



# Growing Mid Wales May newsletter 2023

## European Funding in Mid Wales

On the 9th of May, the European Union will celebrate Europe Day 2023. As we enter the final months of the current EU Structural Funds programmes, we look back at some examples of European-funded activity in the Mid Wales region to mark Europe Day, from the fabulous Coastal Path (what a gorgeous location we live in!) to essential infrastructure developments in Powys towns.

Much of the Growing Mid Wales activity to date, including the GMW Partnership, the Portfolio Management Office and the Mid Wales Regional Engagement Team, has been supported by European funding. As part of this funding, we highlight the impact of this investment in Mid Wales, both in current and previous programmes.

This month, we also take a look at news from Farming Connect and also provide some handy advice on the closure process for EU-funded projects operating in Mid Wales.

Gareth Marston, our European Social Fund (ESF) Project Manager answers our *Meet the Team* questions this month, having many years' experience of working with EU funds.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and share on with your colleagues.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

[The Growing Mid Wales team](#)

**Cover photo:** Some members of the Growing Mid Wales team attended [AberInnovation's](#) celebratory event on Thursday 4th May 2023 that marked the success of its European Regional Development-funded support. The event featured a personalised video address from Minister for the Economy Vaughan Gething.

**Read on for:**

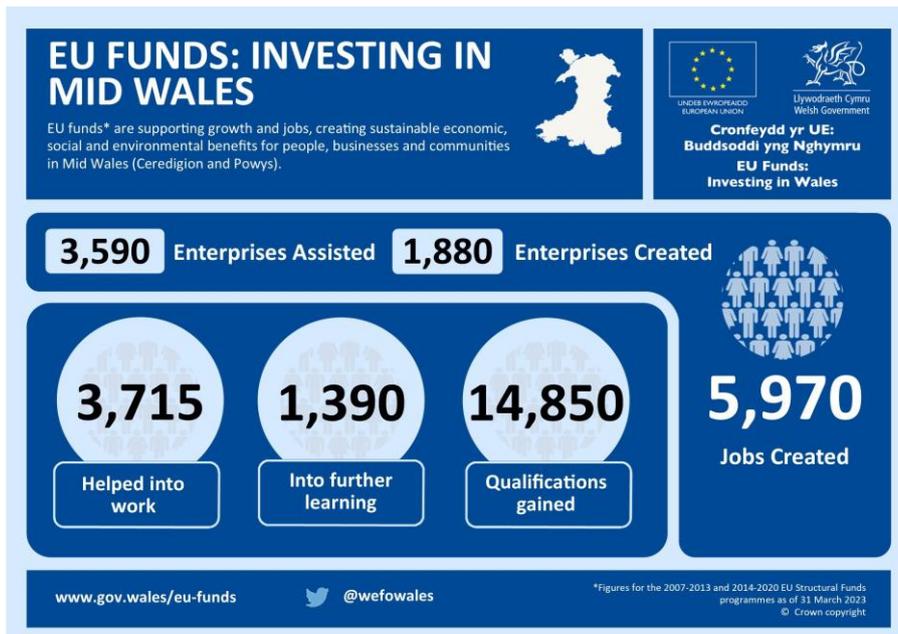
- Key achievements of the EU Structural Funds Programmes in Mid Wales
- Success stories from past Structural Funds programmes
- News from stakeholder organisations
- European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)-funded project closure guidance
- Meet the Team: Gareth Marston
- Fact of the month: World famous Italian 19th-century opera singer who settled in Powys
- Keep up to date

## Key achievements of the EU Structural Funds Programmes in Mid Wales

**EU funds have had a positive impact on people, businesses and communities across Wales by:**

- delivering sustainable economic growth and jobs;
- helping build a thriving and prosperous economy;
- raising skills and helping people into work;
- improving the lives of people and communities across the nation;
- tackling poverty and ensuring equal opportunities for all;
- driving cutting-edge research and innovation for Wales' global success; and
- boosting business and driving productivity for commercial success.

These are the figures for the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 EU Structural Funds Programmes as of 31.03.23.



## Success stories on Mid Wales EU Structural-Funded programmes

We highlight the impact of European funding in Mid Wales, both in current and previous programmes by looking closer at four case studies. You can find more information about the activity and impact of other EU funded activity across Mid Wales in a [booklet](#) produced by our Regional Engagement Team, *Investing in a Brighter Future for Mid Wales*.

### The Wales Coastal Path



At 870 miles long, the Wales Coastal Path is the world's first continuous path that runs along a country's entire coastline. It stretches from Chepstow in the South to the River Dee in Flintshire in the North. In Ceredigion, the coastal path covers 60 miles between the Teifi and Dyfi estuaries.



1 - Ynys Lochtyn

In 2007, the project started with £10.5m funding from the Welsh Government and supported with £4m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The path opened in 2012 and during its first years attracted almost three million visitors, generating £2.3million for the Welsh economy. The path has raised its international profile and has grown the Welsh economy with attracting more visitors and increasing tourist spend.

Read the [Wales Coast Path](#) reports relating to the impact of the Wales Coast Path on health benefits, the Welsh tourism economy as well as path visitor insights, and end of project analysis.



### **Severn Valley Strategic Regeneration Programme (SVSRP)**

The SVSRP is a £5.4m part-funded ERDF programme of physical infrastructure investments in and around the towns of Llanidloes, Newtown and Welshpool in Powys. It consists of three distinct schemes which was completed under the 2007-13 programme:

1. Site development and servicing: at the Offa's Dyke Business Park (Welshpool) and the Abermule Business Park (Newtown).
2. Severn Valley built heritage scheme: physical renovation of specific run down, derelict properties and bringing back into use .
3. Severn Valley environmental enhancement scheme: capital investment in the three town centres of Welshpool, Newtown, and Llanidloes to physically improve the built environment.

SVSRP was designed and delivered by a partnership involving Welsh Government and Powys County Council. The programme was part funded through EU funds (£2.8 million from the East Wales ERDF

Competitiveness & Employment Programme) with the remaining £2.6 million funding provided by Welsh Government (£1.4 million), Powys County Council (£710,000) and private funding (£400,000).

Evaluation of the Severn Valley Strategic Regeneration Programme can be explored on the following link: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-07/141104-evaluation-severn-valley-strategic-regeneration-programme-en.pdf>





## Cardigan Castle



[Cardigan Castle](#) was built in 1136 and is the birthplace of Wales' cultural festival, the National Eisteddfod, which first took place in 1176. In the late 1990's the last inhabitant, Barbara Wood moved into a care home. The property was subsequently sold but fell into a state of disrepair without financial means for its upkeep.

In 1999, the Cadwgan Building Preservation Trust (CBPT) established a *Castle in Crisis* Campaign. In 2011, the Trust was awarded £12m from a combination of funds. This included ERDF Funding of £4.3m and Heritage Lottery Funding of £6m, as well as contributions from CADW and the Prince's Regeneration Trust. £200k was raised by local fundraising.

Restoration work started in 2012 on a four-year project to transform the Castle into a sustainable business with several facilities including a restaurant, shop, self-catering accommodation, community rooms for hire and summer events. The castle successfully opened in 2015.

More information on the restoration project can be explored on the following link: [Cardigan Castle's £12m regeneration project revitalises town - Museums + Heritage Advisor \(museumsandheritage.com\)](#)



2 - 1176 restaurant, Cardigan Castle

## **Cynnydd: EU-funded project to boost prospects of young people in Mid Wales**

The [Cynnydd project](#) received £1 million through the current European Social Fund (ESF) programme. It operated in the county of Powys from Sept 2017 to March 2023 through Powys County Council as Lead Beneficiary together with Careers Wales as a joint beneficiary. The delivery was through the Youth Intervention Service (YIS); a referral-based team in the Youth Service to help young people most at risk of falling out of education and training.

The support offered by YIS and Cynnydd involved one to one work with young people to address a range of issues including mentoring, coaching, counselling and courses to increase basic and life skills as well as work experience and volunteering opportunities to help improve future job and career prospects.



## **News from stakeholder organisations**

### **Over £22m Farming Connect support for Welsh farmers**

A new £22.9m Farming Connect programme will be available for farmers in Wales over the next two years to support them as they prepare to move to the new Sustainable Farming Scheme.

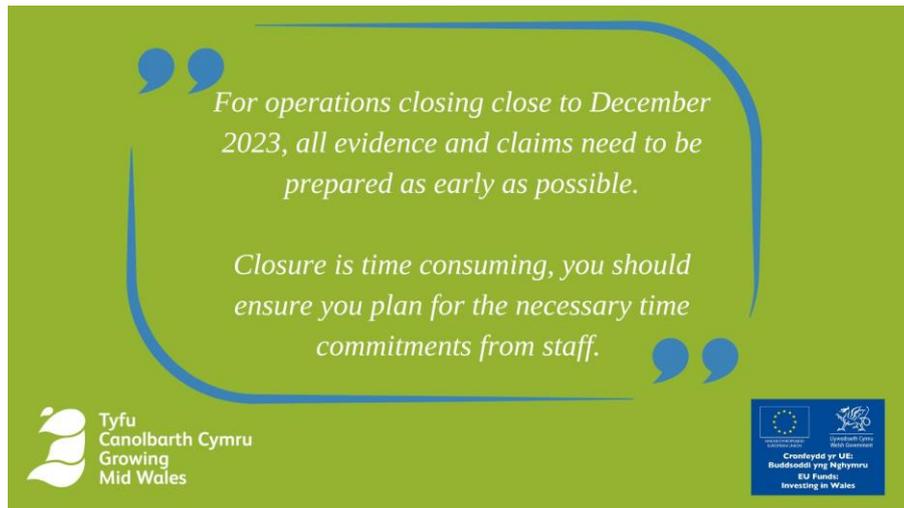
The over-arching themes for the new programme will be sustainability, improved environmental performance and greater global competitiveness.

Farming Connect is delivered by Menter a Busnes and Lantra Wales and funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Farming Connect can be contacted on 03456 000 813 or visit <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/>

## EU-funded project closure guidance

It is very important that the process of project closure starts in good time. If you are currently part of an EU-funded project in Mid Wales, have you started your closure process? See Welsh European Funding Office website for more information: <https://bit.ly/EUFundsClosureGuidance>



## Meet the Team

Gareth Marston, Growing Mid Wales European Social Fund (ESF) Project Manager

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

Beginning of August 2021

- **What are your current priorities?**

We've got a quarterly claim to Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) due to be submitted by mid May so I am starting to compile information for the report that goes with that and I am also about to have a meeting with the contractor for the final term evaluation for the project which is due to commence shortly.

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

It's been great to see over the years an increasing emphasis on reducing our impact on the environment in the priorities of projects receiving EU funds. Now, with WEFO going paper-free too, we generate a lot less waste with processing work whilst increasing our efficiency which is a win-win.

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

A few years ago I bought a business off someone I knew when they retired, I cut overheads by nearly 30% and increased profits in the first year. I was able to draw on my experience of working in the public sector monitoring European funded projects as well as previous private and third sector roles in order to bring about positive change.

- **What is your greatest hope for Mid Wales?**

There are some interesting projects in the pipeline and I'm looking forward to seeing them come through the appraisal process and work start on them, the programme then becomes real for the people of Mid Wales who can then see the benefit.

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

Friendly



*3 - Gareth Marston, Growing Mid Wales European Social Fund (ESF) Project Manager*

### **World famous Italian 19th-century opera singer who settled in Powys**

Craig-y-nos Castle near Glyntawe in Powys was once owned by 19th century Italian opera singer and 'the finest soprano of her age' Adelina Patti (1843-1919) who was famous at the time worldwide.

Craig y Nos was one of the first private dwellings in Britain to be wired for electricity, provided by a small gas generator installed sometime prior to 1898. Madame Patti died in 1919, and though she was buried in Paris, her kindly ghost is said to haunt the castle.



## 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](http://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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**Cronfeydd Strwythurol a  
Buddsoddi Ewropeaidd**  
**European Structural  
and Investment Funds**