

Improved access to Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething, has today [12 May 2017] highlighted the improvements that have been made to the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) across Wales, in response to the McClelland strategic review of Welsh Ambulance Services.

The changes have significantly improved access for patients, carers and health care professionals to the service. Abandonment rates have fallen from 11% to 5% and call waiting times have also reduced.

Patients can make a booking through a single national number (0300 1232303) and can cancel or make enquiries about transport by using enhanced on-line services that are available 24/7.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“In January 2016 I announced plans to modernise the provision of Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) across Wales following the strategic review.

“I am pleased to see that the significant changes made to NEPTS so far have made a real difference to patients. There is far better access and it is simpler to use, meaning patients are getting a higher quality service and inefficiency in the system has been reduced.

“I am keen to see the health boards and the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust continue to work collaboratively to build on this success even further.”

Dan Stevens and Michael Sheen star in ground-breaking Wales-USA film project

US-based producers XYZ Films have linked up with Cardiff-based production company, Severn Screen, to produce the latest film from acclaimed Welsh director Gareth Evans, whose previous films *The Raid* and *The Raid II* were global hits.

Apostle was commissioned by Netflix and will debut exclusively on the streaming service worldwide in 2018.

Support from the Welsh Government has ensured that the entire shoot and all post-production work on Apostle will be undertaken in Wales, providing a £5m plus boost to the economy.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates described Apostle as a ground-breaking production for Welsh film.

He said:

“We are thrilled that Apostle will be distributed worldwide through Netflix and will provide a global platform for Welsh acting, directing, production and post production talent. I am delighted Welsh Government support was able to help secure the project for Wales.”

Wales Screen, part of the Welsh Government’s creative industries team, has been working with the producers since July 2016, to maximise the economic benefits for Wales. This has involved hosting site visits and identifying key locations for the film, including Margam Park where an elaborate village set has been built for the film.

Ed Talfan, head of Severn Screen, said:

“We are excited to be working with Gareth and the team at XYZ. From the outset they were keen to bring the project to Wales – it’s been a joy working with them to help make that happen. We look forward to bringing similarly ambitious projects to Wales in the future.”

Aram Tertzakian of XYZ Films: said

“We’re thrilled to be working here in Wales. It has always been a dream of Gareth’s to make films in his home country, and the support of the Welsh government has helped us make that a reality.

“We’ve been thoroughly impressed with the professionalism and enthusiasm of our Welsh crew. We hope this film will serve as a foundation for many more productions in Wales.”

Set in 1905, Apostle tells the story of a man (Stevens) who travels to a mysterious island off the coast of the UK in search of his estranged sister. On arriving he encounters a community led by enigmatic preacher (Sheen) who harbours a deep and terrifying secret.

The film also stars Welsh actor Mark Lewis Jones, winner of the 2016 BAFTA Cymru Best Actor Award for his role in Severn Screen’s film Yr Ymadawiad (The Passing).

Talfan adds:

“The project is a great opportunity to champion Welsh crews, Welsh cast, Wales based facilities houses and Welsh locations.

“Severn Screen is committed to developing and supporting the sector in Wales, and this is an important step forward for us.”

Welsh facilities houses Cinematic and Bang are set to deliver post-production work on the film while local suppliers will also see spin-off benefits within the supply chain.

£2.7m for libraries, museums and archives in Wales

The new Transformation Fund builds on the success of the Community Learning Libraries Programme for libraries, extending it to museums and archives for the first time. This capital funding will see a number of libraries and museums transform their services to significantly improve the visitor experience, offer new services and develop their sustainability and resilience.

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates, said:

“I am pleased to announce this funding of over £2.7 million for our museums, archives and libraries. These important cultural services are developing ways to engage more people to participate in culture, improving their creative and learning offers, and enabling people to reach their potential through new opportunities.

“Transforming the cultural and learning experience to open up opportunities to participate in culture is central to this funding. I want as many people as possible to experience the varied and stimulating cultural collections and learning experiences which are available in museums, libraries and archives across Wales.

“The Welsh Government is dedicated to supporting these important services and facilities and I’d encourage and recommend everyone to pay them a visit and discover, learn and to enjoy the richness of our culture.”

The Fund will modernise four libraries in Denbigh, Holyhead, Knighton and Townhill, establishing new community hubs where customers can access a range of services such as housing or community facilities, alongside an extensive range of library amenities.

Funding is also provided for Ammanford library to for the creation of a Creative Store (Stordy Creadigol) in partnership with other service providers, offering a high-tech 'maker space' where people can learn a range of creative and cultural skills.

Six museums will receive transformation funding to increase public access to their facilities and collections, ranging from tactile signage for Tenby Museum, to creating new educational facilities at Oriel Ynys Mon and installing new lighting as part of the redevelopment of Ceredigion Museum to improve the visitor experience.

Welsh Government funding will also support the digital offer from museums, archives and libraries, including the National Digital Library Service, which allows customers to access free e-books, e-zines, e-audio books, e-comics, and reference sources, wherever and whenever they want.

Archive services across Wales will benefit from funding to address the challenges of preserving our digital heritage, and to improve online access to information about archival resources.

EPIC adventure in north Wales

It is the UK's only Alpine Coaster, and is set to further boost north Wales' credentials as a world class adventure destination. Zip World is also the new location for the EPIC installation.

The Fforest Coaster has received funding through Visit Wales Tourism Investment Support Scheme. Following the Year of Adventure in 2016 – investment in the sector signals further growth and development in Adventure tourism in Wales.

Research has shown that the Year of Adventure – the first of Wales' themed years -was a big success for the industry. Visit Wales marketing activity for 2016 generated an additional £370 million for the Welsh economy – which is an 18% increase on 2015. This shows visitors were definitely influenced by Visit Wales marketing before taking a trip to Wales.

Following the official opening, the Economy Secretary, said:

“The Year of Adventure has shown that Wales is a world class adventure destination, the Lonely Planet's listing of north Wales as number four in their ten best places in the world to visit in 2017 was the icing on the cake, especially as they mentioned the way the the former industrial landscape has been reinvented and repurposed to create a series of truly world class attractions.

This recognition is testimony to the commitment and partnership working between public and private sector to deliver a world class visitor experience. This exciting addition to the Zip World family will no doubt attract many more to the area. I wish the team at Zip World every success for the coming season and congratulate them on their commitment to invest in product innovation."

Zip World Co-founder, Sean Taylor, says:

"Adventure tourism is booming in north Wales. In fact, we are so confident in its future that we have invested more than £5.5 million in the last 12 months to help consolidate its rightful position as an adventure capital.

"A recent economic impact study on Zip World revealed that since 2013, Zip World attractions has generated £121 million for the north Wales economy and created more than 218 jobs with over 93% of these jobs going to local people. We believe that we have a winning formula -: our world-class customer service; innovative adventures and our ability to leverage Snowdonia's beauty to create an unforgettable visitor experience."

The EPIC installation has also appeared at the Zip World Fforest site for the official opening. EPIC was a focal part of the Year of Adventure campaign and has undergone a makeover over the winter to reflect the Year of Legends theme for 2017. The sign has been refreshed and recovered with illustrations of our most popular and well known legends. Visitors will be able to read all about the stories behind the legends as these are printed on the base of the sign which measures 4 meters high and 11 meters wide. This year's campaign film with Luke Evans is also a feature of the sign; with a QR code to view the film printed on the sign.

[International Arthur film showcases Wales during Year of Legends](#)

During Wales Year of Legends, the new epic film from Warner Bros. Pictures and Village Roadshow Pictures – King Arthur: Legend of the Sword releases internationally 12 May and UK wide 19 May showcasing some of Wales epic landscapes which will inspire international audiences to find out more about Wales' wealth of legends and links with Arthur.

Thursday 11 May 2017

In the lead up to the release date, Visit Wales has partnered with VisitBritain on a digital campaign 'Where Stories Become Legends' which showcases legendary locations in King Arthur's Britain to an international audience. The campaign features an exclusive behind-the-scenes video of writer/director/producer Guy Ritchie, writer/producer Lionel Wigram and the film's stars Charlie Hunnam and Jude Law on location talking about the epic British landscapes used in King Arthur: Legend of the Sword and the emotions they inspire – film can be viewed on this link: [Exclusive behind-the-scenes video on location for King Arthur: Legend of the Sword](#) (external link).

Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates, said:

"The release of the film during our Year of Legends is perfect timing as we explore Wales' many legends and bring the past to life this year.

The film is a high profile showcase to Wales' epic scenery as well as to our potential as a film location. This is the latest in a long line of high profile productions that have filmed on location in Wales, with support from Wales Screen, helping to boost local economies and promote the stunning locations on offer, internationally.

I hope that the film will inspire many to visit us during our Year of Legends, and to take part in their own epic story during 2017."

The locations from the film include Llyn Gwynant, Capel Curig and the Wye Valley.

BAFTA Cymru and Pontio have secured a special preview screening of the new film ahead of the UK release date. Audiences in Wales will have an opportunity to see the magic up on the big screen in the Pontio Arts and Innovation Centre, Bangor, North Wales on Sunday 14 May at 8pm.

This is the latest film to hit the cinema screens which has been filmed in Wales. further information on other films featuring Wales can be found on this link: [Epic film locations](#) (external link).