

Lesley Griffiths officially names new fisheries patrol vessel after former First Minister Rhodri Morgan

The vessel, named FPV Rhodri Morgan, will form part of a fleet patrolling Welsh waters looking for illegal fishing activity.

As per tradition, Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths ceremoniously poured champagne on the vessel and was presented with a velum of the new Welsh Government Fisheries Enforcement flag.

The vellum contains crests from all five vessels that will form part of the new fleet. The rest of the fleet are named FPV Lady Megan, FPV Catrin, FPV Gwenllian and the FPV Siwan.

Each crest carries a picture that reflect the identity of the person the vessel was named after.

Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths was given a tour of the vessel and shown how the latest technology will be used to enforce fisheries and marine laws. As well as meeting those who crew the vessel, she was also shown their accommodation and facilities. The FPV Rhodri Morgan can accommodate eight people with four twin cabins. It also comes equipped with GPS, Radar, Echo and search lights.

The new vessels will replace the current ageing boats, to effectively protect from illegal fishing activity in Welsh waters and safeguard Wales' fishing industry and coastal communities in the years ahead.

The FPV Rhodri Morgan, a 26m patrol vessel that weighs 75 ton and carries 11,000 litres of fuel, incorporates the former First Minister of Wales' name and an illustration of dolphins chasing mackerel to reflect his fondness of spotting dolphins in Mwnt, West Wales. The vessel, built by Mainstay Marine Solutions Ltd this year, also has room for a 6.5metre sea-boat.

Rhodri Morgan's wife Julie Morgan attended the naming ceremony in his memory. After undergoing sea trials all of the new fleet will be in operation from January.

Speaking at the official naming ceremony, Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths said:

"It's an honour to be able to name this vessel after Rhodri Morgan today; a man who gave so much to Wales and left an indelible mark on our history. This will be a fitting tribute to someone who had a great love of the Welsh seas and our wonderful nature

I've thoroughly enjoyed my tour of this new patrol vessel and

seeing first hand the cutting edge technology that will be leading the fight against illegal fishing activity.

These vessels will be at the forefront of protecting Welsh waters and our fishing industry, providing a high speed response capability to ensure Wales continues to effectively enforce fisheries and marine laws.

Ahead of the challenges that we face in a post-Brexit world, it is more important than ever that we focus on sustainability and ensuring our fishing industry is at its strongest possible so we can thrive in the years to come."