

New Year signals an exciting time ahead for Amgueddfa Cymru

The Minister was accompanied by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales Director General, David Anderson. The hugely ambitious redevelopment of St Fagans, which has been supported by Welsh Government as well as the Heritage Lottery Fund, is due to be completed in October 2018. The new facilities and events are already proving popular, which bodes well for the future of the site as a world-class museum of international importance.

Dr Simon Thurley's review, which is also published in full today, describes Amgueddfa Cymru as one of the 'great museums of the UK' and a 'successful and thriving organisation'.

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Lord-Elis Thomas, said:

“Dr Thurley's review is one of the best reports of a public body that I have ever read, and is a key step to help the Welsh Government and Amgueddfa Cymru identify the most appropriate ways in which the organisation can thrive in the future, in what continue to be challenging financial times. As also outlined in the report on Historic Wales, the Welsh Government remains absolutely committed to enabling our heritage institutions to maximise the economic benefits that they bring to the people of Wales. The developments at St Fagans are an excellent example of the ambition and vision of Amgueddfa Cymru – and what can be achieved by working in partnership.”

Dr Thurley's recommendations look at relations between Amgueddfa Cymru and Welsh Government; opportunities for commercial development as well as policy and governance, and future vision. Work is already underway between Welsh Government and Amgueddfa Cymru to address some of the challenges raised in the report, and determine how best to take the recommendations forward.

With the support of Welsh Government, Amgueddfa Cymru has enjoyed a number of successes since the report was commissioned. This includes record visitor figures, learning and inclusion programmes that are recognised as a beacon for the museum sector in the UK, and high-profile and award winning marketing campaigns, such as the one linked to the Dinosaur Babies exhibition at National Museum Cardiff in 2017.

David Anderson, Director General said:

“It is a pleasure to welcome the Minister to St Fagans today, at the beginning of an exciting year for Wales' best-loved museum. The Thurley Review of Amgueddfa Cymru is a positive endorsement of the work of the organisation and its staff, as well as its future

ambitions. We look forward to working with the Welsh Government on taking the recommendations forward in the coming months.”

Copies of the report are available on request.

[Latest Channel 4 drama made in Wales](#)

‘Kiri’ is the latest drama from award winning writer, Jack Thorne whose previous credits include National Treasure , Glue, The Fades, This is England ‘86, ‘88, ‘90, and The Last Panthers.

The four part serial drama stars highly acclaimed actress Sarah Lancashire (Happy Valley, Last Tango in Paradise), Lucian Msamati (Taboo, Luther), and Lia Williams (The Missing, The Crown).

It centres on the abduction of a young black girl named Kiri, who is soon to be adopted but disappears on an supervised visit to her birth family, that was arranged by her social worker (Sarah Lancashire).

The drama was produced by The Forge who made the decision to film in South East Wales after successfully applying for Welsh Government Business Finance to part fund the drama. Funding for the project was dependent on the production company spending a proportion on their production budget on Welsh Production Expenditure.

Culture Minister Lord Elis-Thomas said:

“Early indications suggest that 2017 was one of Wales’ best ever for TV and film production and I am delighted that that we are beginning 2018 with the broadcast of a quality and high calibre drama such as Kiri.

“During 2018 we will work hard to build on this successful record and continue to build Wales’ reputation as a premium filming location with much to offer.”

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This is the second 4 part serial for Channel 4 written by Jack Thorne, the first of which was filmed in Yorkshire, and I have no doubt that the production team’s decision to film in Wales was a direct result of the comprehensive package of support offered by the Welsh Government.

“Our support for Kiri was dependent on the production company spending a proportion of their production budget here in Wales, and this will have generated very real and tangible economic benefits in many of our communities.

“Indeed over the last 5 years, Welsh Government funded film and TV productions like Kiri have spent in excess of £100m within Wales, and this has created over 2000 full time equivalent job years, benefitted local supply chains and supported hundreds of businesses based here.”

New Advisors for Violence against Women and Domestic Violence appointed

They will take up the role on a job share basis from 22 January. They will advise the Welsh Government on how most effectively to implement the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. Yasmin and Nazir will also work with victims and survivors and with other partners to shape and inform improvements in the way services are planned, commissioned and delivered.

Nazir Afzal OBE, was Chief Crown Prosecutor for North West England and most recently, he was Chief Executive of the country’s Police & Crime Commissioners Association. During a 24 year career, has prosecuted some of the most high profile cases in the country and advised on many others and led nationally on several legal topics including Violence against Women & Girls, child sexual abuse, and honour based violence.

Yasmin Khan is the pioneering founder of a forced marriage and honour based violence charity, the Halo Project. Yasmin has worked with communities, and particularly women, in addressing inequalities in the field of employment, education and training.

Leader of the House, Julie James, said:

“Yasmin Khan and Nazir Afzal bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to this role and will provide valuable leadership in building on the work already done under this groundbreaking Act. I look forward to working with them both as we combat all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse, gender-based violence and sexual violence.”

Yasmin Khan said:

“The appointment of a National Advisor for Wales demonstrates the Government’s commitment to tackling and eradicating all forms of violence against women experiencing, and at risk of domestic and sexual abuse and all forms of gender-based violence. I am absolutely delighted to have been appointed as Wales’ National Advisor and look forward to meeting partners, communities and stakeholders to ensure Wales can become one of the safest places for women and girls to live, prosper and feel safe.”

Nazir Afzal said:

“I am very pleased to be appointed to this important role in helping to deliver this pioneering Act. I look forward to working with the Welsh Government to tackle all forms of violence against women and domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. I want to help make Wales a world leader in eradicating these crimes and one of the safest places in the world to be a woman.”

[£50m fund to help prepare Wales for Brexit](#)

The EU Transition Fund – supported by an initial £50m – will be developed in partnership with Welsh businesses, public services and other key organisations, to provide tailored support as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

The fund will provide a combination of financial support and loan funding, and will support the provision of technical, commercial, export-related and sectoral-specific advice for businesses.

In addition, the EU Transition Fund will be designed to help employers retain and continue to attract EU nationals, who make a crucial contribution to Wales. The fund will underline Wales’ welcome to people from other countries who have made Wales their home.

The fund will also provide dedicated development support for Wales’ agricultural industry as it prepares for transition and the future once the UK has left the EU.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“Brexit poses different challenges and opportunities for each and every aspect of Welsh life – from our local businesses and major

employers, to our farmers, hospitals and universities.

“The EU Transition Fund will help meet the challenges that lie ahead. Developed in partnership with our businesses and public services, it will provide targeted and innovative support, which will help them survive and, indeed, thrive outside the EU.

“I am making an early announcement about this fund, so we have the greatest opportunity to design this fund with those organisations and businesses it is intended to help.

“My priority is to ensure Wales is in the best possible position to deal with the challenges and opportunities ahead. As a government, we are committed to providing solutions which work for Wales and we will continue to work with partners to make the most of every opportunity.”

The £50m EU Transition Fund is supported by an initial £10m down payment in the 2018-19 final budget. It builds on £5m allocated for Brexit preparedness over 2018-19 and 2019-20 as part of the 2 year Budget agreement with Plaid Cymru.

The EU Transition Fund will provide support in devolved areas.

[New Year signals a new direction for Fairyhill](#)

The project has had investment from Visit Wales' Tourism Investment Support Scheme (TISS) and support from the Development Bank of Wales.

The new owners have decided to concentrate solely on transforming the stunning grade 2 listed house into a dedicated special event venue that will open for its first event on 1st March 2018. The property was acquired by award winning wedding specialists, Oldwalls, last November. The business has secured funding of £200,000 of TISS with a £350,000 loan from the Development Bank of Wales.

Part of the refurbishment project includes a modern extension to the west wing of the old house which will create a stunning function space especially designed to host events. The room will be available for all types of functions, and will support the current push to attract more business events to Wales.

The Minister said:

“It’s great to see the progress which has been made at Fairyhill and I’m delighted that we’ve been able to support this venture in an area where tourism is such a crucial part of the economy. When complete in the spring, Fairyhill will of course be a first class Wedding venue, but will also be a welcome addition to what Wales has to offer the conference and business market.”

Manager Director, Andrew Hole said:

“We believe that the secret to Oldwalls’ success is dedicating ourselves to special events and weddings and we plan to inject this award-winning formula into Fairyhill. We are heavily investing in the 24 acre listed grounds, interiors and new extension to ensure the much-loved property is enjoyed for centuries to come. The changes will inject vital funds into the local economy too as we are committed to using Welsh suppliers for the million-pound refurbishment project. We can’t wait to offer wedding and event visitors the opportunity to revel and enjoy the magic of Fairyhill.”

Raymond Walters, Portfolio Executive at the Development Bank of Wales said:

“Oldwalls is already established as one of Wales’ leading wedding venues. We’re pleased to be able to support this growing local business as it transforms Fairyhill into an exciting business and wedding destination.”

Fairyhill welcomed a record number of visitors through its doors last weekend for its wedding showcase event and will therefore be hosting a second open day on 13th – 14th January from 12PM – 5PM. The sister venue, Oldwalls Gower, will also be open. Wedding and exclusive event bookings are now being taken with key dates for 2018 available.

Fairyhill is renowned as one of the most iconic country house hotels in the UK. Its illustrious history includes playing host to Hollywood legend, Paul Newman’s son’s wedding. Fairyhill visitors have included a former British prime minister, Joan Collins and Katherine Jenkins.