

Legendary evening in Llandudno Junction

The annual local festival will be using the building's distinctive glass front for a stunning display of vertical dancing for its opening event on 21st April.

Other activities during the evening are linked with the Year of Legends 2017 campaign, including members of Anvil productions dressed in medieval costumes, a climbing wall and cave, archery and an opportunity to see the iconic wooden dragon carved by sculptor Simon O'Rourke.

Local pupils from Ysgol Aberconwy have also been tasked with writing a poem about Yr Afanc, the legendary monster who was said to live in the River Conwy. Two winning poems will be read out during the evening.

Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure Ken Skates said:

"The Year of Legends is about bringing our past to life and creating new legends for the future. It's great to see how a local festival such as Trakz has adopted the themes of the campaign this year. I'm also pleased that the Welsh Government office in Llandudno Junction is hosting this community event."

The Trakz festival will begin at 5.30pm at the Welsh Government office, with further events planned in the town itself over the weekend.

11 innovative health technology projects successful in £7.3m funding bid

The Efficiency Through Technology Fund (ETTF) supports health and social care projects that use innovative technology to improve the efficiency of healthcare services.

Projects that have secured funding include the Public Health Wales led molecular diagnostics project, which will be receiving £2.5m over the next three years to improve methods of diagnosing gastrointestinal infections.

The National Welsh Informatics Service will use £1.18m to lead on a once for

Wales approach to e-Forms development to speed up the move towards a digital patient record.

An e-form is a digital version of a paper form. This will be less time consuming to complete and will eliminate the cost of printing, storing, and distributing pre-printed paperwork.

Digital records will mean that important information is available at the touch of a screen during consultations. This will improve outcomes for patients by informing the decisions they make with their clinicians, ensuring they receive the most appropriate treatment. The programme will focus on Nursing e-Forms as a priority area.

Another successful project will see the development and implementation of an improved pressure ulcer reporting system within care homes. This will provide an open and transparent reporting system for deep pressure ulcers – one of the recommendations of the Flynn report.

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CVUHB) has secured funding, with partners, for a system to help reduce frequent attenders calling for ambulances and/or attending A&E department in CVUHB. This project aims to work with frequent attenders to better understand their needs and thereby reduce the costs and resources burden on the CVUHB services.

Powys health board has been successful in their funding bid for a computerised Cognitive Behavioural therapy project, which will support patients with mild and moderate depression by providing quicker access to treatment.

Other projects are:

- Digitalisation of the lung cancer patient pathway record (NWIS)
- Further development and expansion of the existing ETTF Choose Pharmacy platform and roll-out to all community pharmacies in Wales.
- All Wales Adult Cystic Fibrosis Centre – Virtual Technology Clinics (Cardiff and Vale)
- A national Telehealth Scale up Programme- to reduce hospital and emergency department attendances (ABUHB and ABMUHB)
- Raman spectroscopy technology for colorectal cancer (AMBU)

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“I am pleased to be able to fund these 11 new projects that aspire to improve the efficiency of our health care services in Wales. We received 142 applications in this round of funding – the biggest response to this funding stream so far and I want to congratulate those who have been successful amid fierce competition.

“It is fantastic to see organisations coming up with innovative schemes to improve our health care services. I am looking forward

to visit some of the projects in the near future to see first hand what they can achieve.”

New bilingually produced thriller set to provide £4m economic boost

Part funded through the Welsh Government’s Media Investment Budget, which is advised by Pinewood Pictures the series has been jointly commissioned by S4C and BBC Wales.

The eight part returnable series will film back to back in English and Welsh in the same way as the hugely successful Y Gwyll/ Hinterland.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This is another great project that is not only being filmed in Wales but also set in Wales with funding support from our Media Investment Budget. It will provide great opportunities for Welsh crews, facilities companies and local suppliers and provide a significant boost to local economies.

“The past five years have seen Wales become one of the most successful areas in the UK for high end television drama, and I am delighted that Un Bore Mercher/Keeping Faith has joined the growing showreel of made-in-Wales drama productions.”

This latest high end drama from Vox Pictures is co-written by Matthew Hall (New Street Law, Blue Murder) and adapted into Welsh by Anwen Huws (Gwaith Cartref, Pobol y Cwm). It stars Eve Myles (Torchwood, Broadchurch and Victoria) in the lead character Faith.

The series tells the story of lawyer, wife and mother Faith (Myles) as she fights to find the truth behind the sudden disappearance of her husband. She comes to discover that her beautiful, idyllic home town in West Wales harbours many dark secrets that threaten the lives of Faith and her family.

Director is Pip Broughton (Under Milk Wood and Aberfan, The Green Hollow) who is co-producing with Nora Ostler (Gwaith Cartref, Y Gwyll/Hinterland) for Vox Pictures. Executive Producers are Gwawr Martha Lloyd (S4C) Maggie Russell (BBC Wales) and Adrian Bate for Vox Pictures.

Filmed on location in the Vale of Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, Laugharne and in Pencoed studios, this new and distinctive series will premiere this autumn in Welsh as Un Bore Mercher on S4C followed by the English language version,

Keeping Faith on BBC One Wales early next year.

New lease of life for town centre Inns

Plas yn Dre, Bala has been a family run restaurant since 1990 but has undergone a transformation in 2017 with a complete re-vamp and the addition of 9 Guest Bedrooms, with support of £72,000 from the Tourism Investment Support Scheme.

The Grade II listed building is now fully open for Easter with a restaurant, lounge and bar area. The main works were to convert the upper 2 floors into the 9 en-suite bedrooms. Having opened the restaurant for the Mother's Day in March, owner Sion Williams is delighted with the feedback to date and is looking forward to a busy season, he said:

"The finished article far exceeds our expectations and the customer feedback is unbelievable with rooms being sold out for much of the Easter weekend."

The Erskine Arms in Conwy will open in May, following a redevelopment which will see the historic inn transformed to include a restaurant and 10 high quality rooms. The redevelopment of this traditional Georgian Coaching Inn has been supported by the Tourism Investment Support Scheme with £140,000 and will create 23 jobs.

The Erskine is owned by Stange & Co. Ltd who also own The Cottage Loaf and The Snowdon in Llandudno and The Glengower in Aberystwyth. Stange & Co. Ltd. is a family owned group of character pubs and inns independently run and focus on homemade hearty food on their menu along with local cask ales at the bar. There will be a strong emphasis on both local and seasonal produce throughout the menu.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

"I'm delighted that we've been able to support the redevelopment of these two traditional Inns. It's fantastic that they've been given a new lease of life and transformed to become a very high quality product providing employment for the area. Both are also at the heart of the town in Bala and Conwy – which adds to the appeal and vibrancy of the towns. I wish both developments the very best for future success."

Last call for applications for two Property Development Funds

The £7m Property for Business Development Grant Fund and the £7m Property Infrastructure Fund are both designed to support business growth and job opportunities with a primary focus on projects in Enterprise Zones, Local Growth Zones and City Regions.

Both Funds also aim to bridge the financial viability gap that exists in parts of Wales between the cost of building, expanding or refurbishing properties and the completed market value of the property.

It is expected that each will attract £13m of private sector investment and help stimulate the market to meet the needs of businesses.

Together the schemes will deliver around 51,100 sq. mt. (550,000 sq. ft.) of new and refurbished floor space in areas that will provide tangible benefits to local economies, address market needs and support business growth.

Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure Ken Skates said:

“There has been considerable interest in both Funds which have the potential to make a real impact in terms of improving and expanding the availability of industrial units and office accommodation in target areas around Wales. I would advise anyone interested in learning more about the Funds and applying for support to do so before applications close on 30 April.”

Both funds are for new build, refurbishment, extensions and adaption projects. The Property Infrastructure Fund is aimed specifically at advanced build development and the Property for Business Development Grant Fund is targeted at supporting businesses with bespoke expansion projects. The maximum grant intervention rate for both funds is 35%.

Stage 1 applications that provide brief information on the project requiring support need to be submitted by 30 April in order to be considered for a provisional application of funding. For more information please email gde.pdg@wales.gsi.gov.uk.