



Social enterprise wins big at Wales StartUp Awards

Llandeilo-based social enterprise, Swperbox, took home the Social Enterprise Start-up of the Year prize at 2021's Wales StartUp Awards.

Swperbox are a meal box delivery service, which creates, manufactures and delivers food across South and West Wales.

They beat three other finalists to take home the prize, which was sponsored by WCVA, at this year's awards ceremony.

This marks the latest chapter in the meteoric rise of a social enterprise that only opened for business last year at the start of the pandemic.

Finding opportunities for work limited as the effects of the pandemic took hold, chefs Alex Cook and Stuart Crichton decided to apply their expertise in food to creating a sustainable meal delivery service.

And despite the obstacle of lockdown restrictions, they've delivered over **2,000** recipe boxes to 200 loyal customers, with over 400kg of locally sourced vegetables and 200kg of local meat since March 2020.

This added up to **£30,000** of income for their suppliers, as their community-orientated business model helped inject money into the local economy at a time when businesses needed it most.

Despite their early accomplishments, co-founder Alex Cook says there have been 'no shortcuts' in their path to success 'There's been plenty of hard work and collaboration with Welsh organisations on a regional and

national level including Food Centre Wales, Social Business Wales, Wales Coop Centre, WCVA, Slow Food Wales, Carmarthenshire Food Network and Carmarthenshire County Council.'

Deciding to put social values at the core of their business enterprise, they set up Swperbox with the aim of providing healthy, locally sourced food and sustainable employment.

To help them along their journey, they received investment from the Social Business Growth Fund (SBGF), part funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government and administered by Social Investment Cymru at WCVA.

Caryl Adams of WCVA, who also sat on the judges panel, said: 'There's so much to be impressed by with Swperbox, not only because of what they've achieved in such a short space of time, but also because they've done it while remaining committed to their social values. This means their success isn't theirs alone – it's their community's too'

At a time when getting reliable income and investment might have proved difficult due to the pandemic, Alex said of the funding 'The SBGF funding has enabled us to employ more staff to deliver a greater product or service and avoid shortfalls in revenue.'

'This funding will enable us to become self-sustainable as a commercially viable social enterprise, with organic growth delivering substantial economic, environmental and social outcomes for our community. Wales Coop Centre and SBGF are crucial to this business and the 40+ smaller businesses in our supply chain.'

Swperbox weren't the only ones to demonstrate the effectiveness of SBGF funding either – Prom Ally CIC, another finalist at the Wales Startup Awards, also received financing through SBGF.

A social enterprise based in North Wales, Prom Ally offers the free loan of prom dresses and suits to school children, sixth form students and college students who otherwise couldn't afford one.

Since 2015 they've provided outfits to hundreds of young girls, and have also recently started providing clothing for boys.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Social Business Growth Fund (SBGF) supports social businesses in Wales financially to enable them to grow and create job opportunities. SBGF is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government and is added to the suite of investments administered by Social Investment Cymru at Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). For more information visit <https://wcva.cymru/funding/social-investment-cymru/social-business-growth-fund/>
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) is the national membership body for voluntary organisations in Wales. We exist to enable voluntary organisations in Wales to make a bigger difference together.
- For any follow up questions, please contact Marc Jones or Simon Dowling at WCVA on marcjones@wcva.cymru / 02920 431722 sdowling@wcva.cymru / 029 2043 6596.
- The Wales Start-Up Awards were established in 2016 to recognise the achievements of those amazing individuals who have had a great idea, spotted the opportunity and taken the risks to launch a new product or service. Now in their sixth year, the Wales Startup Awards are also the only awards in the UK that focus specifically on celebrating the success of new businesses and recognise businesses across all sectors and all parts of Wales.

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