

Minister sees work to promote the Welsh Language

Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan, today visited Canolfan Soar in Merthyr Tydfil to see the work being done by Menter Iaith Merthyr at the centre to promote the Welsh Language.

Monday 14 May 2018

Built in an old chapel, and part funded by the Welsh Government, the centre includes a theatre and space for activities. It provides opportunities for local people to learn the language and to socialise and take part in cultural activities through the medium of Welsh.

The centre is also home to the Urdd and Mudiad Meithrin in the area who provide opportunities for young people to learn, play and socialise in Welsh.

Eluned Morgan said:

“I have been very impressed with what I have seen at Canolfan Soar today. Menter Iaith Merthyr, Yr Urdd and Mudiad Meithrin are providing wide ranging opportunities for people of all ages to use, practice and enjoy the language at grass roots level.

“Increasing the use of the Welsh Language in daily life is vital if we are to reach our ambitious target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Centres like Canolfan Soar play a key role in achieving this, particularly in areas like Merthyr that are predominantly English speaking.”

Related

“Diseases don’t respect borders” – Finance Secretary, Mark Drakeford

Speaking at the NHS research and development conference in Newport, the Finance Secretary will talk about the Welsh Government’s aim for Wales to continue to have access to vital EU research and innovation programmes such as Horizon 2020.

Welsh Ministers have repeatedly made it clear that Wales' scientific and research community must not be left isolated from our European partners and stressed the importance of Wales continuing to be part of EU-led programmes.

Mark Drakeford will say;

“As well as the challenges of austerity and increasing demand, we must also acknowledge the challenge of Brexit and the uncertain times we face.

“We know countries and regions across the world are facing common and significant health and care challenges. Diseases do not recognise national borders and our challenges cannot be addressed in isolation. Continued cross-border collaboration in research, development and innovation, (principally through the Horizon 2020 programme at present), is particularly important and should continue after the UK has left the EU.”

[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:
Cowshed
awards@wearecowshed.co.uk / 02920 789321