

Minister visits Cardigan where success is breeding success

The Minister's first stop was at Cardigan Castle where he had an opportunity to see how the £11m restoration project has transformed the castle into a vibrant visitor attraction with accommodation and restaurant. The Castle won the Georgian buildings category of the Channel 4 Restoration of the Year 2017 and has also been named as one of the projects for the European Year of Cultural Heritage for 2018. The latest development at the Castle is the interactive interpretation on the Eisteddfod, and Cardigan Castle's role in hosting the first in 1176.

With less than a week to go until the 2018 Eisteddfod, the Minister had an opportunity to speak to Director of the Castle Jac Owen Davies about his future plans. Jac took up the post last year after moving back to west Wales following his time in London as director and general manager at the pro Rugby League team London Skolars and as chief executive officer at the London Welsh Centre.

The Minister then had an opportunity to meet with the owner of Pizza Tipi James Lynch, also owner of Fforest in Cilgerran where excellent local produce, the commitment of the staff and the stunning location along the River Teifi are proving a real recipe for success. There he discussed further opportunities for the town to maximise its tourism potential and provide further employment for young local people.

Since expanding from a micro-bakery and opening a café, deli and restaurant in one of Cardigan's iconic buildings over Easter, Catrin and Osian Jones, the two local entrepreneurs behind Crwst, have been going from strength to strength. They've recently taken over further space on an industrial estate in the town to keep up with demand and have quickly established themselves as one of the destination eateries for the town. The Minister met with Crwst chef, Sam Everton who won the top chef under 24 award in the World Skills Competition this year. Crwst have also been shortlisted as a Regional Finalist for the second year running in the Rural Business Awards.

Cered (Welsh Language initiative for Ceredigion) were also at Crwst, providing an overview on how Cymraeg yn y Gweithle helps local businesses develop a sense of place by promoting the Welsh language in business.

El Salsa is another example of a business which has had a busy start since opening their permanent premises in their home town of Cardigan earlier this month. El Salsa have won a string of street food awards and are a well known name in many festivals and events. They have been a welcome addition to the Cardigan food scene and are a further example of the many success stories in and around Cardigan at present.

Culture, Tourism and Sport Minister, said:

"I was delighted earlier this week to launch a new resource to celebrate the castles and history of the Lords and Princes of Wales. Cardigan Castle is of course one of the 24 castles alongside abbeys and other historical sites signposted in the booklet –I was delighted to visit today to see how the castle has been transformed – and is again at the heart of life in Cardigan.

Having a tour of Cardigan today and seeing the variety and quality of what the town has to offer has been a real pleasure. There's a vibrancy in the town, with the new developments making the most of the town's culture and heritage, giving people a sense of what Aberteifi is really about. The town's industrial heritage is also turning around, with Hiut Denim making a name for itself world-wide.

This is a town which is proud of its history and, through offering a quality experience, employing local staff and excellent local produce, it is also a showcase to the best of rural west Wales.

I'm delighted to see Cardigan facing the future with confidence and vision. It's been wonderful to hear of the success stories and of the plans the town's businesses have for the future – long may their success continue."