

[EU funding to boost Wales' creative technologies sector](#)

The £1.4m project will transform the currently-unused South Seddon building into state-of-the-art seafront business units.

Led by Aberystwyth University, the scheme will create 12 new modern workspaces for the creative technologies sector and will encourage sustainability in SMEs and help new industries to develop and thrive.

They will also help entrepreneurial graduates and post-graduates from Aberystwyth University access affordable business premises locally.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“This is another positive example of how the Welsh Government is using EU funds to support new industries to develop and thrive, resulting in new jobs, products and services.”

Professor Elizabeth Treasure, vice chancellor of Aberystwyth University, said:

“Economic regeneration is a key element of our plans to redevelop Old College. The new business units in South Seddon will lead to the creation of high-quality jobs and product innovation and we are grateful to the Welsh Government and the Welsh European Funding Office for their valued support.

“We will be unveiling our ambitious proposals for the wider redevelopment of this unique grade one listed building and launching a public consultation on December 11.”

The funding for the South Seddon building is part of a larger regeneration project, which will be announced shortly.

[New funding to ensure children with SEN benefit from the Childcare Offer](#)

for Wales

The Welsh Government has committed to provide 30 hours of government-funded early education and childcare for up to 48 weeks of the year for eligible working parents of three and four year olds in Wales.

The Childcare Offer is currently being rolled-out across Wales. It will be available across the country by 2020.

The £670,000 SEN Grant is being provided to ensure the childcare element of the offer is inclusive to eligible children with SEN.

It will be used by local authorities to remove the potential barriers preventing parents with children they believe have, or have been identified with SEN, from accessing the childcare element of the offer.

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“I’m pleased to make this funding available to the childcare sector to ensure children with special educational needs can benefit from the Welsh Government’s ground-breaking Childcare Offer.

“The provision of affordable, available and accessible childcare will support our drive to increase economic growth, tackle poverty and reduce inequalities. It will also provide opportunities and long-term benefits for our children and improve their life chances.

“The evidence is clear that well-paid work is the best route out of poverty, and the greatest protection against poverty. The Childcare Offer will support working families across Wales and make it easier for parents to take up and retain employment.”

Wales representative to VisitBritain Board selected

Ian Edwards is CEO of both the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, south east Wales, which hosted the 2010 Ryder Cup and staged the 2014 NATO Summit; and the new International Conference Centre for Wales which is to open early next year and based within the resort site. Ian was named Hotelier of the Year at the 2015 European Hospitality Awards; and was a member of the Welsh Government’s former Ministerial Tourism Advisory Board.

The Minister said,

“I’m delighted to appoint Ian to represent Wales on the VisitBritain Board, with Ian’s wealth of knowledge of the tourism industry in Wales and internationally, I’m confident that he will be an asset to the Board, will help in contributing to the overall development of tourism in Wales and help define, develop and scrutinise VisitBritain’s plans and achievements. Never has it been more important to bridge Wales culturally, digitally and physically to the world – and our work with VisitBritain is an important way of building relationships in a bid to grow our share of international visits to Wales.”

Ian Edwards, said:

“I am delighted to be appointed as Wales’ representative on the VisitBritain Board at this very exciting time for Wales. I look forward to bringing my 30 years of experience in the hospitality and events industries to this important role, as well as my personal passion to promote Wales and Britain as an outstanding destination for visitors. I also look forward to working with the team at Visit Wales more closely through the Tourism Management Board.”

As well as representing Wales at VisitBritain Board meetings Ian will also attend the Welsh Government’s Tourism and Marketing Department’s internal Tourism Management Board meetings.

Economy Secretary offers Pembrokeshire £3m per year for removal of tolls

In October 2017 the Welsh Government announced it would be scrapping the tolls on the Cleddau Bridge in an effort to increase economic competitiveness and better connect people, communities and businesses with the jobs, markets and facilities they need.

Now in a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of Pembrokeshire Council, the Economy Secretary has offered £3m per annum to cover the loss of revenue as well one off payments to cover the removal of the toll infrastructure and to cover redundancy costs for those staff who might lose their jobs as a result of the change.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“Abolishing the tolls on the Cleddau Bridge is the right decision for Pembrokeshire and its surrounding areas. I am confident that it will serve to accelerate local economic growth, better connect our businesses and communities, and make it easier and cheaper for people to travel to access the quality employment opportunities they need.

“Indeed a study commissioned by Pembrokeshire County Council shows that the removal of the tolls will support the areas economic development strategy, providing a boost to its local economy, to the Enterprise Zone and to the small and medium-sized enterprises in the area.

“However we absolutely recognise that the decision to abolish the tolls will have implications both on the Council’s budget and on the employment status of the majority of those workers who have been manning the booths.

“With this in mind we have offered the Council a generous deal of £3m per annum to cover loss of revenue as well as additional funding to cover redundancy costs and toll infrastructure removal.”

Paying tribute to the staff who will be affected by the toll removal, Ken Skates added:

“I know that the Council is making every effort to deploy the toll staff who will be affected by this change but unfortunately I understand that some redundancies will be unavoidable. I appreciate how difficult this will be for the workers and their families and would like to thank them for their public service and wish them every success in finding new employment.”

The two-year Budget agreement with Plaid Cymru included £2m in 2019-20 to remove the tolls on the Cleddau Bridge. The Cleddau Bridge tolls are set to be abolished in Spring 2019.

Lesley Griffiths officially names new fisheries patrol vessel after former First Minister Rhodri Morgan

The vessel, named FPV Rhodri Morgan, will form part of a fleet patrolling Welsh waters looking for illegal fishing activity.

As per tradition, Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths ceremoniously poured champagne on the vessel and was presented with a velum of the new Welsh Government Fisheries Enforcement flag.

The vellum contains crests from all five vessels that will form part of the new fleet. The rest of the fleet are named FPV Lady Megan, FPV Catrin, FPV Gwenllian and the FPV Siwan.

Each crest carries a picture that reflect the identity of the person the vessel was named after.

Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths was given a tour of the vessel and shown how the latest technology will be used to enforce fisheries and marine laws. As well as meeting those who crew the vessel, she was also shown their accommodation and facilities. The FPV Rhodri Morgan can accommodate eight people with four twin cabins. It also comes equipped with GPS, Radar, Echo and search lights.

The new vessels will replace the current ageing boats, to effectively protect from illegal fishing activity in Welsh waters and safeguard Wales' fishing industry and coastal communities in the years ahead.

The FPV Rhodri Morgan, a 26m patrol vessel that weighs 75 ton and carries 11,000 litres of fuel, incorporates the former First Minister of Wales' name and an illustration of dolphins chasing mackerel to reflect his fondness of spotting dolphins in Mwnt, West Wales. The vessel, built by Mainstay Marine Solutions Ltd this year, also has room for a 6.5metre sea-boat.

Rhodri Morgan's wife Julie Morgan attended the naming ceremony in his memory. After undergoing sea trials all of the new fleet will be in operation from January.

Speaking at the official naming ceremony, Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths said:

"It's an honour to be able to name this vessel after Rhodri Morgan today; a man who gave so much to Wales and left an indelible mark on our history. This will be a fitting tribute to someone who had a great love of the Welsh seas and our wonderful nature

I've thoroughly enjoyed my tour of this new patrol vessel and seeing first hand the cutting edge technology that will be leading the fight against illegal fishing activity.

These vessels will be at the forefront of protecting Welsh waters and our fishing industry, providing a high speed response capability to ensure Wales continues to effectively enforce fisheries and marine laws.

Ahead of the challenges that we face in a post-Brexit world, it is more important than ever that we focus on sustainability and ensuring our fishing industry is at its strongest possible so we

can thrive in the years to come.”