

Professor Glyn Hewinson to lead cutting edge Bovine TB Centre of Excellence in Aberystwyth

A new Centre of Excellence for Bovine Tuberculosis for Wales will open at Aberystwyth University later this year, bringing international expertise together with the aim of eradicating the cattle disease.

Professor Glyn Hewinson, a world renowned expert on Bovine Tuberculosis, will lead the centre's work. Prof Hewinson is Lead Scientist for Bovine TB at the Animal and Plant Health Agency and has led research into the disease for more than 20 years.

The centre will cost £3.6m and is backed by Sêr Cymru II, a Welsh Government, EU and University funded programme to grow and develop academic research expertise in Wales.

The new Centre of Excellence will be a hub for national and international research into bovine TB. The programme also aims to commercialise the products it develops, collaborating with industry on products such as new diagnostic tests and vaccines.

Bovine TB has a significant financial and social impact on farm businesses and the wider rural community. The cost of fighting the disease is estimated to cost around £26m a year in Wales alone, through the TB control programme and compensation to keepers whose animals are slaughtered.

Sêr Cymru II aims to build on current research strengths and bring new research expertise to Wales. The programme is funded by Welsh Government, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, participating Welsh Higher Education institutions and the European Regional Development Fund.

Announcing the programme, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said:

“Bovine TB is the most pressing animal health challenge for Wales today. It's had a devastating impact on the national cattle herd and the farming community, while being a significant burden on public finances.

“The Centre of Excellence could be a real ‘game changer’ in the fight against bovine TB and is part of our long-term aim of eradicating the disease for good.”

Dr Christianne Glossop, Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, added:

“Professor Hewinson is a pioneer in the field of research into Bovine TB and will bring with him World-class expertise and leadership. He is held in the highest regard among his peers internationally and his appointment is a real statement of intent in our determination to tackle this disease.”

Speaking about his appointment, Professor Hewinson said:

“I am delighted and honoured to be appointed to a Ser Cymru Research Chair at Aberystwyth University, leading a new Centre of Excellence for Bovine TB. The centre will explore fundamental aspects of Bovine TB science, supporting efforts to tackle this devastating disease, in collaboration with both Government and industry organisations.”

Professor Peter Halligan, Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales, commented:

“Attracting new international talent to Wales to increase our already impressive scientific research and development capabilities is essential for Wales’ future economic prosperity and our ability to compete effectively across global marketplaces. I am very pleased to welcome Professor Hewinson, who will be the 12th world class research Chair brought to Wales as part of the Sêr Cymru programme.”

Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor of Aberystwyth University, said:

“We are delighted to be establishing a Centre of Excellence for Bovine TB in Aberystwyth University with the support of Welsh Government. The economic and emotional cost of bovine TB to rural communities can be devastating and the appointment of Professor Hewinson, with his wealth of experience working in disease control, represents a highly significant investment as we seek new approaches to tackling this long-standing problem.”

[Finance Secretary unveils a Budget to build a better Wales](#)

This will be the first Budget to include revenues raised from Welsh rates of

income tax as Wales gains the partial power to set and vary income tax for the first time.

The partial devolution of income tax from 6 April 2019 is the next step in Wales' devolution journey and follows the successful introduction of the first Welsh taxes in almost 800 years – land transaction tax and landfill disposals tax – in April 2018.

The outline draft Budget 2019-20 has been developed against the backdrop of continued austerity and the shadow cast by the ongoing uncertainty associated with Brexit.

Professor Drakeford said:

“The Welsh Government has done – and will continue to do – everything it can to protect frontline services from the worst impacts of austerity. And this draft Budget is no exception.

“This has been my most difficult budget to date. With less money, more demand and inflation growing we have worked hard to squeeze every penny we can for those services that matter the most to people.”

The outline draft Budget 2019-20 builds on plans published last year and reflects the second year of the two-year budget agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.

The Welsh Government's revenue plans include:

- More than £500 million extra for health and social care – this includes £220 million to meet the Nuffield gap and an additional £287 million for services, pay and performance
- An additional £50 million for social care in 2019-20, £30 million of which will be allocated from the health and social care funding
- £15 million additional funding for schools
- A package of £12.5 million of measures to help tackle child poverty.

Local authorities were facing a reduction in funding of £43 million in 2019-20. The Welsh Government has worked hard to reduce this by improving the amount of funding it provides directly to local authorities through the revenue support grant. It has also been able to restore funding to a number of grants and make a number of other funding decisions, which local government will benefit directly from, which add up to £84 million.

In May, the Welsh Government announced £266 million of new capital investments alongside the publication of the Welsh Infrastructure Investment Plan mid-point review. The outline draft Budget builds on those capital announcements and includes:

- £78 million for the local transport fund, over 3 years (£26 million a year from 2018-19 to 2020-21)

- £60 million over 3 years for a local authority road refurbishment scheme to repair the damage caused by a series of hard winters and this summer's heatwave
- Almost £43 million over 2 years to support the development of the Taff's Well rail depot
- £35 million for the Social Housing Grant
- £25 million to create 7 strategic hubs across the South Wales Valleys, in line with the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys' Our Valleys, Our Future plan (£9 million in 2019-20 and £16 million in 2020-21)
- £15 million over 2 years to fund the Collaborative Change programme and waste recycling programme to help maintain Wales' strong record in waste management and recycling
- £7 million over 2 years to establish the Valleys Regional Park in line with the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys' Our Valleys, Our Future plan
- An extra £4.5 million to support plans to deliver 19 new integrated health and care centres.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford added:

“As we move through these uncertain times we remain committed to doing everything we can to help our public services meet the very real challenges they face today, while acting now to improve prospects for the future. This budget uses every source available to us to build a better Wales.”

The Welsh Government will not propose any changes to the rates and bands for land transaction tax in the outline draft Budget, however landfill disposal tax rates will rise in line with inflation, as announced last year.

The Finance Secretary will today announce he intends to consult on plans to exempt care leavers under 25 from paying council tax in Wales.

He will also consult on proposals to put those private hospitals and independent schools, which have charitable status and are exempt from paying non-domestic rates, on an equal footing with NHS hospitals and state-funded schools, which are eligible for non-domestic rates.

The Welsh Government is today publishing a one-year revenue budget for 2019-20 and capital plans for the next 2 years – 2019-20 and 2020-21.

The outline draft Budget is the first stage of the Budget, which sets out where Wales' funding comes from and how it is allocated to the main spending departments. The detailed departmental spending plans will be published on 23 October, in line with the new budget process introduced by the National Assembly last year.

Funding green light for major redevelopment of Llys y Frân

This project will create an iconic recreational park and activity centre which will attract an estimated 40,000 additional tourists, outdoor enthusiasts and local residents. The funding will enable the development of a year-round product both for recreation and education, and will have a positive economic, social and environmental impact whilst also improving the health and well-being of both local residents and visitors.

EU funding of £1.7 million is being invested in the development through the Welsh Government's Tourism Attractor Destination programme, led by Visit Wales, which aims to create 13 must see destinations across Wales.

The redevelopment at Llys y Frân will include a refurbishment and expansion of the visitor centre and full refurbishment of the café with a new water themed play area. A new Outdoor Activity Centre and Waterside Cabin will be built to support walkers, cycling and water sports enthusiasts. The centre will include a wet suit drying room, bike repair workshop, meeting rooms, staff office, food stop, bike storage, bike wash downs and cycle hire.

To build on Llys y Frân's cycling product, a Pump Skills Park and cycle trail will be constructed to provide a natural entry to the 10 km cycle trail around the reservoir. A single track wild trail with red and blue runs departing the existing green-run track will be developed to maximise the offering to cyclists of all abilities.

The Minister, said:

"Llys y Frân has so much potential and I'm delighted that we can support Dŵr Cymru with funding to take this vision forward for what will become an iconic water based and outdoor hub for the area.

The development will benefit the local community, as well as draw more visitors to Pembrokeshire.

Our aim through the Tourism Attractor Destination programme is to focus efforts and investment on key projects in each region so we have a real impact on Wales' profile in this globally competitive market. This development will give people compelling reasons to visit the area and I look forward to plans which I have seen coming to fruition."

Peter Perry, Dŵr Cymru's Managing Director, said:

"We are delighted to welcome the Minister to Llys y Frân to share

with him our exciting plans to create a first-class tourism destination.”

“Our plans represent an opportunity for Llys y Frân Reservoir to become an exciting, vibrant visitor attraction that will complement other attractions in Pembrokeshire and bring benefits to the local, rural tourism economy.”

Planning for Phase 1 of the project is already in place and construction is expected to start in December.

Minister sees benefits of Childcare Offer on Anglesey

Babinogion Menai in Menai Bridge offers bilingual childcare provision and is taking part in the Childcare Offer. Through the offer the Welsh Government provides 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of three and four year olds, for up to 48 weeks a year.

By the beginning of 2019, every local authority in North Wales will be delivering the offer to eligible parents.

The Minister said:

“It’s been great to visit Babinogion Menai and see at first hand the difference our Childcare Offer is making to providers, parents and, most importantly, children.

“Our pilots are already showing the difference this scheme is making. We have examples of families saving almost £250 a week, which they can use for other expenses. We’ve also seen parents increasing their hours of employment and parents changing their working hours so they can spend more time with their children.”

First Minister calls for ‘everyday

saint' nominations for inspirational awards

The annual event, now in its 6th year, was created to recognise and celebrate the good deeds and achievements of individuals and groups from all walks of life.

Previous finalists include Mair Elliot, a young mental health campaigner from Pembrokeshire; Wales' rugby captain Alun Wyn Jones and Gerald Williams from Gwynedd who has spent his life preserving the home of his uncle, poet Hedd Wyn.

To encourage nominations, the Welsh Government has launched its [#EverydaySaint](#) campaign to highlight that anyone can be put forward for an award provided they have made a significant contribution to Wales.

The categories comprise of; Bravery, Culture, Enterprise, Citizenship, Innovation and Technology, International, Sport, Young Person and the First Minister's Special Award. The final award will be chosen by the newly appointed First Minister as Mr Jones steps down in December.

With just 2 weeks to go until entry closes, First Minister Carwyn Jones has spoken to encourage those who haven't yet nominated someone to take the opportunity to do so.

First Minister Carwyn Jones, said:

"As First Minister, I often have the honour of meeting the truly inspirational people who make Wales the amazing country it is. These people are a credit to us, and they are the people who deserve your nominations for the 2019 St David Awards.

"Everyday saints come in many guises – they may have shown outstanding bravery, innovation, or leadership – or perhaps they've preserved a part of our Welsh culture for future generations. I am talking about those who go that extra mile – who give their all without hesitation, for the benefit of others.

"With 2 weeks to go until nominations close, don't miss this opportunity to celebrate your local heroes. Entering is easy and takes just a few clicks – head to the St David Awards website and nominate someone today."

Nominations close on 16th October with finalists being announced on 14th February next year and a celebratory dinner taking place in March 2019 at the Senedd, Cardiff Bay.