

# Legendary summer enjoyed by tourism in Wales

Record-breaking visitor figures were recorded at Cadw sites as well as the best ever figures being achieved for Amgueddfa Cymru sites.

Tourism businesses in Wales have enjoyed a successful summer. 40% received more visitors than last summer, which in itself was a much better summer than 2015 – and a similar proportion (39%) received the same level.

Figures from Cadw show record-breaking summer visitor figures, partly generated as a result of the Cadw Dragons' tour across its historic sites, which was part of Wales Year of Legends activity.

The figures show that more than half a million visitors explored Cadw sites during July and August this year – the highest number ever welcomed during the summer season and an increase of 8.2% compared with summer 2016.

This figure contributes to a total of more than 900,000 visitors welcomed since April 2017 – an increase of 12% against the same period last year. This means that annual visitors are on track to reach 1.5 million for the first time by the end of the year.

The success is in part attributed to Cadw's Live the Legends campaign which brought a family of Welsh Dragons to life in celebration of Wales's 2017 Year of Legends. As a whole, the Dragons' summer presence helped generate a 15% increase in family visitors versus July and August last year – from 87,333 in 2016 to 101,051 in 2017. The Dragon campaign also saw the launch of Little Dragons – an augmented reality smartphone game which allows visitors to 'snap' virtual dragons at seven castles across Wales and to date, has been played by nearly 18,000 users.

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales also welcomed a record 297,792 visitors to its seven museums in August – the best ever August visitor figure achieved by Amgueddfa Cymru up on August 2016 by 18.9%.

By individual museum, in August, St Fagans had an amazing 117,584 visitors – its second highest figure since 2002 when it had 126,808 visitors, and National Museum Cardiff had a record 76,614 visitors.

Across August and July, National Museum sites attracted half a million visitors (492,845), which is a 17% increase on the same period in 2016 and up by 6.3% on the last record summer in 2012.

Increase in visitors can be attributed to a number of developments including the Dinosaur Babies exhibition at National Museum Cardiff; the re-opening of the main building and new developments at St Fagans National Museum of History as well as the Dino on the Loose campaign.

In addition, a wide variety of reasons have been given for the busy summer

generally. The most frequent reasons reported in the Tourism Barometer were businesses' own marketing (23% of businesses with increased visitors) and more British people staying in the UK (16% of those reporting an increase).

Following a busy summer, 82% are feeling confident or fairly confident about the remainder of 2017.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

"It's extremely encouraging that these figures show that 2017 is really proving to be another successful year for tourism in Wales. We've seen two very successful years and we're looking to sustain that growth. Although there is much uncertainty, it's evident that the weaker pound has meant that more people are opting to holiday at home this year. I'm delighted that the industry is looking forward to the rest of the year with confidence.

"The figures for Cadw and Amgueddfa Cymru, also show that innovative ideas such as the touring dragons and Dino on the Loose can capture the imagination and spark a renewed interest in Welsh heritage – which has been fantastic to see during Wales' Year of Legends."

Accommodation occupancy figures over the 12 months ending July 2017 also point towards a busy summer with occupancy for hotels, B&Bs and guesthouses up one percentage point on 2016. Static caravan occupancy saw a rise of 7 percentage points to 84% when compared with the same period in 2016 while touring occupancy rates rose by 5 percentage points.

Latest tourism figures can be found on the following link: <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2017/170926-wales-tourism-business-barometer-wave-3-2017-en.pdf>.

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## **£4m to drive forward marine and tidal energy development in North Wales**

The funding will support Mentor Môn's £5.6m Morlais scheme which will help accelerate the development and commercialisation of multiple tidal stream technologies in the Morlais Demonstration Zone in Anglesey. This will be situated in one of the designated Anglesey Enterprise Zone sites.

The Economy Secretary announced the funding from a UK wide event on marine and tidal energy, held in Cardiff today.

He said:

“The energy generated from wave and tidal flows can play a major role in delivering our ambitions for a Welsh low carbon economy as well as creating sustainable jobs and growth.

“Wales’ coastline means we are well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the blue economy, which is why the Welsh Government is committed to supporting the creation of new tidal demonstration zones that will help industry develop and test new and innovative tidal and wave technologies for commercial success.

“We have already invested EU funds towards a feasibility study for a demonstration zone off the Pembrokeshire coast and today I am pleased to announce £4.2m of EU funds and a further £300,000 from the Welsh Government to support preparatory and consent work on the Morlais demonstration zone in Anglesey.

“Once up and running, the fully consented area of seabed will be able to support at least 20MW of grid connection capacity, but with potential for 193.5MW, to enable developers to deploy and test multiple tidal energy technologies.

“Over the next 5 to 10 years we have a real window of opportunity to develop and grow Wales’ marine energy industry. This funding will provide yet another push to drive our ambitions forward.”

Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs said,

“Wales’ coastline has the second highest tidal range in the world and provides an ideal environment to test and develop emerging tidal energy technologies. We are keen to promote their potential role in renewable energy generation, supporting a prosperous low carbon future for Wales. Menter Môn’s success in managing the Demonstration Zone originates in an early community energy project supported under Ynni’r Fro. Today’s announcement is a fantastic boost to the sector and the area, showing the difference clean energy makes to Wales.”

Gerallt Llewelyn Jones on behalf of Menter Môn said:

“This is very good news. Menter Môn has worked hard to achieve this important milestone for Anglesey and North Wales. It is critical that we position ourselves at the centre of global developments in marine renewable energy, a known growth sector with substantial employment potential.”

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# First Minister launches Christmas card competition

The winning card will be chosen by the First Minister and used as his official Christmas card, which will be sent across the globe to people including the Queen, the Prime Minister, High Commissioners and Ambassadors from across the world.

Children from Years 3 and 4 are being asked to submit their bilingual entries by Friday 10 November 2017.

The successful young artist will get to meet the First Minister and receive a signed, framed copy of their winning entry.

The First Minister said:

“I am calling all Wales’ budding young artists to reach for their colouring pencils, crayons and felt-tip pens and design my official Christmas card.

“I look forward to seeing all the artistic contributions – I am sure they will bring me much festive cheer.”

Last year’s competition was won by 9 year old Travis Carter of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbrân, whose winning design was chosen from more than 700 entries.

Entries should be sent to:

Non Jones / Lloyd Bowen  
Cabinet Communications team  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Tel: 0300 025 3942

E-mail: [non.jones@gov.wales](mailto:non.jones@gov.wales)

## **Christmas card competition entry guidance**

- The competition is open to all pupils in years 3 & 4 (7-9 years old) in Wales
- All entries should be to a maximum size of A4 (210mm x 297mm)
- Portrait or landscape orientation
- All entries should be “flat” – no uneven surfaces, no cotton wool, glitter, etc.

- Bright, vibrant colours reproduce well.
  - Dark backgrounds should be avoided.
  - Any text on the artwork should be bilingual – with Welsh first, followed by English.
  - Please include the pupil's name age, class and school on the back of their entry.
  - Please note that unfortunately we will not be able to return any entries.
  - The closing date for the competition is Friday 10 November.
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## [New initiative to put specialist emotional & mental health support in Wales' schools](#)

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething and Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams have agreed a £1.4m investment to strengthen the support from specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to schools.

Dedicated CAMHS practitioners will be recruited to work with pilot schools in three areas across Wales. The practitioners will provide teachers with on-site help and advice, ensuring pupils experiencing difficulties such as anxiety, low mood, and compulsive self-harm or conduct disorders receive early help in schools from suitably trained staff, preventing more serious problems occurring later in life.

The model will enable:

- support for teachers to better understand childhood distress, emotional and mental health problems, and reduce stress experienced by teachers concerned about their pupils, by up-skilling them to recognise and deal with low level problems within their competence
- ensuring that when issues are identified that are outside teachers' competence and skills, that specialist liaison, consultancy and advice is available to enable the young person to be directed to more appropriate services such as CAMHS or Local Primary Mental Health Support Services, and to support the teacher and school in providing for the young person's educational needs
- ensuring systems are in place to share appropriate information between CAMHS and schools, shared care arrangements are agreed for those young people requiring more intensive support, and that arrangements are in place to escalate/de-escalate as the young person's needs dictate.

Initially operating as a pilot programme, the initiative will commence by the end of 2017 and cover two full academic years, concluding in the summer of 2020. The results will be evaluated, and take into account a broad range of

measures from the perspective of both teachers and pupils.

Wales has led the way in the UK by being the only nation that requires local authorities to provide counselling services in their area for children and young people aged between 11 and 18, as well as pupils in year 6 of primary school. This initiative complements that work by providing an additional layer of more specialist support in schools.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“One in four people in Wales will experience mental health problems at some point in their lives. Getting the right treatment at an early stage, coupled with greater awareness of conditions, can in many cases prevent long term adverse impacts.

“This unique new initiative we’re unveiling today will see specialist NHS Wales services extend into the classroom. This will ensure children, teachers and others charged with caring for children in our schools, receive support to promote good emotional and mental health. It will help identify and address issues early, helping to prevent more serious problems occurring later in life.

“One of the Welsh Government’s key aims is to improve the health and well-being of the people of Wales. This will help us achieve our ambition of prosperity for all, while taking significant steps to shift our approach from treatment to prevention.

“We hope this initiative will improve accessibility to support services, better address school related stress, and ease pressures on specialist CAMHS by reducing inappropriate referrals. We also hope it will facilitate a wider culture which promotes and values positive mental health and wellbeing within our schools.”

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams said:

“Most young people spend a large part of their time in school, so there is a clear need for teachers to be able to help and support them should they experience difficulties in life, such as anxiety, low mood, compulsive self-harm or behaviour disorders.

“Through this new initiative, we are making schools places that actively promote positive mental health and wellbeing, providing evidence-based prevention and early intervention where it’s needed.

“For children and young people, it will enable them to have their problems addressed earlier, before they escalate. For teachers, it will help ensure they feel able and confident in dealing with emotional distress, and know where to go to seek support.”

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# Free weekend bus travel pilot off to a fast start

The Welsh Government funded pilot applies to all buses on the extensive TrawsCymru network and will continue every weekend until at least May 2018. When compared with data from the previous year, increases of well over 100 per cent have been recorded across the network, with the T4 service between Newtown and Cardiff currently boasting the greatest increase.

The highest increases in total daily bus passenger numbers (including child and concessions) were recorded on the following days and services:

1. TrawsCymru T4: Newtown – Brecon – Merthyr Tydfil – Pontypridd – Cardiff

Saturday 26 August 2017: 1,971 bus passengers used the service compared with 461 on Saturday 27 August 2016 – an increase of 328 per cent.

2. TrawsCymru T5: Aberystwyth – New Quay – Cardigan – Fishguard – Haverfordwest

Sunday 9 July 2017: 555 bus passengers used the service compared with 146 on Sunday 10 July 2016 – an increase of 280 per cent.

3. TrawsCymru T5: Aberystwyth – New Quay – Cardigan – Fishguard – Haverfordwest

Sunday 20 August 2017: 389 bus passengers used the service compared with 126 on Sunday 21 August 2016 – an increase of 209 per cent.

4. TrawsCymru T1: Aberystwyth – Lampeter – Carmarthen

Sunday 13 August 2017: 437 bus passengers used the service compared with 169 on Sunday 14 August 2016 – an increase of 159 per cent.

5. TrawsCymru T4: Newtown – Brecon – Merthyr Tydfil – Pontypridd – Cardiff

Saturday 12 August 2017: 2,130 bus passengers used the service compared with 874 on Saturday 13 August 2016 – an increase of 144 per cent.

Welcoming the news, Economy and Infrastructure Secretary Ken Skates said:

“The TrawsCymru network covers large areas of Wales, some of which would otherwise be inaccessible by public transport and it’s extremely encouraging to see this pilot boosting summer passenger numbers.

“From Bangor to Cardiff, Fishguard to Wrexham, this scheme provides a perfect opportunity for people from across Wales and beyond to jump on a bus and spend their weekends enjoying the diverse beauty of Wales and I am delighted it has already proved so popular.

“For those who are yet to take full advantage of the pilot, there’s still time to find out where your nearest service could take you. I’ve been keen that this pilot, at the very least, serves to increase the awareness of what bus services are available locally and today’s figures suggest that to be the case. I look forward to seeing how this TrawsCymru increase has impacted other services later this year.”