

## **£85,000 to develop Deeside transport schemes as plans for North Wales Metro gather pace**

Flintshire Council has been awarded £85,000 to help it develop bus and active travel projects along the B5129 at Queensferry and to Deeside Industrial Park in order to improve transport links to key employment sites.

Ken Skates said the funding will also help Flintshire to strengthen its transport links in anticipation of the Welsh Government's ambitious North Wales Metro project, which will provide wider integrated transport links across North Wales.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"Our ambitious plans for a Metro scheme in North Wales will require significant investment, with huge potential rewards for the local economy. To this end, the £50 million earmarked in our recent budget will see our plans for the North Wales Metro really take shape.

"In the meantime, I'm delighted that we are able to support local authorities, like Flintshire, in investing in improved bus access, in facilitating active travel and in linking communities with jobs – something which will be key to the success of the wider North Wales Metro."

Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment said

"I am pleased to receive the additional funding to help develop our transport solution to improve all modes of transport into Deeside Industrial Park. Improved transport links will ensure that Deeside continues to be the destination of choice for businesses into the future."

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## **First Minister launches 2017 programme**

# of events to mark centenary of First World War

'Programme 2017' is the latest in the Welsh Government's series of annual Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 brochures which highlight events and projects of Welsh interest taking place in Wales and further afield throughout the year. The launch coincides with the First World War Partnership Day 2017 event held in Builth Wells on 26 January.

The central focus for this year's commemoration is the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), which will be commemorated at a National Service of Remembrance at the Welsh Memorial in Langemark, Belgium on 31 July 2017.

The Third Battle of Ypres is of particular resonance for Wales as it claimed the lives of many Welsh soldiers including the renowned Welsh language poet, Hedd Wyn. Hedd Wyn was killed on 31 July 1917 and is buried at the nearby Artillery Wood cemetery, close to Ypres.

People are welcome to attend the National Service of Remembrance but must [register in advance](#) (external link) by 26 March 2017. Entry will be by pre-booked tickets only.

Other key events include the re-opening of Hedd Wyn's home following the £3.4m re-development led by Snowdonia National Park Authority and supported by the Welsh Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Welsh Government will also hold a number of cultural events in partnership with the Government of Flanders on the shared history of Wales and Belgium.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

"Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914 – 1918 gives us the opportunity to remember the lives of those who served in the First World War.

"The sacrifices the people of Wales made, alongside the rest of the UK and allied forces, should never be forgotten. Programme 2017 is testament to the outstanding level of collaboration and engagement seen across Wales since 2014, which set to continue through the year and beyond.

"It is important future generations understand how this terrible war shaped modern Wales, and we must learn lessons from the past to take us into a more peaceful future."

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## Carwyn Connect heads to Swansea

The Carwyn Connect event will give local people the opportunity to meet the First Minister and ask him questions on any issues which affect them or their local community.

The session will take place between 6pm and 7.30pm at Pen yr Heol Comprehensive School (Gorseinon, SA4 4FG).

People are encouraged to register their interest in attending the free event: [Register your interest](#).

Questions can be asked in a number of ways – they can be submitted when people arrive at the venue when doors open at 5.30pm, in advance via email [cabinetcommunications@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cabinetcommunications@wales.gsi.gov.uk) or via Twitter using [@fmwales](#) with the hashtag [#carwynconnect](#).

First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones said:

“Over the past year, I have travelled across the country to hear the views of local communities and answer the burning questions of the people of Wales.

“I am pleased to announce the next event will take place in Gorseinon. I want to see as many people as possible at the event, so if you have a question for me, want to raise issues affecting your community or have a great idea to make your home town a better place to live, come along to the event.

“A wide variety of topics have come up in previous events – from questions about hyper-local issues, to discussions about broad Government policy.

“This is your chance to meet and speak with me in person. I’m really looking forward to meeting you all.”

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## £3m boost for the Welsh Language

Enabling people to use the language at work, along with ensuring the public have access to high quality Welsh language services is essential if we are to achieve our goal of a million speakers.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh is responsible for providing strategic leadership to the Welsh for Adults sector. This role includes the development

and provision of Welsh for Adults courses in the workplace, particularly for bodies that fall under the language standards regime.

The Welsh Government has worked closely with the National Centre to develop a plan for the additional money earmarked in the 2017-18 budget agreement with Plaid Cymru.

The Plan includes five strands:

- Information and advice for employers 'Cymraeg Gwaith/Work Welsh'
- On-line welcome / reception courses 'Croeso Cymraeg Gwaith/Work Welsh Welcome'
- Intensive courses 'Dysgu Cymraeg Gwaith/Learn Work Welsh''
- Courses for the early years workforce 'Cymraeg Cynnar/Early Welsh'
- Residential courses to improve confidence and provide specialist terminology 'Defnyddio Cymraeg Gwaith/Use Work Welsh'

Alun Davies, Minister for the Welsh Language, told Assembly Members:

"The goal of this Government is to have one million Welsh speakers by 2050. In line with our shared ambition with Plaid Cymru we are allocating an additional £3m to ensure the Welsh language is used more extensively and to encourage more people to speak it.

"This investment will enable the National Centre for Learning Welsh to provide practical support to bodies, putting them in a position to provide an outstanding bilingual service to the public and comply with the Welsh language standards."

Efa Gruffudd Jones, Chief Executive of the National Centre for Learning Welsh, added:

"We welcome this additional funding which will allow the Centre to build on progress already made in the Welsh for Adults sector in recent months and further support the Government's ambitions for the Welsh language.

"Putting learners first is at the heart of the Centre's work and this funding will enable new opportunities for individuals who want to learn or improve their Welsh to do so with the support of their employers.

"The 'Cymraeg Gwaith/Work Welsh' courses will sit alongside existing provision and we look forward to working with partners, employers and the Government to deliver this new learning programme, which will feature innovative interactive elements."

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## Carl Sargeant thanks Armed Forces Expert Group

At the 13th meeting of the group, Carl Sargeant said the multi-agency group provided valuable insight into the needs of the Armed Forces community and ways in which service delivery might be improved.

Carl Sargeant said:

“We are committed to providing high quality services to the Armed Forces community in Wales. The Expert Group brings together people with detailed knowledge of issues which affect this community in a number of areas such as health, education and housing.

“Our meetings generate positive discussion between all members and I am keen to continue this, identifying issues of interest to the Armed Forces Community that we can address collaboratively.”