

Cabinet Secretary announces Arts Council appointments

The terms of appointment for Ms Kate Eden, Dr Rachel O’Riordan and Mr Dafydd Rhys will commence on 1 April 2017 and will initially last for three years.

ACW Council members are responsible for setting the aims and objectives of the Arts Council, aligning these to the Welsh Government’s strategic priorities and ensuring funding in Wales is invested effectively.

The three new members are in addition to the two members appointed from 1 November 2016 and complement the current membership of the Council. With the appointments the Council will now comprise 13 members plus the Chair, Dr Phil George.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“I am pleased to announce the appointment of these three new Council members. These appointments have enormous personal and professional experience in the arts but come from completely different backgrounds.

“Their individual skills, knowledge and expertise will add significantly to the current strengths of the Council during a period of transition as it faces up to the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Phil George, Chair of ACW added

“I’m delighted to welcome three new members who will bring a wealth of skills and experience, as well as a passion for the arts, to our Council.

“They will be terrific advocates and ambassadors for the arts in Wales and I look forward to their contribution as we strive to ensure that all communities in Wales are able to benefit from and have access to high quality arts.

“We look forward to welcoming them as Council Members to our Council meeting in May.”

Two long-serving current members – Dr Kate Woodward and Mrs Margaret Jervis – come to the end of their third and final terms of appointment on 31 March 2017.

Excitement building for school engineering awards

The Tomorrow's Engineers programme, led by the engineering community, provides young people the chance to engage in hands-on activities showcasing the benefits of a career in engineering.

As part of their annual curriculum-linked Robotics challenge, the 11 to 14 year-old students from the Cynon Valley learned how to build, program and control autonomous LEGO robots to complete a series of missions. This has given them first-hand experience of solving real-world engineering, technology and computing challenges, as well as working as part of a team.

Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, who won their South West region final, have now been invited to compete in the UK final at the Birmingham NEC on Friday (March 17).

Kirsty Williams said,

“This is a brilliant success story and I would like to wish the school and its pupils the best of luck for the final. Their achievements link well with our key ambitions of raising standards in the learning and teaching of science and technology.

“We want our young people to be able to reason scientifically and understand the value of scientific approaches. This is key for the 21st Century, as tested by PISA, and our new curriculum is being designed to better integrate this approach.

“Earlier this year, I announced a new national network of excellence for science and technology aimed at improving pupils' experience of the subjects at school. The network will involve schools working with the science and technology departments of universities, education consortia, further education and other experts to learn from the best practice available.”

This success follows on from that of Team Tachyon, a group of year 11 pupils from Denbigh High, who recently won three awards for Wales at the F1 in Schools World Championships in Austin, Texas.

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Green light for £35m hub to drive world-leading research in Swansea Bay

EU funding of £17.4m is being invested in IMPACT (Innovative Materials, Processing and Numerical Technologies) to help establish a centre of excellence in Swansea Bay.

The new hub will include laboratory and office space as part of the College of Engineering and will support high-impact collaborative research with industry into ground-breaking science and technology to grow and future-proof business opportunities in the advanced engineering and materials sector.

It will include a metals technology centre, which will undertake research into metallurgy and materials science, supporting partnerships with the metals industry in Wales, the UK and worldwide. The aim is to pioneer new alloys, materials and metal manufacturing processes which can be used in engineering.

Set to open in 2019, the hub will attract 65 new, highly-skilled academic posts and 155 experienced researchers. It will also provide opportunities for local supply chain businesses and jobs during the construction phase.

Professor Drakeford said:

“EU funding is playing a vital role in the establishment of this centre of excellence, which will help drive new, innovative technologies in the engineering sector in Wales.”

IMPACT will focus research into next generation manufacturing processes, including robotics and automation; advanced aerospace and automotive structures.

Research will also involve characterisation and computational-based simulation for understanding and optimisation of manufacturing processes and products, such as wind turbines, aircrafts and engines.

The building will be built to BREEAM Excellent standard and will incorporate a range of measures to promote sustainability and equality, including bird habitats, solar panels, onsite bio-diversity and support for the local supply chain.

Professor Richard B. Davies, vice chancellor of Swansea University, said:

“We welcome the EU funding for this major new resource at the Bay Campus.

“IMPACT will operate as a semi-independent research institute with

objectives determined by a scientific board and advised on by external academic, governmental and industrial stakeholders.

“It is set to deliver a transformative, sustainable and laboratory future-proofed engineering research environment, aligning world-class technology development and delivery with collaboration between academia and industry.”

[New sites in Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone can apply for latest round of Business Rates Scheme](#)

The Ebbw Vale Zone was recently expanded to include three additional sites – Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, Waun Y pound Industrial Estate and Victoria/Festival Park.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“The Enterprise Zone Rates Scheme has helped make a real difference to businesses and I am pleased to announce additional funding so eligible businesses within the newly expanded areas of Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone can apply and potentially benefit.”

The scheme focuses on small and medium sized enterprises that are demonstrating business growth, new starts or businesses that are increasing the size of their full time workforce. Consideration is also given to other business activity related to sectors, increased productivity and innovation/R&D.

The Enterprise Zone Business Rates Scheme is available to businesses within all eight Welsh Enterprise Zones and could deliver significant reductions to their annual business rates payments for 2016-17.

Applications for the 2016/17 financial year can be made until **Friday, 31 March 2017**.

For more information about the Scheme, businesses can ring the Business Wales helpline on freephone 03000 6 03000 or contact the EZBRS team at EZBRS@wales.gsi.gov.uk for an application form.