

Spotlight on tourism as Wales Tourism Week gets underway

The Minister visits Celtic Holiday Parks' Noble Court to officially open a luxury glamping development. The Park is owned by the Pendleton family, who have been welcoming visitors to Wales since 1980. Today the Minister is due to meet with family and staff members to thank them for their efforts.

Each year, Wales welcomes more than 10 million overnight visitors – that's well over three visitors per head of population. The Wales Visitor Survey consistently shows that the feeling of welcome and the feeling of security, along with the quality of the natural environment, are among the highest-rated aspects of visits to Wales.

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

Following an extremely busy weekend and the hottest Spring Bank Holiday on record – I'd like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the tourism industry in Wales and to the people of Wales for welcoming visitors to our country and making sure that they have the best possible experience. We can be very confident in Wales' ability to compete in a global market place – our people and welcome are one of our best assets – and my intention during Wales Tourism Week is to say 'Diolch'.

The Minister continued:

And as the theme of Wales Tourism Week is collaborating to compete, my thanks also goes to the industry for joining forces to celebrate our themed years and marketing campaigns – the result has been that Wales is a destination with a clear, compelling and confident story to tell. With the industry also supporting our work on social media we now have a following of more than 1 million – an influential online community of support for Wales. Following the busy bank holiday, let us keep this momentum and confidence going as we look forward to a busy summer season.

Due to the challenges of an early Easter, preceded by bad weather, Visit Wales is running an additional early summer digital campaign, which will mean that Wales will be front of mind for those looking at holidays and day trips to Wales over the summer. Visit Wales marketing generated an additional value of £356 million to the Welsh economy in 2017.

Celtic Holiday Parks director, Huw Pendleton, said he was looking forward to welcoming the Minister and was honoured that the Park would be kick-starting such an important week for Welsh tourism; he also said:

Forward bookings are extremely buoyant, with overall percentages up by 30% on 2017 figures. Holiday snacking seems to be the key term in the industry currently, and we're certainly experiencing that at Celtic Holiday Parks. Lots of multiple short breaks, with visitors enjoying a range of different accommodation during each stay. I'm very proud that the continued investment programme at Celtic Holiday Parks is creating jobs with futures for people within Pembrokeshire, offering career paths within hospitality and the tourism sector.

The early spring bank holiday was a busy one across the region, Head of Marketing for Folly Farm, Zoe Wright said:

The fantastic weather over the Bank Holiday weekend was a huge boost for us as holidaymakers and day visitors flocked to Pembrokeshire. We were 50% up on the same period last year in terms of visitor numbers and looking forward to the bank holiday at the end of May.

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The best in Welsh education revealed

Today (13 May 2018), nine inspirational teachers and education professionals have been revealed as winners of the second Professional Teaching Awards Cymru.

130 guests from all four corners of Wales, including 25 finalists, were invited to celebrate excellence in education in a special ceremony held at Hensol Castle. Welsh comedian Tudur Owen and Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM revealed the winners of the nine categories.

Lorraine Dalton from Ysgol Esgob Morgan, St Asaph was announced Teacher of the Year, nominated for her hard work and dedication to give pupils the best possible learning opportunities. Lorraine impressed the judges with her unwavering commitment, passion and the tremendous impact she has had on her school, where she started her teaching career 20 years ago.

Lorraine, said:

“I’m so surprised, it’s a lovely feeling. It makes everything you do worthwhile. I kept saying when I was shortlisted that it is just a job, but thinking about it, it’s more than a job, it’s a way of life. Every teacher will agree that you never switch off, because you want to do the very best you can for the year the pupils are in your class. I can honestly say the children are at the heart of what I do and every member of the team at Ysgol Esgob Morgan makes pupils their priority. This is for them.”

Janet Waldron from Pontarddulais Comprehensive School was named Headteacher of the Year. Judges commented how she lives and breathes the life of her school and truly cares about every person in it, pushing staff to challenge themselves and encouraging pupils to realise their potential.

Janet, said:

This award isn’t just for me, it is in recognition of the fantastic work carried out by pupils, staff and my amazing headship team. Being a head really is the best job and it’s something that anyone can do with commitment and a desire to make a difference.”

Winners in other categories included Jon Caple from Bishop Hedley High School, Merthyr Tydfil for School Business Manager/Bursar, Adam Griffiths from Penydre High School, Merthyr Tydfil for Supporting Teachers and Learners, Dylan Lewis, also from Pontarddulais Comprehensive School for Best Use of Digital.

Ruth Thackray, Senior Lead for Curriculum for Wales at GwE (School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales) took the title for

Promoting Collaboration to Improve Learning Opportunities and Monkton Priory Community Primary School, Pembroke for Promoting Wellbeing, Inclusion and Relationships in the Community.

The ceremony also saw the first winners of new categories, with Helen Jones from Flint High School for Outstanding New Teacher and Gwenan Ellis Jones from Gwynedd Council Education Department for Inspirational Use of the Welsh Language.

Education Secretary Kirsty Williams said:

“The calibre of the finalists of our Professional Teaching Awards Cymru was outstanding and are a testament to the commitment, dedication and hard work of teachers and education professionals across the country, as such our judges faced a difficult task in choosing our winners.

“All nine of our winners go the extra mile and make a significant difference in their schools and most importantly to individuals. This year it has been fantastic to celebrate the next generation of teaching professionals already making an impact through our inaugural Outstanding New Teacher Award and showcase those aiding the use of our national language through the Inspirational Use of the Welsh Language award.

“Our education professionals are changing the lives of our future generations and helping us to raise standards and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence.”

The entire awards ceremony was live-streamed across the Facebook channel @EducationWales.

All nine winners were presented with bespoke, hand-crafted Griffiths Jones trophies.

To view the full list of finalists and winners, visit: www.gov.wales/teachingawards. Join the conversation with #TeachingAwardsCymru and keep an eye on the Education Wales social channels @WG_Education/@EducationWales.

For more information, please contact:

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Leaving your organ donation decisions to your Will could be too late – Health Secretary Vaughan Gething.

It is a fairly common request for a Will to include a statement in regards to organs being donated for transplant after a person's death. Law firm Watkins and Gunn, who has offices in Cardiff, Newport and Pontypool, say around 1 in 10 people include their organ donation decision in their Will.

However, it's likely to be far too late for you to become a donor by the time your Will is read.

Only 1% of the population die in a way that means they can donate because organs have to be transplanted very soon after death and can only be donated by someone who has died in a hospital, under particular conditions.

Specialist Nurses for Organ Donation will check to see whether an individual is on the NHS Organ Donor Register, and in addition, the family of a potential donor will always be consulted.

However, if individuals don't tell their family of their decision to donate, the family may not honour that decision and over-ride the organ donor registration, or not support deemed consent.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething Said:

"This Dying Matters week, dying, death and bereavement are being brought to the fore and gives us an opportunity to remind people about organ donation.

"Our latest campaign highlighted the importance of having a chat with families and loved ones about organ donation. I'd like to reiterate that message by asking solicitors and those providing a Will writing service to remind their clients to discuss their decisions, whatever they may be, with their loved ones.

"More often than not, when a Will is read, people's organ donation decisions are known too late to help someone in need of a life changing transplant.

"Ensure your decision to give the gift of life through organ donation is honoured – have the chat with your family and loved ones."

Watkins and Gunn is encouraging people to discuss these concerns early to avoid issues arising after death. Linda Dack, Head of Private Client at Watkins and Gunn said:

“Many of us find it difficult to talk about end of life planning, but it is essential that we have these important conversations with our loved ones and do not leave important decisions, such as organ donation to chance. Relatives can still override deemed consent system in Wales, so it is very important to be clear about your choice regarding organ donation so that relatives can honour your decision.

“Making a Will is the first step, and at Watkins and Gunn we have noticed an increase of 5% in clients expressing what they would like to happen to their organs. Completing a Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare is essential, as well as appointing an attorney that you trust to carry out your wishes on life sustaining treatment preferences. We would encourage people to speak openly about their decision on organ donation as part of that process.”

You can register a decision at any time by calling 0300 123 23 23 (Calls to this phone line will be answered by NHS Blood and Transplant) or visiting www.organdonationwales.org or by telling your family (and friends).

[Economy Secretary welcomes plans for a digital and cyber security powerhouse](#)

Global technology company, Thales which provides solutions for the aerospace, defence, transportation, space and security markets, is seeking Welsh Government support for a programme that would see it establishing a new National Digital Exploitation Centre (NDEC) in Ebbw Vale.

Thales plans to work with the Welsh Government, Blaenau Gwent Council and the University of South Wales in establishing the centre which would act as a catalyst for digital and cyber educational training and research facilities.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

I am pleased to confirm that the Welsh Government is in discussion with Thales about their plans to establish a National Digital Exploitation Centre as part of our Tech Valleys project.

The centre, which would be located in Ebbw Vale, could help Wales exploit the global opportunities of digital transformation and equip our businesses with the skills and knowledge they need to win a greater share of large regional and national projects.

It could also serve to stimulate and create employment in high value technology businesses which is an ambition that is right at the heart of our Tech Valleys project.

The Welsh Government is currently assessing Thales's proposal for the centre.

Gareth Williams, vice-president of Thales UK's security and cyber business, said:

We are delighted that the Welsh Government is keen to work with industry and academia on developing this critical capability and skillset within Wales.

One of the major benefits of this digital centre is to develop a talent pipeline of people in this increasingly important sector. As well as developing specific skills, it will also enable businesses – large and small – to use digital transformation in a safe and secure way.

By their very nature, digital and cyber security are constantly evolving and this centre will play an important role in that. We also have an established partnership with the University of South Wales and that is allowing us to conduct invaluable research into the future of cyber security.

The NDEC's research capability and educational outreach is being developed in partnership with the University of South Wales, a strategic partner of Thales UK and founder of the National Cyber Security Academy in Newport.

Professor Julie Lydon OBE, USW's Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, said:

This centre would be a significant step in developing South Wales's reputation as a leading region in the growing global market for cyber graduates and research knowledge. We want the centre to harness the academic research and graduate education together with the market insight and technological capability of industry. It's an exciting combination that would be good for our local communities, for Wales, and for UK plc.

The Tech Valleys project in Blaenau Gwent is part of the wider Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, which was set up by the Welsh Government to deliver real change for the South Wales Valleys; create good-quality jobs, closer to people's homes; improve people's skills and bring prosperity to all.