

£6m funding for third sector organisations

£4.5m of core funding has been allocated to Third Sector Support Wales to help them provide advice and training to third sector organisations across the country for key activities such as fundraising and governance.

A further £1.3m has been awarded to the Volunteering Wales grant scheme to provide support to volunteer-involving organisations and £41,000 has been awarded to the Community Foundation in Wales, a charity which distributes grants to community groups and voluntary organisations throughout Wales. The money will part fund two posts at the charity.

The remaining funding will be used to compensate Third Sector organisations who are members of the Third Sector Partnership Council for the time spent working with the Welsh Government and organising network events to share Welsh Government priorities and research the views of the sector to share with Ministers.

Announcing the funding, the Cabinet Secretary said:

“Third Sector organisations play a vital role in Wales, whether that is providing services, supporting vulnerable people, improving their communities or providing opportunities for people to build confidence and learn new skills. I am therefore delighted to be awarding this funding to support them to continue the excellent work they do and to build on it for the future.”

Superfast speeds check-in at Ceredigion hotel

Fast fibre technology – now available thanks to the Superfast Cymru programme – is allowing the hotel to promote itself more effectively and provide new services for visitors.

The Conrah was originally the mansion house of the Ffosrhydgaled Estate and is set in extensive grounds in the Ceredigion countryside, some four miles from Aberystwyth.

Hotel owners Geraint and Wendy Hughes decided to upgrade to superfast broadband after realising the strong demand for the technology from guests

and the overall impact it could have on the business.

The hotel now benefits from offering fast broadband speeds of 80 Mbps – which can be increased even further if required – as a result of the latest fibre-to-the premises (FTTP) broadband rolled out to the area by engineers from Openreach, the local network business which is part of BT Group.

Geraint Hughes said:

“Superfast broadband has made a massive difference to the hotel. The demand is there from guests for faster internet speeds and we’re now able to provide exactly what the customer wants.

“Although they are away from home, visitors are also keen to stay connected, whether it is for business or personal use, and being able to offer superfast broadband can be the difference between a guest booking to stay or going somewhere else.”

Online advertising is just one of the ways, Geraint and his team have been able to improve the business. They are now able to take bookings on the website better than before and make greater use of social media to promote the hotel. It is also vital in their conference facilities offering.

Guests have also been impressed with the superfast connection. They are able to access work as well as stream videos and upload photos from their stay.

Geraint added:

“Superfast broadband has opened a wealth of new opportunities for us. We now employ a member of staff who is solely responsible for our social media, something which we could never have done previously.

“We also sit down with guests, look online and help them plan their stay – where they want to visit, how to get there, which walking routes they’d like to take – it’s a great benefit.”

Minister for Skills and Science, Julie James, said:

“I’m delighted to hear how superfast broadband is making a real difference at the Conrah Hotel thanks to the Superfast Cymru programme.

“It is a great example of how faster speeds can have a positive impact for the business and visitors. Having access to quick, strong and reliable internet connection is increasingly important for guests and the Superfast Cymru roll-out is helping meet that

demand.

“Areas such as Ceredigion would have no superfast broadband without the intervention of Superfast Cymru and it’s great to see how the team at the Conrah are making the most of the technology.”

Alwen Williams, regional director for BT Cymru Wales, said:

“The roll-out of superfast broadband across Wales is already having a huge impact on how families and businesses interact online. The Conrah Hotel is another example of how this new high-speed network is making an impact.

“As more and more homes and businesses gain access to superfast broadband speeds every single day I’d urge people to follow in the footsteps of the Conrah Hotel and make the most of this new technology by upgrading their services.

“We appreciate that this isn’t currently possible for small parts of Wales but our engineers continue to work hard to roll out fibre broadband across the country as quickly and as widely as possible.”

£1.5m investment to quadruple production capacity at Massilly UK’s Swansea facility

The company currently produces 10m aerosol cans a year and the investment, supported by £200,000 from the Welsh Government, will upgrade its existing production line and introduce an additional line, enabling it to produce up to 40million cans a year by 2018.

The investment will secure the sustainable future of the site, create 16 new jobs and safeguard the existing 25 jobs.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Massilly operates in an established niche growth market supplying the UK SME sector and is now operating at full capacity. It has seen its turnover increase by 25% over the last three years and this investment in additional plant and equipment will enable it to exploit further growth opportunities.

“I am delighted support from the Welsh Government helped secure this investment for Wales which will result in a significant increase in the company’s production capacity while also safeguarding and creating jobs.”

Thanks to that investment effort, the Massilly group wants to strengthen its position in the UK tin plate aerosol cans market by offering local manufacturing and support to its customers.

“We definitively believe that giving a local solution to our customers is the most efficient way to fulfil their expectations. We have developed the same model in Spain for the south of Europe and also in Germany and Russia. Our European network, associated with our local structures, help us to deliver specialist expertise, as well as flexibility,”

said Thomas Bindschedler, CEO of Massilly Group.

The company was supported in its application to the Welsh Government for this discretionary grant by advisory firm Broomfield & Alexander. Director of Grants, Mike Fenwick, commented:

“We were delighted to support Massilly UK with the application process, which involved agreeing key terms and conditions, and preparing the supporting business plans and financial forecasts to ensure that the application met with the Welsh Government’s own criteria, as well as complying with European State Aid rules. The investment is great news for Wales and the local economy and we wish Massilly every success with its new investment.”

Massilly UK, established in Wales since 1984 is based at Hendy Industrial Estate, Pontarddulais, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Massilly Holding SA, a private family company headquartered in Macon, France, which has 28 subsidiary companies in Europe as well as Canada, South Africa, Russia and India.

The Swansea plant entered the UK aerosol market in 2012 – the second largest in Europe producing 1billion cans per annum – targeting the SME sector. The quality of its products, which is considered superior to imported products, has given it a major competitive advantage in winning new business.

School uniform fund approved for 2017-18

The grant is available to pupils in year 7 of maintained schools in Wales who are eligible for free school meals, and to pupils in special schools, special needs resource bases and pupil referral units who are aged 11 at the start of the school year and who are eligible for free school meals.

Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, said:

“Chosen by each school, school uniforms provide students with a school identity; strengthen school and individual spirit and pride – not unlike the way team kit builds identity, morale and self-esteem. Every child can appreciate wearing a school uniform is a powerful rite of passage, and an equally powerful statement of belonging.

“This fund is about making sure everyone in Wales, no matter what their background, has the opportunity to feel their best and thrive at school. I remain committed to closing the achievement gap between the pupils from our most deprived communities and those from more prosperous areas.”

£6.8m for medicine revolution to boost Welsh health and economy

The Genomics for Precision Medicine Strategy, which is supported by £6.8m Welsh Government funding, sets out how Wales can capture the health and economic benefits of genomics.

New genetic and genomic technologies will allow scientists and healthcare professionals to develop a much more detailed understanding of the link between our genes and health.

In recent years there has been international recognition that these technologies have the potential to revolutionise medicine and public health.

The Strategy will help develop new services and technologies to improve the diagnosis and treatment of complex illnesses including cancer, heart disease and rare diseases. Patients will benefit through improved diagnostics, reduced waiting times and better treatments.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“The strategy will play a key part in developing a modern NHS in which we invest in health, research and education, a priority in our programme for government, Taking Wales Forward.

“We are providing leadership and funding to support skilled job creation and advances in research and development. It will also help us develop workforce skills and expertise that will help make Wales more attractive to international academics as a place to work and live.

“Our genomics strategy will help to create improved international academic and business links in addition to improved genetic and public health services delivered by NHS Wales.”

The Genomics for Precision Medicine Strategy, outlines key actions as part of a 5-10 year genomics plan, and has been developed by a Welsh Government-led genomics taskforce, working with key stakeholders from academia, industry, the third sector, the NHS and the public.

The [Genomics for Precision Medicine Strategy](#) (external link) is open for consultation and will run until 24 May 2017.