

Plans to mark the Centenary of Women's Suffrage in Wales

The Welsh Government has committed nearly £300k to mark the Centenary of Women's Suffrage with a range of activities focused around the themes of Celebrate, Educate and Participate.

Communities across Wales will be able to bid for grants for events to celebrate the achievements of women and there will be a public vote to decide which two women, who have made a significant contribution to Welsh society and history, will be commemorated by statue.

Leader of the House, Julie James said:

“Today marks the significant, one hundred year anniversary of the Representation of the People Act which was passed on 6th February 1918. This Act enabled all men and some women over the age of 30 to vote for the first time.

It is worth noting, however, it wasn't until ten years later, with the passing of the Equal Franchise Act of 1928, giving women the right to vote at age 21, that women could vote on the same terms as men. So on 2 July this year we can mark the 90th anniversary of that Act.

I am also mindful that this centenary overlaps with the Welsh Government's Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914 – 1918 programme which marks the centenary commemoration of the First World War in Wales. The contribution of women at the time to the war effort was paramount and part of the impetus in establishing the Representation of the People Act in 1918.”

In a statement to the National Assembly, she outlined a programme of activities to celebrate and recognise the achievements of women, that too often are almost invisible in our history.

The Welsh Government has sponsored Women's Equality Network Wales to deliver a project to celebrate the 'top 100' Welsh women.

In the Autumn, the public will be able to vote to choose the Welsh women who they believe have been most inspirational. Two statues will be commissioned as a result of this project.

Working in partnership with Chwarae Teg and WEN Wales, the Welsh Government will also fund the commissioning of purple plaques for as many of the original 100 nominees as possible.

Julie James added:

“The centenary and the activities related to it will look forwards as well as back. Our aim in highlighting notable Welsh women both past and present is to raise awareness of their achievements and provide lasting memorials for a significant number of them, telling their stories in the context of their local communities. They provide powerful role models for the women and girls of today.

It is right to celebrate the progress we have made in the past hundred years. It is also right to remember the struggle and sacrifice which has been the price of this progress. We need to maintain our momentum, to strengthen democracy further, increase the number of women in decision making roles, and continue to challenge inequality and unfair discrimination.”