

# Excitement building for school engineering awards

The Tomorrow's Engineers programme, led by the engineering community, provides young people the chance to engage in hands-on activities showcasing the benefits of a career in engineering.

As part of their annual curriculum-linked Robotics challenge, the 11 to 14 year-old students from the Cynon Valley learned how to build, program and control autonomous LEGO robots to complete a series of missions. This has given them first-hand experience of solving real-world engineering, technology and computing challenges, as well as working as part of a team.

Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, who won their South West region final, have now been invited to compete in the UK final at the Birmingham NEC on Friday (March 17).

Kirsty Williams said,

“This is a brilliant success story and I would like to wish the school and its pupils the best of luck for the final. Their achievements link well with our key ambitions of raising standards in the learning and teaching of science and technology.

“We want our young people to be able to reason scientifically and understand the value of scientific approaches. This is key for the 21st Century, as tested by PISA, and our new curriculum is being designed to better integrate this approach.

“Earlier this year, I announced a new national network of excellence for science and technology aimed at improving pupils' experience of the subjects at school. The network will involve schools working with the science and technology departments of universities, education consortia, further education and other experts to learn from the best practice available.”

This success follows on from that of Team Tachyon, a group of year 11 pupils from Denbigh High, who recently won three awards for Wales at the F1 in Schools World Championships in Austin, Texas.

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## [New sites in Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone can apply for latest round of Business Rates Scheme](#)

The Ebbw Vale Zone was recently expanded to include three additional sites – Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, Waun Y pound Industrial Estate and Victoria/Festival Park.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“The Enterprise Zone Rates Scheme has helped make a real difference to businesses and I am pleased to announce additional funding so eligible businesses within the newly expanded areas of Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone can apply and potentially benefit.”

The scheme focuses on small and medium sized enterprises that are demonstrating business growth, new starts or businesses that are increasing the size of their full time workforce. Consideration is also given to other business activity related to sectors, increased productivity and innovation/R&D.

The Enterprise Zone Business Rates Scheme is available to businesses within all eight Welsh Enterprise Zones and could deliver significant reductions to their annual business rates payments for 2016-17.

Applications for the 2016/17 financial year can be made until **Friday, 31 March 2017**.

For more information about the Scheme, businesses can ring the Business Wales helpline on freephone 03000 6 03000 or contact the EZBRS team at [EZBRS@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:EZBRS@wales.gsi.gov.uk) for an application form.

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## [EU funding to support jobseekers in Powys](#)

The funding will support the new Workways+ Powys project, which will be delivered by Powys Council and PRIME Cymru. It will target out-of-work people aged 54 and over.

Workways+ Powys will run for three years and help people looking to start their own business; return to work or hoping to take part in volunteering

opportunities to improve their skills and confidence.

It will offer support with jobseeking and interview skills; help with CV writing and the chance to gain vocational qualifications and take part in work experience placements.

Around 50 volunteer mentors will be recruited and trained to provide one-to-one mentoring to people looking to return to work in Powys as part of the project.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“EU funding is making a huge contribution to boosting the skills and prospects of people in Wales through projects like Workways, as well as apprenticeships, traineeships, graduate programmes and schemes to help young people pursue careers in STEM industries.

“I’m very pleased to announce this further investment, which will fund important services and new opportunities for people in Powys to get back into work and develop new careers.”

David Pugh, chief executive of PRIME Cymru said.

“We are delighted to be working with Powys Council on this truly innovative approach to supporting mature individuals who have so much to offer both Powys and the economy of Wales as a whole.

“This project will be one of the very first in Wales dedicated to supporting this age group back into economic activity.”

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## **Partnership between Jesus College Oxford and Wales’ brightest students unveiled at major education summit**

The partnership between the University of Oxford College and the Welsh Government’s Seren Network will see a selection of Wales’ brightest students attend a bespoke summer school at Jesus College in August this year.

Students from each of the 11 Seren Network hubs across Wales will be given the opportunity to apply for the four-day summer school, where they will

sample student life and attend lectures on demography, artificial intelligence, climate, trade, politics and literature.

Unveiled today by Welsh Government Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language at the Seren Network's second annual Beyond the Curriculum conference in mid-Wales, the summer school is thought to be the first aimed at solely Welsh students.

Speaking at the event, Welsh Government Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language, Alun Davies, said:

"Raising the aspirations and attainment levels of Welsh school pupils to help them reach their academic potential is an ongoing priority for Welsh Government, and the Seren Network is playing a pivotal role in this ambition.

"Since its inception in 2015, the Network has quickly grown to a recognised and valuable vehicle through which some 2000 of the brightest pupils in Wales are now channelling and honing their academic talents.

"Today's announcement adds another tangible benefit for students. By enabling Wales' most academically gifted pupils to sample life at one of the world's best academic institutions, we are demonstrating that educational excellence is well within their reach, and equipping them with hands-on support and guidance to make sure they reach the top.

Professor Sir Nigel Shadbolt, the Principal of Jesus College, Oxford, said:

"Jesus College is incredibly proud of its enduring connection to Wales, a connection that goes back to the College's foundation in 1571. This new initiative will help ensure that we continue to welcome future generations of talented Welsh students here in Oxford.

"The Seren Network works in partnership with organisations including the Sutton Trust to identify all opportunities and support Seren students to make informed decisions about their futures. Morgan Cronin, from the Merthyr-RCT Seren hub, attended a Sutton Trust-organised summer school at Yale and now has an unconditional offer to study there."