



## Growing Mid Wales March Newsletter

What's been happening this month?



It's officially Spring, isn't it wonderful to see the daffodils and snowdrops again! We recently celebrated St David's day with a Welsh cake or two - which was needed to keep our energy up as we have been very busy with lots of developments – the Regional Skills Partnership event, the launch of the Employment and Skills plan, funding news and welcoming in new members of the team.

This month's *Meet the Team* spotlight is on Cathy Martin, Mid Wales Growth Deal Operations Manager.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

### ***The Growing Mid Wales team***

\* Is your organisation part of the Growing Mid Wales partnership? Or, are you a member of a group that's benefitted from European Regional Development Funding? If so, we'd love to share some of your news in future newsletters. Get in touch!

#### **Read on for:**

- Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Event
- Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan 2022-2025
- Fact of the month: Newtown apprentice who became a world famous entrepreneur
- Growth Deal News
- Open Call For Mid Wales Shared Prosperity Fund Applicants
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## Grow - Define - Deliver Together



An employer engagement event hosted by the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) took place on 23 March to give businesses of Mid Wales an opportunity to come together and talk about what they need for the future to meet their business goals.

Held at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, support and guidance on procurement, tendering, recruitment, skills, and training was available to businesses who attended. In addition, it was an opportunity for networking and exploring the opportunities around upskilling, training and apprenticeships.

Key topics were explored in a round table discussion including Green Skills and Net Zero; looking at ways to prepare and adapt organisations and supply chains for the green economy, identifying green skills for the workforce and how these can be achieved.

During the event the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan 2022-2025 was officially launched. More about this later on in our newsletter.

If you missed the event but would like to get involved with the work of the Regional Skills Partnership you may be interested in joining our Business Cluster Group that we are setting up. We are seeking business leaders/experts from within Mid Wales to join this group which aims to help the RSP identify and address the barriers and issues affecting businesses in Mid Wales.

The cluster group is an advisory subgroup of the RSP whose members include industry and business leaders. More members are needed to ensure there is a balance of representatives from different sectors and a variety in micro, medium and large businesses.

Emma Thomas, Chair of the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership said: "Help us to understand your barriers to skills and recruitment, enabling the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership to be your voice when and where it matters."

To join the cluster group, email [midwalesrsp@powys.gov.uk](mailto:midwalesrsp@powys.gov.uk).



## Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan 2022-2025



Through engaging closely with businesses, giving them a voice to influence priorities for the region, this Plan addresses the importance of making strong connections between the local learning system and the skills needed across the region, so that we are creating the right conditions for a thriving workforce.

Launched at the Grow - Define - Deliver Together event, the Plan identifies key sectors and skills, priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth in the Mid Wales region and sets out the mechanism to create a more prosperous skills infrastructure for the region for the next 3 years and beyond.

View the plan on our website [here](#).



## Growth Deal News

At the Growing Mid Wales Board meeting held on 28 March, key documents have been approved, moving the Mid Wales Growth Deal a step closer to unlocking £110m combined funding from both the UK and Welsh Governments.

The updated Strategic Portfolio Business Case, which is the overarching document detailing how the Growth Deal Portfolio will be delivered and meet its objectives, will now be submitted to both Governments along with vital supporting documents so that they can consider issuing the first tranche of funding for the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

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

## Open Call For Mid Wales Shared Prosperity Fund Applicants

From 20 March, projects operating in the Local Authority areas of Ceredigion and Powys can present their outline applications for funding in a series of two open funding calls.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will support the Levelling Up objectives, that seek to :

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency
- Through the Multiply Programme, increase levels of functional numeracy in the adult population

Please note that the Local Authority areas of Ceredigion and Powys are in receipt of individual allocations for the UK SPF. If you intend submitting a regional bid, please contact both authorities to discuss further.

To apply for the fund and for more information on the funding calls, including the important details organisations should think about before applying, go to the Mid Wales Shared Prosperity Fund page on the Growing Mid Wales website, [www.growingmid.wales/MidWalesUKSPF](http://www.growingmid.wales/MidWalesUKSPF)

A webinar on the Mid Wales UKSPF open call was held by on 16 March. This information session, attended by over 150 participants, provided an overview of the fund, the focus of the calls in each area, hints and tips to help with applications and a Q&A session at the end. Don't worry if you missed the webinar, you can view the slides on our [website](#). If you wish to raise any questions, email [ukspf@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:ukspf@ceredigion.gov.uk) or [ukspf@powys.gov.uk](mailto:ukspf@powys.gov.uk).



### Mid Wales UK Shared Prosperity Fund Regional Manager

This month, Becky Jeremy joined the GMW team as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Regional Manager. The UKSPF is delivered in Mid Wales aligned to our other regional funding and initiatives, with a Mid Wales Regional Investment Plan setting the framework for the fund. Becky will be responsible for the strategic management of the UKSPF for Mid Wales, working closely with the Economy & Regeneration teams of both Powys and Ceredigion Councils to deliver projects to benefit local communities, businesses and people.

Whilst the local partnerships in both Local Authority areas will decide and agree on the projects – Becky will have a key role to ensure strategic alignment and administration of the fund. She will be working closely with all of us in Growing Mid Wales across Skills, the Growth Deal and Regional Engagement teams to ensure all of our funding streams deliver the best possible results for Mid Wales.

Welcome to the team Becky, and all the best in your new role!



*1 - Becky Jeremy, UK Shared Prosperity Fund Regional Manager.*

## Meet the Team



*2 - Cathy Martin, Operations Manager for the Growth Deal.*

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

I joined the team in July 2021 when the Portfolio Management Office was first being established.

- **What are your current priorities?**

We've recently been updating our overarching Portfolio Business Case which provides the latest information on the programmes and projects within the Portfolio and how together they will meet our objectives for the Growth Deal. It's a bit of a beast of a document and is very detailed but shows the work going on behind the scenes to progress the Growth Deal, both what we've achieved to date and what lies ahead.

This is all part of demonstrating to both Governments that we are ready to receive the Growth Deal funding and start delivering so it's a big deal! Of course progressing the projects is a major part of that so we are working closely with project sponsors on the next stages of their business case development. It's not a straight forward process and I think we're all learning!

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

Before taking up my role with GMW, I worked for two Local Enterprise Partnerships, mostly with Northamptonshire and more recently Leicestershire. The majority of that time I managed the delivery of various Government-funded programmes which have supported some amazing projects. There have been some big ones such as Catesby Aerodynamic Research Facility in Northants and SportPark in Loughborough but I think some of the most rewarding ones were grants to businesses where a relatively small amount of funding helped a business develop, grow - making such a difference.

Now I'm part of the Mid Wales team, I'm really looking forward to seeing the projects within the Growth Deal come to fruition. Exciting times ahead!



3 - SportPark, Loughborough. Image Credit: Loughborough University

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

Ooh that's a tricky one! Back in 2012 I arranged the Northamptonshire Business Summit, there were over 20 speakers, various workshops and over 200 businesses attended. I managed to get Chris Boardman as a guest speaker too; he was really good.

Moving back to Wales was another one! I'm originally from Pontypool and moved to Northampton to go to college and ended up staying. I've always wanted to move back to Wales though and finally took the plunge a year ago and have not stopped smiling since!

- **What is your greatest hope for the Growth Deal?**

The Mid Wales Growth Deal is ambitious but you have to be ambitious to make a difference. Through our projects and programmes, we have the ability to deliver significant change in Mid Wales and that's an incredible opportunity. So I guess it's positive change, pride in our achievements and proof that we can do it!



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

Dedicated

- **Favourite quote?**

“Imagination is more important than knowledge” – Albert Einstein

## **Fact of the month:** Newtown apprentice who became a world famous entrepreneur

### **Sir Pryce Pryce-Jones**

Sir Pryce Pryce-Jones (16 October 1834 – 11 January 1920) was a Welsh entrepreneur who formed the first mail order business, revolutionising how products were sold. Creating the first mail order catalogues in 1861 – which consisted of woollen goods – customers for the first time could order by post, and the goods were delivered by railway.

Pryce-Jones was born in Llanllwchaiarn, just outside Newtown, Montgomeryshire. He left school at 12 and was apprenticed to a local draper, John Davies; he took over Davies's business in 1856.

Pryce-Jones became hugely successful in the United Kingdom where he had over 100,000 customers, which included Florence Nightingale and Queen Victoria. In England he was able to promise next-day delivery. His business also took off overseas, selling Welsh flannel to the rest of Europe, the United States followed by Australia. During the 1870s he took part in exhibitions all over the world, winning several awards, and he became world famous.

In 1879, he built the Royal Welsh Warehouse, a tall red brick building in the centre of Newtown which still stands today and is the [new Business Wales enterprise hub](#).

Information taken from [Wikipedia](#).



4 - Royal Welsh Warehouse, Newtown. [Attribution:](#) Penny Mayes

## Other news



*5 - Dr Gemma Delafield, Regional Energy Officer, Growing Mid Wales*

We are pleased to welcome Dr Gemma Delafield to the GMW team! Gemma joins us in the new role of Regional Energy Officer. Fully funded by Welsh Government, Gemma will be supporting the development of Local Area Energy Plans for Ceredigion and Powys. Gemma will also play a key role in the development and implementation of key strategies and plans to support the region's energy system transition to net zero.

Tom Yeo, our Energy Lead has been on loan from Powys County Council (PCC) to the GMW team for the last year. Sadly his secondment has come to an end and he will be returning to PCC in the role of Economic and Climate Lead from 1 April. He will continue to be involved in the regional work and will work alongside Gemma, and Bethan Lloyd-Davies, his Ceredigion County Council counterpart, in delivering the Regional Energy action plan and development of the local area energy plans. The Growing Mid Wales team would like to thank Tom for all his hard work for the past year and look forward to working alongside him in his new role. There's no getting away from us!



*6 - Growing Mid Wales team*

Next month we will be focusing on Innovation. We will be looking at how [the new Innovation Strategy](#) from Welsh Government will influence Growing Mid Wales in addition to funding for innovation projects and previous funding has helped establish innovative projects in Mid Wales.

## 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).

