

## SEREN FFESTINIOG CYF

### *Contact*

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Seren Ffestiniog was created to provide work and training opportunities for people with learning disabilities – in a variety of environmental and community projects – within their community and locality.

The company was formed in 1996, following the local council's decision to close a park in Blaenau Ffestiniog due to lack of funds for maintenance. Linda Jones, already working with people with learning disabilities, saw the opportunity to turn a crisis into a business – giving disadvantaged people work while at the same time delivering a service to the community. Formed in co-operation with Gwynedd County Council's Social Services, the company now provides work for over 40 individuals and 16 people with learning disabilities.

As well as tending to gardens in Llan Ffestiniog and nurturing and selling plants, Seren produces goods such as home-made jams, cakes, crafts, greeting cards, dried flowers and gifts – often from recycled materials.

As a consequence of this work, Seren Ffestiniog has developed a number of economic initiatives. These include:

- A landscape and gardening service
- A café run in Blaenau Social Park
- A local art and craft shop in Church Street
- Sale of new and used (recycled) furniture
- Sale of products from its own website
- Sale of produce from Stiniog Gardens
- A travelling buffet service to companies, establishments and individuals
- Supporting vulnerable adults in their own homes.

Areas of related and accredited training include supporting people with learning disabilities, gardening and landscaping, hospitality services, small-scale retailing, office administration and arts and crafts.

As a community project, the company offers numerous opportunities for public involvement. The Seren Board is comprised of ten local residents, and individuals within the community are welcome to volunteer. A website questionnaire gives people a chance to comment on the project.