



# Growing Mid Wales June Newsletter

## What's been happening this month?

June is the time where growth and development is all around us, from blooming vivid flowers to tasty fruit and vegetables ready to pick. We've also seen some great developments and growth in the work of Growing Mid Wales this month which we would like to update you on:

- The Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) team have been ramping up their engagement with the region's businesses
- Planning is underway to refresh our Vision to reflect the changes in the economic landscape since 2020 (watch this space!)

So, read on to find out more including interviews with Mid Wales businesses and apprentices, our 'Meet the team' section which we feature Carwyn Jones-Evans our Joint Strategic Lead, and external funding news.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

***The Growing Mid Wales team***

*\* Don't forget that if your organisation is part of the Growing Mid Wales partnership, get in touch to share your news!*

## Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Business Cluster Group



A wonderful start and location to the Mid Wales RSP's first Business Cluster meeting held at Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru - National Library of Wales on 15 May. We welcomed a cross-sector of businesses to discuss the skills gaps in the region.

The aim of the group is to help the RSP identify and address the barriers and issues affecting businesses in Mid Wales. The cluster group is an advisory sub-group of the RSP whose members include industry and business leaders.

If you would like to get more involved with the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership email: [midwalesrsp@powys.gov.uk](mailto:midwalesrsp@powys.gov.uk)

This cluster group along with other cluster groups being set up enable us to have strategic conversations with businesses, training providers and stakeholders across the region – giving us a 360-degree view on skills.

We hear the issues and challenges businesses, face in certain sectors - recruitment and retention, skills shortages, lack of relevant training provision in specific sectors, digital isolation, transport links have all come up in our conversations on a regular basis. This information, backed up by our analysis of Labour Market Intelligence and our 3-Year Employment & Skills Plan, we can now act as a strategic body and represent the regions businesses' interests at WG level.

## Getting to know Mid Wales businesses and apprentices

Engaging closely with businesses is one of the Regional Skills Partnership's (RSP) core aims, to give them a voice to influence priorities for the region. Earlier this year, the RSP team were eager to start making connections in the region and to find out more on apprenticeships. Working with AMP Media, the team spoke to and filmed a mixture of businesses and apprentices from Powys and Ceredigion.

Thanks are given to the following contributors: EOM Ltd, Harrisons, Makefast, Affintiy Healthcare, Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council.

### Employing apprentices in Mid Wales

Businesses from Mid Wales talked to the RSP about the benefits of having apprentices as part of their workforce. Watch the video to hear what they had to say (click on the link in the image below to be directed to the Growing Mid Wales YouTube channel):



1 - <https://youtu.be/M5L8Zp10954>

### Being an apprentice in Mid Wales

We talked to apprentices in the region to find out why they became an apprentice and what the future holds for them in Mid Wales. Watch the video to hear what they had to say (click on the link in the image below to be directed to the Growing Mid Wales YouTube channel):



2 - <https://youtu.be/VZDjan5Efzq>

## Further and Higher education partnership to transform vocational training

Emma Thomas (Mid Wales RSP Chair) and Louise Grove-White (Interim RSP Manager) were delighted to attend the launch of the University of Wales Technical Institutes at the Senedd recently. This is a new partnership which will focus on the delivery and application of higher technical and vocational awards, professional development and strengthen business and employer engagement.

For more information, visit the [University of Wales Trinity Saint David's](#) website.



*3 - Launch of the University of Wales Technical Institutes at the Senedd recently.*

## Meet the Team

### **Carwyn Jones-Evans**

Joint Strategic Lead, Growing Mid Wales

- **When did you start with the team?**

I came to Mid Wales in May 2019, having come from the WLGA, and previously the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and Gwynedd Council before that.

I took up a post leading Growth and Major Developments for Ceredigion County Council, helping to shape a new strategy and approach for the Authority's economic development functions.

Later in 2019, I was seconded to lead on the Mid Wales Growth Deal, and I have led on the work of Growing Mid Wales and the Growth Deal for both Councils since.

- **Can you tell us more about your role?**

I have a dual role, split between Ceredigion Council and Growing Mid Wales. My role at Growing Mid Wales now sees me sharing as a Joint Strategic Lead with my colleague Nicola Williams – where we lead all aspects of work in GMW. Where the other regions have a Portfolio Director, we have two Strategic Leads.

I lead and manage the Growth Deal team, Regional Engagement Team, as well as our Energy function. I support Nicola then with leading the RSP team and work on the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC).

For Ceredigion, I have responsibility for our UK Government funds, Community Renewal Fund (CRF) and Levelling Up Fund (LRF), and our strategic economic team which includes digital and major projects. I also manage our UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) function as a Lead Authority.

- **What are your current priorities?**

**Leadership:** My main priority is to ensure that I continue to provide the right advice and support to our teams and our decision makers to navigate the year ahead. There are a lot of potential changes to governance and collaboration at a regional level, that we will need to understand and respond to as one team. We will also be shifting the Growth Deal from development phase to delivery – that will bring about its own set of challenges.

**Collaboration:** Continue to develop strong working relationships with strategic and key partners in Mid Wales and beyond. It will be critical that people know and understand our work and functions – and that we continue to build on our presence and visibility in all sectors of the Mid Wales economy.

**Delivery:** A lot of the team’s work to date has been around establishing systems and processes and governance – the focus for this year onwards will be on delivery. Our teams are already delivering funding streams locally and regionally across the board. The Mid Wales Growth Deal will soon join that list, with the funding expected to be confirmed imminently.



- **What developments have you seen over the years?**

Our work in Mid Wales has come a long way. Our work has grown, our teams have grown – and we’re beginning to see some real impact in a number of areas. I am full of admiration for my team, who’ve work relentlessly over many years to keep working hard and not lose sight of the bigger picture.

I’ve seen the region move from having a voluntary Partnership back in 2015, to now being in position where it has multi-million pounds of funding in delivery.

- **What’s been your biggest achievement?**

The work I have led in Mid Wales since 2019 has been by far my biggest professional achievement. Securing agreement of our partners on Vision for Growing Mid Wales, establishing the governance for the Growth Deal and our Regional Skills Partnership – to recruiting and building our teams and systems and also successfully securing and establishing UK funding for Ceredigion Council on the CRF, LUF and UKSPF.

I am incredibly proud of the impact that I've been able to make to lead the region to where it is today.

In my personal life, I recently completed the Welsh 3 Peaks, raising money for Ty Hafan – completing the challenge in under 24 hours on what was a very hot day!

- **One word that sums up the Growing Mid Wales Team:**

**Incredible** - I am very fortunate to be able to lead and work with such a fantastic group of people. Dedicated, committed and hard working – they've responded to every challenge in their stride and continue to build the team's work upwards and outwards.



## Other news

### Business Energy Aid Toolkit

Warwick Manufacturing Group (WVG) at the University of Warwick have created a [Business Aid Energy Toolkit](#) to provide SME manufacturers based in the UK with easy access to experts and equipment, helping you make significant reductions to your energy usage in short time frames. Support includes areas such as:

- Data-driven insights into your energy usage
- Help to identify production planning improvements
- Pinpointing cost-saving measures
- Discover opportunities to reduce your carbon footprint and work towards Net Zero
- Expertise from a team of specialists

Find out more on the Warwick University website:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/wmg/business/innovationexperience/reduce-energy-consumption>



### **Extension to UK Horizon Europe Guarantee**

The guarantee has been extended to cover all Horizon Europe calls that have a final submission deadline on or before 30 September 2023. Eligible, successful applicants to Horizon Europe will receive the full value of their funding at their UK host institution for the lifetime of their grant.

The 'Horizon Europe guarantee' scheme provides funding to researchers and innovators unable to receive their Horizon Europe funding while the UK is in the process of associating to the programme.

Further information [here](#).

### **Cwmpas - Wales Connectivity Survey**

Cwmpas are reaching out to individuals from across Wales who are experiencing very slow broadband speeds (below 4Mbps) and facing regular connectivity problems.

The responses and feedback will be fed into a report for the Welsh Government to explore options for supporting communities in areas with challenging connectivity.

Click on the link to participate in this [important survey](#)

### **AberInnovation Solutions Catalyst - Voucher Competition Open**

The AberInnovation Solutions Catalyst supported by [UKRI - BBSRC](#) returns for a second year. UK companies have the chance to win a voucher worth up to £30,000 to gain access to AberInnovation's state-of-the-art facilities and Aberystwyth University academic expertise. The successful applicant will receive a package of support that will include the following:

- Aberystwyth University academic consultancy
- Access to facilities and technical support at AberInnovation
- Consumables for research & development
- Workshops

A briefing event will be held on 29th June to address all FAQs. For more information, visit AberInnovation's [website](#).



## Keep up to Date

Need to catch up on what's been discussed in our meetings? Here's a reminder of where you can find the minutes for the following meetings:

- All minutes relating to the Growing Mid Wales Board are hosted on Powys County Council [website](#).
- Papers relating to the Growing Mid Wales Partnership can be found on our [website](#).

Keep up to date with Growing Mid Wales news, developments on activity and organisations we support by following our Twitter and Linked In pages:

<https://twitter.com/growingmidwales>

<www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales>

We're eager to reach out to as many organisations and businesses across Mid Wales as possible. You can make this possible by following, liking and sharing our pages.

Disclaimer: As a Growing Mid Wales Stakeholder you receive these emails so that we can share news and information with you on a regular basis. You can inform us if you no longer wish to receive these emails by emailing [growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk).







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