

Glastir Woodland and Restoration schemes open to bids

The schemes which provide financial support for new planting and restoration of woodland will be open to bids from the 1st April.

Glastir is the Welsh Government's flagship sustainable land management scheme, and has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government. It pays for the delivery of specific environmental goods and services aimed at:

- combating climate change
- improving water management
- maintaining and enhancing biodiversity

The Glastir Woodland Creation Scheme was set up to increase the area of new woodlands in Wales by offering financial assistance for new tree planting. It can also contribute to the First Minister's commitment to create a new National Forest for Wales.

The Glastir Woodland Restoration Scheme enables woodlands infected by *Phytophthora ramorum* and stands of larch, to be replanted to help slow down the spread of the disease. When a woodland is clear-felled, the scheme provides an opportunity to diversify tree species to increase resilience to climate change and damage from pests and diseases.

Together, they have delivered 1,081 hectares of new planting and 813 hectares of restocking, with hundreds more awaiting approval.

Lesley Griffiths said:

"The Glastir schemes provide support for a range of proposals which will improve the management of our natural resources and will contribute to the well-being of our rural communities.

"Forestry is not just good for our environment and well-being. It is also good for our economy. Well-managed woodlands can provide a continuous, sustainable supply of timber which is why we want to encourage better management of our existing woodlands across Wales.

"Disease has been an unprecedented challenge on the public estate but Natural Resources Wales has responded well. Where trees have had to be felled we are replanting with more resilient species in order to develop healthier and more varied woodlands. These will

provide a greater variety of trees to produce high quality Welsh wood and forests as well as reducing their vulnerability to disease in the future.”

Yesterday the Minister made an Oral Statement in the Senedd outlining the Welsh Government’s plans to address the challenges the environment faces and the work underway to support forestry in Wales.

Well-managed woodlands can provide a continuous, sustainable supply of timber which is why we want to encourage better management of our existing woodlands across Wales. We have already committed £5 million of RDP funding towards our very popular Timber Business Investment Scheme and we have committed a further £2 million towards a 4th round of funding which we opened for expressions of interest on 1 February. The scheme provides capital funding for improvements which add value to forests for woodland management activities, timber harvesting and timber processing.

The Welsh Government is committed to accelerating woodland creation and our refreshed Strategy gives guidance on the kinds of trees and woodlands we need in Wales and clear direction to woodland managers.

Lesley Griffiths added:

“By working with others, our aim is to optimise the multiple environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits the woodland estate provides.

“Woodlands can make an important contribution to public goods such as carbon sequestration and woodland biodiversity. We are also exploring ideas for integrating woodlands and forestry into resilient farm businesses. This can tie in with the creation of a national forest.”

Minister confirms appointments to the Education Workforce Council

The Education Workforce Council (Appointments and Membership) (Wales) Regulations 2014 provides for membership of the EWC to consist of not less than 14 members. Seven members would be directly appointed by Welsh Ministers and seven members would be appointed by Welsh Ministers having being nominated by organisations listed in the Schedule of the Education Workforce

Council (Appointments and Membership) (Wales) Regulations 2014.

Obtaining Council members through nominated and direct appointments helps to ensure that all sectors of the wider education workforce are fairly represented.

The 14 members, of whom 8 are new appointments and 6 reappointments, will start their four year term on 1 April 2019.

The members are:

Direct appointments

Reappointed:

- Angela Jardine
- Kevin Pascoe
- Berni Tyler

New Appointments:

- Dr Gwawr Taylor
- Ann Pitman Direct
- Rosemary Lait

Nominated appointments

Reappointed:

- Paul Croke (Colegau Cymru)
- Clare Jones (National Education Union – National Union Teachers section)
- Jane Setchfield (National Association of Schoolmasters *Union* of Women Teachers)

New Appointments:

- David Williams (Principal Youth Officers Group) new appointment
- Kelly Edwards (National Training Federation for Wales) new appointment
- Eithne Hughes (Association of School and College Leaders) new appointment
- Stephen Drowley (Education Training Standards Board) new appointment
- Ian Roberts (Association Education Directors Wales) new appointment

The Minister said:

“I’m delighted to confirm the appointments of the members of the Education Workforce Council. All will play an important role in maintaining and raising teaching standards and ensuring our young people receive the very best learning and support.”

These appointments were made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public

Appointments.

These posts are not remunerated and members of the ECW are not paid, however, they are reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence costs.

Members have a typical time commitment of 10-12 days per year.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for the political activity of appointees (if any declared) to be published.

- Stephen Drowley has carried out political activities in the last five years that relate to canvassing on behalf of the Labour party
- Kevin Pascoe has carried out political activities in the last five years that relate to canvassing on behalf of the Labour party
- Clare Jones has carried out political activities in the last five years that relate to packing and delivering envelopes on behalf of the Labour party
- Kelly Edwards has carried out political activities in the last five years that relate to being a member of the Labour party.

Wales making connections at London Book Fair 2019

London Book fair is one of the most significant global marketplaces for publishing and takes place this week (12-14 March) at Olympia, London.

Presence at the London Book fair provides a platform to showcase the distinct and unique culture of Wales to a global audience allowing writers, translators, publishers to present their work, strike business deals, make new connections and network.

The Wales at London Book Fair stand is co-ordinated by seven Welsh organisations working across the literature and publishing sectors (Arts Council Wales/ Wales Arts International, British Council, Literature Across Frontiers, Literature Wales, Wales Literature Exchange, Wales PEN Cymru Welsh Books Council).

The stand showcases the work of 14 publishers from Wales, as well as our thriving bilingual magazine culture. The publishers showcased on the stand are: Accent; Atebol; Cinnamon; Cyhoeddiadau Barddas; Dref Wen; Firefly; Gomer; Graffeg; Honno; Parthian; Rily; Seren; University of Wales Press and Y Lolfa.

To coincide with UNESCO Year of Indigenous Languages, this year, the Wales

stand has partnered with Publishing Scotland to provide a seminar on the subject of indigenous languages and identities in Wales, Scotland and Europe.

Translation and cultural exchange are key themes of the Wales presence this year. A launch event on the final day of the fair showcases the exciting new project of Parthian Books; with the help of a grant from Creative Europe, as well as support from the Arts Council of Wales, British Council, Welsh Books Council, , and Literature Across Frontiers, Parthian are translating several books from European languages into English.

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Lord Elis-Thomas said:

“I’m delighted that the Welsh Government has been able to provide funding for Wales’ presence at this prestigious book fair, and keep up the momentum of developing the publishers’ international profile. Wales has a lot to celebrate, share and promote in both languages and never has it been more important to bridge Wales culturally, digitally and physically to the world.”

Economy Minister in Geneva for Brexit Talks with Automotive Sector

The Minister also took an early look at the all electric Lagonda All Terrain Concept, which is being formally launched at the show, and will be the first production Battery Electric Vehicle to be manufactured at Aston Martin’s new facility in St Athan, with production starting in 2022.

Speaking from Geneva, Ken Skates said:

“The Welsh Automotive sector is a vital part of our economy, employing nearly 19,000 people in Wales. It is also vital to the UK supply chain, with more than a hundred supply chain companies and two engine plants producing over 30% of the 2.7m engines produced in the UK.

“We know the automotive industry is experiencing a period of rapid change caused by major technological change and stronger environmental standards. Add to that the potential for new tariff and non-tariff barriers and frictions and costs if the UK leaves the EU without access to the Single European Market and there is no doubt that this an uncertain and challenging time for the sector.

“We have been working with companies in the sector on a daily

basis, assisting them in a number of operational and strategic areas including investment plans, training needs, competitiveness issues and export market requirements for example.

“In what looks like being a crucial week for Brexit, this visit has provided another excellent opportunity for me to speak to the sector directly and hear about their current challenges and uncertainties.

“We know that our sector-focused Brexit awareness and workshop sessions, our Business Wales Brexit portal and the Brexit Resilience Fund are all being well received by the sector and are helping companies to prepare as best as they can for a future that is largely unknown. As a business friendly Government, it is vital that we listen and that our support continues to evolve and respond to need.

“We will continue to push the UK Government to agree a deal that gives our automotive manufacturing companies the best possible chance to continue to compete in this global industry that is so vital to the UK and the Welsh economy.

“I was especially pleased to see the fantastic all-electric Lagonda concept, which will be produced at St Athan. Our relationship with Aston Martin is a compelling example of what our business friendly approach can achieve and we will continue to work constructively and proactively with the sector in the challenging months and years ahead.”

Minister at Jones Bros to celebrate Apprenticeship Week

The visit is part of Apprenticeship Week 2019 – a week long celebration of the positive impact apprenticeships have on individuals and businesses.

The Welsh Government supports a wide range of individuals, businesses and sectors through its Apprenticeship Scheme and is committed to creating 100,000 apprenticeship opportunities over the life of the current Assembly term.

Speaking after the visit, Economy Minister Ken Skates said:

“It was a pleasure to visit Jones Bros, a family founded and run civil engineering company that employs around 350 people here in

Ruthin, and is behind some of our flagship North Wales infrastructure schemes including the Llangefni Link Road.

In the last five years, Jones Bros has recruited and trained an average of 34 apprentices per year, with each employed by the company from day one and benefiting from the high-quality training provided at its dedicated training facility.

Securing and retaining a skilled workforce will be crucial for future economic success beyond Brexit. The quality of people in a business has been proved time and again by research to be the difference between success and failure, so raising workforce skills is an investment in the future.

Apprenticeships can provide the perfect avenue into work and allow companies to find, nurture and develop staff. They also help ensure our economy is supported by a workforce that is equipped to tackle the challenges of today and ready for the opportunities of tomorrow – and as we work to prepare for a life outside of the EU this is more important than ever.

The Welsh Government is determined to see Wales lead the way. Two years into our ambitious commitment to deliver 100,000 apprenticeships here in Wales by 2021, we are already seeing apprenticeships across all sectors make a significant contribution to our economy. And it's an economy and a workforce that's growing.

The last few months have seen record levels of employment in Wales, with economic inactivity at a record low. This is testament to our ongoing work to drive prosperity and increase resilience within our economy, with apprenticeships an important part of this mix."

Richard Owen, training manager at Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK, said:

"Jones Bros is an industry leader for apprenticeships, and the feedback we have from those taking part is incredible.

Our apprenticeship programmes not only train the learners how to carry out their work, but they give them life skills and a very solid foundation for their career progression.

The vast majority of our apprentices have stayed with the company after completing their apprenticeship, with some now enrolled on our higher apprenticeship course as part of their career development.

We were pleased to have the chance to showcase how our apprentices have, and will continue to, impact the Welsh economy by working and developing new skills on significant projects in the region such as the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd Bypass."