



Growing Mid Wales

February 2026

Welcome to the February 2026 Growing Mid Wales newsletter.

This month, we're highlighting how innovation, skills and collaboration continue to support the future of Mid Wales. From exploring the potential of green hydrogen to decarbonising forestry, to connecting young people with local employers through our Careers Connections pilot, these activities reflect the practical steps being taken to strengthen our regional economy.

We're also pleased to share insights from our partners and cluster groups on developing future engineering talent, alongside our support for Apprenticeship Week Wales 2026, which showcased the vital role apprenticeships play in helping businesses grow and building strong career pathways across the region.

Alongside these stories, you'll find updates, opportunities and resources from partner organisations working across Mid Wales. Thank you, as always, for your continued engagement and collaboration.

[The Growing Mid Wales Team](#)

Content:

- New clean energy project explores green hydrogen for sustainable forestry in Mid Wales
- Unlocking Mid Wales podcast: clean energy innovation in action
- Careers Connections pilot links Mid Wales learners with local employers
- Securing the next generation of Mid Wales engineers
- Supporting Apprenticeship Week Wales 2026
- Other news - updates and opportunities shared from partner organisations

New clean energy project explores green hydrogen for sustainable forestry in Mid Wales

A new clean energy project in Devils Bridge, Ceredigion, has joined a growing portfolio of innovation activity supported through Growing Mid Wales, exploring how locally produced green hydrogen could help cut emissions in the forestry sector.

Led by Challoch Energy Ltd, the project will examine how wind power could be used to produce green hydrogen to replace diesel in forestry machinery and vehicles — supporting a sector that plays a vital role in the Mid Wales economy.

Read the full story on our [website](#).



Unlocking Mid Wales podcast: clean energy innovation in action

The Challoch Energy green hydrogen project is featured in our most recent Business News Wales podcasts. The episode brings together all four WSRID project leads to explore how clean energy solutions are moving from feasibility into real-world testing — and why Mid Wales is uniquely placed to pioneer innovation tailored to rural economies.

Listeners will hear how these projects aim to cut emissions, strengthen local industries, and support Wales' journey to net zero — with early results expected from 2026 onwards.

Listen now to the podcast: <https://businessnewswales.com/growing-mid-wales-digital-discussions/>

Episode Four
Testing Clean Energy in Mid Wales

Growing Mid Wales' WSRD programme is moving from feasibility into prototype development, with clean energy projects now being built and tested in real-world rural settings.

Host Gemma Casey is joined by Dr Simon Minnett of Challoch Energy, John McHugh of the Centre for Energy Equality, Alex Gauntt of Water To Water and John Owen of Lafan Consultancy Group to explore how initiatives spanning farming, community energy and local systems are approaching scale, commercial viability and replication.



Dr Simon Minnett
Managing Director
Challoch Energy

John McHugh
Co-Founder & Director
Centre for Energy Equality
(CEE)

Alex Gauntt
CEO & Co-Founder
Water To Water

John Owen
Lead Consultant - Agriculture
and Environment
Lafan Consultancy Group

1 - <https://businessnewswales.com/growing-mid-wales-digital-discussions/>

Careers Connections pilot links Mid Wales learners with local employers

Learners across Mid Wales are gaining first-hand insight into local career opportunities through the new Careers Connections pilot, a partnership between the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) and Careers Wales.

The employer-led initiative connects Mid Wales businesses directly with schools, helping young people better understand the range of careers available in the region through practical, hands-on activities that reflect real-world roles and skills, such as designing and building structures, exploring sustainable materials, and learning how different parts of a business work together on a project.

Read the full story [on our website](#).



2 - Careers Connections visits across the region's schools



3 - Careers Connections visits across the region's schools

Securing the next generation of Mid Wales engineers

In our latest guest columns with Business News Wales, Ceri Stephens, Chair of the [Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership](#) Advanced Manufacturing cluster group, explores how employers, educators and skills partners across Mid Wales are working together to inspire young people, strengthen engineering pathways, and ensure the region has the skilled workforce needed to support future growth in advanced manufacturing and engineering.

Read the full article on the [Business News Wales website](#).



GUEST COLUMN:

Ceri Stephens
Chair
Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership
Advanced Manufacturing Cluster



Partneriaeth Sgilliau Rhanbarthol
Canolbarth Cymru
Mid Wales
Regional Skills Partnership

In addition to this, we're pleased to share another insightful guest column from Andries Pretorius, creator of [Careers In 360](#). In *Rethinking careers guidance for the attention economy*, Andries explores how careers support needs to evolve in a rapidly changing labour

market — especially as digital, creative and attention-driven sectors continue to grow. The piece offers fresh perspectives on preparing today’s learners and jobseekers for the future of work.

Read the full article on the [Business News Wales website](#).



Supporting Apprenticeship Week Wales 2026

Apprenticeship Week Wales 2026, held from 10–16 February 2026, provided an important opportunity to highlight the vital role apprenticeships play in supporting business growth and developing future talent across Mid Wales. The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership worked with partners to raise awareness and encourage engagement from employers and learners, including promoting a dedicated Business News Wales podcast series exploring the benefits of apprenticeships, how businesses can get started, and the long-term career opportunities they create.

As the [Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership](#), we bring together employers, education and training providers to ensure skills provision aligns with the needs of the regional economy. By working closely with businesses across key sectors, we help identify skills needs and support the development of high-quality apprenticeship pathways that strengthen local career opportunities and help employers build the workforce they need for the future.

Key resources and support are available through: [Ceredigion County Council](#), [Powys County Council](#), [National Training Federation for Wales \(NTfW\)](#), [Careers Wales](#), [Welsh Government](#), and the [Business News Wales skills podcast series](#).

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

8 reasons why an apprenticeship is a GENIUS DECISION

#1 AN APPRENTICESHIP WILL KICKSTART YOUR CAREER
Available to people aged 16+ (with no upper age limit). Apprentices are typically employed for at least 30 hours per week and will earn and learn on the job.

#2 APPRENTICES ARE PAID A SALARY
All apprentices will earn a salary of at least the National Minimum Wage for apprentices which is currently £7.55* per hour. But many employers pay more! Take a look at the live vacancies on the Apprenticeship Vacancy Service (AVS).

#3 APPRENTICESHIPS LAST A MINIMUM OF 12 MONTHS
Most apprenticeships take between 1-4 years to complete. It will depend on the level and delivery model of the apprenticeship.

#4 APPRENTICESHIPS RANGE FROM GCSE TO DEGREE LEVEL
There are apprenticeships at levels equivalent to GCSEs up to degrees. This means you can now achieve a degree through an apprenticeship.

#5 APPRENTICES DO NOT PAY FOR THEIR TRAINING
All apprenticeship training costs are fully funded by the employer and/or the Welsh Government, meaning the apprentice does not pay for their training.

#6 APPRENTICES BALANCE WORK AND STUDY
Most time is spent gaining practical experience on-the-job. Apprentices also receive paid time off-the-job to develop skills and earn qualifications.

#7 THERE IS CLEAR CAREER PROGRESSION
Many apprentices go directly into full time employment or higher education.

#8 THERE ARE A WIDE RANGE OF APPRENTICESHIPS AVAILABLE
Apprenticeships are available in almost every industry, with new ones being advertised each week across a wide range of job roles.

**The National Minimum Wage for apprentices is reviewed each April.*

To discover more, search **APPRENTICESHIPS WALES** **GENIUS DECISION**

Prentisiaethau Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships Provide a Strategic Talent Pipeline
Malcolm Holland, Managing Director, Police

Welsh Employers Rank Apprenticeships for Workforce Planning
Welsh employers are using Apprenticeship Week Wales 2026 to highlight apprenticeships as a practical response to skills shortages, recruitment pressures and long-term workforce planning.

Apprenticeships and the Future NHS Workforce
19 FEBRUARY 2026

Apprenticeship Week Wales 2026: Showcasing
19 FEBRUARY 2026

Stay Local, Go Far: Building World-Class Careers in
19 FEBRUARY 2026

Wrexham Bakery Apprenticeship
19 FEBRUARY 2026

Growing Clean Energy Talent Through
19 FEBRUARY 2026

More Than 100,000 Apprenticeships Delivered
19 FEBRUARY 2026

Other news - updates and opportunities shared from partner organisations

First step towards boosting manufacturing with new research centre and technology park

A deal has been struck to pave the way for a state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing centre (AMC) for Mid Wales, and business park, to be built on the edge of Newtown.

Powys County Council (PCC) is buying 14 hectares of land next to Newtown College from NPTC Group of Colleges for the landmark infrastructure project.

Located on Llanidloes Road, the development will be known as CymruTech Park. It will bring together the Mid Wales AMC with flexible high-quality business units, creating a hub for innovation, skills and growth.

PCC will now work with key partners, including the Mid Wales Growth Deal, to secure funding towards the project's capital costs.

Head to the news section on Powys County Council's website for [more information](#).



Active Travel in Ceredigion – have your say

From everyday journeys to long-term transport planning — Ceredigion’s active travel consultation helps inform the wider regional transport work led through the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee, coordinated by Growing Mid Wales. Have your say by 22 March 2026: <https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/your-council/consultations/active-travel-network-map-2026/>



New Exporter Programme

Broaden your business horizons

This Programme is a key component of the Welsh Government's Export Action Plan for Wales forming part of the extensive range of export development focussed support available to Wales based companies. The New Exporter Programme is specifically designed to grow the number of micro, small and medium sized business in Wales that export on a regular and sustainable basis.

Head to the Welsh Government website for [more information](#).

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 Instagram and LinkedIn pages, and YouTube channel:

www.instagram.com/growingmidwales/

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

<https://www.youtube.com/@TCC-GMW>

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.

