

with Ynys Môn MP
Virginia Crosbie

londonbeat

Every effort to help 2 Sisters workers... and welcome for Levelling Up funds for major transformation of Holyhead

YR wythnos ddiwethaf cawsom y newyddion trychinebus bod 2 Sisters yn ymgynghori ar gau eu safle prosesu dofednod yn Llangefni - a fyddai'n arwain at 730 o bobl yn colli eu swyddi.

LAST week we received the devastating news that 2 Sisters are consulting on closing their poultry processing site in Llangefni - a closure that would lead to the loss of 730 jobs.

2 Sisters has started a 45 day consultation process and I understand how worried workers at the factory are. I was briefed by the company on the morning of Wednesday 25 January, at which time 2 Sisters assured me that all wages will be paid in full and that those who are eligible will receive redundancy pay.

The company has stated that there are several reasons for this step including the age and size of the plant; issues with transportation on and off the island and significant increases in energy costs.

Immediately after speaking to their CEO I raised the matter in Prime Minister's Questions and met with the Chancellor. I also spoke with ministers from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to identify potential avenues of support for the company to tackle the issues it had identified.

Following those discussions, a DWP rapid response team is being deployed to the island to work alongside the local DWP and JobCentre Plus teams. Their experts will support workers in finding new jobs, accessing training and making sure that they are receiving any financial support available to them.

Locally I rang a number of larger local employers to ask them to consider 2 Sisters employees for any potential opportunities and spoke with Môn CF who have been swift to offer support.

Their team of dedicated employment mentors are ready to speak with anyone who is now seeking alternative employment. You can contact them by filling in the online form on the Môn CF website www.moncf.co.uk/enquiry-form

On Friday I went into the factory to speak to staff, understand their concerns and offer my support. I will be going back there next week so that we can keep each other updated on progress.

To support local people across



● Ynys Môn MP Virginia Crosbie raising the proposed closure of the 2 Sisters Llangefni plant in the Commons

Anglesey facing the challenges of the global cost of living crisis I have also announced my Cost of Living Advice Fair which will be held in Holyhead Town Hall on 10 February between 10am-midday.

There will be over twenty local and national businesses on hand to offer advice on financial support and savings including Isle of Anglesey County Council, Môn CF, HSBC, Lloyds, the DWP, Centrica, British Gas, SSAFA and the Citizens Advice Bureau. I and my team of caseworkers will also be available to offer support. Medrwn Môn, who will also be at the event, can provide drivers through Linc Mon subject to volunteer availability. If you live outside Holyhead and need help getting to the event please contact me.

The event is free to attend and you do not need to register although it would help me to understand likely numbers if you do. The registration page is on my website: https://www.virginiacrosbie.co.uk/events/cost_of_living

In contrast to the news about 2 Sisters I was pleased to hear that Ynys Môn has been awarded £17 million of investment from the UK Govern-

ment's Levelling Up Fund.

This is great news for the island and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone involved in the bid. Our dedicated bid team put in a lot of time and hard work and produced a very detailed and compelling proposal. The resulting investment will be transformative for Holyhead and bring benefits to the whole of Anglesey.

More than 500 bids were submitted from across the UK with just 111 awarded a share of the £2.1bn fund. Welsh projects were awarded the highest amount of money per head of population - £106 per person. The next highest funding went to North West England with £79 per person with London trailing at just over £20 per person.

In addition to the £17m Levelling Up money, the team secured £5.5m additional match funding from other sources.

We expect the programme to deliver more than £54m in benefits to the community of Ynys Môn.

The bid was titled "Holyhead: A culture and heritage driven transformation" and it will help to reverse the decline of the town centre and

increase pride of place for residents. It covers a package of different but linked projects which will increase local employment.

Many people have asked me, why was Holyhead chosen?

In contrast to previous EU funding, which saw smaller pots of money spent on very specific projects with often no long term economic benefit, the Levelling Up fund is being used to target a range of interventions which will provide long term sustainable benefits. As such a bid that would have seen smaller amounts of money being distributed across Anglesey would not have met the criteria for the fund and would therefore not have been successful.

When the county council initially requested expressions of interest for the Levelling Up fund, more than half of those received were based in, or included, Holyhead.

Holyhead is our island's largest town and has some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales. However, it has a rich heritage, a fantastic port and with over 1.5 million visitors to Ynys Môn and over 50,000 cruise passengers annually, Holyhead has the potential to be the pow-

erhouse for our island's economy.

In contrast to several news reports that this money will fund "new walkways and cycle paths", this very extensive regeneration programme will improve the town centre, increase footfall, enhance the visitor experience and give the community a vibrant hub of activity. Our winning bid includes:

- A substantial extension to the Ucheldre Arts Centre to increase capacity, enhance facilities and offer more community activities and events.

- The renovation of St Cybi's Church and Eglwys Y Bedd to create a useable community space and social enterprise café bringing more employment and training for local people.

- An extension to the Empire Play Centre - the town's main indoor attraction - to cater for increasing demand and bring more people into the town centre.

- The renovation of the Newry Beach shelters to offer retail and tourist information outlets.

- An extensive town centre property restoration programme, targeting some of our largest and most prominent vacant properties to create sustainable new community initiatives and increase footfall and spend.

- Refurbishing dilapidated town centre heritage properties helping to reverse the decline of the town centre.
- Enhancing the Breakwater Heritage Visitor Centre and improving routes and links between the Breakwater Park and the town centre.

Once again - llongyfarchiadau to everyone who worked so hard on making this bid such a success. I am proud to have supported it and I am looking forward to working with everyone involved to unlock its benefits for the town and bring more jobs for the whole of the island. I am also looking forward to seeing a transformed Holyhead in two years time!

I enjoy meeting as many constituents as possible, as well as helping individuals, groups and organisations with problems, projects and ideas. You can contact me at virginia.crosbie.mp@parliament.uk or call me on 01407 644645. Diolch yn fawr.

Rwy'n mwynhau cyfarfod â chymaint o etholwyr â phosibl, yn ogystal â helpu unigolion, grwpiau a sefydliadau gyda problemau, prosiectau a syniadau. Yna cysylltwch â ni - byddwn wrth fy modd yn clywed genych - gallwch gysylltu â mi ar virginia.crosbie.mp@parliament.uk neu ffoniwch fi ar 01407 644645. Diolch yn fawr.