

Funding green light for Wales International Coastal Centre

- Final sign off of funding for improvements to 11 'must-visit' destinations across Wales.
- Investment of £62 million in the tourism industry up until 2021.

This is the final project to receive the go ahead under a programme of tourism destination improvements across Wales.

The EU funding is being invested through the Welsh Government's Tourism Attractor Destination programme, led by Visit Wales, which aims to develop 11 must see destinations.

The new centre in Saundersfoot builds on previous EU funding for investment in Saundersfoot as part of an ambitious development programme.

The project is a transformational development for both Pembrokeshire and South Wales offering a high quality activity and events programme, with all-weather attractions and establishing Saundersfoot as a must see tourism destination for the region. It will establish new water activity venues and family activity facilities that complement and strengthen the Port's current leisure and commercial maritime operation.

The Wales International Coastal Centre will comprise of four linked developments: Marine Centre of Excellence and Coastal Storm Centre; National Events Deck; Ocean Square Heritage & Arts Centre; Coastal Schooner – historic tall ship recreation. Some of these developments are subject to planning.

The Wales International Coastal Centre is the final of 11 destinations to get the green light for funding. The Tourism Attractor Destination project will see £62 million investment in the tourism sector over the next three years, including £ 27.7 million of European funding.

Developments are well underway in all 11 destinations with the aim of all projects completing by February 2021. The other 10 destinations benefiting from this funding include Caernarfon; Holyhead; Pendine; Porthcawl; Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal; Llys y Fran; Vale of Rheidol; Colwyn Bay; Venue Cymru, Llandudno; and the Summit Centre, Merthyr Tydfil.

Minister for Culture Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“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 represents a huge funding boost for the sector, which will make a real difference to the products and experiences that Wales has to offer.

“The aim is for these destinations to develop as attractors and give compelling reasons for people to visit Wales or stay in Wales for a holiday. By attracting visitors to these key sites, the surrounding area will also benefit from further business investment and deliver key outcomes in terms of employment and regeneration.

“Tourism is one of our key sectors and generates £8.7 billion for the Welsh economy and employs 15% of the workforce. Our mission is to remain competitive in a very rapidly changing global marketplace. Projects such as these will ensure that we can continue to compete on the world stage.”

The project will provide a significant boost to tourism in Pembrokeshire and the aim is to create a must see destination in Saundersfoot that will provide wet weather attractions and a high quality programme of events and activities throughout the year.

Bradley Davies, Commercial Manager of Saundersfoot Harbour, said:

“We’ve seen a big increase in footfall to the area since the completion of the earlier developments, and we look forward to bringing something completely new and different to visitors and locals alike.”