

Welsh Government confirms funding for National Broadcast Archive for Wales

A ground-breaking £9million project to create a National Broadcast Archive for Wales, is a significant step closer, following confirmation of Welsh Government support of £1 million.

Amendments to the project, which have been the subject of the recent discussions between the National Library, BBC Cymru Wales and Welsh Government, were today agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“The Welsh Government has consistently expressed support for the ambition of the National Library to establish a National Broadcast Archive. I appreciate the efforts which have been made over the last few weeks to resolve the outstanding issues and concerns, and am delighted that the project can now move forward.”

The President of the National Library of Wales, Rhodri Glyn Thomas added:

“We are delighted that the Deputy Minister has lent his support to this pioneering project which now means that we can submit our final bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. As the home of extensive sound and moving images collections, and with material from ITV Wales already at the Library, we intend to safeguard this vital source of our nation’s heritage for present and future generations. We are very grateful for the National Lottery’s support to develop our plans and to BBC Cymru Wales for generously gifting the archive to the Library.”

Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director of BBC Wales said:

“BBC Wales’s archive is a rich tapestry of the nation’s history and I’m delighted to see the next phase of this exciting and innovative project in motion. Working with our partners, the National Broadcast Archive is set to ensure that treasures of the past will be accessible to everyone for generations to come.”

The National Library of Wales and BBC Cymru Wales intend to develop an ambitious plan to provide public access to the BBC Cymru Wales archive at four digital heritage hubs, to be located at Aberystwyth, Wrexham, Carmarthen and Cardiff. In addition, 1500 digital clips, including entire programmes, will be available online for community use.

The archive, which has about 180,000 recordings dating back to the late 1930's, is an unique and invaluable chronicle of the life of the nation from the Second World War, Aberfan, the miners' strike, political battles over devolution, sporting triumphs, films and news items capturing the key moments, people and places in Welsh history.

[Devolved administrations call for clarity on future funding post-Brexit](#)

Welsh Finance Minister Rebecca Evans, said:

"I will be calling for clarity about our budgets, and pushing for ongoing and meaningful dialogue between the UK government and the devolved administrations about the challenges we are facing.

"With the clock ticking as we approach EU exit day, it is absolutely vital we are at the heart of decision making and are able to prepare for the impact of Brexit.

"Alongside this, I will also be pressing for further clarity and assurances about the cost associated with the UK government's changes to public sector pensions and how it intends to fund it.

"Only last week, the First Minister and local government leaders wrote to the Chancellor seeking clarification. Worryingly, even as local authorities are finalising their budgets, there is still some uncertainty about funding."

Finance Secretary Derek Mackay said:

"Today's meeting is an opportunity for the UK government to provide much needed clarity around future funding as well as details on what support will be made available to help protect Scotland's economy against the consequences of the UK's exit from the European Union.

"Funding from the EU supports jobs in Scotland, from major infrastructure projects to sustaining rural communities and delivering research funding for our world-class universities. That is why the Scottish Government is determined to defend its hard-won fiscal responsibility and maintain the benefits that EU funding has provided to many sectors and individuals in Scotland.

"With just weeks to go until the planned EU exit day, we remain

deeply concerned about the lack of detail regarding replacement arrangements for EU funding streams given their importance to individuals, businesses and communities across Scotland.

“Today I will be calling on the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to provide reassurance that Scotland should not be financially worse off as a result of EU exit and to guarantee that all lost EU funding will be replaced in full.

“As the Scottish Government Chief Economist’s State of the Economy report set out, Brexit uncertainty is already impacting key economic indicators and a no-deal Brexit would lead to a major dislocation to the Scottish economy.

“The UK government must immediately rule out the possibility of a ‘no-deal’ Brexit and extend the Article 50 process. However, as a responsible government we will also continue – and indeed intensify – our work to prepare for all outcomes as best we can.

“Alongside the Welsh Finance Minister, I will urge the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to take an even handed approach in meeting all costs associated with the UK government’s changes to public sector pensions. We need urgent clarity and agreement around future funding, in order to plan and focus on delivering efficient and effective public services”.

Ministers press ahead with 50p minimum unit price for alcohol in Wales

Alcohol is a major cause of death and illness in Wales. It leads to a number of health and social harms, particularly for the significant minority of people who drink to excess.

In 2017, there were 540 alcohol-related deaths in Wales and in 2017-18, there were nearly 55,000 alcohol-related hospital admissions. All alcohol-related deaths and alcohol-related hospital admissions are preventable.

Ministers have long been clear that a pricing intervention must be a key component of the Welsh Government’s comprehensive strategy to tackle alcohol misuse, not least because the affordability of alcohol has increased significantly over the past two decades.

The National Assembly supported minimum pricing when the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill was passed last year.

The 2018 Act is targeted at protecting the health of hazardous and harmful drinkers who tend to consume greater amounts of low-cost and high-strength alcohol. It provides a formula for calculating the applicable minimum price for alcohol by multiplying the percentage strength of the alcohol, its volume and the minimum unit price. This allows the Welsh Government to target the sale and supply of low-cost and high-strength alcohol.

Ministers have consulted on a preferred minimum unit price of 50p. A summary of the responses to that consultation have been published today. Taking into account these consultation responses, Ministers remain of the view of that a 50p minimum unit price is a proportionate response to tackling the health risks of excessive alcohol consumption.

The Welsh Government intends to lay regulations to the National Assembly for Wales, specifying this level, for its consideration later this year.

Health Minister, Vaughan Gething said:

“The Welsh Government has always said that minimum pricing forms part of a wider strategy and approach to reducing substance misuse.

“Following a public consultation, I’m pleased to confirm we will now ask the National Assembly for Wales to approve a 50p minimum unit price. We believe a 50p minimum unit price strikes a reasonable balance between the anticipated public health and social benefits and intervention in the market.

“We will continue to use all available levers to reduce the harms caused by the excessive consumption of alcohol, as we develop and take forward a new delivery plan for substance misuse.”

Many responses to the consultation supported the principle of minimum pricing, but also raised issues regarding the potential unintended consequences of introducing a minimum unit price for alcohol.

The Minister added:

“The consultation process raised a number of issues, such as the potential impacts on vulnerable groups, household budgets, the risk of switching to other substances and the potential increase in the number of people seeking support from services. We will continue to consider these potential impacts.

“We have commissioned specific research to look at the risk of switching, which will report ahead of implementation. In December 2018, we announced an extra £2.4m in funding for Area Planning Boards for local frontline substance misuse services so that we can ensure services are widely available. We have worked closely with

Area Planning Boards throughout the development of this legislation and we will continue to do so ahead of implementation.”

5,000 jobs now created by Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme

- A Welsh Government programme offering individual support to SMEs looking to grow and expand has created its 5000th job, Economy Secretary Ken Skates has revealed.

Business Wales’ Accelerated Growth Programme has been an enormous success since its inception in 2015, and reached the impressive milestone as Tiago Szabo, a factory operator for Wrexham based automotive design and manufacture company Hi-Mark, began work at the companies’ 25,000sq ft site.

Economy Minister Ken Skates was at the factory to witness their growth and to meet Tiago. He said:

“The Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme has been a real flag bearer for Business Wales and it’s fantastic to see that it’s now been directly responsible for some of our most ambitious and high potential SMEs creating 5000 new jobs across Wales. It’s a success story that’s testament to the Welsh Government’s proactive support for business and the hard work and expertise of the team there.

“But what’s special about this programme isn’t just the growth it drives in companies but also the impact that in turn it is having on individuals the length and breadth of Wales. It’s 5000 jobs that may otherwise not have been created and it’s a source of great pride for me that we have been able to help people like Tiago into a job at a company with a proven track record of delivery that’s looking to the future with vision and confidence.

“Hi-Mark’s plans to invest in robotics and automation to drive efficiency and further growth are particularly exciting, with this the third such job we have supported there through this scheme. I would encourage businesses in Wales with strong ambitions to grow and expand to explore whether the Accelerated Growth Programme can help them too.

“It was fantastic to meet Tiago and the hard working team at Hi-Mark today. Creating 5000 jobs is no mean feat, and, as I look to the future of the programme, I feel confident in predicting there

will be many more milestones to come.”

Hi-Mark has been designing and manufacturing injection moulded products for over 40 years. The firm’s 40-strong workforce use cutting edge technology to manufacture products that are used by some of the largest automotive companies in the world.

Jack Yates, Managing Director of Hi-Mark:

“The support we have received through the Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme has been invaluable to us. It helped us through a tricky negotiation phase with a major customer, resulting in us securing a significant order which we may not otherwise have been in a position to win.

“Having access to a highly-respected sales specialist meant we were able to set up a new framework for the way we approach sales and networking. Even though it’s early days of adopting these new ways of working, the results speak for themselves.

“I’m delighted that we are the company responsible for creating the 5000th job, which is a great honour for our team. Tiago is settling into the team really well so far and we are confident that our team will continue to grow over coming months.

“I would strongly encourage other businesses looking for support to apply for the programme. Since signing up Hi-Mark has gone from strength to strength, and I’m very grateful for all the help we’ve received.”

Further information on the Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme can be found at businesswales.gov.wales.

£1.5m to grow the foundations of Wales’ economy

The Foundational Economy, which accounts for around 40% of jobs in Wales, describes the organisations SMEs, microbusinesses and social enterprises that are rooted in local communities and deliver the goods and services people need.

From construction and childcare, through to social care and retail, the Foundational Economy describes the jobs that provide the goods and services that people across Wales rely on.

Deputy Economy Minister, Lee Waters, recognises the contribution that these type of companies make to the wellbeing and identity of communities right across Wales.

Building on the Economic Action Plan's commitment to building stronger and more resilient communities, he wants this funding to support projects that will help us to understand how best to nurture and grow the Foundational Economy in order to reverse the deterioration of employment conditions, stop the leakage of money from Wales' communities and reduce the environmental cost of extended supply chains.

The intention is that this will help to spread benefits into communities where it has historically proven difficult to attract large companies.

Lee Waters said:

“Care, food, housing, energy and construction are just some of the sectors that make up our Foundational Economy. They are the industries and firms that are in our communities because our people are there.

Accounting for around four in ten jobs, and around £1 in every three that we spend these firms already make up a significant part of our economy. By nurturing and growing them further, I believe we can go a long way towards increasing wellbeing and improving the quality of people's lives, and addressing some of the issues and concerns that were expressed by many communities in their response to the Brexit referendum.

Our new £1.5m fund will test innovative ways of supporting and growing our Foundational Economy so that we can spread good practice right across Wales. I want it to fund experimental projects that are collaborative and innovative and challenge the conventional ways of doing things.

By providing space and support for projects that challenge the status quo I want to empower local government, wider public and third sector and business to work together in order to drive and retain local wealth.

This is about developing creative solutions to local challenges that really do deliver for our communities.”

The £1.5m was secured as part of a 2 year budget agreement with Plaid Cymru and will open for applications in the next financial year.

It is announced on the same day as an event, hosted by the Deputy Minister, that brings together partners and experts to consider how best to support Wales Foundational Economy.