

[New top-class Welsh primary school for Cardiff](#)

Funding to build a brand new Welsh language primary school in Cardiff has been approved by Welsh Education Secretary Kirsty Williams.

Tuesday 23 May 2017

Cardiff Council has been awarded £3.9 million against a total project cost of £7.8 million to build a new build 420 Welsh medium primary school with 80 Nursery places on Lewis Road, Splott (Maltings Park).

Education Secretary Kirsty Williams said:

“The demand for Welsh medium education in Cardiff has increased significantly in recent years and it’s great that we have the 21st Century Schools and Education programme that allows us to respond in a planned way to that growth.

“I’m eager to ensure that children within communities across the county, wherever they live, have access to the best possible educational resources. Children in this area of Cardiff will benefit from a modern Welsh-medium teaching environment as well as a new outdoor play and educational area.

“It’s not only the pupils and teachers who’ll benefit from this new development, but the wider so will the wider community, as this is a major construction scheme creating employment and providing opportunities for local suppliers.”

[New facility for Zip-Clip helps secure new contracts as business ramps up global exports drive](#)

Zip-Clip’s international growth plans were outlined by CEO Steve Goldsworthy at the official launch of their new £1.8m facility on Offa’s Dyke Business Park in Welshpool which was built by the Welsh Government and opened by Economy Secretary Ken Skates.

Exports currently account for 38% of sales by the company which designs and manufactures innovative suspension systems for installing heating,

ventilation and air condition systems in industrial and commercial buildings. It also supplies the electrical market and specialises in Seismic bracing for the building services industry.

Zip-Clip has more than 50 key distributors globally – many of whom were present at their opening – and plans to increase its presence overseas.

This year it is opening a new distribution centre in Melbourne, appointing two distributors in Japan and has already appointed a global manufacturer of cable management containment systems to represent their range in South America, Portugal and Spain.

It is currently in discussions regarding representation in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and has appointed a new commercial manager to support its exports and liaise with a number of OEM clients operating across Europe.

Its export drive has benefited from support from the Welsh Government's Export Support Programmes which enabled the company to explore and access new international markets including New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, the Middle East, India and Europe.

Congratulating the company on their export growth Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"This is a great illustration of how SMEs can really benefit from exporting and find new lucrative markets for their products. The Welsh Government can offer companies a raft of help, advice and support to target overseas markets and I am delighted Zip-Clip has benefited from these programmes.

"I am also pleased the Welsh Government is supporting the company's expansion and that Zip-Clip is already reaping the benefits from operating from larger premises having already secured a new £1m plus contract and taken on five new members of staff to service growing orders."

At 17,500 sq ft, their new premises are more than twice the size of their previous facility in Newtown and since moving they have hosted business visits from Finland, Italy, US and Australia.

Managing Director Matthew Clay-Michael added:

"Without this new facility we couldn't even consider growth and now we have the space to expand and target new markets. As well as securing a three year £1m contract with a major global manufacturer of electrical containment systems we are in talks with one of the world's largest manufacturers of lighting products to make a bespoke lighting suspension system.

"We experienced a 24% growth in UK and overseas sales last year and

plan to achieve at least 15% growth year on year over the next three years which is achievable given the increased capacity in our new facility and new products being developed.”

Zip-Clip’s products have been used on numerous prestigious buildings worldwide – ranging from Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi to the Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Texas – from Kuala Lumpur Tower in Malaysia to The Gherkin and Shard in London.

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[Site works pave the way for new HQ and e-commerce centre for Charlies Stores in Welshpool](#)

To mark the start of work Economy Secretary Ken Skates joined Charlies Stores Managing Director Designate Rebecca Lloyd on the seven acre site to cut the first turf.

They met representatives from Alun Griffiths Ltd civil engineering and construction contractors that are undertaking works valued at £676,000 to prepare site for the planned 108,000 sq ft facility.

Separate orders totalling £76,000 have also been placed with Scottish Power, Severn Trent Water and Wales & West Utilities for the diversion of the electric, water & gas mains on site.

Ken Skates said:

“The Welsh Government has worked closely with Charlies Stores to support their plans to expand and grow in mid Wales and I am delighted work is now underway preparing the site for development.

“Charlies are a very important employer and their planned investment will ensure its continued long term sustainable growth in Mid Wales, supporting and creating jobs locally and helping to develop the competitive edge of this particular region of Wales.”

Rebecca Lloyd said:

“We are delighted to see groundwork begin on our new headquarters and distribution centre. We are proud to call mid Wales our home and are pleased we can continue to do this with this new state-of-the-art facility. As a growing business, this represents an exciting time for us and will give us the option to expand even further in the future.”

The company employs more than 400 staff across eight stores, selling goods ranging from footwear and cooking utensils to chainsaws and camping equipment. Online sales have seen an 80% year on year growth with ambitions for internet sales driving its future growth.

It currently operates across multiple sites in Newtown and Welshpool, many of which are reaching full capacity – consolidating these operations under one roof at the planned new e-commerce centre will enable the company to increase efficiencies, serve a larger number of stores and grow its web based business.

It has outlets in Newtown, Welshpool, Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, Deeside and Shrewsbury. Last year it opened a second outlet in Aberystwyth.

The work includes levelling the site, diverting a public footpath, the demolition of existing infrastructure works including a length of road and an electricity sub station. The completion in summer August 2017 will trigger the sale of the site to Charlies Stores.

Updated planning policy to strike a chord with live music fans

The Cabinet Secretary wants an explicit reference to the 'Agent of Change' principle within updated national planning policy. Under this principle, if new developments or uses are to be introduced near a pre-existing business, such as a live music venue, it is the developer's responsibility to ensure solutions to address and mitigate the noise are put forward.

Lesley Griffiths also confirmed [Planning Policy Wales](#) will be updated to allow the designation of areas of cultural significance for music within Local Development Plans.

The Cabinet Secretary has decided to update Wales' national planning policy following a high profile public campaign, based around Womanby Street in Cardiff city centre, home to a number of popular live music venues. The adoption of the 'Agent of Change' principle into national planning policy and the designation of areas of cultural significance for music are two of the campaign's central aims.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

"Live music venues contribute greatly to Wales' thriving cultural scene and our night time economy. I am aware of the efforts to protect the future viability of these venues, including the "Save Womanby Street" campaign, in Cardiff and I would like to pay tribute to the hard work and commitment of all involved.

"Although the continued vibrancy of areas like Womanby Street depends on the ongoing participation of a number of different parties, including local authorities, the venues themselves and their customers, I have heard the calls to update our national planning policy to protect live music venues.

"I am delighted, therefore, to confirm I have asked my officials to start revising Planning Policy Wales at the earliest opportunity.

"I am sure this news will be music to the ears of Wales' live music fans and I hope local planning authorities will have the confidence to apply these measures when considering planning applications.