

Press release: Seven Welsh high streets shortlisted for Great British High Street awards

Seven high streets across Wales have been shortlisted in this year's Great British High Street Awards 2018.

The awards, run by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and sponsored by Visa, recognise and celebrate local achievements on our high streets and shine a light on great examples of how high streets can meet the challenges of changing consumer behaviour and a changing retail environment.

After a rigorous selection process led by a panel of independent judges, four Welsh high streets have been shortlisted in the Champion high street category, which aims to find the UK's best high street, while three Welsh high streets have been shortlisted in the Rising Star category, which aims to find the UK's most ambitious high streets.

The shortlisted high streets in Wales are:

Champion Award

- Holywell, Flintshire
- Welshpool, Powys
- Crickhowell, Powys
- Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire

Rising Star Award

- Cardigan, Ceredigion
- Narberth, Pembrokeshire
- Cowbridge, Glamorgan

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This is fantastic news for all seven high streets in Wales recognised for their excellence and ambition to thrive in an increasingly competitive time.

High streets across Wales are the lifeblood of our societies, providing an opportunity for small businesses to set up shop and make a name for themselves, and for people to get together and support their communities by shopping locally.

Good luck to all of those high streets in the running in Wales, and I encourage everyone to show their support and vote for their favourite.

The 38 finalists across the UK will now battle it out in a public vote, which accounts for 30 per cent of the final scoring, and will then have the chance to impress an expert judging panel as they seek to be crowned Britain's best.

Those interested in participating in the public vote can visit www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk for more information. The winning entries for both the Champion and Rising Star categories will be announced on 15 November 2018 at an awards ceremony in London.

High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

Congratulations to all 38 high streets shortlisted for this year's Great British High Street Awards. The awards celebrate the great work that is being done to revive, adapt and diversify the nation's high streets and the quality of entries this year has been outstanding.

Over the next six weeks they have the chance to impress an expert judging panel as they also battle it out in a public vote for the title of Britain's best high street. This is a great opportunity to show your support for the hard work taking place on our high streets, so get voting.

For more information about the Great British High Street Awards 2018 terms and conditions and details on how to vote, visit:

www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk

[News story: Welsh Secretary discusses Brexit with EU Expert Panel](#)



Representatives from business, local authorities, agriculture and third sectors in Wales will gather today (Monday 17 September) to discuss their priorities for Brexit as well as their primary concerns. As negotiations progress, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns has remained committed to hosting these

vital conversations, ensuring that his discussions in Whitehall are informed by the views of each sector of the Welsh economy.

The meeting will build upon previous conversations that have focussed on how former EU powers should be used to help Wales thrive in a post-Brexit world. With the future of Welsh prosperity as the focus, the White Paper on the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union, operational readiness and technical notices are top of the agenda.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

In order to achieve a smooth and orderly Brexit that delivers for Wales it is vital that we continue to have open and honest conversations with the experts about the concerns and opportunities surrounding Brexit in their respective sectors.

There have been a number of significant developments since the Expert Panel last met. The UK Government has published the White Paper on the Withdrawal Agreement, the paper on the UK's future relationship with the EU and the first two batches of technical notices, advising businesses and citizens on how to proceed in the unlikely event of a no-deal Brexit. With negotiations now reaching a critical stage, it is more important than ever that we engage with these key partners to ensure that every region of the UK and every sector has a voice at the heart of government.

With record breaking employment levels and an economy which is going from strength to strength, it is clear that we are continuing to attract investment in Wales. But to ensure this confidence in our ability is not lost as we prepare to leave the European Union, it is my job to provide certainty to those who drive the Welsh economy.

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[Speech: DFID Ghana Private Sector Development Adviser's speech at British Council's social enterprise event](#)

Country Director of TechnoServe, Chief Executive Officers and other

representatives of private sector institutions, members of the Press Corps,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good evening to you all.

It is a pleasure to deliver the opening remarks of the maiden Social Thursday event for this year with such a well-chosen focus – Women in Enterprise the Creative, the New, and the Disruptive.

Recent research shows that if women started businesses at the same rate as men, global GDP could be further enhanced by \$28 trillion by 2025. This is common sense. I grew up in a family of entrepreneurial women and my grandmother often used to say women make the world grow round with their ingenuity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For about a week in September I had an opportunity to tour a few regions in Ghana and meet female entrepreneurs and the level of creativity and ingenuity I encountered was breath-taking.

Tonight a few of these businesses are here and we will hear positive stories of how female entrepreneurs have grown their businesses despite many challenges. We know small business owners in Ghana face many challenges which make it difficult for them to grow. These challenges; including the high cost of energy, regulatory challenges and high cost of finance, are contributing factors to why entrepreneurs in Ghana are struggling to grow and scale their business ideas.

These challenges are not unique to female entrepreneurs but there are unique challenges that confront women specifically which often means female businesses are often smaller and don't grow at the same pace as male enterprises.

I will share three unique stories of three women entrepreneurs to illustrate some of these barriers that female entrepreneurs face to provoke a good debate tonight.

1. Female entrepreneurs often minimise achievements to fit in – Last year I had an opportunity to meet a top female CEO who is at the top of her game. I spent the evening chatting with her about where her company and growth plans. She bluntly highlighted that she had on several occasions had to diminish her achievements and success to be accepted or fit in with societal expectations This is not a story unique to her.
2. The second challenge often faced by women is time poverty – Women often have to make big trade-offs between growing their businesses and home responsibilities. This challenge is often more pronounced in more traditional settings where female roles are more clearly defined. This also means that women miss out on business networking events and related opportunities.

3. The ownership challenge – I met a female entrepreneur last year who had registered her business in a family members name. This had occurred because she had been busy and had asked someone to register on her behalf in the interim. In this particular example the female entrepreneur had challenges down the line in proving ownership of company assets.
4. Some societal norms e.g. widower rites which bar women from participating in normal business activity after the death of a spouse.

But women are overcoming some of these challenges through new technologies and innovations e.g. social media platforms for business networking. And more can be done to support and nurture female entrepreneurs to their full potential. I hope this social Thursday event a space to openly and honestly discuss these challenges and collectively find solutions to these challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I hand over to the moderator I would like to talk briefly about the UK's partnership with Ghana on private sector development.

Advancing economic development is a hallmark of building Global Britain. DFID's Economic Development Strategy, published at the beginning of the year, and recognises the critical role of the private sector in creating jobs, supporting economic transformation and contributing to income growth and therefore poverty reduction.

In Ghana, DFID is focussed on supporting Ghana to stimulate investment, improve the ease of doing business, mobilise Ghana's own domestic resources and move beyond aid.

Our ENGINE programme (which is collaborating with the British Council to bring you this event today), is delivered by TechnoServe, and launched in 2014 is helping women engaged in small business to scale.

Our support has helped 503(177 women) small businesses to develop and implement their business ideas resulting in over 250% revenue growth of these firms who in turn have created 1,572 new jobs. More than 53% of the jobs are created by females. In the ENGINE programme the industriousness of our women is seen in their continuous upgrades of their businesses.

Many of the ENGINE female entrepreneurs are now exporting products – ranging from indigenous beauty products like Black Soap and Shea butter based cosmetics – across Africa, UK and into Europe and North America. And I must add that our female entrepreneurs are often very complaint with regulations with many of their businesses formally registered and complaint with legislation's for operating businesses in Ghana.

But we have not done this alone. To help sustain these successes, ENGINE has partnered a range of institutions including the British Council, National Board for Small Scale Industries, the UK Ghana Chamber of Commerce and Ghana

Food and Drugs Authority.

DFID is also working with the Government of Ghana to improve the business enabling environment for businesses here in Ghana through the Business Enabling Environment Programme (BEEP), recognising that the policy and regulatory environment for doing business is also important for business growth.

BEEP is helping Government streamline business regulation making it easier and less costly for businesses to comply with these. For example the programme is helping Government undertake tax, customs, business registration and licensing reforms.

Through our Market Development in Northern Ghana (MADE) programme we are working to link smallholder farmers to markets in sectors like rice, groundnuts and vegetables.

And we want to do more. DFID recently approved a new job creation and economic transformation programme in support of Government's ambitious industrialisation strategy.

To conclude...

The size of the challenge – and the opportunity to support budding entrepreneurs in Ghana – is huge. The UK Government can help, by supporting events like these and the above mentioned programmes but it's not our role to do this alone. We believe that the core role of entrepreneurship development lies with the private sector – through the banks, business development networks, with the Government providing a sound enabling environment and the regulatory framework for businesses to operate.

Ladies and Gentlemen, like the theme of the event let us be disruptive and discuss and identify innovative solutions to the challenges that entrepreneurs face in increasing investment and jobs and catalysing economic transformation in Ghana.

Thank you.

Press release: 'Don't be a Space Invader' – stay safe, stay back says Highways England

New figures show that one in eight of all road casualties are caused by people who drive too close to the vehicle in front, with more than 100 people killed or seriously injured each year.

While a small minority of tailgating is deliberate, most is unintentional by drivers who are simply unaware they are dangerously invading someone else's space.

So a safety campaign launched today uses the well-known Space Invader video game character to alert drivers to the anti-social nature and risks of tailgating.

[Space Invader 'Tailgating' campaign](#)

A survey by Highways England reveals that tailgating is the biggest single bugbear that drivers have about other road users. And in-car research – using dashcams, facial recognition, emotion tracking and heart monitors – reveals that a driver's typical reaction to someone who tailgates them is surprise, anger and contempt, with a spike in heart rate.

Nearly 9 out of 10 people say they have either been tailgated or seen it. And more than a quarter of drivers admitted to tailgating.

The 'Don't be a Space Invader – stay safe, stay back' campaign is supported by one of the world's best drivers. Former Formula 1 world champion Nigel Mansell, who is President of the Institute of Advanced Motorists RoadSmart, says:

Tailgating is a driving habit I utterly deplore. Not only is it aggressive and intimidating, but it can lead to a crash with a tragic outcome.

There is absolutely no upside to it – you will not get to your destination faster, you are not a skilled driver for doing it, and you are putting so many innocent people at risk. So I very much back this campaign to highlight the dangers of tailgating.

Former Formula 1 world champion Nigel Mansell is backing the campaign

Highways England says good drivers leave plenty of safe space for themselves and others.

Richard Leonard, Head of Road Safety at Highways England, says:

If you get too close to the car in front, you won't be able to react and stop in time if they suddenly brake.

Tailgating makes the driver in front feel targeted and victimised, distracting their attention from the road ahead and making them more likely to make a mistake.

It is intimidating and frightening if you're on the receiving end. If that leads to a collision, then people in both vehicles could end up seriously injured or killed. We want everyone to travel

safely, so the advice is – stay safe, stay back.

If you wonder whether you are 'space invading', then remember the Highway Code, which says that drivers should allow at least a two second gap, which should be doubled on wet roads. If you are tailgated, then avoid speeding up, slowing down or staring in the rear-view mirror. Reduce the risk to yourself by driving normally, signalling clearly and allowing people to overtake.

Being a Space Invader can also cost you money. One insurance company reports that almost a quarter of accident claims between January and August this year involved either a policy holder's or a third party's vehicle being hit from behind.

Andy Watson, Chief Executive of insurer Ageas, says:

A bump won't just damage your vehicle, it's likely that it will also hit your pocket when it comes to renew your insurance. So we urge all drivers to follow the advice of Highways England and back off from the driver in front.

Thatcham Research are experts in vehicle safety technology, vehicle security and crash repair. Director of Research at Thatcham, Matthew Avery, says:

Tailgating is one of the most dangerous driver behaviours seen on UK roads. Not only does it intimidate others and create 'phantom' traffic jams via the ripple effect of sharp braking, it is also a leading cause of accidents. Thatcham Research is proud to offer our full support to this potentially life-saving Highways England campaign.

National Express, which will carry the campaign on some of its long-distance coaches, is among supporters of the campaign that also include the National Police Chiefs Council, leading road safety bodies Brake and the Institute for Advanced Motorists, and the motor insurer Thatcham.

Highways England has a dedicated [webpage](#) where drivers can find more information about tailgating and what they can do to stay safe.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: Savvy students know their renting rights

- University students can demand better in the private rented sector
- Deposits must be protected in a government-backed scheme
- Landlords must put problems right quickly – or students can complain

When things go wrong with rented properties, students have the right to get them fixed – and the government has published [How To Rent guides](#) to help out.

Government legislation protects students and their money from rogue landlords and agents. And new laws coming into force on 1 October, around the time when a new term starts, will mean landlords must provide adequate size bedrooms and sufficient rubbish bins.

Six things students should know on move-in day:

1. Your deposit must be protected in a government-backed scheme – get a certificate from your landlord or agent.
2. Check the property is safe – think fire, electrical, gas safety certificate, and hygiene. If you have concerns, raise them with your landlord or agent immediately.
3. Agree an inventory with your landlord or agent – or you could lose money when you move out.
4. By law, landlords must install a smoke alarm on each floor (and carbon monoxide alarms if needed) but it's your job to regularly check they are working.
5. Know who is responsible for bills (water, electricity, gas) and take meter readings.
6. Landlords or agents must be reachable to fix problems quickly – make sure you have their contact details.

Minister for Housing and Homelessness Heather Wheeler MP said:

Rogue landlords and agents should never get in the way of students enjoying university life and we're working to stop them in their tracks.

We've brought in laws to crack down on bad operators and we have measures in place to protect tenants' deposits.

We are going even further by changing the law to ban unfair letting fees and cap tenancy deposits.

We want students to know their rights – that landlords must do their job and fix leaks, keep heating working and install smoke

alarms.

Landlords or agents must deal with any problems with the water, electricity and gas supply, and maintain appliances and furniture they have supplied. Councils can step in when landlords don't do their job, and there are independent schemes to help resolve disputes with letting agents.

Houses lived in by 5 or more independent people will soon have to be licensed in an extension of laws which previously only covered buildings of 3 storeys or more.

Homes of any number of storeys will be covered under the extension, meaning more students will be helped – with tiny bedrooms (of less than 6.51 square metres for one adult) banned and landlords forced to provide the right bins to homes.

The laws will come in from 1st October but local authorities can give landlords up to 18 months to get bedroom sizes right.

As well as this, new regulations taking effect from 1st April 2019 will keep renters' money safe by only allowing letting agents that join a government-approved client money protection scheme to handle their money.

Students should use the [How to rent](#) and [How to rent a safe home](#) checklists on Gov.uk.