



Darcey Howell

Blaenau Gwent Youth Mayor 2020-2021

Member of Blaenau Gwent Climate Change Assembly

Young person who's passionate about change, passionate speaker and advocate for Children & Young People's voices.

Since joining the Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum in 2017, Darcey Howell of Tredegar, has spent her time ensuring that young people in Blaenau Gwent have a voice that can both influence decisions and bring about change to improve the lives of children and young people.

Darcey's term as Youth Mayor ended in November 2021. During her term Covid-19 was prevalent, meaning Darcey had to quickly adopt new ways of working within her role as Youth Mayor. However, this did not stop Darcey from going on to attain many achievements which we'd like to recognise and celebrate.

On behalf of Blaenau Gwent Council we'd like to congratulate you and thank you for all your hard work. You're a pleasure to work with and an inspiring young leader who is a credit to the young people of Blaenau Gwent.

How I became the Blaenau Gwent Youth Mayor 2020

My journey towards becoming Youth Mayor of Blaenau Gwent began when I joined the Youth Forum in 2017. In 2019 I was elected as **Deputy Youth Mayor** and set my priority as **Physical Activity with a focus on Mental Health**. I also supported the Youth Mayor with her **Positive Body Image** priority as well as working on other emerging priorities identified by the Youth Forum.



Physical Activity

I am passionate about physical activity as a young person, recognising the impacts physical activity has on not only your physical, but mental wellbeing. As a young person, I attend many sporting activities, but recognise this is not the same for all young people.

Therefore, I wanted to raise awareness that you don't have to attend a sports club or take part in typical sporting activities to be physically active. I attend a local community gym which is great, but some of the equipment was not suitable for younger people. So, I decided to work with the Gym lead to submit a Cash4U funding application for new sporting equipment which young people could use to take part in a youth academy programme which involved volunteering.

The funding bid was successful and all the equipment was purchased on behalf of the gym. Initially the academy was put on hold due to COVID 19 restrictions, however it is now up and running. 16 young people have signed up and 20+ sessions have been delivered to date.

In September 2021, myself and Youth Forum members attended the gym to take part in a session using the new equipment to promote my project and kick forward the priority.



Climate Change Assembly

In February 2021 as Youth Mayor, I was asked to be part of the planning group for the first Climate Change Assembly in Wales alongside another Youth Forum member. This involved us attending regular meetings, working with different partners across the Council and with many external organisations as well as members of Blaenau Gwent community. The Climate Change Assembly took place over two weekends in March 2021 which saw members of the community come together to look at tackling Climate Change as a whole, but more importantly, focussing on what we could do in Blaenau Gwent, as well as voting on the key issues to take forward. I supported the running of the day by offering IT support, managing the lobby for Zoom as well as participating alongside my peer as a speaker at the event where we highlighted simple, everyday changes people can make towards tackling Climate Change.

<https://cynnalcyrmru.com/climate-assembly-sessions/>

This experience allowed me to meet with many different people, work on something I feel very passionate about, whilst allowing me to gain new skills outside of my comfort zone. I am pleased to say I will continue to be part of this work going forward.

Continuing my journey

My journey as Youth Mayor did not stop there, being part of the youth forum allowed me to:

- Be part of consultations around topics such as Mental Health, Policing, Wellbeing and ensuring the voices of Children & Young Peoples are continually heard.
- Be involved in Campaigns such as International Women's Day, Show Racism the Red Card and raising awareness around the Census.
- Be part of the Regional Youth Forum.
- Be a Chair at the Police Commissioners question time event for Young People.
- Be part of COVID recovery planning for Young People.
- Be involved on the interview panel for the Youth Service.
- Contribute to the development of the Positive Body Image Campaign.

But watch this space as my journey hasn't finished, I am still an active member of the Youth Forum.