationally.

It would therefore be good to have some understanding of the potential reach of the project. For the purposes of this exercise we focus on trying to imagine the potential reach of the project on a county scale – of adopting the Ceredigion 360 brand. Having said that, estimating the project's potential reach is problematic. This is what is already known to try to make a sensible estimate.

- There are likely to be around 40,000 Welsh speakers in Ceredigion and the adjoining areas on the banks of the river Teifi. Reaching 10% of those would mean an audience of 4,000. Reaching 15% of them would mean an audience of 6,000.
- The Cambrian News sells around 6,500 copies in Ceredigion and reaches around 20,000 readers. That's also the number of individuals who follow them on *Facebook*. It could be argued that around 10,000 of those likely readers are Welsh speakers.
- The sales of the county's community newspapers are as follows:

**Table 3: sales of Ceredigion's community newspapers<sup>6</sup>**

Community Newspaper	Sales	Likely readers
Papur Pawb	350	1,050
Y Tincer	800	2,400
Yr Angor	325	975
Y Barcud	500	1,500
Clonc	700	2,100
Llais Aeron	400	1,200
Y Gambo	750	2,250
Y Garthen	400	1,200
Y Dwrgi	?	?
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,225+</b>	<b>12,675+</b>

It is interesting to note that the likely number of readers of community newspapers in Ceredigion compares closely with the number of Welsh speakers reading the *Cambrian News* – around the 10,000 individuals – namely around a quarter of the extended county's Welsh speakers. (That doesn't mean that they are the same 10,000, of course).

Given the current patterns of reading and use on the Web, would one in four Welsh speakers in the county be likely to use the Ceredigion 360 website? Or do you think that a potential reach of 10-15% is more realistic?

<sup>6</sup> Source: Mentrau Iaith Cymru.



Measuring the current reach of Bro 360 websites in Ceredigion is difficult. The documented information regarding traffic to the individual websites is as follows:

**Table 4: Average number of website visitors per month in 2021.**

Clonc 360:	7,498	
Caron 360	2,691	14,587
Bro Aber 360	4,398	
Golwg 360	72,379	

**Table 5: Number of unique page visits per month, on average, in 2021.**

Clonc 360:	8,819	
Caron 360	3,613	18,586
Bro Aber 360	6,154	
Golwg 360	121,227	

(NB: the tables above do not represent the number of unique visitors. Individuals are likely to be counted each time they access the website. Similarly the visits to pages).

In addition, 1,600 people are known to like the *Facebook* page of Clonc 360, over 1,000 like the Bro Aber 360 *Facebook* page and 635 currently follow the *Facebook* page of Caron 360 (December 2021). Those statistics have continued to grow gradually throughout the recent period. Given this, the number of Ceredigion 360 website followers could reach between 7,000-10,000 within the timetable of the extension scheme.

It would be erroneous, of course, to assume that the followers of these digital platforms are limited to Ceredigion. Digital media cuts across geographical boundaries and it must be recognised that there is potential to attract readers/visitors and customers from outside the area or county as well.

However, in planning, it would be reasonable to expect Ceredigion 360 to aim to reach around 10,000 visitors and followers over the period of setting up and extending the scheme. That would be equivalent to the likely readers of the *Cambrian News* and the community newspapers alike. That would provide a very strong reason for businesses and public bodies to use the platform as a means of advertising, issuing public notices and offering grants and financial funding to the project. It is vital, therefore, that the project establishes a means of monitoring the scheme's reach in terms of unique users.

#### Relationship with community newspapers

A significant contextual aspect is the presence of the Ceredigion community papers. The community newspapers have been a cornerstone of Welsh culture since their development in the 1970s and 1980s. They have been a very effective way of linking Welsh neighbourhoods together and offering attractive and accessible reading material to a large proportion of Welsh speakers.

There are nine community newspapers in Ceredigion – Papur Pawb (north Ceredigion), Y Tincer (Genau'r Glyn area), Yr Angor (Aberystwyth), Y Barcud (Tregaron), Llais Aeron (Aeron Valley), Clonc (Lampeter), Y Gambo (south Ceredigion), Y Garthen (Bro Teifi) and Y Dwrgi (Cardigan).

The community newspapers – like the printed press in general – currently face significant challenges as the digital press comes to power. During the course of this research a number of people involved in community newspapers were spoken to in connection with a number of matters.

A high percentage of those questioned were community newspaper readers. The editor of Llais Aeron, the Chair and some committee members of Y Garthen, individuals involved in Y Gambo such as editors of the month and committee members were questioned along with some of the committee members of Y Dwrgi were questioned. All of them expressed concerns about the future of the community newspapers – in terms of seeing falling sales, seeing the average age of readers and contributors getting older, the challenges faced from the digital press and the challenges posed as a result of the break-up of social patterns due to COVID-19.

The project was generally welcomed by individuals who were directly and indirectly involved in the target area's community newspapers. A number of committee members and individuals with editorial duties expressed concern about their personal inability to cope with information technology and the digital culture. But at the same time there was also a desire to see the community papers come to terms with the situation and survive in some form or another.

The fact that Bro 360 hosts digital copies of 37 community newspapers on their website was welcomed. There was also a warm welcome to the constructive and symbiotic partnership developed between the Clonc community newspaper and Clonc 360, with many stating that they would like to see a similar relationship developing between the project and community newspapers in their areas.

The boundaries of Llais Aeron and Y Garthen community papers compare very well with the Bro 360 target areas in the Aeron Valley and Bro Teifi and a strong desire was expressed to work with the project by representatives of both community newspapers in those areas.

The target area of Cardigan is understood to be slightly wider than the town of Cardigan alone, namely the main focus of Y Dwrgi. Y Gambo community paper serves the area to the north of Cardigan as well as Bro Siôn Cwilt. Although formal contact has not been made with representatives of these two community newspapers, there have been positive indications from individuals involved with them and the project will need to have a constructive dialogue with these community newspapers and other community newspapers going forward.

There is potential for those discussions to be about common organisation, sharing content and creating income-raising packages on a joint basis.

## 5.0 Conclusions

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From the above fieldwork we can draw the following conclusions:

- The idea of establishing a local Welsh news website in the four areas was welcomed without exception.
- Some concerns were expressed – regarding the availability of volunteers and the relationship of the project with local community newspapers – but there was general recognition that the project was needed in order to ensure a modern digital Welsh language platform that could offer the opportunity to use the Welsh language as a lively and dynamic social medium – especially in relation to the younger generation.
- There was consensus that the four areas proposed by the project made social sense. There is no doubt that they will define themselves in due course. There was also a desire to recognise the county identity and the relationship with adjoining areas.
- In terms of content, there were a range of proposals but local ‘news’ about local people and organisations was attractive as a core element. A number also noted their desire to see more ‘hard’ journalism that could raise awareness of the issues of the day locally. This highlights the importance of ensuring that a journalist is part of the Ceredigion 360 team.
- The importance of promoting Bro 360 on social media platforms was highlighted to direct traffic to the website.
- The response in terms of participation was positive with 64% indicating that they would be prepared to contribute in practical terms to a local Bro 360 project and 52% of all those questioned were prepared to be part of a Local Steering Group.
- There was general agreement that the project needed to develop a constructive relationship with community newspapers in the target areas.

Having asked the local businesses we can propose the following conclusions:

- That the idea of establishing local news websites is generally welcomed among the area’s businesses.
- Local businesses see the opportunity to highlight themselves on the website’s news pages (free of charge) as engaging.
- That the opportunity to advertise on a local digital platform is generally welcomed – but that some businesses would need linguistic or technical support to do so.
- Based on the answers received, the initial price point for placing a basic advert on the local Bro 360 website, with a link to the company’s digital platform, would be around £25 (+VAT) per month - £250 (+VAT) per month. It could be cheaper without the reference link.

- That the possibilities of advertising outside the local area – particularly at Ceredigion-wide level – were welcomed although guidance was not offered on the price point for that sponsorship.
- That Bro 360 needs to develop a clear and simple advertising offer that offers value for money to advertisers and sponsors. The advertising and sponsorship package could operate at two (or three) levels – local, Ceredigion 360 (and Golwg 360) – depending on the company’s catchment area and reach.
- That the project would need to significantly promote use of the website, monitoring traffic through local websites and increasing it regularly to test value for money for advertisers.
- That inclusion of job advertisements and public notices as part of the Bro 360 advertising strategy needs to be considered.
- That careful consideration needs to be given before introducing an on-line business club scheme. Establishing and maintaining such a club would involve considerable investment in staff time and effort. As such, it is possible that it may not be cost-effective and would not add value to the project. It is suggested that the idea of a business club should be reviewed in year 2 of the business plan.
- That the project needs to allocate a dedicated member of staff within Ceredigion to sell advertisements and maintain contact with businesses – in conjunction with local teams of interested volunteers.

As a result of the brainstorming sessions organised between 10-13 January we can conclude that there is strong support for the establishment of Bro360 websites in the four areas and that there are active groups of volunteers willing to take on the work.

## 6.0 Recommendations

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- That the Bro 360 scheme continues to maintain and support the 3 local news websites already established in Ceredigion – Clonc 360, Caron 360 and Bro Aber 360.
- That the Bro 360 scheme continues with the intention of establishing 4 additional local news websites in Ceredigion – Aeron Valley, Bro Sion Cwilt, Bro Teifi and Cardigan – over a 2-3 year period.
- That consideration be given to establishing a specific brand – Ceredigion 360 – to link the 7 local websites together in terms of news, events, advertising and sponsorship.
- Where the project has previously been run by public funding, the project needs to adopt a commercial model if it is to continue with what has been developed so far and extend the project to new areas.
- That a business plan is developed which includes a county co-ordinator along with a local motivator, journalist and advertising and sponsorship salesperson.
- That a clear and simple advertising and sponsorship package is prepared which offers opportunities for local businesses at two levels – the local and county level, namely Ceredigion 360 – as well as the national opportunities already offered by Golwg 360.
- That there is a need to consider attracting income from public notices from public bodies and job advertisements.
- That the project needs to develop constructive partnerships with the local community newspapers in the Ceredigion target areas as a central aspect of the approach.
- That a partnership needs to be developed with the relevant County Councils and language initiatives along with local economic and community development bodies.
- That the idea of creating an online business club be ‘parked’ for a period of time and reviewed in the second year of the scheme in terms of its commercial value.
- That the model proposed in this report be replicated in Arfon and/or Gwynedd in order to support a full time Co-ordinator and a holistic Bro 360 project.
- That in forward planning, the project considers how to fund further extensions to Bro’r Preseli, Bro Myrddin and Bro Ddyfi through public seed funding and commercial income.

Below we propose an outline of a business plan and action plan to realise the above recommendations.

## 7.0 Business Plan Model

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The business case for the Ceredigion 360 project, namely the social and economic need for it in terms of public policy, is set out in Section 1.0. Those reasons are also known from reading the core project documentation. Local demand is outlined in the findings of Section 4.0 above. Here, therefore, we focus on trying to outline a model of a potential business plan that could see Ceredigion 360 being set up as a financially self-sufficient project within a three-year period.

The model assumes that the current three areas would remain operational and that the project would succeed in establishing itself in two other areas during the first year, adding another area in year 2 and a seventh area either in the second half of year 2 or in year 3, whichever is practical. It is assumed that this would be year 3 for the purposes of the model.

The model also allows the scheme to be expanded in years 2 and 3 to cover other adjoining areas, e.g. Bro'r Preseli, Bro Myrddin or Bro Ddyfi – although financial planning for that is not part of our intention here.

### Staffing and costs

In year 1 the suggested staffing structure for Ceredigion 360 includes:

- co-ordinator (50%),
- journalist (100%),
- local motivator (100%),
- advertising and sponsorship salesperson (100%), together with
- freelance technological support.

Furthermore, the budget recognises the need for some project funding, a budget for volunteer costs, a budget for travelling costs and a fund that allows the purchase of technical resources. The budget also recognises the need to include company overheads and Golwg Cyf staff time in managing and supporting the project.

50% of Co-ordinator time is noted in the plan on the assumption that a corresponding scheme would be developed to support the other half of the post in Arfon and Gwynedd.

In year 2 of the scheme the time of the local motivator and the advertising and sponsorship salesperson falls to 75% as they move to prepare the ground in adjoining areas after an 18 month period, e.g. Bro'r Preseli, Bro Myrddin or Bro Ddyfi. Their contribution falls to 50% in year 3 for the same reason.

The input of the Journalist and other support systems remain at the same rate for the purposes of this exercise – although this may change in due course as a result of the establishment of adjoining areas. The project's mid-term evaluative report notes that 86% of those questioned agreed that journalistic input from Golwg staff was an important element of the project. We agree with that.

Based on those forecasts a budget could be presented as follows:

**Table 6: Costs of running the Ceredigion 360 project over 3 years**

	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
<b>Co-ordinator</b>	£ 15,000	£ 15,450	£ 15,914
<b>Journalist</b>	£ 22,500	£ 23,175	£ 23,870
<b>Local motivator</b>	£ 22,500	£ 17,381	£ 11,588
<b>Advertising salesperson</b>	£ 22,500	£ 17,381	£ 11,588
<b>Technical support</b>	£ 15,000	£ 15,750	£ 16,538
<b>Project costs</b>	£ 5,000	£ 5,250	£ 5,513
<b>Volunteers' costs</b>	£ 2,500	£ 3,000	£ 3,500
<b>Travelling costs</b>	£ 5,000	£ 5,250	£ 5,513
<b>Resources and overheads</b>	£ 10,000	£ 10,300	£ 10,609
<b>Management, support and administration</b>	£ 10,000	£ 10,300	£ 10,815
	<b>£ 130,000</b>	<b>£ 123,238</b>	<b>£ 115,445</b>

In order to expand into the surrounding areas it will be necessary to secure seed funding to fund 25% and 50% of the jobs of the motivator and the advertising and sponsorship salesperson. Some of the remainder of the proposed business plan may be a means of supporting some of that but the likelihood is that public or charitable support will be needed again – from outside Ceredigion – to support the expansion envisaged in years 2 and 3. There are possibilities for attracting this from Carmarthenshire County Council funds (e.g. Welsh Church Fund<sup>7</sup>) and Pembrokeshire County Council (e.g. Pembrokeshire Improvement Grant<sup>8</sup>).

With inflation rising, wage inflation is forecast at a rate of 3% and inflation on overall costs at a rate of 5% per annum over the period.

## Volunteers

The model is dependent on the time and expertise of the above staff. But it is also dependent on the contribution of a large number of local volunteers. Motivating and supporting the local teams of volunteers would be the main work of the local motivator. Furthermore, the journalist and advertising and sponsorship salesperson would also need to develop a creative relationship with local individuals to ensure an effective method of working.

The focus of the voluntary team would be the Local Steering Group for each area. The Local Steering Group would be the central engine of the project in each individual area. It is suggested that the Local Steering Group could organise itself into specific work groups, e.g. journalism, editing and checking, collecting advertisements and sponsorship. Each work group would receive guidance and support from one of the professional teams.

The contribution of volunteers is vital and valuable. In developing in the future, and by submitting applications to extend the scheme to other areas, it would be possible to measure and place a financial value on the contribution of the Local Steering Groups as contributions in kind.

## Income

<sup>7</sup> [Welsh Church Fund \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales)

<sup>8</sup> [Pembrokeshire Improvement Grant - Pembrokeshire County Council \(sir-benfro.gov.uk\)](http://sir-benfro.gov.uk)

It is assumed that the Ceredigion 360 project would need to be financially self-sufficient within 2-3 years. The Bro 360 project has already received considerable financial support from public sources – specifically the European Union Rural Development Fund. That has laid a firm foundation for the project by developing an effective model and approach.

In considering the development of Ceredigion 360 into a self-sustaining business unit in its own right, it is reasonable to expect that some public investment would be needed again in the short term (1-2 years) until the model could stand on its own feet. However, the main source of income for the project, as far as we can see, would be income from advertising and sponsorship. This involves a significant change of approach for the project team as the project's funding model changes from the support of two public grants to becoming a commercial enterprise.

## Sources of income

Given potential sources of income to support the budget below, it is suggested that consideration be given to the following income streams:

- Income from advertising
- Income from sponsorship
- Income from public notices
- Income from grants from town and community councils
- Income from Ceredigion County Council Community Fund
- Other income from public or charitable sources

### Income from advertising

Looking at the websites of the Bro Aber 360, Clonc 360 and Caron 360 at present, it is seen that a number of businesses have placed adverts on the 'Siopa'n Lleol' or 'Y Farchnad' page – Bro Aber 360 (78), Clonc 360 (47), Caron 360 (25). There are similar numbers on the websites of some Arfon areas – Caernarfon 360 (53), Dyffryn Nantlle 360 (33) and Bro'r Wyddfa 360 (25).

However, we understand that these companies are not currently paying for that facility. In order to ensure sound financial foundations for the project going forward it would be a requirement for companies to pay for advertisements on the local websites. Advertising offers can be complex. For our purposes here there are two types of basic products:

- (a) a basic advert on the 'y Farchnad' page (or similar) for a price of £250 per annum (or £25 per month) which would carry a link to the company's website or Facebook page or a similar advert that does not carry a digital link for a price of £200 per annum (or £20 per month); and
- (b) opportunities to sponsor specific pages of the local website (or Ceredigion 360) at a price of £1,000 per annum (or £100 per month).

Advertisements could also be sold on a Ceredigion 360-wide scale or on a Bro 360-wide scale or even at Golwg 360 level development if a composite package were developed and discussions held with individual companies. Any such income would be in addition to the figures we set out here.

It is assumed (based on the companies already advertising for free) that it would be possible to attract at least 20 companies on average in the initial 5 areas to advertise at a basic level,



increasing those numbers to 30 and 35 in the following two years. It is recognised that there is more potential to do so in some areas than others, e.g. Aberystwyth and Cardigan, but all income from advertisements attracted within the county would be contributing to the same county fund (the Ceredigion 360 business unit).

#### Income from sponsorship

Alongside a simple and clear advertising scheme (above), it is suggested that a sponsorship scheme should be developed which includes wider opportunities to attract the attention of readers and users over a period of 3, 6 or 12 months. The exact offer would be the subject of a discussion between the project and Golwg Cyf. in due course

It is assumed that it would be possible to attract 4 companies from each area (on average) to extend funding of £1,000 per year in each area, increasing to 6 and 7 in subsequent years. These amounts can also represent elements of county-scale advertising at higher rates – rates to be developed again as part of a composite marketing plan.

Furthermore, it is suggested that consideration could be given to developing a dynamic relationship between Golwg 360 and the local websites – in terms of national advertisements by local companies and job advertisements – thereby attracting additional income to the Ceredigion 360 budget. This support is entitled ‘contra income’ in the budget.

#### Income from public notices

By developing the Ceredigion 360 website to attract between 5,000-10,000 readers and users, public bodies could be attracted to place public notices and job advertisements on the 360 platform at competitive rates, bringing additional income to the project. The estimated potential of this source of income is included in years 2 and 3 of the business plan, as preparation work will be needed in this respect.

#### Income from grants from town and community councils

Another source of potential income would be to receive grants from supportive town and community councils. There are 51 town and community councils in Ceredigion. In terms of the project we can also count a handful of councils located across the border in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire – it may be considered that 57 councils would have a potential interest. The ability of town and community councils to contribute financially to community projects varies considerably. The budgets of towns such as Aberystwyth and Cardigan are significantly more substantial than those of rural community councils.

For the purposes of this exercise, therefore, we anticipate that the supporting councils would increase from 10 in the first year to 18 to 25 in subsequent years and that the average funding would increase from £100 per council to £150 and £175 per individual council over the three years. However, it is envisaged that the contributions of town and community councils will only be a small part of the income relative to the income that would need to be attracted by advertising and sponsorship.

#### Income from Ceredigion County Council Community Funds

As the project focuses on developing and expanding within Ceredigion it appears that Ceredigion County Council’s Community Grants fund<sup>9</sup> would be a suitable source of financial support. The

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<sup>9</sup> [Community Grants - Ceredigion County Council](#)

project fits in with the Fund’s criteria and aligns with a number of the strategic objectives of Ceredigion County Council and the Local Services Board in terms of their Language Strategy 2018-23<sup>10</sup> and the Corporate Strategy 2017-22<sup>11</sup>.

Revenue income is available from the fund up to £10,000, £8,000 and £6,000 in subsequent years.

#### Other income from public or charitable sources

As this new commercial model becomes established and income from advertising and sponsorship grows over the three years there will be a shortfall in the budget for the first two years of around £100,000. To maintain the cash flow and ensure the success of the establishment period it would be necessary to secure public or charitable funding to carry that deficit – by April 2022.

#### Subscribers

Seeking subscribers would be another way of generating income – Golwg 360 has already developed in that direction – but it is not considered feasible in this respect as it would close access to local content and be counterproductive in terms of the administration to maintain it.

**Table 7: Possible sources of income for Ceredigion 360 over 3 years**

	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
<b>Income from advertising</b>	£ 22,500	£ 40,500.00	£ 55,125.00
<b>Income from sponsorship</b>	£ 20,000	£ 36,000.00	£ 49,000.00
<b>Contra income</b>	£ 5,000	£ 6,000.00	£ 7,000.00
<b>Income from public notices</b>	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 7,000.00
<b>Town and community councils</b>	£ 1,000	£ 2,700	£ 4,375.00
<b>Ceredigion County Council</b>	£ 10,000	£ 8,000	£ 6,000.00
<b>Public grants</b>	£ 70,000	£ 30,000	£ -
	<b>£ 128,500.00</b>	<b>£ 128,200.00</b>	<b>£ 128,500.00</b>

The above sources of income are considered possible, realistic and practical – through the co-operation of local work groups and the support of a professional advertising and sponsorship salesperson. However, it all depends on the value that advertisers and sponsors feel they get from the website – in direct business or local profile. The project must be able to justify the investment of local businesses in traffic to the website and traffic to their advertising/sponsorship specifically if the model is to remain sustainable after the initial period of goodwill. In doing so and by securing initial public or charitable funding it is believed that the income and loss account below is realistic and forms the basis for sustaining Ceredigion 360 as well as extending the scheme to adjoining areas in the future. We also believe that it is a model that could be replicated in Arfon and Gwynedd in order to integrate the whole project under the Bro 360 mantle.

**Table 8: Ceredigion 360 project income and loss account over 3 years**

Income	£ 128,500	£ 128,200	£ 128,500
Costs	£ 130,000	£ 123,238	£ 115,445
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>-£ 1,500</b>	<b>£ 4,963</b>	<b>£ 13,055</b>

<sup>10</sup> [strategaeth-iaith-ceredigion-2018-23.pdf](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Draft Corporate Strategy \(ceredigion.gov.uk\)](#)

## Action Plan

In order to implement the above business plan it is suggested that an action plan needs to be prepared along the following timescale over the next 15 months.

### Year 0 (January – March 2022)

Action	Timetable
Confirm the intention of Bro Aber 360, Caron 360 and Clonc 360 to continue into the next phase of the project.	January 2022
Submission of applications for public or charitable funding.	January 2022
Identify 2 new areas to extend the project into.	January 2022
Advertise for specific staff, e.g. Local Motivator, Journalist, Advertising and Sponsorship Salesperson for a work start date in April 2022.	January 2022
Complete the monitoring and reporting arrangements for the current scheme.	February 2022
Confirm the relationship with the local newspapers in the current areas and develop a robust discussion with the local newspapers in the target areas.	February 2022
Appoint a team of staff for Ceredigion 360 (2022-2025).	March 2022
Confirm a clear and simple plan of advertisements, a sponsorship package and 'contra' arrangement for Ceredigion 360 and the local websites.	March 2022

### Year 1 (April 2022 - March 2023)

Action	Timetable
Continue to maintain current local teams and websites – Bro Aber 360, Caron 360 and Clonc 360.	April 2022 -
Induction of a team of new staff.	April 2022
Identify advertisers and sponsors in the current 3 areas.	April-May 2022
Establish Local Steering Groups in 2 new areas.	April-May 2022
Identify specific work groups and their duties, e.g. local journalism, editing and checking, collecting advertisements and sponsorship.	May 2022
Identify potential advertisers and sponsors in the two new areas.	June 2022
Develop the technical aspects on 2 new websites + Ceredigion 360	Jun–Jul 2022

Prepare marketing materials for 2 new areas + Ceredigion 360	July/Aug 2022
Ceredigion 360 launched with the 5 areas.	September 2022
Maintain 5 local websites and the local action groups.	September 2022 – March 2023
Plan to expand Ceredigion 360 to 6th area by April 2023 and consider setting up 7th area by September 2023 or April 2024.	November 2022 – March 2023

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