



# Bay of Life Watch NEWSLETTER

## **September 2014 Edition**

**Business and Education – Health & Life Science – Development Update**  
**Exciting news from around the region - Events and Activities**

Please send your contributions/features for the newsletter by the 25th of each month.

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## **Business and Education**

### **Coastal Housing Group latest to partner with Swansea Bay Futures**

Swansea based housing association and social business Coastal Housing Group is the latest company to partner with Swansea Bay Futures, the not-for-profit company which works to promote and connect businesses in the Swansea Bay region. With over 5000 properties, Coastal provides homes for rent and for sale in Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire, whilst also providing support for older people, people who require adapted homes and people who need help managing their tenancy. Focused on regeneration and sustaining communities, Coastal believes in the lasting social and economic benefits that come from the creation of high quality mixed-use developments which provide new homes and premises for new businesses. By partnering with Swansea Bay Futures, Coastal hopes to play its part in growing and sustaining the local economy and contributing to the success of the area. Debbie Green, Coastal Housing Group's chief executive, said: "We are very pleased to be partnering with Swansea Bay Futures and hope to contribute to the success of the Swansea Bay region, making it a better place to live, work and visit. We have a long term commitment to Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot and, supported by our regeneration activities, we aim to play our part in sustaining the local economy; focusing on place, people and communities. In addition to building on our existing relationships, we also hope to expand our business networks and create new opportunities for partnership working."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/coastal-housing-group-latest-to-partner-with-swansea-bay-futures](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/coastal-housing-group-latest-to-partner-with-swansea-bay-futures)

### **Swansea businessman appointed to senior electrical industry role**

A Swansea businessman, Dave Kieft, has been appointed to a senior role at the industry's top trade association. David, who is a director of Swansea-based RDM Electrical Services Ltd, DRS Facilities Management Ltd and EFT Energy Consultants, has been inaugurated as Senior Vice President of the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA). Speaking of his appointment, Dave said: "I'm delighted to have been offered this role, and want to use this as an opportunity to put electrical and building services engineering back on the map."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-businessman-appointed-to-senior-electrical-industry-role](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-businessman-appointed-to-senior-electrical-industry-role)

### **Former factory site set for starring role in city's entertainment industry**

A former Swansea car parts factory which has been reborn as a film set could be set to expand further after a re-brand as Swansea Gate Business Park. The 250,000 sq ft facility, which has already been used as a set to film hit US series Da Vinci's Demons, will be marketing itself as a fully-fledged studio. Owner Roy Thomas, in association with production designer Ed Thomas and other prominent film industry players, has transformed the premises to the largest building of its kind in Europe and owners have also hinted at the possibility of further expansion as development continues. In addition to impacting the economy, the studios have been providing a chance for local youngsters to learn more about careers in this exciting area, with visits to the studios by students from schools and colleges within the Swansea Bay area, proving popular. Speaking of the plans and success so far, Roy Thomas said: "This is the third year of what is hopefully a seven year transition project. My hope is that we can turn all this energy and commitment into opportunities for new generations, who can develop a craft in this fast growing industry."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/former-factory-site-set-for-starring-role-in-citys-entertainment-industry](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/former-factory-site-set-for-starring-role-in-citys-entertainment-industry)

### **Customers and profits rise at Insurance group**

Customers with car insurer Admiral, which has offices in Swansea, Cardiff and Newport, rose by 9 per cent to 3.94 million in the first half of the year, according to latest figures released by the firm. This was accompanied by a rise in profit before tax of 2% to £184.9m, although turnover dropped by 5%. Henry Engelhardt, chief executive officer, said: "Thanks to improved retention levels, we now insure over 130,000 more customers in the UK than at this time last year. Outside the UK, our international insurance operations continue to grow and make progress. Our European price comparison businesses had a profitable first half of the year and we're encouraged by the very early indicators from comparenow.com in the US."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/customers-and-profits-rise-at-insurance-group](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/customers-and-profits-rise-at-insurance-group)

### **Tata Steel lodges plan to boost Port Talbot operation**

Metal processing giant Tata Steel has lodged plans to boost production in Port Talbot in a move that could see an additional 600,000 tonnes of iron pass through the plant. Tata Steel proposed the installation of two new boilers and two steam turbines in a bid to increase production to 4.7 million tonnes of iron per year from the current 4.1 million tonnes. If approved, the plant's maximum energy capacity could reach 225MWe, enough to power 225,000 homes. The documents submitted by Tata Steel state that the development has the potential to deliver "positive effects on economic activities" during the construction phase, including the creation of local jobs, with the company pledging to use local contractors. The proposals will be reviewed by Wales Planning Inspectorate officers, with a decision expected in early September.

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/tata-steel-lodges-plan-to-boost-port-talbot-operation](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/tata-steel-lodges-plan-to-boost-port-talbot-operation)

### **£100m for investment in new equipment by UK companies**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has agreed to provide £100m to support investments made by small and medium-sized business in the UK over the next two years. The dedicated lending programme, that includes a matching contribution from Societe Generale Equipment Finance, is expected to help firms invest in transport, high-tech and industrial equipment by providing lower cost financing for up to 8 years, providing medium and long-term financing and an alternative to regular bank lending. Eligible investment includes commercial vehicles and agricultural machinery, IT, office and medical equipment, production and packaging machines and a broad range of construction equipment. EIB vice president, Jonathan Taylor, said: "Investment in new equipment is often essential to remain competitive and create new jobs. The European Investment Bank is committed to supporting small and medium sized companies and is pleased to work with Societe Generale Equipment Finance to achieve these shared goals in the UK. Financing that addresses the specific needs of small firms is even more important at a time of improving business confidence."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/100m-for-investment-in-new-equipment-by-uk-companies](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/100m-for-investment-in-new-equipment-by-uk-companies)

### **Victorian village school set to become unique eco centre for new green technologies**

Hen Ysgol, in Carmarthenshire is undergoing a mammoth £500,000 eco transformation and is set to be one of the greenest buildings in the country, with a range of technologies in use and on show throughout the building. All of the different technologies are linked together with an intelligent buffer tank to provide hot water and central heating on demand at a fraction of the cost of the mainstream fuels. A large showroom and salesroom will enable home owners and businesses to see the technologies in action before buying, while working 'child friendly' models will be displayed throughout to help school children understand and learn in a safe environment. The development has attracted a £67,500 grant from the Wales Economic Growth Fund, which is supporting five new jobs. The building will be the new operations centre for Plumbers, Electricians, Carpenters Ltd which was founded by Jayne and Ian Hall-Edwards who have re-trained in the installation of green technologies and currently employs eleven people. Speaking about the development, Jayne said: "The grant support from the Welsh Government was vital in taking our project forward and used towards installing a range of green technologies and also enabled us to take on four apprentices. We aim to raise awareness of what is available, savings that can be made and which technologies can be linked with customers' existing primary heat source. They will be able to see a range of working displays such as solar photovoltaic and rain water harvesting."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/victorian-village-school-set-to-become-unique-eco-centre-for-new-green-technologies](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/victorian-village-school-set-to-become-unique-eco-centre-for-new-green-technologies)

### **Coastal leading the way in providing apprenticeship opportunities**

Swansea-based Coastal Housing Group is leading the way in helping people who want to work in the construction industry, having to date helped over 30 local people take up paid apprenticeships with its contractors, giving them valuable experience working on construction projects across Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot. The company is looking to provide even more apprenticeship opportunities in future having played a role in the development of Cyfle, the South West Wales Shared Apprentice Scheme, which directly employs apprentices who are then placed with an employer to gain experience whilst learning at college. This approach removes the employment burden from contractors and since its inception in September 2013 Cyfle has employed more than 140 apprentices across south west Wales, with 75 new apprentices due to start this year. Clare Watkins, Coastal Housing's targeted recruitment and training manager, said: "We work collaboratively with our contractors to ensure they deliver employment and training opportunities for local people on every new housing scheme or new maintenance contract they take on. Apprenticeships are an extremely popular choice as both contractors and students gain from the experience. They are invaluable for youngsters looking to get into construction and gain on the job experience where they will learn more about the industry and pick up the practical skills they will need to progress their careers."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/coastal-leading-the-way-in-providing-apprenticeship-opportunities](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/coastal-leading-the-way-in-providing-apprenticeship-opportunities)

### **Swansea Bay sees a boost in GCSE and A level results.**

Swansea Bay schools have recorded a rise in GCSE results. Nearly a quarter (23.3%) of Swansea students were awarded A\* and A grades - a 0.9% boost on last year, and almost 4% more than the figure for the whole of Wales. Initial analysis also shows that 59.5% of pupils got 5 GCSEs at grade A\*-C, including maths and either Welsh or English - up from 55.3% in 2013. In Neath Port Talbot, schools also secured outstanding performances at GCSE with 68% of students achieving A\*-C grades. Ffynone House School, a leading independent school also achieved outstanding results in both GCSE and A levels. More than 60 percent of students gained A\* or A in their GCSE results, while 66 percent of A-level students gained the top two grades, with 100 percent pass rate at A-level being achieved for the third year running. Head teacher, Mrs Nicola Walker, said: "The results this year demonstrate the excellent consistency of achievement at Ffynone and highlights the reasons we had such an excellent Estyn inspection. Students should be very proud of all they have achieved."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-bay-sees-a-boost-in-gcse-and-a-level-results](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-bay-sees-a-boost-in-gcse-and-a-level-results)



### **Gower College Swansea and NPTC Group celebrate A level success**

Students at both Gower College Swansea and NPTC group have been celebrating after achieving excellent results at A Level. At Gower College Swansea, the overall pass rate was 98%, with an impressive 25% of the grades awarded being A\*/A. 34 individual A Level subjects had a 100% pass rate and over 500 A Level students are now progressing to higher education, with over 150 heading for Russell Group universities. The college has maintained its outstanding record of student progression to Oxbridge colleges and nine have been accepted this year to study at Oxford or Cambridge. Vocational students also excelled with 45% of students being awarded a Distinction and over 120 students were awarded a triple Distinction, which is the equivalent of three A grades at A Level. 450 vocational students are also progressing to higher education. Students at the NPTC Group of Colleges, meanwhile have achieved an overall pass rate in excess of 99%. In 40 subjects out of the 46 offered, students achieved 100% pass rate and more than half the students sitting A Level exams achieved A\* to B grades. In addition, a record 67 students achieved an excellent outcome of triple distinction grades in the National/Extended Diploma qualifications, with a further 22 students achieving the highest possible grade profile of D\*, D\*, D\*. Mark Dacey, chief executive officer of NPTC Group, said: "This continued success strengthens further our reputation as being a high achieving College. The quality of education we deliver along with that of our partner schools keeps growing and it means we are providing our students with the best possible opportunity to gain outstanding qualifications."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/gower-college-swansea-celebrates-a-levels-results-with-98-pass-rate](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/gower-college-swansea-celebrates-a-levels-results-with-98-pass-rate)

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/success-keeps-growing-at-nptc-group](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/success-keeps-growing-at-nptc-group)

### **Student satisfaction levels reach new high at Swansea University**

The latest National Student Survey (NSS) results show that satisfaction levels amongst students at Swansea University are continuing to rise, with 89% of students responding that they are satisfied with their course. The NSS is a comprehensive UK-wide survey of students' views carried out independently and anonymously. Students are asked their views on areas such as teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, the organisation and management of their course, learning resources, personal development and their Students' Union. Over 2,220 Swansea students completed the 2014 survey and they rated their overall satisfaction with their University at 89%, 4% higher than the average satisfaction in Welsh universities and 3% higher than the average of all UK institutions. This puts Swansea University in the top 20 universities in the UK. Swansea University have a total of 19 subjects in the top ten for their subject areas nationally and are first for student satisfaction for Human and Social Geography, Physical Geography and Environmental Science, Historical and Philosophical Studies and Social Work. Professor Alan Speight, pro-vice chancellor for student experience, said: "These results reflect the continued efforts of the university, working in partnership with our students, to enhance the student experience over recent years."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/student-satisfaction-levels-reach-new-high-at-swansea-university](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/student-satisfaction-levels-reach-new-high-at-swansea-university)

### **Swans, West Ham, Scarlets - jobs success for sports science graduates**

Three Swansea sports science graduates will be using their skills at the highest level of elite sport, having secured jobs with Premier League football teams Swansea City and West Ham and regional rugby team the Scarlets. The students all followed postgraduate courses in Sports Science at Swansea, which is one of the top departments in the country, ranking 8th in the UK, according to The Guardian University Guide 2015. Tom Taylor is now a sports scientist at West Ham Utd, working with the first team to monitor the recovery and preparation of the players during the season; William Sparkes has joined local Premier League team Swansea City as an assistant sport scientist; and Rhys Jones has joined the Scarlets rugby team as their strength and conditioning coach. Dr Liam Kilduff, associate professor at A-STEM, said: "We aim to ensure that postgraduate students conduct projects that enhance their academic knowledge but also develop their applied understanding and experience. Both these coupled together significantly enhance the students employability prospects."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swans-west-ham-scarlets-jobs-success-for-sports-science-graduates](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swans-west-ham-scarlets-jobs-success-for-sports-science-graduates)

### **Welsh researchers breakthrough in promoting sustainable EU prawn fishery**

Scientists at Swansea University have made a significant breakthrough in rearing and hatching *Nephrops norvegicus* (Norway lobster – also known as Dublin Bay prawn, scampi and langoustine). This is as part of an international initiative to develop and promote the sustainability of the EU's prawn fishery, one of Europe's most lucrative shellfish, with 59,000 tons a year caught commercially with a first sale value of almost £200 million. Since 2012, researchers from the University's Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Research (CSAR) have formed part of an international collaborative project called NEPHROPS, worth almost £2 million. CSAR, based in Swansea University's College of Science, has played a key role in developing a pilot scale hatchery for the species, with an overarching goal to test feasibility for releasing juvenile animals into the wild to assist restocking. Due to high natural mortality in the wild, survival during larval stages is very low, and previous efforts to rear larvae in captivity have yielded juveniles from at best 5% of the initial larval population. After three seasons' efforts, the CSAR team has successfully optimised larval rearing at pilot commercial scale, with success to metamorphosis reaching in excess of 50%. Dr Adam Powell, project leader at Swansea University, said: "This breakthrough is a testimony to the cutting edge facilities, technical support and innovation at CSAR."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/welsh-researchers-breakthrough-in-promoting-sustainable-eu-prawn-fishery](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/welsh-researchers-breakthrough-in-promoting-sustainable-eu-prawn-fishery)

### **Sheepdogs herding model has wide implications**

Swansea University scientists have uncovered the secret to how one man and his dog can round up a herd of sheep and it is a deceptively simple process involving just two basic mathematical rules. One causes a sheepdog to close any gaps it sees between dispersing sheep. The other results in sheep being driven forward once the gaps are sufficiently closed. A computer simulation showed that obeying these two rules alone allowed a single shepherd - or sheepdog - to control a flock of more than 100 individuals. The discovery has implications for human crowd control as well as the development of robots that can gather and herd livestock, say the scientists. Writing in the Journal of the Royal Society Interface, the researchers conclude: "Our approach should support efficient designs for herding autonomous, interacting agents in a variety of contexts. Obvious cases are robot-assisted herding of livestock, and keeping animals away from sensitive areas, but applications range from control of flocking robots, cleaning up of environments and human crowd control."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/sheepdogs-use-simple-rules-to-herd-sheep](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/sheepdogs-use-simple-rules-to-herd-sheep)

## **Health and Life Science**

### **£900,000 boost to Swansea based ground breaking Multiple Sclerosis research project**

The MS Society has awarded £900,000 over the next three years to the UK MS Register, based in the College of Medicine at Swansea University. The UK MS Register is one of the Society's major investments and encourages people with multiple sclerosis (MS) to enter their experiences of the condition into an online portal – in turn, helping scientists and researchers understand more about MS and how it affects people. Data from the Register has already revealed new information about levels of anxiety and depression in people with MS, and about the impact of disability on employment status, knowledge that can be used to support campaigns for fair, relevant policy and improved health care. The new funding will focus on ensuring NHS hospitals across the UK link the data they have on patients to existing data held in the MS Register, which helps to validate information. The project is led by associate professor of health informatics at Swansea University, Kerina Jones, and project-managed by Rod Middleton, also based at the University. Kerina Jones said: "We are extremely pleased and excited to be embarking on this next phase, as it will allow us to engage with greater numbers of NHS Neurology clinics and to enrich the data on the Register. We are grateful to all the people with MS who have already enrolled, and we want to encourage more people to take part, to build up the data for research to improve health and well-being."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/900000-boost-to-swanea-based-ground-breaking-multiple-sclerosis-research-project](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/900000-boost-to-swanea-based-ground-breaking-multiple-sclerosis-research-project)

## Development Update

### **Coastal housing plans for a £5.5million residential development in SA1**

Coastal Housing Group has acquired a 1.5 acre site from the Welsh Government for a £5.5m residential development on SA1 Swansea Waterfront. The site, acquired by Coastal Housing for £720,000, will be the Group's third investment on SA1 and the project is part of Coastal's £50million plus development programme over the next three years. Subject to planning, work on the new development is due to start in 2016 and will provide a range of affordable one and two bedroom apartments, as well as 27 three and four bed family homes which will be for sale. Gareth Davies, Coastal Housing's director of development, said: "We are extremely pleased to have another opportunity to be involved in the ongoing development at SA1. It will provide much needed homes for rent and for sale in what is becoming one of the most sought after locations in Swansea."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/coastal-housing-makes-third-investment-on-sa1-with-plans-for-a-55million-residential-development](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/coastal-housing-makes-third-investment-on-sa1-with-plans-for-a-55million-residential-development)

### **Exciting new Mumbles development gets go-ahead from planners**

Plans for the high-class Oyster Wharf waterfront development on Mumbles seafront have been given the go-ahead by Swansea planners. The development, by Nextcolour Developments Limited, will include four sophisticated restaurants, a gym/spa and new retail facilities. The existing iconic 1930s Tivoli building will be reinstated as the focal point of the development after extensive refurbishment. The company has also acquired the Co-op's existing Mumbles Road premises, which will be converted into two further retail units to enhance the retail mix. Nextcolour's commercial director, James Morse, said: "We are already on site carrying out preliminary works and have a very visible office adjacent to Tivoli Arcade in Mumbles; construction work will begin January 2015 – it is very exciting."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/exciting-new-mumbles-development-gets-go-ahead-from-planners](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/exciting-new-mumbles-development-gets-go-ahead-from-planners)

### **Glynneath improvement works near completion**

Works to regenerate the centre of Glynneath, being undertaken thanks to £360,000 of funding from the Welsh Government's Western Valleys Regeneration Area initiative, are approaching completion, ahead of schedule. The improvement works will greatly enhance the appearance and attractiveness of the town and also increase the accessibility of the town centre. They include new paving, the widening of pavements, new street furniture and the creation of a new public car park. Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council, Cllr. Ali Thomas, said: "Glynneath is a strategically important town in the Neath Valley and I am pleased to see this work progressing well. The Council is committed to its valleys communities and we will continue to work hard to secure further funding for other projects in the regeneration programme to fully realise the potential of this part of the County Borough."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/glynneath-improvement-works-near-completion](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/glynneath-improvement-works-near-completion)

### **Baglan Energy Park link bridge on target**

Work is progressing well on a £7.3m bridge which will link both sides of Baglan Energy Park in Neath Port Talbot. Baglan Energy Park is a significant employment site in the area and the bridge will open up the wider Baglan Bay area for further investment and regeneration opportunities. The bridge will also create a viable through-route for buses that can deliver employees close to the offices and SMEs on the Park, connecting with Swansea, Neath, and Port Talbot. The project is part of the Regional Transport Plan and the majority of the funding comes from a number of Welsh Government funds. The main supports for the bridge are now completed and, following erection of the structural steelwork, construction of the concrete deck and parapet walls will continue over the winter months. The project is on track to open in March next year. Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council, Cllr Ali Thomas, said: "Bridging the gap between the two sides of the Park will greatly benefit businesses and investors by improving Baglan Energy Park's internal and external transport connections."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/baglan-energy-park-link-bridge-update](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/baglan-energy-park-link-bridge-update)

### **Kier Construction begins work on Neath Town Centre redevelopment**

Kier Construction is on site for the first phase of Neath town centre redevelopment. Hoardings are up and demolition of the Magistrate's Court building is underway and should be completed by the end of September. Excavation and piling work for the new 600 space multi-storey car park and retail unit are about to start, with the existing multi-storey car park remaining in place until the new facility has been built. The next visible construction milestone will be the erection of the new steel frames later this year. The first phase of the town centre redevelopment is funded by the Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales (RIFW) which provides funding to stimulate and support urban development projects and Neath is the first development in the country to benefit from RIFW. Councillor Ali Thomas, leader of Neath Port Talbot Council, said: "This development plays a key part in our efforts to build a better future for the county borough as an attractive place to live, visit and do business. The town centre development is one of the few schemes of its kind starting in the UK this year and I am pleased that our plans for Neath are becoming a reality."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/work-begins-on-neath-town-centre-redevelopment](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/work-begins-on-neath-town-centre-redevelopment)

### **Work progresses on new leisure centre for Aberavon**

Developer Corban Investments and their contractor, Heron Bros Ltd., have started construction of the new £13.4m leisure facility which is being built adjacent to Reel Cinema in Aberavon. The investment in the landmark seafront location will result in a purpose-built beachfront leisure centre, complete with 'wave design' roof and featuring a 25m pool with moveable floor, multiple changing facilities, gym/fitness suite, spin room, dance studio, four court sports hall, cafe and community rooms. The main earthworks element of the contract is underway and excavation work for the new pool is progressing well. This work is likely to continue until mid-September, followed by construction of the concrete pool deck. The next visible construction activity will be the erection of the new steel frame later this year. Work has also started inside the existing building to form the foundations for new internal partitions and additional steel framework. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2015. Councillor Ali Thomas, leader of Neath Port Talbot Council, said: "I am pleased to see good progress being made on the construction of the new leisure centre. This will be a wonderful twenty first century facility we can all be proud of and will be a focal point in enhancing our strategy and vision for regenerating the whole area."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/work-progresses-on-new-leisure-centre-for-aberavon](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/work-progresses-on-new-leisure-centre-for-aberavon)

## **Swansea University Campus Development Update**

### **Finance Minister tops out Innovation Hub at new Swansea University Campus**

Welsh Government Finance Minister Jane Hutt has visited the site of Swansea University's Bay Campus to top out the Engineering Central building. The building will be part of the College of Engineering, and home to the Innovation Hub which will provide world-class research facilities and enable the university to significantly increase its ability to access research council grants and other sources of funding. It will also provide an 'open innovation' environment for industry to collaborate and engage with academic expertise to help develop manufacturing products and processes and introduce new ones, contributing to the economic regeneration of the region. The building is being developed by the university's framework contractor Leadbitter, which is part of Bouygues UK – one of the nation's leading construction companies. The £450m Bay Campus development, which will welcome its first students on site in September 2015, has benefitted from £50m through the Welsh Government, including £35m from the European Regional Development Fund. This includes support for the Innovation Hub and for an Engineering Manufacturing Centre. Jane Hutt said: "I am pleased to see how EU funds have helped establish a leading research and innovation facility to drive forward our knowledge economy whilst offering local employment and skills opportunities in the construction of the campus".

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/finance-minister-tops-out-innovation-hub-at-new-swansea-university-campus](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/finance-minister-tops-out-innovation-hub-at-new-swansea-university-campus)



### **Bay Campus contractor helps apprentice skills**

Reussir Ltd, one of the brickwork contractors working on the development of Swansea University's Bay Campus, has been playing an important role in helping develop local apprentices. As well as supporting a placement under the Cyfle Shared Apprentice Scheme, which allows apprentices to complete a full apprenticeship programme by working with a number of different employers, the company has also donated materials which enable particular construction method skills to be taught in college. Over 1 million bricks will be used on site, which is being constructed by St. Modwen, the land owner and development partner for the £450million Bay Campus. If laid end to end these would reach from North to South Wales. Managing director of Reussir, Roger Byrne, who was himself 'Apprentice of the Year' in 1980 while working for John Laings in London, said: "I am extremely passionate about my trade and take great pride in the training of young future bricklayers. I think with the recession passing and growth returning to the construction industry it is essential for us all to work together for our futures."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/bay-campus-contractor-helps-apprentice-skills](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/bay-campus-contractor-helps-apprentice-skills)

## **Exciting news from around the region!**

### **Preparations continue for Dylan's 100<sup>th</sup>**

Work is underway on improving Swansea's Dylan Thomas exhibition in readiness for what would have been his 100th birthday in October. The permanent exhibition is now temporarily closed while work to improve access, digitise artefacts and introduce new information about Dylan's life story takes place thanks to a major grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The permanent exhibition area will also be refurbished, and a new learning space and temporary exhibition room will be introduced.

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/preparations-continue-for-dylans-100th](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/preparations-continue-for-dylans-100th)

### **Michael Sheen to record Dylan Thomas for celebrations**

As part of the Dylan Thomas 100 celebration events, Frost/Nixon actor Michael Sheen will be taking part in a project called Poems in October which runs from October 25 to November 9 and involves a series of minute-long recordings celebrating some of the most famous Dylan Thomas and William Shakespeare works of all-time. The train station, Swansea Market, the Grand Theatre, the No Sign Wine Bar and the Uplands Tavern are among the locations where the bite-size recordings will be installed where they will be heard either through concealed speakers or PA systems.

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/sheen-records-dylan-for-city-centre-project](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/sheen-records-dylan-for-city-centre-project)

### **International stars to be part of 'Dylathon' performance**

Oscar nominated star Ian McKellen has signed up to join a line-up of stars for the 36-hour marathon reading of Dylan Thomas's works in Swansea this autumn. Other participants include Ruth Jones, Rob Brydon and Sian Phillips; Hollywood stars Michael Sheen and Matthew Rhys; and the BBC's economics editor Robert Peston. It will take place at Swansea's Grand Theatre running from 11am on October 26 through until 11pm on October 27 — exactly 100 years to the day of Thomas' birth. Swansea Bay schoolchildren and community groups will also be involved in the ambitious project alongside choirs and bands. The extravaganza, which will be the climax to the poet's official 2014 centenary celebrations, will be directed by Olivier award-winner Michael Bogdanov from Neath. It will include all of Thomas's popular short stories, poems and broadcasts including Under Milk Wood. The final session will feature some of the best known poems and readings by Hannah Ellis, Thomas' granddaughter, as well as the Prince of Wales's recording of Fern Hill. Thomas fans can buy tickets for the entire 36 hours, for 12 hours or for a three-hour block. Author and Dylan expert Jeff Towns said: "Dylan Thomas's centenary year has, is, and will continue to surprise and enthrall. But The Dylathon is something quite different and very special, and I feel privileged to have been involved in the project from the start, and aim to be there at the finish."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/lord-of-the-rings-star-ian-mckellen-signs-up-for-36-hour-dylan-thomas-reading](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/lord-of-the-rings-star-ian-mckellen-signs-up-for-36-hour-dylan-thomas-reading)



### **Swansea City story Jack to a King to hit the big screen**

As Swansea City embark on another Premier League campaign, memories of their remarkable ten-year rise from near extinction are never far away for fans who have followed them through thick and thin. Those who came together to save the club they love have now told their stories for a documentary film - Jack to a King - celebrating the Swans' survival. In 2001 Swansea City were sold for £1 to businessman Tony Petty whose turbulent three-month reign almost brought the club to its knees. His plan to cut costs by sacking players met huge opposition from supporters who joined forces to take over the club and rebuild its fortunes. The film shows how close the club came to going under until fans on the terraces became heroes of the hour. Victory on the last day of the 2002/3 season ensured the Swans escaped the drop into the lower leagues and gave them the chance to regroup and rebuild. By 2011 they had climbed from the bottom of the fourth-tier of English football to clinch promotion to Premier League. Jack to a King goes on general release on Friday 12 September and preview screenings have proved it has a wider appeal than just football fans. Executive producer Mal Pope said: "The reaction from a non-football audience has been incredibly positive because they fall in love with the characters. This film isn't really for Swansea or even about football - it's about these strange characters. If it was in America it would be about people in New Jersey taking over a steelworks. It's a universal story."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-city-story-jack-to-a-king-to-hit-the-big-screen](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-city-story-jack-to-a-king-to-hit-the-big-screen)

### **Swansea University and Ospreys seal two-year deal**

The Ospreys and Swansea University have confirmed a new two-year commercial agreement, cementing the existing long-term relationship between the organisations. The deal will again see the University's logo feature on both the senior team and age-grade jerseys, with the commercial and research partnership between the two organisations seeing the region supporting the already successful rugby structure at the University by engaging sporting scholars with rugby experts. In addition, a programme of research collaboration is well underway between the two bodies, not only on the pitch but also with students from the School of Management undertaking work experience within the commercial arm of the Ospreys' business. Rugby players at the University are also benefiting from nutritional testing and advice, sports psychology, lifestyle planning and strength and conditioning testing and coaching. Swansea University/Ospreys rugby scholarships will also be made available for potential students wishing to pursue a dual career path. Professor Richard B Davies, vice chancellor of Swansea University, said: "This agreement continues to underline the relationship between two globally renowned but Swansea based institutions. The physical presence of the Swansea University logo on the Ospreys jersey signifies our commitment to the relationship with the Ospreys as we continue to work together and share both expertise and sporting resources."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-university-and-ospreys-seal-two-year-deal](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-university-and-ospreys-seal-two-year-deal)

### **Swansea will be home for Canada and Fiji Rugby World Cup squads**

Swansea will be the temporary home of the Canada and Fiji rugby squads during next year's global showpiece Rugby World Cup. Players and officials from both teams will be based at Swansea University for the duration of their stay in the tournament, after it was announced as an official training venue. The university is one of 41 venues to be selected as a base camp for one or more of the competition's 20 teams. The search was launched in April last year with around 100 bids in total being received by tournament bosses. Paul Robinson, from Swansea University's estates team, said: "We are very pleased to be hosting the Canada and Fiji teams for the 2015 Rugby World Cup. As the success of [the recent] IPC European Championships showed, the sports facilities we can offer here at Swansea University are making us a major centre for international sport."

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-will-be-home-for-canada-and-fiji-rugby-world-cup-squads](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/swansea-will-be-home-for-canada-and-fiji-rugby-world-cup-squads)

## City to host heritage conference

Plans are being drawn up for a major conference in Swansea this autumn which will look at the way UK museums look after the country's heritage. Friends of Swansea Museum have been putting their heads together for the British Association of Friends of Museums event, to be held in the city between September 26 and 28. The theme for this year's event is 'Keeping Heritage Alive'. The city became the host venue because of the number of museums and art galleries as well as panels in the Brangwyn Hall, along with places of interest in the Gower. The Marriott Conference Centre event is being supported by the Friends of Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Friends of the Egypt Centre and the National Waterfront Museum. The conference programme will include a number of excursions and discussions on topics ranging from Digital Interpretation and Community engagement.

[www.abayoflife.com/en/news/city-to-host-heritage-conference](http://www.abayoflife.com/en/news/city-to-host-heritage-conference)

## Events and Activities

### BUSINESS EVENTS:

#### **Sell2Wales – Interactive Workshop**

**9 September, 09.15 – 12.30**

**Neath Port Talbot College, Port Talbot**

[www.business.wales.gov.uk](http://www.business.wales.gov.uk)

An interactive workshop which will provide an overview of the Sell2Wales website and its use as a tool for businesses wishing to supply the public sector direct and through subcontractors.

#### **ISD Free Business & Design Support Breakfast**

**10 September, 08.00 – 12.00**

**Liberty Stadium, Swansea**

[www.isdwales.com](http://www.isdwales.com)

A free networking breakfast where you can also find out what help and support you can access for your business from the Institute for Sustainable Design (ISD). There will also be an opportunity find out about number of ISD R&D projects that have had a significant impact on the businesses involved.

#### **Collaborative Working for SMEs**

**16 September, 9.00 – 13.00**

**Aberavon Beach Hotel, Port Talbot**

[www.business.wales.gov.uk](http://www.business.wales.gov.uk)

This collaborative working event will be jointly facilitated by the Wales Co-operative Centre and the Business Wales tendering advice team. The event will focus on the necessary requirements and challenges of bidding for work collaboratively, and gaining an appreciation of how to overcome these challenges effectively.

#### **SAW Workshop: The Irresistible Website**

**18 September, 10:30 - 15:30**

**Glangwilli Mansion Hotel, Carmarthen**

[www.softwarealliancewales.com](http://www.softwarealliancewales.com)

Learn how to review your website for its attractiveness; understand how eye tracking works and what it reveals; and understand how to use colour, images, video and calls to action for most impact.

#### **SAW: How to develop a web design brief**

**23 September, 09.30 – 12.30**

**The Village Hotel, Swansea**

[www.softwarealliancewales.com](http://www.softwarealliancewales.com)

A half day workshop which will introduce the concept of the website design brief as an effective communications tool for your web builder, helping ensure that you get what you need from your online investment.

**IoD Swansea Networking Evening****24 September, 17.30 – 19.30****Sketty Hall, Swansea**[www.iod.com](http://www.iod.com)

Guest speaker Professor Peter Stead will be speaking on the 'Centenary of Dylan Thomas, while Actor & Theatre Director Peter Richards will be supporting Professor Stead's talk with performances of Dylan's writing and will recite a poem or two.

**South Wales Chamber, Networking Breakfast****25 September, 07.30 – 10.30****Mercure Hotel, Swansea**[www.southwaleschamber.co.uk](http://www.southwaleschamber.co.uk)

Sponsored by arvato, operators of the UK government's first Independent Shared Service Centre located at the Department for Transport (DfT) in Swansea, which provides HR, procurement, payroll and finance transactional services to the DfT and its executive agencies. The relaxed networking event is an opportunity to meet with and present your business to many other attendees in one morning while enjoying a delicious breakfast!

**Swansea Business Club Lunch; Debra Williams, Entrepreneur****26 September, 12.15****Marriot Hotel, Swansea**[www.swanseabusinessclub.com](http://www.swanseabusinessclub.com)

Hailed as one of the UK's leading business women and entrepreneurs, Neath-born Debra Williams, will address Business Club guests on how she has achieved success at some of the UK's most recognisable businesses

**GENERAL EVENTS****Love Your Countryside Festival****6 – 21 September****across rural Swansea**[www.swansea.gov.uk/loveyourcountrysidefestival](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/loveyourcountrysidefestival)

Get better acquainted with Swansea's amazing rural environment in this new and exciting festival. Come face to face with nature on a wildlife walk or bushcraft adventure, be creative and learn new skills in a rural craft workshop or get your hands dirty helping to look after our wonderful countryside environment.

**The Heart of the Valley Show****6 September, 10.00****Riverside Centre, Pontardawe**[www.theheartofthevalleyshow.com](http://www.theheartofthevalleyshow.com)

An agricultural/rural event in Pontardawe for all ages, many demonstrations including falconry, farm animals, sheep dogs, fly fishing etc. As well as numerous craft stalls and entertainment.

**Dylan Thomas' Return Journey****6-7 September, 10.30****National Waterfront Museum, Swansea**[www.museumwales.ac.uk](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk)

Lighthouse Theatre presents this promenade production inspired by Dylan Thomas' masterpiece. A tribute to the spirit of Swansea following the bombing raids of the Second World War. Both touching, tragic and funny, and filled with characters brought to life on the streets that inspired it.

**Wales Orchid Festival****6-7 September****National Botanic Garden of Wales**[www.gardenofwales.org.uk](http://www.gardenofwales.org.uk)

Stunning displays of beautiful orchids plus tours round of the Tropical House and talks with tips from experts.

### **BBC Proms in the Park**

**13 September, 19.45**

**Singleton Park, Swansea**

[www.swanseabayfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.swanseabayfestival.co.uk/events)

Proms in the Park sees the spectacular culmination of the BBC Proms season, as the world-famous Last Night celebrations spill out from London's Royal Albert Hall, and thousands of people come together at venues across the UK to be part of the magic of the Last Night.

### **Swansea Open House**

**13 - 14 September**

**various, across Swansea**

[www.swanseaopenhouse.com](http://www.swanseaopenhouse.com)

Swansea Open House is a free event that celebrates Swansea's built environment and heritage, providing a once a year chance to see behind closed doors and to hear more about how buildings and projects were designed and operate.

### **BP Big Screens: Rigoletto, live from the Royal Opera house**

**17 September, 19.30**

**Castle Square, Swansea**

[www.swanseabayfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.swanseabayfestival.co.uk/events)

Swansea's Big Screen is delighted to be hosting BP Big Screens summer programme live from the Royal Opera House. Head to Castle Square, pull up a deckchair, sit back and enjoy outdoor entertainment in the city centre. And the great news is, it's FREE!

### **Admiral Swansea Bay 10K**

**21 September, 12.30**

**Swansea to Mumbles (and back!)**

[www.swanseabay10k.com](http://www.swanseabay10k.com)

The Admiral Swansea Bay 10k is one of the UK's premier road races with a flat, fast and scenic route alongside the magnificent views of Swansea Bay. The race is open to all abilities aged 15+.

### **Dunvant Male Voice Choir, Annual Patrons Concert**

**27 September, 19.15**

**Brangwyn Hall, Swansea**

[www.dunvantchoir.org](http://www.dunvantchoir.org)

With guest artists Sir Willard White (OM CBE) (Bass Baritone), Mary-Jean O'Doherty (Soprano) and Caradog Williams (Accompanist) and supported by Ms Beverley Humphries. For further info and tickets, please contact Stuart Jones on [stuart.jones627@ntlworld.com](mailto:stuart.jones627@ntlworld.com)

## **Contact**

### **Zoe Bragg**

#### **Communications & Marketing Executive**

Swansea Bay Futures Ltd,  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Union House  
Swansea University,  
Swansea  
SA2 8PP

**Tel:** 01792 513129

**E-mail:** [zoe@swanseabayfutures.co.uk](mailto:zoe@swanseabayfutures.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.abayoflife.com](http://www.abayoflife.com)

