

Talks with Chancellor pay off to help us make the most of our Freeport

ROEDD dydd Mercher, Tachwedd 22 yn ddiwrnod pwysig iawn i Ynys Môn yn San Steffan, am ddau reswm.

Yn gyntaf, ar y diwrnod hwnnw cyflwynodd y Canghellor ei ddatganiad yr Hydref a oedd yn cynnwys cyhoeddiad a fydd yn cryfhau ein Porthladd Rhydd Ynys Môn eto fyth.

Canolbwyntiodd y mwyafrif o'r wasg ar y penawdau canlynol o Ddatganiad yr Hydref:

- Cynnydd o £1.02 yn y lleiafswm cyflog cenedlaethol, o £10.42 i £11.44 yr awr i unrhyw un dros 21 (dros 23 yn flaenorol).

- Cynllun Dychwelyd i'r Gweithle i ddenu 1.1 miliwn o bobl yn ôl i'r gwaith.

- Newidiadau i'r Yswiriant Cenedlaethol i roi mwy o arian ym mhocedi pobl.

- Cynnydd o 8.5% mewn pensïonau gan roi £900 ychwanegol y flwyddyn i bensiynwyr ac anrhydeddu adedwid tri chlo Llywodraeth y DU.

Ond gwnaeth un cyhoeddiad fwy o wahaniaeth i ddyfodol ein hynys nag unrhyw un arall. Yn ei araith cyhoeddodd y Canghellor:

"Yn dilyn cynrychiolaeth gadarn gan fy Anrhydeddus Gyfaill, yr Aelod dros Ynys Môn (Virginia Crosbie)...rwyf wedi penderfynu ymestyn cyfnod y cymhellion ariannol ar gyfer parthau buddsoddi a'r gostyngiadau treth ar gyfer porthladdoedd rhydd o bum mlynedd i 10 mlynedd. Byddaf hefyd yn sefydlu cronfa cyfleoedd buddsoddi gwerth £150 miliwn i sbarduno buddsoddiad i'r rhaglen honno."

WEDNESDAY, November 22 was a very important day for Ynys Môn in Westminster, for two reasons.

First on that day the Chancellor gave his Autumn statement which included an announcement that will make our Anglesey Freeport even better.

Most of the press focused on these Autumn Statement

headlines:

- The national minimum wage rising by £1.02 from £10.42 to £11.44 per hour for anyone over 21 (formerly over 23).

- A Back to Work plan to bring 1.1 million people back into work.

- Changes to National Insurance to put more money in people's pockets.

- Pensions rising by 8.5% giving pensioners an extra £900 per year and honouring the UK Government's triple-lock pledge.

But one announcement will make more difference to the future of our island than any other. In his speech the Chancellor announced:

"Following tenacious representations from my Honourable Friend the Member for Ynys Môn (Virginia Crosbie)... I have today decided to extend the financial incentives for investment zones and the tax reliefs for freeports from five years to 10 years. I will also set up a £150 million investment opportunity fund to catalyse investment into that programme."

I am delighted that my discussions with the Chancellor have borne fruit. Speaking with him ahead of his statement I regularly emphasised that five years would not be enough time to make the most of our Anglesey Freeport.

By extending the period for financial incentives to ten years, our Freeport becomes more attractive to potential investors who want to establish a long-term future here. It will make both new and existing local operations more robust and give more time to make sure we lock in skills and experience for local people.

Anglesey is such a very special place but it was left in the cold for way too long. For decades we have watched and wept as major employers packed up and left - leaving a void of opportunity for our young people. Every year we haemorrhage Anglesey natives who leave in search of employment and a stable future. They take with them our language, our culture and our heritage,



● Virginia Crosbie MP and members of the Ynys Lawd team with their Anglesey Day goody bags in Westminster

and leave depleted aging communities in their wake.

As JFK once said "Things do not happen. Things are made to happen."

For far too long there has been too much sitting around waiting for things to happen on Anglesey - now we are making things happen. Since I was democratically elected to represent you in Westminster, I have fought every day to reverse that trend. I love this job - but honestly I have never worked so hard!

I am committed to continuing to use my position as your Member of Parliament in Westminster to improve the lives of people on Ynys Môn. It is a privilege to know that my work today will keep doing that for years to come.

This brings me on to the second reason why November 22 was so important for Ynys Môn.

After the Autumn Statement we celebrated Anglesey Day in Westminster.

Anglesey Day is my annual event to raise the profile of Ynys Môn in Parliament and celebrate our island. This year I focused on one of the many local programmes that benefited from the UK Government Community Renewal Fund.

The £2.7m Community Renewal Fund has been used to make a real difference on

Anglesey, including:

- Increasing the use of the Welsh language and improving community engagement,

- Giving social care workers the advanced education and qualifications they need to improve their earnings,

- Developing facilities to support local businesses to both start up and scale up,

- Funding the Green Digital Academy, which was the primary focus of this year's Anglesey Day.

The Green Digital Academy has been run as a joint venture between two North Wales businesses - Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and Greener Edge - both of which had stands at the event.

The Academy has helped many local companies improve their carbon footprint and make real, tangible changes to the ways they work with long-term sustainable benefits.

Some of those businesses had stands at Anglesey Day including: Aria Film Studios, Mona Lifting, Animated Technologies, John Kelly Construction, Metex, Bryn Ednyfed and Anglesey Sea Zoo

Also at the event were:

- BAE Systems representing their presence at RAF Valley which recently received investment of £175m from the UK Government.

- The Anglesey Freeport team to discuss the £26m UK Gov-

ernment investment which will kick-start an innovative renaissance for our island.

- Bangor University and M-SPARC with information about how they are using UK Government investment to generate new and exciting jobs and opportunities on our island.

Each of these businesses is being directly supported by UK Government investment being used in a focused, results-orientated way.

Some people assert that Anglesey has received less funding from the UK Government than it did from the EU. However, if you look at the figures, in the SIX years before Brexit Ynys Môn received £86.6m from the EU. This compares to £83m in the THREE years since Brexit.

This means that Ynys Môn has actually received almost twice as much funding per year from the UK Government than it did from the EU.

However, unlike the EU funds, the UK Government's investment is intended to make a long-term difference. For that reason the immediate impact may not be visible in a way that we are used to.

Take for example the beautiful Celtic Gateway bridge in Holyhead. This bridge cost £6.2m of EU money when it was opened in 2006. It was designed by an English com-

pany, constructed by an English company and built in Italy. This means that other than short term construction jobs there was little, if any, obvious long-term benefit.

The £6.2m Celtic Gateway Bridge did not lead to a revival of the town centre because there was no sustainable vision. It wasn't - as many were led to believe - the first building block in a long-term plan for a better future.

On the other hand, the £83m funding Ynys Môn has received from the UK Government over the past three years - from the £17m Levelling Up Fund being used to regenerate Holyhead, to the £16m Shared Prosperity Fund which the Council is allocating to local bidders - is all being used to give our island long term sustainable benefits.

People say to me "all this money but there's still nothing to see for it"...but I say patience is a virtue. The work going on behind the scenes is epic and intense.

We will soon see real changes...more jobs, better wages, year-round employment, stronger communities, long-term security, economic stability and optimism for the future - changes to Holyhead, Llangefni, Amlwch, Gaerwen and across the island.

Anglesey Day was a huge success. It was opened by the Secretary of State for Wales, David TC Davies MP, and attended by dozens of people from across Ynys Môn as well as by the Secretary of State for Education and other parliamentarians. GE-Hitachi generously sponsored the event and the fantastic team from Ynys Lawd were on hand to greet people as they arrived and hand out gift bags.

I am delighted to announce that all of the companies represented at the event have also signed up to my Local Jobs for Local People campaign.

If you would like to find out more about Anglesey Day, our Freeport or my Local Jobs for Local People campaign please visit my website www.virginia-crosbie.co.uk and sign up for my regular free e-newsletter.