

Why waste waste? A new sustainable hub for production in South Wales

Using a model designed to help businesses interested in setting up in Wales, the Welsh Government made a former RAF workshop available on the Welsh Government's Picketston Business Park in St Athan. They agreed a 10 year lease at a competitive commercial rent that reflected the work needed to convert the building to make it fit for purpose.

The workshop boasts a total of 4,550 sq m (49,000 sq ft) of indoor space, as well as a further 13,380 sq m (144,000 sq ft) of outdoor filming space. It also features a number of additional facilities, including unit bases and storage and rooms and offices which can be adapted to suit a productions needs.

Dresd have operated in the film and TV industry offering sustainable services to productions since 2012. Their work to reduce waste in the industry has allowed up to 99% of sets to be recycled and reused, while saving money for the productions they have worked with.

Their aim is for the studios to lower the carbon footprint of productions. Those who film at the studios are able to benefit from their cost-effective, unique and sustainable services.

Since Dresd moved in, the studios have already hosted filming for Requiem, a recent co-production by BBC One and Netflix. In the past they have accommodated TV productions such as Doctor Who, Torchwood and Sherlock, and features such as Mr. Nice and The Killer Elite.

They regularly employ workers registered with local employment agencies, and are looking forward to welcoming two more into their team when the positions open this year. They are also regularly in touch with local colleges and students who are looking to gain experience in the creative sector.

Managing Director Lynn McFarlane said:

"We aim to provide a sustainable hub for television and film productions, where filmmakers can access used materials for their work, reducing the need to build brand new sets.

"Most of the salvaged items would have ended up in landfill, but they now form part of a reclaimed prop house for the production industry, not only film and television, but theatrical productions, events and the interior design industry as well.

"We are grateful for the Welsh Government's assistance in helping us to set up in the premises with the room we need to be able to offer our services to companies across the creative industries."

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This is an excellent example of the support we can give new and established businesses that recognise the benefits we have to offer here.

“I am delighted the Welsh Government could help Dresd come into Wales.

“Over the last five years, film and TV productions shot in Wales and funded by Welsh Government have spent in excess of £100m in Wales. This is investment into local economies, providing hundreds of Welsh businesses and individuals with high quality work. Without a doubt there is a place within the creative sector for the sustainable services Dresd can offer.

“These studios will allow the company to move into a new phase of work, focused around providing a new, sustainable hub for the recycling of production sets, and will be the first of its kind in Wales. It’s a commendable idea and an admirable achievement, and I wish them every success in the future.”