

Minister visits Pembrokeshire to see Welsh Government investment in action

The Minister began his visit to the county with a visit to Milford Haven Leisure Centre to see how the social enterprise café is helping people with learning disabilities into work, by providing employment opportunities. The project received £100,000 funding from the Welsh Government's integrated care fund (ICF).

The Minister also heard about several other projects the Welsh Government is supporting via the ICF in Pembrokeshire, including:

- Community Connectors – A 3rd sector community & citizen centred approach to help people achieve and sustain a good quality of life within a supportive community setting. This project received £30,000 ICF funding
- Pembrokeshire Time Bank – a pilot project to examine the potential for community time banking as a preventative service that encourages participants to build (or rebuild) their community ties. This project receives £11,000 ICF funding for 2018/19
- Bus Buddies Project – which provides volunteers to help people who need extra support to use public and community transport services. This project has received £40,000 ICF funding.

The Minister then visited the Care At Home Team, based at South Pembrokeshire Hospital. Operational since January 2017, the team has cared for over 300 patients in the local community, helping them to maintain their independence and remain at home. The project has received £200,000 funding from the ICF.

The Welsh Government has allocated nearly £6.6 million in ICF revenue to the West Wales Regional Partnership Board in 2018-19 to support a range of innovative integrated care services. Overall £50 million has been provided across Wales.

Speaking following the visit, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“It was great to visit Pembrokeshire to see for myself the real, positive difference Welsh Government funding is making to so many people's lives across the county. These are the types of seamless services – which bring together health, social services and the social value sector – that A Healthier Wales – our long term plan for Health and Social Care aspires to.

“From the inspirational individuals I met at café in Milford Haven, who are doing outstanding work to help people with learning disabilities gain experience to allow them to make the conversion to paid work, to the Care At Home Team, which is providing support to people to maintain their independence and remain at home, it's great to see so many dedicated staff making a real difference to

the lives of so many people in our communities.”

CADW lists rare war memorials as Wales remembers the end of the First World War

The artillery piece – a 105mm light field howitzer – stands on Twyn y Garth with sweeping views over the Wye valley and the village of Erwood in Powys.

It is said that a local woman, Nessa Williams-Vaughan (later Mrs Lionel Trafford) obtained the gun from the War Office to serve as a memorial for her brother, Christopher, and other local men who had died in the First World War. She was killed in a car accident – reputedly Herefordshire’s first fatal one – before the gun could be delivered in 1920. Yet, her wishes were carried out by the communities of Erwood and Llandeilo Graban, who dragged the howitzer up the slopes of Twyn y Garth and fixed it in place.

After decades of exposure to the elements, the gun had deteriorated badly by 1999. However, Painscastle Community Council restored it as a millennium project with the assistance of 6th Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and local craftsmen. It has now been listed as a rare survival of the thousands of enemy field guns that were once scattered across the United Kingdom in the aftermath of what many hoped would be the ‘war to end all wars’.

Before the First World War centenary observances began in 2014, CADW had listed almost 240 war memorials across Wales ranging from horse watering troughs to hospital buildings. Many more are in or around listed civic buildings or places of worship. Yet some noteworthy memorials, like the Garth Gun, had escaped designation.

Another recently listed monument is in the village of Nantlle, on the western flanks of Snowdonia. It is a carved slab of deep purple slate, which was quarried, worked and erected in 1922. The Welsh inscription remembers 14 slate workers from the nearby Penyrorsedd quarry. Originally placed in the quarry, the memorial was later moved to its present location in front of the village chapel.

The names of the fallen are surrounded by intricately carved scenes of the working life that the men would have known at the quarry. Two workers watch slate being hauled up the quarry face to a workshop for processing. Finished slates descend on an inclined railway to be carted away. Across the bottom of the memorial, however, is a panorama portraying infantry moving forward into a blasted battlefield of trenches and artillery emplacements, reminding the

viewer of the men's sacrifice.

Now this memorial is not only a poignant reminder of the cataclysmic impact of the First World War, but also of a once thriving industry in the mountains of north Wales.

As part of Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918, the centenary programme of commemoration of the First World War led by the Welsh Government, CADW launched the Grants for War Memorials in Wales scheme. Developed in partnership with the War Memorials Trust, the scheme has provided funding for the repair and conservation of memorials in almost 50 communities across Wales. Applications will continue to be accepted until March 2019.

[Centenary Trees project to commemorate end of First World War](#)

Natural Resources Wales' Centenary Trees project will feature creative tree planting to commemorate those who died during the War.

The project will also mark the centenary of the Forestry Commission, whose Welsh arm became part of NRW in 2013. A product of the 1919 Forestry Act, the Commission was created to replenish the nation's timber, which was at an all-time low following the War.

The project aims to reach every community in Wales, including working with young people to rebuild their relationship with trees and emphasise the important role trees play in our lives. Planting is expected to begin in 2019 and will take between three and five years to complete.

The Welsh Government will be marking the centenary of the end of the First World War through its [Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 programme](#) (external link).

Hannah Blythyn said:

"This year we mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, which tragically cost the lives of more than 40,000 Welsh soldiers.

"One of the other outcomes of the War was the impact on our tree population, which fell dramatically because of the need for timber for the War effort.

"In Wales, trees benefit our economy through our timber trade and provide recreational activities that are good for our health and well-being. They help reduce the risk of flooding, improve water quality, lock up carbon from the atmosphere and are home to much of

our wildlife.

“Trees are also vital to human life, providing us with the oxygen we need to breathe. It is therefore fitting we mark the centenary of the First World War, which caused so much death and destruction, by planting many more new trees, which will help sustain life for generations to come.”

Clare Pillman, Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, said:

“Rebuilding the forests after the war took an army of people, many of whom returned from the war with the skills and knowledge of the land.

“The sacrifice of so many who did not return is something we should never forget. This is why we want to engage with the people of Wales so that future generations can benefit from a lasting act of thanksgiving and remembrance.

“Trees have a special place in the lives of communities now, just as they did in 1918, and will in 2118. NRW is looking to support communities across Wales to explore their relationship with trees and the benefits they bring now and in the future.”

Grant funding doubled for Wales' most disadvantaged pupils

Following on from last month's Draft Budget, Education Secretary Kirsty Williams has announced that funding for Pupil Development Grant (PDG) – Access will be doubled from £1.7m in 2018-19 to £3.5 million in 2019-20.

The PDG-Access fund offers parents up to £125 and also covers equipment for activities within the curriculum, such as design and technology.

Parents can also access funding for equipment for out of school hours trips, including outdoor learning.

Looked-after children and learners eligible for free school meals can receive funding if they are entering reception class in primary school, year 7 in secondary school or aged 4 or 11 in special schools, special needs resource bases or pupil referral units.

The £3.5m boost for PDG-Access brings overall funding for the Pupil Development Grant to £97m in 2019-20.

Described as “invaluable” by schools, the PDG gives greater support to learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and Looked After Children (LAC). It is intended to overcome additional barriers that prevent learners from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving their full potential.

Kirsty Williams said:

“Breaking the cycle of disadvantage and poverty is critical to the long term well-being and success of our children and central to our National Mission for Education.

“Figures released this week show that at Key Stage 2 and 3 the attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers is the narrowest we have seen in 10 years.

“This should be welcomed but we now have to make sure that we keep finding new ways of overcoming barriers to learning.

“That’s why we have doubled financial support to learners in the Foundation Phase and extended the PDG to cover early years learners, those in pupil referral units and learners who are educated other than at school.

“With the additional money we’re investing in PDG-Access, even more pupils will be able to access opportunities, either in or outside of school. I encourage parents to take full advantage of this and to keep applying to their local council for funding.”

Finding new ways of helping parents with the cost of school uniforms will be one of the issues addressed by a consultation to be published later this month.

“We need the power of procurement to achieve prosperity for all” Finance Secretary tells Procurex Wales

Addressing an audience of professionals, he will talk about the need for smarter and more creative procurement to support the government’s prevention and prosperity policy agendas and to maximise the way public money is invested and spent in the future.

He will also speak about the impact the UK’s forthcoming exit from the EU will have on procurement and the wider Welsh economy.

The Finance Secretary will say:

“There was a time when procurement was just a process – an under-appreciated backroom function delivering on value for money and good governance within organisations.

“While these are as important as ever, what is better understood now is the power of procurement to deliver policy in Wales and contribute towards a more prosperous Wales.

“This type of procurement means there is a need to further develop the skills and capacity of procurement professionals in Wales. The new programme I announced in September will ensure we provide more profile and visibility for the profession – having the best people who understand the bigger picture and make the best procurement decisions for Wales’ wellbeing.”

One of the big issues which will test the power of procurement is Wales’ preparation for Brexit. Leaving the EU poses a number of challenges to Wales’ economy, public services and procurement processes, but the Cabinet Secretary will tell Procurex that Brexit is an opportunity to build on the good work already underway in Wales.

Professor Drakeford will say:

“While preparing for Brexit is understandably at the forefront of our minds, it’s important we don’t lose sight of the opportunities which could arise from the Brexit ashes.

“This is an opportunity to simplify regulations, through the development of a procurement framework; stimulate the Welsh economy with more businesses winning more Welsh public sector contracts and devolve more competencies to Wales.”

And he will add:

“We need to think of procurement as a vehicle’s engine. The vehicle won’t go anywhere without an engine. The engine won’t work without fuel. But a fine-tuned and powerful engine will take the vehicle further and more efficiently than one which is poorly serviced.

“If we are to achieve prosperity for all in Wales, we need the power of procurement under the bonnet.”