

## Update on the Arfor 2 programme in Carmarthenshire

### Background

Based on the success of the first Arfor programme, a further £11 million has been secured from Welsh Government until March 2025 to help strengthen the economic resilience of the Welsh language strongholds. Arfor 2 will support communities to prosper through economic interventions which will also contribute to increasing opportunities to see and use the Welsh language on a daily basis.

The Arfor 2 programme is being led by Gwynedd County Council and will continue to work across the four counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire.

The key strategic objectives of Arfor 2 are:

- To create opportunities for young people and families (under 35 years old) to stay in or return to their indigenous communities – supporting them to succeed locally by engaging in enterprise or developing a career.
- To create enterprising communities within Welsh-speaking areas – by supporting commercial and community enterprises that aim to preserve and increase local wealth by taking advantage of the identity and unique qualities of their areas.
- To maximise the benefit of activity through collaboration– to ensure that good practice and lessons learnt are shared and that there is on-going monitoring to ensure continuous improvement.
- Strengthen the identity of communities with a high density of Welsh speakers – by supporting the use and visibility of the Welsh language, encouraging a sense of place and local loyalty.

### Workstreams

Of the total £11 million secured for the entire programme, Carmarthenshire has been allocated £1,182,770 million to deliver the Cymunedau Mentrus programme as a third-party grant opportunity with other targeted workstreams being delivered by external organisations following procurement exercises undertaken by the lead partner on behalf of the region.

The Arfor II programme consists of five targeted workstreams which have been developed to deliver a range of interventions aligned with the programme's strategic aims:

#### 1. Llwyddo'n Lleol - £3,000,000

Menter Môn, in partnership with Menter a Busnes, has been appointed to deliver this element of the programme which aims to deliver a programme which aims to provide opportunities across the region to encourage young people to return to the area and to deter youth migration.

Four key programmes of work are being delivered with support available to both Carmarthenshire based business and young people residing in the County:

- **Mentro** – Mentoring and financial support to young people between 18-35 residing in the Arfor region who are looking to start a new business and develop their business idea.

Four young people from Carmarthenshire have been successful in gaining a place on the programme in the first cohort.

- **Ymgartrefu** – Individuals and families who are exploring the options of relocating to the Arfor area will have an opportunity to attend a residential weekend at recreational sites across the region. During the stay, information on job opportunities, leisure and recreational opportunities and general lifestyle expectations will be relayed to those attending as well as further support to those that commit to relocate (e.g.childcare costs, temporary accommodation costs)
- **Gyrfaoedd** - Businesses across Carmarthenshire will have the opportunity to be part of this programme that can provide financial support for hosting a young person. Young people within the area will be matched with a host business and offered an employment opportunity as well as training and mentoring. The host business will be supported financially to cover staff costs. The call for businesses and individuals is now open with window of opportunity closing on 12 November. It is expected that the young people matched to a successful business will begin employment in January 2024.
- **Profi**-Working with school children and youth organisations, Profi aims to dispel the perception of the lack of career opportunities across the region by engaging with young people to highlight opportunities through engagement sessions.

## **2. Cymunedau Mentrus /Enterprising Communities - £1,182,770 per local authority area**

The Authority has been allocated £1,182,770 to deliver this workstream at a local level. The purpose of the Cymunedau Mentrus fund is to develop Welsh Language Spaces that offer a natural environment for people to work and socialise through the medium of Welsh. Businesses and community organisations can apply for financial support for both capital and revenue costs.

To date, 19 applications have been approved totalling £883,709 which will create 77 new jobs across the County. Details relating to approved applications are included at Annex 2. A further call for applications closed on November 5 2023, providing comfort that the remaining £298,061 will be allocated and spent before March 2025.

Alongside the offer of financial support, a dedicated officer has been seconded onto the programme to assist local businesses to achieve the Cynnig Cymraeg standard as well as support on how to increase the visibility and use of the Welsh language in their business.

## **3. Challenge Fund - £2,600,000**

Menter a Busnes has been awarded the contract to deliver this element of the Arfor programme which aims to seek innovate solutions to the challenges that the region faces in terms of youth migration, economic opportunities with the sustainability of the Welsh language being a key consideration. Applications can deliver at either a local or regional level.

Support of up to £100,000 can be awarded to projects that can demonstrate alignment with the fund's objectives and deliver by the end of December 2024. A smaller fund of up to £30,000 is also available to test new concepts or for feasibility studies. The fund is available to all sectors

yet applications from single private entities are discouraged. This fund is currently open. Local information sessions were held in early September to develop project ideas.

#### **4. Bwrlwm- £300,000**

This element extends upon the Bwrlwm Arfor project from the Arfor programme which saw the creation of a digital platform, showcasing local entrepreneurs, community projects and case studies thus creating a digital Welsh space. Lafan Cymru has been awarded the contract to deliver this workstream and will build upon the work already undertaken as well as develop key initiatives that further encourage the use of the Welsh language within business and across our communities.

#### **5. Monitoring and Evaluation -£200,000**

Following on from the recommendations of the Arfor 1 programme, monitoring and evaluation is a key part of the programme alongside ensuring that the relationship between the economy and the Welsh language is further understood. Wavehill has been appointed to develop a monitoring framework to be used across the workstreams to evidence the impact of the programme.

Their proposed work programme includes;

- Welsh business awards
- Community based data collection based on work undertaken in the Basque country to understand the use of the Welsh language across our high streets/towns.
- Creation of Bwrlwm forum with key stakeholders across the economic and Welsh language sectors in the region
- Creation of an online Welsh space directory

### **Marketing and Promotion**

Officers have developed dedicated webpages on the Authority's corporate website, that provides information on all aspects of the Arfor programme to include those delivered by the Authority and by external contractors. Details of all the offers to businesses and individuals are communicated via a range of methods such targeted newsletters, disseminated to relevant established networks, promoted on digital platforms as well facilitating Arfor information events at key locations. Officers work closely with the dedicated Llwyddo'n Lleol officer for Carmarthenshire who is employed by Menter a Busnes, to jointly promote and raise awareness of the vast amount of opportunities that Arfor can provide to both individuals and businesses across the County.

### **Conclusion**

The Arfor 2 programme presents an opportunity to encourage the Welsh language to prosper through economic interventions whilst creating new employment opportunities at a local level. Good progress is being made at a local level via the Cymunedau Mentrus/Enterprising Communities Fund. We will continue to work closely with delivery partners to ensure that the County is in a position to maximise from opportunities via the wider workstreams.

## Annex 2

### Cymunedau Mentrus/Enterprising Communities - Approved projects

#### **Atebol**

Amount approved: £75,000

Atebol is a production company with a base at yr Egin, Carmarthen working across a variety of mediums in the creative sector. Grant supported request for the creation of a new role to support the growth of the business who operate through the Welsh language to allow further developments and growth opportunities.

#### **Carlam Cyf**

Amount approved: £75,000.00

Carlam Cyf is media production company based in Yr Egin, Carmarthen.

Grant support requested for the development of a post-production and editing facility at Yr Egin that will provide both efficiency savings and growth opportunities for the business as well as wider creative businesses in the area and creation of new jobs.

#### **Caffi Lolfa**

Amount approved: £44,016.00

This project aims to refurbish a currently empty property on the main high street of Burry Port (52 Station Road, Burry Port, SA16 OLP). The aim is to turn this property into a restaurant, event space and shop that Caffi Lolfa will operate out of. We aim to develop Caffi Lolfa into an Arts/Culture/Hospitality/Inclusive Safe Space for the Community with a focus on the Welsh language.

#### **Camp Out West**

Amount approved: £28,000.00

Having returned to the area and recently bought the old, abandoned coal miners caravan park in Cynheidre, partner Jon and Emilie Jones embarked on a renovation journey on YouTube & TikTok, which quickly went viral, gaining over 11 million views and over 250,000 followers. Attracting attention from S4C, the renovation and development of the site has been commissioned into a television programme which will begin filming soon. Grant request for the support for the development of the tourist attraction enriched with the history of the area, that will create new jobs and support local economy.

#### **Carmarthen Deli**

Amount approved: £75,000.00

Development of Welsh produce Deli in Carmarthen town centre that will support local produce and create new jobs whilst also redeveloping vacant town centre premise.

Grant support for specialist equipment, shop fittings and bilingual marketing products.

#### **Decus**

Amount approved: £75,000.00

Located in Capel Hendre, Decus has operated a chemical testing laboratory and research facility for 20 years.

Grant request to establish new Bacteria and Food Testing facility in the same building providing services to both food and drinks and agricultural sector.

#### **Diod**

Amount approved: £32,801.97

Cegin Diod Kitchen is a brand-new cafe/restaurant based in the newly renovated Market Hall in Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire. The aim is to grow on the success of the applicant's current business Diod (also located in Llandeilo) to create a destination café where people will travel to visit, offering great quality local food and drink to customers. Grant requested to support equipment/fit out of the space which will create new jobs in the area, training for staff and a dedicated marketing officer.

### **Equal Education Partners**

Amount approved: £43,106.00

Equal Education Partners is a bilingual education services company based in Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, specialising in providing recruitment services, project management, tutoring, professional learning, and marketing services to a range of clients across the education sector. Grant support requested to support a Welsh language professional learning lead to develop context specific Welsh-medium professional learning resources and training opportunities to support our Welsh-language tutoring.

### **Jenkins Garden Machinery Limited**

Amount approved: £57,801.80

The project has been designed to promote the Welsh language in the Carmarthenshire area by way of a new mobile workshop van. The van will be kitted out with tools for the repair and maintenance of Garden Machinery at the customer's premises and will be sign written bilingually. Following the retirement of a nearby competitor, support from Arfor will provide economic growth opportunities as well as creating new jobs and raising the profile of the Welsh language in the business.

### **Old Oak Kitchens**

Amount approved: £38,500.00

Established in 2010 and based in Cynwyl Elfed, Old Oak Kitchens is a cabinet making/carpentry business whose owner created the Chair at this year's Urdd Eisteddfod located in Carmarthenshire. The business is keen to introduce the Welsh language and sense of place to their business as native Welsh language speakers and through the support of Arfor rebrand to Stwdio Pren.

### **Olew**

Amount approved: £35,000.00

This project aims to provide logistical support and streamline the supply chain processes for businesses, enabling them to focus on core operations and growth, and in-turn creating jobs for the local economy. Achieving this will be through the development of centralised hub for receiving, storing, and distributing products on behalf of local entrepreneurs located at Victory Hall, Llanybydder. This project will also create local jobs, create a Welsh space for community use with the Welsh language at its core whilst also redeveloping a vacant eyesore building in Llanybydder complementing other programmes of delivery such as 10 towns programme.

### **Carmarthenshire School of Gymnastics**

Amount approved: £18,213.82

Based in Cross Hands, Carmarthenshire School of Gymnastics wish to employ a dedicated Welsh speaking staff member to increase the visibility and the use of the Welsh language in the organisation. Panel recommendation that only expenditure associated with the development of the bilingual offer to the organisation be supported and therefore grant approved lower than that requested.

### **Pruex**

Amount approved: £24,778.60

Pruex have built a business, now located from Cwmcerring, Gorslas, Carmarthenshire that leads the fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR), in agriculture. We need to expand domestically and internationally to help combat the risks of both AMR and environmental pollution. We can ensure that Wales leads the world in both of these issues.

Grant request to support;

- Set up of a soil lab to demonstrate how their technology reduces the risk of environmental pollution of nitrogen and phosphorus.
- Employ a salesperson to help fund the R&D process within the business and reduce the risk of antimicrobial resistant bacterial pollution of the natural environment.
- Make the Welsh Language more visible.
- Help the non-Welsh Speakers to learn the language and use it within and outside the business

### **Teilwr bach**

Amount approved: £24,500.00

Raised bilingually in Welsh and English, Catherine Davies is the owner of Teilwr bach and is now based in Login, near Whitland. Passionate about traditional tailoring techniques, she is also a keen advocate for sustainable fashion and the 'slow fashion' movement. Constantly striving to recycle fabrics and source materials ethically and locally, all garment 'toiles' are made from End-of-Roll fabrics. Already the business contributes towards the growth and sustainability of the Welsh language, yet grant request is made to further develop and support the business by small works to workshop, new job creation and Welsh language resource creation to support workshops.

### **Tref bach Tots**

Amount approved: £73,564.00

Tref Bach Tots will be a new role play and soft play facility aimed at young children under 8 to explore and enjoy. Utilising bespoke backdrops and specially selected high-quality toys and equipment, children can fully immerse themselves in role play in their own world and hopefully encourage parents to join in too. The centre will be located at The Gospel Hall, Amanwy, Llwynhendy.

### **Swim Like a Fish**

Amount approved: £29,400.00

Swim Like a Fish is swim school located in Pensarn, Carmarthen. Grant request to support the development for a new space for training swimming teachers in Welsh medium vocational training. Thus, building a sustainable workforce across the ARFOR area to encourage and develop the use of Welsh in a non-academic setting and offer a new workplace for Welsh speakers. 8 tutors and 60 individuals will be trained as part of the project.

### **Mel Gwenyn Gruffydd**

Amount approved: £23,411.50

Located in Cwrt Henry, Dryslwyn, Mel Gwenyn Gruffydd is a passionate honey company producing Great Taste Award Winning all natural, untreated, 100% raw, Welsh wildflower honey, Honey Hampers, Honey Gifts, Beeswax Candles, Peat Free Compost & Bee Friendly Wildflower Seeds.

Grant request for specialist honey processing equipment to enhance the business' productivity and capacity.

### **Onesta**

Amount approved: £69,353.20

Onesta is an award-winning sustainable clothing brand that produces high-quality, classic clothing for men and women that is sustainably and ethically manufactured in Wales and the UK. The clothing is made using sustainable fabrics made from fibres like hemp, organic cotton, seaweed and Tencel, and they have developed ranges made from local deadstock material to help drive the circular economy in Wales. This particular project will focus on promoting Made in Wales, showcasing the beauty and skills within Wales, supporting the Welsh language, and creating attractive employment within Carmarthenshire  
Grant request for support with creation of 1 new job – full time marketing manager and costs associated with new Made in Wales collection creation.

### **Holidaynests**

Amount approved: £42,030.00

The Holidaynests Experiences start-up project is the forerunner to develop the larger business of Holidaynests Ltd to be developed in Login near Whitland. With a refurbished stone barn near completion as a self-catering holiday cottage, the request for Arfor support is to expand on the experiences visitors can access, providing a quality tourism offer, with the Welsh language and heritage of the area being a main feature. The grant will enable the business to employ a Welsh speaking experience officer, development of a bilingual tourism app and development of an outdoor kitchen and e-bike offer. The officer role will be sustained post funding via Holiday Nests.

**Total of approved projects £883,709**