

Gold Award list of accommodation announced

The annual list recognises accommodation business offering the highest standards of quality, exceptional comfort and hospitality. For 2018 there are 40 Hotels and 87 Guest Accommodation made it to this prestigious listing. The Tourism Minister, Lord Elis-Thomas, visited Celtic Manor Resort today on a series of visits in south east Wales. The Celtic Manor Resort has been listed for the 6th time as one of the Gold Award Hotels with the Resort's Manor House being listed for the 1st time.

Following refurbishment in 2017, Plas yn Dre, Bala has also been listed as a Gold Award Guest Accommodation for the first time this year. Plas yn Dre has been a family run restaurant since 1990 but had 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.

Rachel Jones, Plas yn Dre, said:

"We are delighted here in Plas yn Dre that all the hard work and dedication shown by all our team has paid off in us being given the Gold Award, and we're proud to have made it to the Gold Award list for the first time."

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

"Quality and innovation are of the utmost importance in developing world class facilities which ensure that Wales remains a strong contender in a fiercely competitive global industry.

Being recognised as one of the Gold Award Hotels shows the commitment of these businesses to quality, delivering first class experience and going over and above our visitors' expectations."

Ian Edwards, CEO of Celtic Manor Resort, said:

"We are delighted to receive this Gold Award once again for the Celtic Manor Resort and we are particularly pleased that the Manor House has also achieved this prestigious listing for the first time. We are constantly striving to exceed our guests' expectations and have recently completed a bedroom refurbishment to further improve the quality of our accommodation.

The opening of ICC Wales next year will bring an influx of discerning business travellers and visitors from all over the world

so it is important all hotels and accommodation providers seek to achieve the highest standards like those set out in the Gold Award.”

First Minister appoints new Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales

As Wales’ chief scientific adviser, Professor Halligan will provide independent scientific advice to the First Minister and lead the development of the Welsh Government’s science policy. He will also work to promote the study of science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine to help build a strong science base in Wales.

Professor Halligan, who has secured international recognition for his research, has played a key role in a number of innovative developments including establishing the Cardiff University Brain Research Imaging Centre (CUBRIC), the Wales Research and Diagnostic Positron Emission Tomography Imaging Centre (PETIC), the Wales Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience (WICN), the Haydn Ellis Distinguished Lecture Series and Cardiff University Research Institutes.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“Professor Peter Halligan is an excellent scientist and world renowned psychologist and neuroscientist, whose research is internationally renowned and respected. His appointment is a huge boost to Wales’ growing science and research sector.”

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said,

“I look forward to working with Professor Halligan to increase and promote the excellent research conducted across Wales.

“The role of science and research in the Welsh economy is of growing importance and I am confident Professor Halligan will help us towards our ambition of create an innovative and ambitious science base in Wales.”

Professor Halligan said:

“I very much look forward to taking up this important role, and working with the scientific community to ensure research evidence is taken into account as part of the Government policy making process. I also hope to continue to build on the progress of my predecessors in growing Wales’s research and innovation capacity, to help raise Wales’s profile and grow its economic capability.”

New fisheries protection vessels named

The Cabinet Secretary will today visit Mainstay Marine Solutions at Pembroke Dock to see the building work currently underway on two of the new vessels built and manufactured in Wales. The company is delivering high quality boat manufacturing products through a highly committed and locally skilled Pembrokeshire workforce.

During the visit, the Cabinet Secretary will also unveil the new Welsh Government Marine enforcement ensign, which in collaboration with the Garter Principal King of Arms has been designed and manufactured at Welsh social enterprise company, Red Dragon flagmakers in Swansea.

The Cabinet Secretary will announce two larger patrol vessels, built by Mainstay Marine Solutions, will be named the FPV Rhodri Morgan and the FPV Lady Megan, with two smaller enforcement RIB’s named the FPV Gwenllian and the FPV Siwan.

A Cabin RIB patrol vessel, built by MST Ltd which is very close to completion, will be named FPV Catrin. The FPV Catrin will undertake sea trials later this month and will be expected to be in operational service early this year.

The FPV Rhodri Morgan and FPV Lady Megan are expected to be in operational service by late autumn this year.

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.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“Our new patrol vessels will ensure we can continue to effectively enforce fisheries and marine laws around the seas of Wales and help ensure we meet our commitment to manage our fish stocks sustainably. They will also help safeguard Wales’ fishing industry and our coastal communities in the years ahead.

“I am delighted to announce the names of the new vessels and to see

first hand the considerable progress that Mainstay Marine has achieved in building two of our new Fisheries Patrol Vessels for Wales.”

Stewart Graves, Managing Director of Mainstay Marine Solutions said:

‘‘We are delighted with the progress of the builds so far. Our design, build and project management teams are enthusiastically engaged in ensuring we deliver a high-quality Welsh product on time and in budget.’’

[Finance Secretary announces plan to support Welsh steel industry](#)

The PAN builds on the recommendations in the Steel Report by the Tata Steel Task Force in January 2016, which identified public procurement as an area of support for the steel industry in Wales and the UK. The PAN will provide clarity to the Welsh public sector on approaches which should be adopted to open up sub-contract opportunities for Welsh and UK steel suppliers.

Professor Drakeford said: “The publication of the PAN is part of our ongoing commitment to support the long-term viability of steel making in Wales and recognises the importance of steel to the Welsh and UK economy as a provider of highly-skilled, well-paid jobs – both directly and in the supply chain – and as a key investor in further education and research and development.”

The steel PAN encourages public sector bodies to determine which of their procurements are major projects in which steel is likely to be a critical component. It suggests they may include but are not limited to:

- Infrastructure projects – such as rail and roads;
- Construction projects – such as the building of and or refurbishment of prisons, hospitals, universities, housing, community centres, bridges and schools;
- Flood defences.

Professor Drakeford added: “This is a further example of the Welsh Government’s commitment to provide opportunities for local suppliers to engage in public contracts – either directly or through the supply chain – and is part of our wider support package for the steel sector in Wales. It also highlights our ongoing policy of using public procurement to support ethical business practices.

“We are already seeing the results of the first steel PAN, which was issued

in 2016, to support the Eastern Bay Link Road project, funded by the Welsh Government. This has helped source 89% of the steel reinforcing bars used in the construction of the road from within Wales.”

The procurement advice note Supporting the sourcing of steel in construction and infrastructure projects in Wales is available on the following link at: [Supporting the sourcing of steel in major construction and infrastructure projects in Wales \(PAN\)](#) .

Mumbles one step closer to improved flood defences thanks to £700k Welsh Government funding

The Welsh Government funding of £682,500 will contribute 75% towards the cost of carrying out detailed design work for a coastal defence scheme to reduce the flood and coastal erosion risk to Mumbles.

Under the Council’s preferred option the coastal defences will be enhanced and the promenade widened, potentially providing recreation, tourism and health benefits, as well as reducing risk to homes and businesses.

The appraisal identifies that, once construction work is complete, 124 properties will benefit immediately, rising to 147 in 2118, taking into account climate change and associated sea level rise.

Hannah Blythyn said:

“It is one of our key priorities as a Government to reduce the risk of flooding caused by rising sea levels and climate change. This funding towards the cost of the design phase is bringing Mumbles one step closer to a significant coastal protection scheme which will make a difference to residents and visitors alike.

“We are working with coastal local authorities around Wales towards investment of up to £150 million to reduce the risks we face from sea-level rise and climate change. This complements a further £151 million capital investment in flood risk management over the lifetime of this Government.”

Swansea Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment Services, Cllr Mark Thomas, said:

“We are delighted that our Welsh Government partners have approved

a substantial funding contribution towards this exciting project. It means we can now move forward to develop a detailed design for the scheme.

“Not only will it protect properties at risk of flooding near the seafront and tackle coastal erosion for generations to come, it is also an opportunity to widen and improve sections of the promenade at the same time for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.”