

## **Tabor Centre in Brynmawr opens thanks to £499,969 Welsh Government funding**

The Tabor Baptist Chapel, which was built in 1835, has been completely refurbished with £499,969 from the Welsh Government's Community Facilities programme and £398,181 capital and £101,787 revenue from the Big Lottery.

On a visit to the official opening of the Tabor Centre, Communities and Children's Secretary, Carl Sargeant said: "This new and improved centre has been made possible by capital funding of £499,969 from the Welsh Government's Community Facilities Programme and £398,181 from the Big Lottery's People and Places Fund.

"The centre will now be well placed to provide access to vital services as well as volunteering and training opportunities. The range of activities on offer will also provide people of all ages with a chance to socialise and build new friendships, helping to combat isolation.

"The Community Facilities Programme has to date provided funding totalling over £16 million to 60 projects across Wales."

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## **'Fantastic facility' made possible thanks to Welsh Government funding**

The Welsh Government has approved over £1.9m for Caerphilly County Borough Council over the 3 years of the VVP programme.

The range of projects the funding has helped to deliver include environmental improvements to Rowan Place; the refurbishment of the Hafod Deg centre which includes Men in Sheds; Ty Coch Play Area; the removal of a dilapidated footbridge and unused community centre at Lansbury Park; CAB Hub redevelopment and the Lansbury Park Energy Efficiency scheme.

During the visit the Cabinet Secretary officially opened the new workshop at the Hafod Deg Resource Centre in Rhymney and visited Rowan Place to view the improvements that have been made possible thanks to the Welsh Government funding.

Carl Sargeant said:

“I am pleased to see how Welsh Government funding has helped make a difference in this area. The work undertaken at Hafod Deg and Rowan Place demonstrates what can be achieved through strong partnership working. This is a fantastic facility for the local community.”

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## **Extra £30m to support small and medium size construction companies**

It is anticipated that the loan fund, which enables SMEs to access affordable finance, will help more local companies build new homes.

The Cabinet Secretary said that innovation and an increased role for SME home builders will help identify alternatives to the existing model for house building.

Carl Sargeant said:

“SME house builders were hit particularly hard by the global economic crisis and continue to be affected. I hope the expansion of the Property Development Fund will have a significant impact in helping SMEs who are building homes, and encouraging more local companies to become developers.

“We have a challenging target of delivering 20,000 affordable homes over this term of government. In working to meet our target, I want as many homes as possible to be delivered by SMEs, creating new capacity in this sector. I want to see people thinking innovatively about how we can do things differently to address the challenges we all face.”

The loan fund, which is run by Finance Wales, supports small and medium sized construction companies, who are unable to access affordable finance from traditional sources, to get projects off the ground to build new homes.

Cenydd Rowlands, Property Fund Manager at Finance Wales:

“The additional £30m is a real boost to the fund and with an expanded team in place we’re excited to support even more small to medium-sized developers. The mixed-use and residential projects we can fund have direct impact on their local communities through direct and indirect employment opportunities as well as providing much needed quality housing.”

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## Chetwood Financial comes to Wrexham

The start-up, which is creating 90 high quality jobs in North East Wales, is led by a management team who have operated at senior executive levels in UK retail banks and overseas.

The company pride themselves on using state of the art technology to develop and offer innovative financial services products for consumers. Their move to Wales has been supported by £750,000 business finance from the Welsh Government.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“I am very pleased to welcome Chetwood to Wrexham, and to have supported their move here with £750,000 of Welsh Government funding.

“Our investment in Chetwood is helping to support the creation of 90 well paid skilled jobs, in what is becoming a thriving professional and financial services sector in North East Wales.

“It is particularly pleasing to see Chetwood working with Coleg Cambria, Glyndwr University and others to ensure their business capitalises on local talent.

“With the region attracting a growing number of financial specialists, not least our own Development Bank for Wales, I look forward to seeing Chetwood Financial building North East Wales’ reputation as a destination for financial service companies and forming part of a lasting and financial hub in this part of Wales.”

Speaking at the launch CEO Andy Mielczarek said:

“It’s a huge milestone for us to finally open our doors and to be able to operate right here in my home town, Wrexham. The assistance from the Welsh Government has been integral and we’re confident that their investment will pay dividends for the people of Wrexham and the wider public as we fulfil our plans to create smarter financial products that make people better off.”

Speaking about the launch COO Mark Jenkinson added:

“It might sound complex when we say we’re a product manufacturer rather than a bank – but what we’re offering is refreshingly simple. We design really good, cost-efficient financial products that will make use of cutting edge software so they’re different to the products currently out there. Whether that’s a loan, savings account or mortgage – they will be clever, dynamic products that make people better off and give them a better experience too.”

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## Organisations that promote Spanish and German welcomed to Wales by Kirsty Williams

The Spanish Embassy Education Office & Goethe Institut Offices will be based at Cardiff University. They have each received £10,000 of Welsh Government funding to set up in the city.

In December the Education Secretary signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Spanish Government which included an agreement to support, increase and improve the teaching of Spanish in Wales.

The Goethe-Institut promotes the study of German abroad and encourages international cultural exchange. In the UK German Teacher Awards 2017, two of the three winners were teachers from Wales.

The support is part of the Welsh Government’s Global Futures plan to promote modern foreign languages for pupils and students.

Kirsty Williams said:

“I am delighted to celebrate the launch of the Goethe Institut and Spanish Embassy Education Office’s presence at Cardiff University.

“We want more of our pupils and learners to recognise the importance of modern foreign languages and the significant life and career opportunities they can provide. Our aim is to improve the learning and teaching experience of modern foreign languages in our schools, to make them subjects that more choose to study at GCSE, A-level and at university.

“I want our young people to become global citizens, able to speak to people in other languages and to understand

and appreciate their own and other cultures.”