

Mid Wales Tourism Awards

CAT judged best in Third Sector at Mid Wales Tourism Awards

Immediate: October 18, 2019

One of the world's leading eco centres, which is based near Machynlleth, added another award to its collection at the inaugural Mid Wales Tourism Awards.

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) won the Best Third Sector Award, supported by Social Business Wales, at a glittering awards ceremony held at The Hafren, Newtown on October 17.

Designed to celebrate and showcase the region's exceptional tourism industry, the biennial awards were organised by MWT Cymru with support from Mid Wales Regional Tourism Forum, a public and sector partnership and Visit Wales, the Welsh Government's tourism arm. A dedicated Tourism Awards Advisory Group was established specifically to assist with the awards.

On accepting the award John Challen, head of CAT's Eco Centre, said: "We have had an amazing year, so being able to take this award back to CAT is going to be a real boost to all the staff. It has been a real team effort.

"I think these awards are a brilliant idea because they bring together everyone involved in tourism in Mid Wales."

CAT's mission is to inspire, inform and enable people to achieve practical solutions for sustainability, producing the 'changemakers' urgently needed to solve pressing environmental issues.

CAT has worked for more than 45 years to transform a redundant Welsh slate quarry into one of the world's leading eco centres.

The CAT site covers 23 hectares in the Dulas Valley near Machynlleth and attracts around 27,000 visitors a year. The attraction is enjoying a major resurgence, with a 35% increase in visitors in the past year with major plans for the future to meet growing demand for its services.

In addition to being a world-renowned visitor centre, CAT also runs a wide range of courses and postgraduate degrees. It also has an on-site and on-line retail operation, an in-house vegetarian café with a five-star food and hygiene rating and a 94-bed accommodation operation. Holding the Learning Outside the Classroom accreditation, CAT's 2018 VAQAS survey rated the staff and welcome experience at 95%.

The business employs around 70 permanent staff, which increases to more than 100 during the main tourist season, with the majority living within a 20-mile radius of the site.

CAT works with other local tourism businesses on joint ticketing promotions and arranges visits to other Mid Wales attractions and businesses for visiting education groups.

CAT has a long history of innovation, entrepreneurship and incubating and spinning out successful businesses, many of which have been based in Mid Wales. Significant funding has been received to create a low carbon innovation hub to assist sustainable start-ups, which are likely to make a local impact.

Runners up for the award were Crickhowell Resource and Information Centre, Crickhowell and RSPB Ynys-hir, Machynlleth.

Granted an Awards Trust Mark by the Independent Awards Standards Council, the awards were open to all businesses, organisations and individuals who contribute to tourism within Mid Wales.

MWT Cymru is the regional destination marketing and membership organisation for Powys, Ceredigion and Meirionnydd district of Southern Snowdonia. As a not-for-profit social enterprise company, MWT Cymru supports and represents more than 550 tourism businesses and organisations across the region.

Picture caption:

Nick Wilson (left) from sponsor Social Business Wales presents The Best Third Sector Organisation Award to Rob Bullen and John Challen from the Centre of

Alternative Technology, Machynlleth at the Mid Wales Tourism Awards held at The Hafren, Newtown.

Ends

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