



Hundreds of children helped celebrate Welsh culture at Swansea Market on St David's Day and many more are expected to join in the celebrations as the city hosts the National Eisteddfod this summer. Details on page 8

Supporting community services

AN AVERAGE band D household in Swansea can expect a Council Tax increase of 75p a week before precepts from other organisations like Community Councils and the police.

Swansea Council provides a huge range of services to the people of Swansea that includes education, social services and leisure centres.

It is the biggest employer in the city and is responsible for supporting local transport services, library services, street lighting, rubbish collection and mending potholes in the road.

The Council also maintains many public parks across the city and it supports economic and community regeneration projects.

The overall budget for the Council for this year is more than £333m and Council Leader Chris Holley said, "Council services touch everyone's life."

"Every family in Swansea benefits from Council services in a lot of different ways."

"It is important that the people of Swansea get the services they require as efficiently as possible."

"There have been massive financial pressures, but through its established process of budget review across all departments the Council has been able to absorb many of them and restrict the Council tax increase to 5%."

Key services get funding boost in council budget

MILLIONS of pounds in extra funding will be invested in frontline services across Swansea.

There will be increases in budgets for education, social services totalling £13m as well as major new capital spending on looking after council-owned buildings that provide essential services.

In education there will be an extra investment of £1.9m in Special Education Needs as part of a £6m budget increase.

In Social Services children's services will see an increase of £1.3m that will help support activities such as respite care and support for looked after children.

This extra investment means that, despite budget pressures, Council tax will be kept to a rise of 5% this year.

The Council has also agreed plans that will see the Central Library re-

located to a new civic centre at a revitalised County Hall.

Contractors for the civic centre project could be appointed as early as April.

The Council is also facing a range of

info Savings made

SAVINGS being made by individual portfolios include £1.3m in culture, recreation and tourism, £1.4m in environment and £1.9m in social services.

Significant savings amounting to £8.7m are required to meet the Welsh Assembly's Gershon savings target of £3m and finance the unavoidable spending needs.

unavoidable increases in spending over the coming year that is costing the authority an extra £25m, such as an extra £1.7m for fuel costs and £2.5m on waste disposal now that the Tir John landfill site is not available.

The Council's investment in the eGovernment programme is an extra £3.9m this year which will help pave the way for very significant savings in the years to come.

The council's capital budget and programme will see significant investment in the city's future including £25.6m on the refurbished Swansea Leisure centre.

There will be £7m for the civic centre and an additional £6m for other work at County Hall. And as the Council's programme of asset management continues there will be an investment of £9.3m in buildings.

For full reports see pages 4 and 5.

inside your city: your paper



My gem

Why Gower is my favourite spot - by Huw

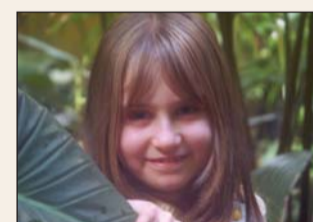
page 3



CCTV

Looking out for our communities

page 7



Plantasia

Welcome to the city centre jungle

page 9

plus your city: what's on



Where to go and what to do in Swansea

pages 2 and 3

info 1

useful
numbers**Leisure centres**

Penlan
01792 588079

Morrison
01792 797082

Penyrheol
01792 897039

Cefn Hengoed
01792 798484

Pentrehafod
01792 641935

Highways

Sewers - 24 hours
0800 0855937

Drainage - Mon to Fri
01792 636121

Damage to roads etc
0800 132081

Other highways issues
01792 843330

Housing

Main number
01792 636000

Repairs (out of hrs tenants)
01792 521500

Social Services

General Inquiries
01792 636110

Child, family access,
investigation team
01792 635700

Elderly disabled intake team
01792 636519

Child disability, family
support
01792 635700

Education

Main number
01792 636560

Environment

01792 635600

Main council switchboard

01792 636000



The Swansea Leader is the newspaper of the Council of the City and County of Swansea

To receive this newspaper in a different format ring 636226, text phone 636733

info 2

events
highlights**Every Sunday**

Dinghy Sailing Races-Every Sunday at Oxwich Bay Location: Oxwich Bay Contact: 01792 234502

March 28 - April 1

The Crucible by Arthur Miller presented by Swansea Little Theatre
Location: Dylan Thomas Centre
Contact: 01792 473238

March 19

They Might Boosh
Location: Swansea Grand Theatre
Contact: 01792 475715

March 19

An Evening with the Stars
Location: National Waterfront Museum
Contact: 01792 468321

March 20

Broadway A Star Spangled Celebration
Location: Swansea Grand Theatre
Contact: 01792 475715

March 22

Damon Brown Quintet
Location: St James Club, Uplands
Contact: 01792 466535

March 23

Jake and Elwood in the Best Blues Brothers Show in the World..Ever!
Location: Swansea Grand Theatre
Contact: 01792 475715

March 24

Twmpath with Jac y Do Live
Location: Bishop Gore School
Contact: 01792 635420

March 25

Fireman Sam to the Rescue
Location: Swansea Grand Theatre
Contact: 01792 475715

March 26

Nick and Joe s Bad Film Club
Locations: Dylan Thomas Centre
Contact: 01792 463980

March 29

Science Caf 
Location: Dylan Thomas Centre
Contact: 01792 463980

March 29

Comedy Club
Location: Arts Wing at Grand Theatre
Contact: 01792 475715

March 30 - 31

The Canterbury Tales

Location: Taliesin Arts Centre
Contact: 01792 602060

April 1

BBC National Orchestra of Wales
Location: Brangwyn Hall
Contact: 01792 475715

April 1 - 2

Fun weekend in Llangennith
Wipe Out Cancer Campaign
Location: Llangennith, Gower
Contact: 07891 123267

April 4

Seven Brides for Seven Brothers
Location: Grand Theatre
Contact: 01792 475715

April 8

Laser 4000 and 5000 Open Championships
Location: Mumbles Yacht Club
Contact: 01792 369321

Easter Holiday period

Easter Storytime Activities at Swansea Libraries
Location: Various
Contact: 01792 636430

April 8

Meditation Course
Location: Dharmavajra Buddhist Centre
Contact: 01792 458245

April 9

Swansea Bach Choir - Brahms' Requiem
Location: Brangwyn Hall
Contact: 01792 475715

April 11

Welsh National Opera- The Marriage of Figaro
Location: Grand Theatre
Contact: 01792 475715

April 14 - 17

Welsh Age Group and Youth Championship
Location: Wales National Pool
Contact: 01792 513513

April 22

Spring Charities Fayre
Location: Brangwyn Hall
Contact: 01792 544013

April 24

Easter Crafts and Games
Location: Llewellyn Park
Contact: 01792 635484

April 25

Living Sculpture Workshop
Location: Parc y Werin
Contact: 01795 635484

info 3

opening
times**CIVIC AMENITY AND RECYCLING SITES**

◆ Morrision Civic Amenity Site, Ferryboat Close, Morrison.

◆ Clyne Civic Amenity Site, Ynys Newydd Road, Derwen Fawr.

◆ Garngoch Civic Amenity Site, Phoenix Way, Gorseinon.

◆ Penlan Civic Amenity Site, Off Mynydd Newydd, Penlan.

◆ Tir John Civic Amenity Site, Danygraig Rd, St Thomas.

Civic Amenity Sites are open seven days a week during the following times:
British Summer Time (BST): 8.00am to 6.30pm
British Winter Time (GMT): 8.30am to 5.00pm (closed Christmas Day and New Years Day only)

The Civic Amenity sites are licensed by the Environment Agency to accept household waste only.

The sites will not accept trade, commercial, construction or demolition waste.

LEISURE CENTRES

For further information on activities at the Leisure Centres you can also visit www.swansea.gov.uk and click on Leisure and Tourism

Penlan

Mon-Fri6.30pm-10.00pm
Saturday7.30am-9.00pm
Sunday8.30am-9.00pm

Morrison

Mon-Fri8.45am-10.15pm
Sat/ Sun8.30am-5.30pm

Cefn Hengoed

Mon-Fri9.00am-10.00pm
Sat-Sun9.00am-6.00pm

Penyrheol

Mon-Sun9.00am-10.00pm

LIBRARIES

Blaenymaes Library and Mobile Library
07796 275142

Bonymaen Library
01792 469203

Brynhyfryd Library
01792 650953

Brynmill Library
01792 466072

Clydach Library
01792 843300

Fforestfach Library
01792 586978

Gorseinon Library
01792 516780

Gowerton Library
01792 873572

Killay Library
01792 203453

Llansamlet Library
01792 771652

Morrison Library
01792 516770

Oystermouth Library
01792 368380

Penlan Library
01792 584674

Pennard Library
01792 233277

Pontarddulais Library
01792 882822

St. Thomas Library
01792 655570

Sketty Library
01792 202024

Townhill Library
01792 512370

Swansea Central Library
01792 516750 for lending
01792 516753 for reference

info 4

how to...

How can I organise a civil partnership ceremony for my partner and I?

Civil partnership ceremonies between couples of the same sex can take place at Swansea Registrar Office.

New legislation came into force on December 5th which offered couples the chance to officially register their intent to form a civil partnership and over 20 ceremonies have taken place.

The Act has now given same sex couples the chance to make a formal and legally binding commitment to each other.

Every couple has their own ideas about the kind of ceremony they'd like and Swansea Register Office are more than happy to help arrange their day.

Couples are encouraged to contact Swansea Register Office on 01792 636188.

How do I organise a wedding in a hotel?

Civil marriages can be held in a venue which has been licensed by the Council and are called Approved Venues.

It's possible to marry in any

local authority approved venue in England or Wales but notices of marriage have to be given in the district where you live.

Marriages are not allowed by law to take place in the open air or in a temporary structure such as a marquee.

For a list of Approved Venues in Swansea contact Swansea Register Office on 01792 636188.

What legal documents do I need to give a marriage notice?

When you give your notice of

marriage, you will need to provide proof of your name, age, marital status and nationality.

A current full passport is preferred for proving your identity and nationality along with a birth certificate or a national ID card.

Supporting evidence such as a driving licence or bank statement showing your current address will also need to be produced.

For further details or to make an appointment to give a marriage notice, you can contact the Swansea Register Office on 01792 636188.

- Gower AONB 50th celebrations
- Huw Edwards' favourite spot
- Easter fun in store

Magic of Rhossili can always draw me home

HE may be the face of the BBC 10 O'Clock news but there's more to Huw Edwards than his in-depth interest in current affairs.

Staying true to his rural Welsh roots, the journalist has maintained a passion for the land of his fathers and speaks highly of the Gower peninsula in Swansea.

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. And it is after all, hardly more than a stone's throw from his home village of Llangennech in Carmarthenshire, and Huw spent many happy childhood hours in Gower.

He said, "I was once on a camping holiday in Horton with a few school friends and we tried to walk along the coast from Port Eynon to Rhossili. We soon gave up when we realised we'd miscalculated. I spent weekends in Port Eynon in my auntie's caravan, and also made many trips to Caswell Bay as a student."

Despite its ever-burgeoning popularity, Huw is under no illusions as to how Gower has managed to keep its magic.

He said, "It has maintained its rugged natural beauty despite an onslaught of tourism. This must be protected at all costs for the enjoyment of tomorrow's generation. Gower is



undoubtedly one of the jewels in the Welsh tourism crown. It's one of the biggest assets Wales possesses. I think most Welsh people appreciate their luck in living in such a beautiful country. And judging by the people who want to come and live in areas such as Gower from across Offa's Dyke, Wales is equally appreciated elsewhere too."

Different parts of Gower will spark varied memories for different people.

For Huw, it's the scenery and walking that he hankers for the most.

The newscaster said, "Rhossili beach is my favourite spot on Gower. It's the best of its kind in Europe, despite the cold water! I have walked the sands there many times since my childhood. For me, it's a very magical place."

Huw Edwards took over the 10 O'Clock news slot in 2002. He graduated into journalism by chance at Swansea Sound after gaining a first class honours degree in French.



Rhossili, Huw Edwards' favourite Gower spot

news Popular place to say I do

CIVIL partnership ceremonies in Swansea are proving to be a popular choice for same sex couples with 20 ceremonies having already taken place.

New legislation came into force on December 5 which offered couples the chance to officially register their intent to form a civil partnership.

Swansea was one of the first to offer a couple the chance to take part in a civil partnership ceremony. Julie Thomas Anderson and Adele Rees from Gorseinion were able to exchange pledges that were as legally-binding as a marriage in the first ceremony held at the Registrar Office on December 21st 2005.

Draft Welsh plan on cards

SWANSEA Council's Cabinet has approved plans that will help influence the future of Welsh Medium Education in Swansea.

A comprehensive review of the current Welsh Education Scheme has taken place and the new targets will help build on the progress made so far.

The draft goes the Welsh Language Board for discussion followed by public consultation before a final version is agreed goes back to the WLB for approval.

You know city's been Tango'd

TWO Swansea roads are to appear in a new Tango advert to be screened across the UK later in the year.

A film crew working on a commercial for the soft drinks giant picked Cambridge Street and Hawthorne Avenue in the Uplands area as the location for their latest marketing push.

Thomas Thomas Films of London produced the advert and fruits were rolled down the hills as part of the filming.

Well done Lee

LEE Ellery, 21, has picked up Swansea Youth Forum's Young Person of the Month award. The scheme was set up to encourage a positive image of children and teenagers in the community.

info

Gower facts

Did you know:

There are 21 bays and sheltered coves within the rugged coastline of Gower.

Gower was still attached to mainland Europe at the end of the last Ice Age, 20,000 years ago.



where to go

Easter Events/Swansea

A FEAST of events in Swansea over the Easter holidays should help keep boredom at bay.

Activities for both children and adults have been organised to ensure munching chocolate eggs doesn't become the sole past-time over the period.

If culture's what you're after then you're likely not be disappointed thanks to a star-studded performance coming to the Grand Theatre.

Beyond Reasonable Doubt, starring Leslie Grantham of Dirty Den notoriety and Simon Ward, is

being staged at the venue between April 25 and 29.

The play, written by Jeffrey Archer, is a gripping courtroom drama with a twist in the tale.

For children, the Swansea Bay Rider will again be up and running along the promenade between Blackpill and Mumbles with stops at West Cross, Norton, Oystermouth and Southend Gardens along the way.

Swansea Museum, too, has much to offer during the holiday season.

Its surfing exhibition - which

documents the history of the sport and its development in the Swansea area - runs until April 29.

Featuring its pioneers and personalities, it tells the story of surfing in the UK from its humble beginnings in belly boarding in the early 1900s, through to its current cool cult status in Gower and far beyond.

And then there's Swansea's leisure centres which can offer a range of wet or dry weather fun for all the family.

Finally, don't miss the chance

to visit the city's National Waterfront Museum.

Situated a stone's throw from the city centre, it's an ideal place to catch up on the industrial heritage of Swansea and of Wales.

A range of interactive exhibits really make the past come alive for visitors of all ages.

For more information about these events and others taking place across Swansea over Easter, visit www.swansea.gov.uk or for the National Waterfront Museum go to www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/swansea

County Hall given back to the people

PLANS to transform Swansea's seafront County Hall with a 21st Century state-of-the-art Civic Centre that aims to make it easier to access services than ever have been approved by Council.

The centre will boast among the most modern library facilities in Wales, complete with internet access. There will also be a café as well as a one-stop call and contact centre that will put customers at the heart of council services.

The original vision announced in February, 2005, included a new Central Library, a call and contact centre – subject to Cabinet agreeing the service@swansea programme - a public exhibition area, a café and an Archives and Family History Centre.

In addition to this plan unveiled last year the project now includes improved public car parking facilities, a special bus lane for the proposed Swansea Metro service as well as some internal refurbishment works on toilets and other facilities at County Hall. And on top of this are proposals for a new computerised library management system that will be a hub linking the Central Library to all other

libraries in Swansea. It will mean more flexibility than ever before for the city's award-winning library service.

The Council has already undertaken a lot preparation work. Layout proposals for changes at County Hall have been drawn up and some staff have already been moved as part of the process. Work on site could start as early as next month and the new library should be up and running by early 2008.

Visitors to the new Civic Centre will be able to browse the shelves of the new Central Library or the internet and then pop over to the cafe and enjoy outstanding views across Swansea Bay while enjoying a coffee. And people who want to study their family trees or find out about the history of Swansea will have access to an unrivalled service at the Archive and Family History Centre.

Council Leader Chris Holley said, "The Council's plan is to give County Hall back to the people of Swansea. It will be a modern flagship location that our citizens can have real pride in. Just as importantly it will deliver on the Council's commitment to improve service delivery and access for our citizens."

The call and contact centre will be a



A graphic impression of how the new Civic Centre might look from the inside

single point of contact for a large number of council services. For example, visitors to the Civic Centre would be able to pay their Council Tax bill and book tickets at the Grand Theatre, he said.

"County Hall is a major landmark in the city and from the inside it has marvellous views across the sweep of Swansea Bay. The council wants

everyone to have the chance to enjoy those views in a light and friendly atmosphere.

"County Hall will always be a working building, but hundreds of visitors passing through will breathe new life into it. The hope is that while people will want to come to County Hall to do business with the council it will also be a focal point for people

who just want to be out and about.

"At the same time we hope it will encourage those casual visitors to take the opportunity to participate in council meetings or events as well."

"County Hall has always belonged to the people of Swansea. Now they are going to have the chance to use it as a lively centre of information, learning and culture."



Guildhall will benefit from Capital Programme

Millions of pounds earmarked to improve city's public buildings

SWANSEA'S Grade I listed Guildhall will be among the public buildings that will benefit from a £9.4m maintenance fund.

The Capital Maintenance fund forms part of the Council's Capital programme for the coming years and is designed to be a rolling programme of infrastructure maintenance.

And the programme includes provision for the completion of urgent work at the Guildhall that was

identified by a report to the Council last month.

The survey by external consultants was conducted as part of the Council's proactive approach to the management of its corporate buildings.

Chris Holley, Leader of Swansea Council, said, "The Guildhall is a national treasure; it is one of the great buildings of Wales and we will be seeking external funding and grants to help us carry out this major

refurbishment.

"The Council is fully committed to refurbishing the Guildhall so that it can be preserved for future generations and remain an important and operational building for the people of Swansea.

"We are now prioritising the first phase of works which we need to start within the next few months so that the new heating system will be in place for next winter."

- Budget 2006/07
- Education gets £143m
- Social Services gets £78m



Special needs pupils get £1.9m funding boost

EDUCATION in Swansea is to see an increase in its budget of £6m in the coming financial year.

It means that almost £143m from the revenue budget will be spent on education and their pupils in 2006/07, the biggest budget by far among the Council departments.

The Capital Programme has also earmarked £8.5m for education,

including money for a new St Thomas Primary School.

There will be a £1.9m increase for supporting pupils with Special Education Needs in schools across the city.

The department is also fielding the extra costs of fuel price increases of almost £750,000 and extra pension fund increases of £415,000.



Extra for young and services to elderly

SOCIAL Services in Swansea are getting a funding increase of just under £8m as part of the revenue budget settlement.

Children's services are to get an extra £1.3m to support activities including respite care services, preventing youth offending and support for looked after children.

Elderly and disabled services will

see a budget increase of £1.8m and there will also be extra available for mental health and learning disability services which support initiatives such as day centres and projects such as the Victoria Park kiosk.

In Housing there is a Capital Programme budget of £5.2m for disabled facilities and housing improvement grants.



Re-cycling is more important than ever

THE Council has earmarked £2.5m to cope with a big rise in the cost of waste disposal since Tir John has not been available. On top of that an extra £300,000 is needed for landfill tax.

Although Swansea is one of the best-performing authorities in Wales for re-cycling waste, the rise shows how important it is to keep improving rates.

Fuel price increases will also be costing the department almost £300,000 extra over the coming year.

Extra investment of £200,000 from the Capital programme is going into building two new pontoons at the council-owned Swansea Marina to help boost income at one of the most popular sites of its kind in Wales.



Regeneration plans invest in the future

COMMUNITY Regeneration and Economic and Strategic Development are among the key drivers of ensuring that communities across Swansea benefit from the Council's work now and in the future.

The Community Regeneration programme for next year includes provision for almost £600,000 for community safety and another

£457,000 for community recreation.

Economic and Strategic Development invests in supporting businesses through initiatives like the Business Centre and development projects.

In the capital programme for Economic are proposals for development grants and redevelopment work.



Healthy future with a bit of help from Activa

THE CULTURE, tourism and recreation department is responsible for a huge range of activities in Swansea, ranging from the refurbishment of Swansea Leisure Centre to our parks, sports initiatives and libraries.

Its revenue budget for this year is £15.7m, with more than £3m going on libraries and more than £5.5m going

on keeping our city's parks in top condition.

The council's highly successful Activa centres have seen a big jump in membership and together with improving Box Office receipts from the Grand Theatre, they are expected to generate around £250,000 of extra income for the Council over the coming year.

news Centres offer all-weather fun

CHILDREN and young people groups from Swansea and beyond now have the opportunity to take part in adventure activities on Gower all-year-round.

The Swansea Council-run Activity Centres at Dan-y-Coed, Borfa House and Rhossili are now available come rain or shine from January to December.

The facilities have recently undergone a £1m refurbishment programme thanks to help from the Big Lottery Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.

All the activities are delivered by a team of fully-qualified instructors.

Surfing, rock climbing, canoeing and abseiling are among the sports available.

Makeover is complete

IMPROVEMENT work on the famous wall at St Helen's has been finished.

The wall behind the new stand has been re-rendered and painted a mushroom-grey to blend in with the back of the new stand at the ground.

The wall has been given a makeover as part of a £150,000 Swansea Council-led redevelopment project.

The historic arch of the boundary wall where great players have passed below over the years has also been given a face lift.

Saddle-up for ride to school

SCHOOLS in Swansea are being encouraged to set up cycling clubs to help promote and encourage more pupils to cycle to school.

Swansea Council's Safer Routes to School Team is assisting schools in the process and offering incentives to children who cycle five times or more to school during a term.

If a school is planning to set up a cycle club, they can call Swansea Council's Road Safety Team on 01792 636129 for info.

Up the junction

SWANSEA Council has unveiled improvement plans for phase two of the Ynysforgan Interchange. Improvement work at Junction 45 of the M4 is due to start in the spring.

School is building a special place

PONTARDDULAIS Comprehensive School is looking forward to welcoming children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) through its doors.

A new specialist teaching facility is to be created at the school, building on the Council's long and proud history of supporting children with special educational needs.

Pontarddulais Comprehensive has always thrived on its aim of being inclusive and maximising the potential of children of all abilities.

Its special needs provision in its last inspection report was rated as very good and the report recognised that the school is a warm and welcoming community.

The school is now looking forward to providing up to 12 young people with specialist teaching facilities but head teacher John Radford believes it will benefit all his pupils.

The creation of the Pontarddulais facility follows the success of a primary school based specialist teaching facility which opened in September 1996 in Penllergaer Primary School and is attended by 12 pupils.

Penllergaer head teacher Graham

Lewis said, "I would say it has been one of the most significant developments that Penllergaer Primary School has ever seen. It has benefited all children.

"We are able to offer a wonderful facility to our special needs pupils, but the facility has also had a very positive impact on the development of mainstream children at the school.

"The lives of all the children are enlightened and enriched by having this facility at the school.

"We use every opportunity for integration where appropriate and where it benefits both special needs and mainstream children.

"They meet in such areas as music, art and for example through lunchtimes.

"From our experience this type of unit is win-win for everyone and it is best for everyone that this should continue into secondary education without a doubt."

The new facility at Pontarddulais Comprehensive School will now enable pupils from Penllergaer Primary to continue their mainstream education without having to go out of the area.

The new PMLD building will consist of two main classrooms, associated bathroom facilities, a



Pontarddulais Head Teacher John Radford on a busy school day

therapy room, a sensory room, an administrative/meeting area and specialist equipment.

The scheme will include an external walkway linking the unit to the main school and also adaptations within the existing school building to provide curricular inclusion for the PMLD pupils.

Funding will be from the Schools Building Improvement Grant and the

local authority's capital budget.

Pontarddulais head teacher Mr Radford said, "This is and has always been a school which prides itself on being inclusive and regards its duty as educating children of all abilities and needs. The governing body, staff and pupils are delighted to now have such an opportunity to provide a truly inclusive school catering providing for children whatever their needs and

abilities.

"There was significant consultation with pupils, parents and staff.

Former Penllergaer pupils have particularly responded very positively to the thought of having their former pupil friends and peers with them again. We see this as an opportunity and challenge for the school to fulfil its goal which we see as trying to maximise the potential of all children."

your school Penclawdd Primary/Penclawdd

GOING to school in Swansea might be seen as no different to going to school in other parts of Wales. Those who think that would be wrong.

Many schools in other parts of the country haven't got the beautiful and rugged coastline on their doorsteps. This adds a whole new element to the occasionally mundane learning environment.

Nestled in the heart of cockle-picking country is Penclawdd Primary, a school that takes full advantage of its location.

Having welcomed the Sky News weather team there recently to broadcast weather bulletins to the nation, the school has thrown themselves into learning even more about the environment, studying life at the bottom of the ocean.

Children at the school have gone on to help marine experts at the National Museum Wales launch a new CD-Rom about life in the deep blue sea.

The exciting new learning package entitled 'Explore the sea floor' has been developed

following an in-depth study of the waters in the Bristol Channel by the museum's Marine Biodiversity Department along with the British Geological Survey (BGS).

Deputy Headteacher Alyson Jones seized the opportunity to pilot the CD-Rom after receiving information on it. Alyson said, "We received a flyer from the National Museum Wales highlighting the CD-Rom.

I contacted the museum and asked if we could have a copy earlier than the release date because we were studying marine

life. They agreed and asked us to pilot the CD to see how useful and pupil-friendly it is.

Since then, the CD-Rom has had a major national launch, with copies of the CD-Rom sent to every single school in Wales.

Education Minister Jane Davison visited Penclawdd Primary to help with the launch and talk to some of the children at the school.

She said, "It's especially useful for children in Penclawdd where the sea has helped develop the village."



- Our communities
- Reaping dividends of CCTV
- Fighting domestic abuse

Looking out for you round the clock

CCTV is helping to reduce the fear of crime as well as cut crime and nuisance on the city's housing estates.

A network of 28 surveillance cameras across the city and county have helped deter, detect and record evidence vital for conviction on incidents that range from firearms incidents to house fires.

They have also helped to avert a suicide attempt and provide court evidence for assaults as well as proving to be a vital weapon in tackling other low level anti-social behaviour.

Four CCTV cameras controlled by Swansea Council's Neighbourhood Support Unit or NSU were first introduced in 1998.

The aim was to complement NSU foot patrols in supporting district housing offices' efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour on estates.

The success of this initial scheme sparked a Welsh Assembly Government grant for a further 17 cameras on Swansea residential streets plus a dedicated control room. Eight cameras have since been added.

The aim of the cameras is crime reduction and detection and reducing fear of crime.

They aim to deter perpetrators, but also alert emergency and police

info

Neighbourhood watch

THE CCTV cameras work 24 hours, seven days a week and are managed by dedicated trained officers on a shift rota. Tapes are kept for at least 28 days.

Camera locations are decided in liaison with police and local residents. There are nine in Townhill, five each in Morriston, Eastside, and Blaenymaes, three in Penlan, one in Clydach and one in Sketty.

From April 2005 to date more than 2,400 incidents have been observed on CCTV.

services to incidents and provide evidence for any necessary legal action against criminals or perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

Dave Thomas, Swansea Council Neighbourhood Support Manager, said, "Since the use of CCTV was introduced on Council Housing estates in 1998, it has proved an invaluable tool in detecting crime and gathering evidence.



The NSU team out on patrol in Swansea

"If a member of the public phones us with an anti-social behaviour complaint we are often able to look immediately at the situation gather evidence and deploy an appropriate response.

"We work closely with the Police and other partners within the Safer Swansea Partnership group to promote confidence and security for all residents of our housing estates."

Inspector Andy Kingdom, Head of

Community Safety for South Wales Police said, "Our partnership with the Neighbourhood Support Unit has proved very effective and the footage provided by the CCTV cameras has resulted in arrests and prosecutions."

Cabinet Member for Housing Councillor Graham Thomas said, "Residential area CCTV underlines the Council's commitment to ensuring that homes are safe and are located in safe environments."

news Insulate homes against bills

RESIDENTS hoping to make their homes more comfortable, cut their fuel bills and reduce harmful CO2 emissions have a new number to call for expert energy advice.

The Council's Energy Advice Centre at Craddock Street can now be contacted on 01792 652457 or 01792 655823. Residents can also still pop into the office to get energy saving tips.

Householders can also gain information on the best insulation schemes and grants which can be up to 100% for cavity wall and loft measures. Householders who are not eligible for 100% grants may still benefit from discounts of between 50% and 70%.

Museum chases £100,000 prize

NEWS that Swansea's National Waterfront Museum is in the running for a major arts prize has been welcomed by city leaders.

Swansea Council leader Chris Holley has lavished praise on the facility after it was named on the shortlist for the £100,000 Gulbenkian prize, the largest single arts prize in the UK.

The prize shortlist will be announced in April and the winner will be known in May.

Happiness is a real nappy

THIS year's Real Nappy Week is taking place at the end of April and organisers are running a roadshow across Swansea.

Real nappies are eco-friendly, help reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill sites and are becoming a fashionable lifestyle choice.

For more information about the Nappacino coffee mornings visit www.realnappieswales.org.uk or call the Swansea Real Nappy Hotline on 01792 427256.

Street clean

SWANSEA Council is teaming up with pubs along Wind Street to come up with better ways to manage the clean-up problems associated with weekend nights out.

Don't suffer domestic abuse in silence

A NEW strategy is to be launched this spring which aims to improve services and awareness for thousands of people in Swansea whose lives are touched by abuse in the home.

The Safer Swansea Domestic Abuse Strategy 2006 – 2008 comes under the umbrella of the Safer Swansea Partnership and involves Swansea Council, South Wales Police, health services, probation, the courts and a range of other statutory and voluntary bodies who deal with abuse and its

consequences.

Swansea Council Head of Mental Health and Learning Disability Services Chris Maggs said, "Domestic abuse is a high risk, high volume crime. This strategy looks at ways we are going to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse through partnership."

Women, men, children and young people who wish to speak to someone in confidence about domestic abuse may call the Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 80 10 800.

Extra funding for care home provision

CARE homes are to get a funding increase to help them provide quality care for hundreds of older people across Swansea.

Swansea Council and Swansea Local Health Board are to pass on extra Assembly cash to independent care homes to help alleviate cost pressures faced by these vital providers.

This means that the local authority rate for personal care for 2006/7 will be lifted by 4.8% to help alleviate the

cost pressures on independent sector care home providers.

Swansea Council commissions personal care services from approximately 50 private care providers to support around 740 people across the city and county.

Swansea Council also has partnership arrangements with Swansea Local Health Board and currently jointly purchases 500 local Nursing Care places from independent providers in Swansea.

Appeal teams are nearly there

Stage is set for you at Welsh cultural festival

LOCAL appeal committees are within shouting distance of hitting their fundraising target for August's event.

The National Eisteddfod attracts 170,000 visitors and over 6,500 competitors annually and will cost about £2.7m to stage. A large amount of the financial support comes from local government, sponsorship and television rights.

But residents of the area hosting the event are also asked to dig deep and Fred Williams Chairman of the Eisteddfod Finance Committee said, "Local residents were also asked to raise a proportion of this cost and in Swansea a target of £272,500 was set. The people of the city have responded magnificently and we're 97% of the way there now.

"Appeal committees are vitally important to the Eisteddfod not only to raise funds but also to raise awareness in the area. We are indebted to everyone who has helped organise events.

Here are a list of events organised by Appeal Committees over the coming weeks to help bridge the final gap:

March 24: Twmpath with Jac y Do at Bishop Gore School, Swansea c/o Mumbles appeal committee.

March 25: Morryston Appeal Committee – Tabernacl Choir present the Messiah gan Handel at the Tabernacl, Morryston. Tickets: Jennifer Davies – 01792 874 015, by the door or by members of the choir.

March 28: Tabernacl Choir present the Messiah by Handel at the Tabernacl, Treforys c/o Derwen Fawr Appeal Committee.

March 31: Adloniant Mawr Society present Geraint Lovgreen a'r Enw Da at the Glamorgan Arms, Pontlliw at 8pm. An auction will also be held during the evening. Proceeds to the Felindre/Garnswllt appeal committee.



National Eisteddfod a highlight of the cultural summer

SWANSEA is pulling out all the stops as it prepares to welcome the National Eisteddfod to the area in the summer.

It will be the first time in 24 years that the festival will be visiting Swansea, after being held originally in Singleton Park in 1982. This time it will be setting up camp at the former tin works at Felindre between August 5 and August 12.

As part of the preparations Swansea Council is looking for schools and community groups to perform at the council's own pavilion during the week.

The Swansea Pavilion will have a small stage with programmed events during the week which will give school children and community groups from all over Swansea the chance to perform on the Maes.

Rhodri Jones, Education Office for the Council who will be co-ordinating the stage events said, "We'd like to hear from schools and community groups who would like the chance to perform on the council's stage at the maes. It will be a great opportunity for them to show their talents in front of the visitors to the maes, and may even be an incentive for them to compete in the Eisteddfod competitions!"

"There has been some interest already and places are limited so I'd encourage those who would like the chance to perform to get in touch with me as soon as possible so that they can ensure their place."

Four performances will feature on the stage at different times during the day with the aim of providing a platform for different cultures and talents of Swansea. As part of the Eisteddfod's policy every performance on the field must be in Welsh.

For further information and a chance to book your place at the pavilion

contact Rhodri Jones on 01792 637142, the closing date for applications is April 10th.

The Swansea Pavilion will also feature information and highlight the best of what Swansea has to offer such as the beautiful beaches of Gower, cultural and entertainment events, leisure activities, home grown local produce and local crafts.

Council Leader, Chris Holley said, "The Swansea Pavilion will be a wonderful opportunity to show visitors and the people of Swansea what we have to offer in terms of our heritage, arts, entertainment and the many other ingredients that make Swansea so special.

"It will also give us a chance to celebrate and promote the rich and diverse cultures that we have in Swansea."

The Council has already provided the Eisteddfod with financial support to help stage the event and is working closely with the organisers on setting up the field. Part of this partnership working has seen a new city centre shop opening especially set up for the festival at the Tourist Information Centre in the heart of the city centre.

The Council Leader was one of the first to buy his ticket for the festival when the shop opened on St David's Day. The prime location will make it easy for residents and visitors alike to buy tickets for the festival, be it for a visit to the maes, pavilion performances or concerts.

Elfed Roberts, Director of the Eisteddfod said, "This year's concert programme has something for everyone, hosting local and international artists side by side.

"Katherine Jenkins will perform on the opening concert ensuring that the Swansea and District Eisteddfod gets off to a flying start. It promises to be an exceptional week."

Attendances heading in the right direction

IMPROVEMENTS in school attendance in Swansea are continuing following the latest figures published by the Welsh Assembly.

Swansea has improved its standing in the table, moving up one place to 15 out of 22 local authorities. This has been a continuing trend in the progress made by Swansea schools since 2002 when they were 21 out of 22 in Wales.

Total attendance in both primary and secondary schools has continued to improve since 2002. The latest figures

show an increase in secondary attendance from 89.2% in 2002 to 90.1%.

Figures for primary attendance are equally as promising with figures in 2002 at 91%. These now stand at 92.5%. Statistics also show Swansea is the fifth most improving authority in Wales over the last four years.

Much of the improvement has been attributed to the excellent work done by the schools in collaboration with the Education Welfare Service.

Don't hide your creativity under a bush, let it blossom for all to see

DO YOU enjoy gardening? Do you work hard to make your home or business look beautiful in the summer months?

If your answer is yes, then why not enter this year's Swansea in Bloom competition

Now in its 14th year, the competition is run by a voluntary organisation in conjunction with Swansea Council.

Since its introduction, the competition has been successful in

encouraging businesses, schools and residents to decorate their premises with floral displays, making their local community a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

The competition is to enter and is open to anyone who enjoys gardening. Judges are looking for attractive and well maintained displays that stand out from the rest and give pleasure to passers-by. There's a category for everyone to enter.

The competition is being launched

at Easter and entry forms will be available from mid-April by calling 01792 635490 or by visiting www.swansea.gov.uk/swanseinbloom.

All entries received before June 9 will be entered into a free prize draw to win a trip for two people to the spectacular Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, courtesy of Majestic Tours who can be found on their website on www.majestictours.co.uk/flower_show_s_m50.htm

- Culture and recreation
- When did you last go to Plantasia?
- Green vision unveiled

A crystal palace in heart of our city

LET'S face it Plantasia is hard to miss.

Few people could have not heard about or seen the glass pyramid at the heart Parc Tawe complex near Toys 'R' Us.

But when was the last time you stepped inside?

If you have not been there recently – or ever – you and your family could be missing out.

For the leafy look of the complex visible from its greenhouse windows from the outside can only hint at the climatic paradise jam packed with wildlife surprises inside.

A tour of Plantasia is like travelling across the world in around two hours – and its warm, dry, pram friendly, child friendly and wheelchair accessible throughout.

Children are entranced the minute they are through the doors with a fish tank full of types of fish made famous in Nemo.

Then it's on to the exotic creatures lurking to excite just around the corner.

There's skin-crawling cockroaches, hairy tarantulas, poisonous arrow frogs and those camouflage champions the stick insects too.

There is a glass tank you can walk all around where terrapins swim or

info

Your holiday hotspot

OVER the coming months there are events to add to what Plantasia always has to offer from felt making workshops to a visit by Noah's Animal House.

Popular and educational hothouse trails run every school holiday with prizes up for grabs.

For further details on opening times and admission fees go to the website:

www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1272

watch visitors from a rock.

Prefer things that slither – well among the snakes there is a rather large Burmese Python coiled to thrill.

And what about one of the latest additions to the hot house – a veiled chameleon who was about the size of a thumb when he first arrived – but a diet of 15 crickets a day means he is now one foot long and very visitor friendly.



Welcome to the steamy jungle that is Plantasia

For adults and older children there is information and examples of species of plants which are to be found in this disappearing habitat. And for the children the array includes fascination for them too in terms of unusual flowers, colours, giant leaves and even branches that could be mistaken for snakes.

The plant life gives way to a watery oasis containing huge koi carp which you can sit and watch or even feed.

Their pool is fed by a waterfall which you can even walk behind. And that's hardly half the story.

With all the excitement the sight of the Plantasia coffee shop is a welcome end to the tour and the gift shop has plenty on offer to enable children to take a memory home with them.

So don't just peer through the panes there's a whole new planet to explore and and it's right here on your doorstep.

news

Safety first at school gate

PARKING restrictions are being introduced on roads close to a number of schools in Swansea.

The latest measures will help prevent parents parking outside school gates during the school run.

The persistent parking near school gates at a large majority of schools in Swansea has been highlighted by the Council as a major hazard for children who are walking to and from school.

Anthony O Sullivan, Head of Transportation and Engineering in Swansea Council said, These measures are important in helping to create a much safer environment for children walking to and from school.

Paper trail to baling plant

SWANSEA is further increasing its commitment to recycling following the opening of new facility to store collected paper at the Baling Plant in Lansamlet.

The new bulking facility will store paper, newspaper and magazines collected by the council's county wide kerbside scheme as well as other recycling sites.

The aim is to help minimise cross contamination that can occur when different materials are kept together.

Flagging-up the best

CRWYS Primary School has been awarded a Green Flag for its commitment to the environment.

It has received the accolade thanks to a range of initiatives introduced since October of 2002.

The school originally set realistic targets such as eating healthier food and recycling mobile phones.

Now it also has an eco committee and has established a litter rota involving every class. Bird boxes have also been installed at the school.

Hot news

AN action plan to tackle fuel poverty has been launched. Real Changes sets out how Swansea Council and partners will work to help ensure people can heat their homes.

Green vision on view at Environment Centre

SWANSEA is to get its first Environment Strategy, setting out priorities for the next 15 years to ensure that the quality of the natural and built environment is safeguarded and improved for the long-term benefit of people living or working in the city.

The strategy will cover issues relating to wildlife and the countryside, the design and development of towns and neighbourhoods, our use of energy and transport, the quality of our air, water

and land, and the way we deal with our waste.

It also looks at how we can improve our awareness of environmental issues and be more sustainable at home and in work.

Public consultations are taking place on March 26 at the Environment Centre in Pier Street, with presentations at 2p, 4pm and 6pm

For further information on the Environment Strategy or SEF contact Jenny Edwards on 01792 480200.

Full steam ahead for futuristic StreetCar

SWANSEA is to get one of Britain's first StreetCar transport systems.

The innovative project supported by the Council has got the go-ahead follows news of its annual transport grant settlement which includes £2.2m for the planned Swansea Metro project.

The Swansea Metro will provide a modern alternative to public transport, utilising a new type of transport vehicle like no other.

Transport provider FirstGroup Plc is

behind the state-of-the-art vehicle which will take up to 100 passengers. The company has developed the vehicle and is now working with Swansea Council to introduce the first service of its kind in Wales.

The Swansea Metro will operate along a clearly defined route and will call at a number of heavily visited destinations including, Morriston and Singleton Hospital, Swansea University, the city centre and the Mumbles.



The Environment Department's graffiti team is on hand to go into action with power washers as quickly as possible after an incident is reported.

We're ready to clean up city

SWANSEA'S streets are getting cleaner, safer and brighter than ever, new figures suggest.

According to its latest performance indicators the council's environment and health teams are working flat out fixing street lamp failures, cleaning away graffiti and fly-tipping and filling in potholes in roads and pavements.

The figures show that every item of damage to roads and pavements that is the council's responsibility to fix is made safe within 24 hours of being reported.

And almost three-quarters of abandoned vehicles are taken away within 24 hours of the authority being legally entitled to remove them.

It also takes an average of just four

info

How you can play your part

EVERYONE in Swansea can help improve their communities by reporting cases of graffiti and other anti-social behaviour to the Council, or where more appropriate, to Safer Swansea Partnership or the police.

It has established a number of helplines have been set up so people can report potholes, street lamps that are not working or other issues.

Damage to roads: 0800 132081
Abandoned vehicles: 01792-637250
Other highways issues: 01792-843330
Environment department 01792-635600

days to repair street lamp failures in the city after they are reported, almost twice as fast as the Council's own targets. The figures come from

the latest round of performance indicators which are produced quarterly so the people of Swansea can see how the authority is getting on

compared to a whole range of targets.

It forms part of the Council's Journey to Top Performance, an improvement plan that aims to place Swansea among the best-performing 25% of local authorities in the UK by 2008. A study carried out by the accountants, Price Waterhouse Coopers, has reinforced the authority's findings that 15% of indicators were achieving top performance in 2004/2005, while 44% of indicators were improving.

The statistics also show how every single complaint of food safety and associated matters is investigated within four working days of being reported.

Cllr John Hague, Cabinet member for Environment, said that the statistics

showed that the authority gives a high priority to what people want.

"When you hear about cases of eColi and food poisoning in the news, it is worrying. But you can see from the figures that the environmental health team are responding well to the challenges and putting in the effort to ensure that all complaints about food safety are investigated quickly and appropriately.

"Things like fly-tipping, holes in the road, broken street lamps and graffiti can all make people feel their area is not cared for or run-down. That's why the Council regards it as vital that we do our bit for our communities by getting in and dealing with the problems as quickly as possible after they're reported."

City centre project is hailed the best in Wales

SWANSEA has won an award for the best town centre management scheme in Wales.

The city landed the prize thanks to its pro-active stance in tackling alcohol-related crime.

Initiatives such as the exclusion zone project and the introduction of polycarbonate safety glasses were heralded as an overwhelming success in the party season that ran from Christmas of 2004 to January of 2005 where violent crime in the main pub

and club district fell by 34 %.

Organisations such as the Swansea Council-supported City Centre Partnership were driving forces behind the campaign. The Safer Swansea Partnership was also heavily involved.

Other schemes introduced included fluorescent arm bands for recognition of door staff and a dedicated CCTV camera to monitor late night taxi rank activity.

A mobile triage centre to promptly treat injuries was also set up.

Thousands more commuters let park and ride take the strain

CITY CENTRE workers are voting with their cars and using the city's park and ride services more than ever, it's been revealed.

The most recent survey shows there has been a 5% increase in the number of commuters travelling to their place of work in the city centre.

The Council recently published annual user figures for 2005 for Landore and Fabian Way sites. The 2005 statistics highlighted a 49% increase in the number of cars that

parked at the purpose built facilities compared to statistics for 2004.

The service will include a third facility in 2007 following the identification of an appropriate site along Carmarthen Road.

Anthony O'Sullivan Head of Transportation and Engineering in Swansea Council said, "We're delighted that the latest figures show an increase in workers opting to use the service.

"It reflects the quality and price of

park and ride.

"We are committed to easing congestion in the city centre as well as providing high quality, safe parking facilities in the city centre for shoppers."

Both park and ride sites now have express bus routes featuring dedicated lane for park and ride buses only.

Park and Ride in Swansea remains one of the cheapest and easiest services in the country. The cost to park one vehicle all day is £1.50.

Why we need a waste solution

THE HUNT has begun for a new waste management strategy that will serve Swansea for a generation.

The city is one of the leading recycling local authorities in Wales, but all councils have to meet Welsh Assembly targets on increasing recycling.

Any long-term solution to dealing with waste that cannot be re-cycled is unlikely to be up and running for several years, which means the Council has to provide a medium-term landfill or waste treatment facility in order to meet statutory targets.

John Hague, Swansea Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, said, "Swansea has an excellent record on recycling. We need to build on that record in future years and reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill.

"This means all councils have to find new ways of dealing with the residual waste that we do not recycle.

"Councils across the country have to meet this challenge. In Swansea we've taken the lead and we're ahead of many other councils.

"We now need to establish which of the technologies available to deal with the residual waste are best suited to Swansea's needs.

"Doing nothing is not an option, we

info

New charges for bulky waste

NEW charges are to be introduced for the collection of bulky waste.

The measures are part of the Council's annual budget review.

Bulky waste is classified as household waste that cannot be fitted into black bags or weighs over 25kg.

For full details on the Bulky Waste Collection service go to the Council website: www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3261

have to act now to protect the interests of the Council, its customers and the environment.

"We will enter this procurement process with an open mind. I want to emphasise that no decisions have been or will be made until we've completed this process.

"It will cost many millions of pounds but the Council wants a solution that is efficient, sustainable and gives Swansea the best value for money for the next 25 years."



The Council's fly-tipping team clearing away more unsightly fly-tipped rubbish

Help us fight the blight of fly-tipping

NEW government regulations to help fight the blight of fly-tipping in our communities have come into force.

They mean that from now on householders will be responsible for ensuring their rubbish is passed on to an authorised carrier for disposal. This may be the Council or a private company.

Cllr John Hague, Cabinet Member for Environment said, "We are as a

council working hard to combat fly tipping but we need help.

"As part of the Duty of Care, householders who hire contractors to remove waste items from their property will have to ensure they are registered to carry waste.

"Any householders who don't use a registered carrier and whose rubbish ends up as fly tipped waste could face a fine of up to £5,000."

The Environment Agency has an online list of registered carriers that can be checked and if carriers are not listed, they should not be used.

But householders do not need to pay for waste removal if they can take the rubbish to a civic amenity site.

For a list of authorised carriers go to the Environment Agency's website:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/publicregister

Economic regeneration strategy aims to help unlock city's potential

SWANSEA'S future economic prosperity will depend on increasing productivity, entrepreneurship and building the knowledge economy.

And the building blocks need to be put in place now to ensure local economic growth is sustainable in the years to come.

A report to Cabinet showed how the city's Economic Regeneration Strategy aims to build on what's already been achieved with the likes of the Technium initiatives and the new

£50m Institute of Life Sciences at Swansea University.

The draft strategy will now go out to consultation with local business groups, the university and Swansea College as well as schools, MPs, AMs and other interest groups.

Gareth Sullivan, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, said that the strategy has six strategic aims designed to tap into local strengths to build a prosperous future for the whole of the city.

"This proposed strategy recognises that tackling economic inactivity and equipping our young people with the skills they need is the most effective platform for building economic success.

"On top of that this strategy aims to develop key sectors in the local economy that are already doing well such as tourism, computing, life sciences, professional services and creative industries," he said.

Home planned for off-road motorbikes

SWANSEA is to get Wales' first local authority-supported off-road bike track.

Illegal off-road scrambling has become a big problem for communities around Wales and the pilot scheme approved aims to offer an alternative that is better for residents and for riders.

Off-road motorcycling is growing in popularity but it often leads to complaints by residents of anti-social behaviour, noise pollution and

environmental damage.

Subject to planning permission the designated site proposed at council-owned Garth Farm in Ynystawe would provide controlled tracks as an alternative to mountains and wasteland. Noise will be kept to a minimum.

It would be designed by the Auto Cycle Union to accommodate several tracks catering for all levels and ages of riders. The ACU will advise on all aspects of course development.

Your 2020 vision is reaping rewards

AMBITIOUS plans to make Swansea a distinctive European City 2020 are already reaping benefits from better schools to safer streets.

The Swansea Community Strategy – known as Ambition is Critical – is a bold road map setting out the aims of making Swansea a world class city.

The shared vision for the community strategy is that by 2020 Swansea will be:

- A distinctive European City.
- A city that compares with the best.
- A city that invests in the future.
- A city where everyone matters
- A city that values its culture and heritage.

The strategy, which was first launched in 2004, has five distinct themes which are community safety, health and well being, learning, prosperity, and the environment.

There is no doubt that the strategy's vision presents a real challenge to Swansea Council, its partners and its communities. However, the drive for partnership and success generated by the strategy is reaping results.

For example, in education, all schools inspected in the last two years show improvement and attendance in schools is at the highest for five years and, at the same time, Welsh school inspectors Estyn has praised the standard of vocational training being provided by Swansea's Employment Training Centre. Swansea's health and well being strategy is also making excellent progress with 89% of

Swansea's action plan for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing due to be complete by spring 2006. Thanks to the work of the Safer Swansea partnership crime statistics in Swansea are also showing significant improvement.

And a new environment strategy – one of the first in Wales - will ensure that Swansea makes the most of its superb natural environment. Both of these strategies have had the thumbs up from key tests designed to guarantee sustainability.

Significant work to tackle poverty and social exclusion has also been ongoing with Swansea becoming the first city in Wales to endorse the UN's Millennium Goals declaration. Generation 2020 - an initiative to tackle child poverty - and an affordable warmth action plan featuring the characters Warm and Toasty – both mean that Swansea is leading the way in Wales.

These achievements were recently highlighted at Our Ambition 3, an event that was attended by over 80 people from a range of organisations. The aim of the day was to look at how Swansea's community strategy could be updated in May with the publication of the new strategy.

Councillor Chris Holley, Leader of the Council said, "Ambition is Critical sets out how all of our plans and partnerships link together and shows how everyone is working to achieve the 2020 vision for Swansea. But the community strategy is about more than plans and partnerships.



Where Swansea's past meets its future - Castle Graig and the Liberty Stadium

"It highlights what is unique about Swansea and gives a sense of what Swansea is all about. It is because we are passionate about Swansea that we want it to achieve all that it can."

Dave McKenna, Community Leadership & Engagement Manager said, "What is amazing is the way that people from difference communities and organisations will work together to make Swansea a better place. He said, "There is a real positive feeling and commitment and people are really focused on tackling the issues that matter."

For more information go to www.swansea.gov.uk/community-strategy

info

U txt us yr vu 4 city

YOU can play a part in the further development of Ambition is Critical, the community strategy for Swansea.

Describe how you would like your community to be in 2020 using just five words, for example More parks for our kids .

Submit your five-word statement either by e-mail to community.strategies@swansea.gov.uk, telephone 636292, post to Community Strategies, Room 2.2.3, County Hall, Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN or online at www.swansea.gov.uk/gimme5

All statements submitted will be entered into a prize draw.

Include your name, community and contact telephone number along with your entry. Texts will cost standard text rate. Ask bill-payers permission before entering. The competition is open to 16-25 year olds only and the closing date is April 10.

Activa membership is soaring

OVER 400 new members have joined the Activa leisure centres in Swansea since the launch of new equipment.

The new members are among the 2,800 people staff at the centres in Bishopston, Cefn Hengoed, Morriston, Penlan and Penyrheol have been introducing to the cardio-vascular and strength resistance facilities since

January.

Some of the consoles available have individual screens so people can watch their favourite television programmes or listen to music while they train.

A Swansea Leisure Card is also available so members of the Activa scheme can work out at any of the centres simply by swiping in. They can

also use the National Pool.

The revamp was a result of Swansea Council pumping £425,000 into its fitness centres in the city.

Liz Edmonds, manager of Penlan Leisure Centre said, "The introduction of the new technology has added an extra dimension to the gyms. The standard is very high."

Waking up to numbers

CHILDREN and their parents are to get valuable lessons on the importance of numbers as part of new learning initiative.

The Numbers and Play (NAP) programme is being introduced in primary schools across Swansea. The scheme, funded by the Basic Skills Agency and the Welsh Assembly helps children and parents to learn all about

numbers using play as a fun learning method.

It has been piloted in Cwmglas Primary School and head teacher Peter Osbourne said, "It gives children a better understanding of numbers at an early age. Parents also benefit by knowing how and what their children are taught, and are better prepared to support their children's homework."