

## **Swansea Bay Futures Summary Report 2009/10**

This, the fourth annual summary report from Swansea Bay Futures (SBF), aims to bring you a flavour of what we have been working on over the last 12 months, recognises all those who have supported our work through the year, offers a reminder of what we are trying to achieve and gives an outline of what's being planned for the next 12 months.

### **Challenging Times**

The economic position during 2009/10 meant it was a difficult year for many of us and SBF was little different. After the 3 year commitment by our initial Partners and Premier Partners, we sought to renew the agreements which provide the funding to enable us to help promote the region, with the aim of getting it on the shopping list as place to live, work, study, invest in or visit. We were very pleased that the vast majority of our companies – as highlighted below - decided to remain with us:



Looking ahead, we are delighted that DVLA has committed to rejoin us as Premier Partners from 2010/11 and we are hoping that some new organisations will also be attracted over the coming year to join with these committed companies.

In addition to those linked in Partnership, SBF was also very pleased to link with a number of other companies who became or remained as Associates. In 2010/11 we will be more actively seeking to recruit new Associates and introducing a new aspect to the scheme which will seek to harness their ideas and connections to help us better promote the region. Those with us during 2009/10 were:

- iCreate
- Afon Tinline
- Swansea Building Society
- A Space in the City
- Home from Home
- Gorseinon College
- Cognita Schools in Wales
- Bluebell Hotel, Neath
- The LC
- Griffith & Miles
- Graham Evans & Partners
- Trainer Group
- Surf GSD
- Property Search Wales
- WRW Group
- Swansea Tennis & Squash Club
- Village Hotel, Swansea
- Graphic Core Design
- CLC Chartered Surveyors

The support from all of our link companies has been vital, not just for the financial resources that they contribute, which we use to promote Swansea Bay, but also through the opportunities they enable us to access in order to spread the word about this lovely part of South Wales.

## Promoting the region

With limited resources available to us, the plan for 2009/10 was to promote the region by focusing on working with our partners, link companies and event organisers, using opportunities arising through them. Work was undertaken on a wide range of fronts, from welcoming key visitors with packs and presentations to providing promotional resources for overseas trips, particularly for schools linked visits as awareness of the company's resources increased. A particular pleasure was presenting to a group of Fulbright Scholars on a visit hosted by Swansea University, with many of them in Wales for the first time.

Despite the economic climate, attracting the best people to work for you has remained an important aspect for many companies. Recruiting from outside of the immediate area can be a challenge when people are unaware of the attractions of Swansea Bay. Supporting our Partners in selling the region as a place to live has therefore continued to be an important part of our work. In addition, the website [www.abayoflife.com](http://www.abayoflife.com) was used as a free resource to highlight the attractions of the region by many other companies.



The website remains a key tool for promoting all aspects of Swansea Bay, attracting around 6,000 unique visitors each month. The site is recognised as being informative, comprehensive and importantly it is kept up to date and fresh with news and events being added on an almost daily basis. It is an area that we are continually developing and expanding.

Allied to the website, the team have been working on Swansea Bay's social media presence, developing our Facebook site and regularly tweeting positive news about the region. The activity is leading to a growing number of followers, with some 500 followers on Twitter and over 600 'friends' on Facebook, with numbers growing all the time.

In a new and well received initiative, Bay of Life interactive, musical Christmas cards were developed and widely distributed through emails which personalised the cards. In just one example of their impact, the Cardiff based Honorary Consul for Switzerland, who was delighted to receive a card and felt it was an excellent way of promoting the area and the work of SBF, forwarded a card to all of her Swiss Consul colleagues in the UK as well as both work and home contacts in Switzerland.



The internet is now the first point of call for information in business. SBF decided to take advantage of a new website being set up for companies looking at potential investment areas in UK. [Locations4business.co.uk](http://Locations4business.co.uk) was launched in early 2010 and although not yet perfect it provides a good presentation of the region, particularly with the enhanced entry we have contracted which includes links to the promotional DVD, detailed information and images. In the first 2 months almost 1 in 20 site visitors viewed the Swansea Bay pages on the site, a number we hope to improve by continually updating the information and materials.

On going promotion of the region has continued through the support of Cardiff Airport and at Swansea's Liberty Stadium, with those arriving at the airport and spectators at the stadium being exposed to attractive images and positive messages on Swansea Bay.

Of course plans are just the starting point and one of the advantages the company has is that its small scale and flexible nature enables us to respond quickly to opportunities as they arise. In July 2009 DCMS announced a competition to designate the first ever UK City of Culture for 2013. At the next Board meeting, in September, it was agreed that Swansea Bay would work together to put in a bid for this prize – although it was a designation with no funding attached! As a regional bid, SBF took the lead, working across the region and with cultural delivery groups and representatives from the public and private sector. A large amount of work was undertaken in a very short time by a number of people involved in culture and regeneration. A bid was submitted, along with 13 other bids from across UK, in mid December. Despite our efforts, Swansea Bay did not make the final shortlist of four. Even so, the bidding process was a very worthwhile initiative, allowing the region to place a marker on a national stage, challenging some perceptions of what we have to offer here and cementing a working relationship across the region for bidding for significant projects.

In 2010/11 we will continue to work with our Partners and others to maximise the promotional activity undertaken around specific initiatives and seek to increase our involvement in using specialist events. The Ryder Cup in October 2010 is an opportunity for Wales and we plan to ensure those visitors who choose to make Swansea Bay their base for this event will be given a full flavour of the whole of the region's offer.

We will also continue to expand our social media marketing activity, increasing our web links and building contacts for promotional activity.

### Developing promotional tools and key relationships

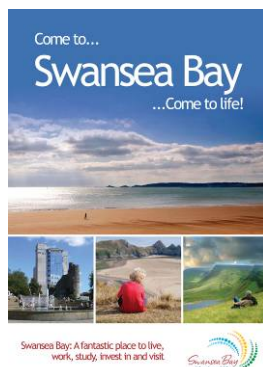
Before we can effectively promote the region, both directly and through our links, we need to ensure that we have the information and materials to do the job.

Our Bay of Life Watch newsletter is an extremely well received tool and is used to promote what is happening in the region. There has been much good news to report during the year, despite the economic climate, with excellent developments taking place, delivered through both the public and the private sector. Reaching over 10,000 people each month it is an excellent means of highlighting the region's strengths and developments. In 2010/11 we will be reviewing the newsletter to ensure it delivers the right news, in the right way, at the right time to the right people.

Other key tools include the A4 Quality of Life guide – which has recently been updated – the Bay of Life coaster gift with its associated small guide which will shortly be revamped to match the A4, and our Guide to Living and working in Swansea Bay.



Glass Coaster Gift



New A4 Glossy brochure



Promotional Calendar

A picture paints a thousand words and we have continued to invest in new images of the region and to make these images available to our link companies through the on-line image library. Our 'Bay of Life' photography competition ran again in 2009, and provided a source of new images, with the winning and highly commended entries being compiled into a promotional calendar which has been used as another tool in our armoury for promoting the region. The entries have also provided the base for a new Flickr site for Swansea Bay.

Excellent working relationships are a key to success. Through 2009/10 we have continued to use initiatives to build relationships across the region and within Wales, as well as with those outside of the Principality such as Wales in London. Across business, education and tourism there is a clearer understanding of the role SBF can play in supporting the work of those tasked with turning interest into action and an appreciation of the value of what each can bring to the table.

This is an area where work will continue throughout 2010/11 as the more people who are working together for the benefit of the region, the more we can all achieve.

### **Managing for the future**

During 2009/10 we were pleased to welcome three new members to the Board of SBF. Judith Smith from DVLA, David Morgan from HP Enterprise Services (previously EDS) and David Swallow from Eversheds were successful in being appointed to the Board, attending their first meeting in December 2009.

They have joined a Board which currently also includes Peter Jones Morgan Cole (Chair); Steve Hodgetts, Cardiff Airport; Dawn Lyle, iCreate; Gill Lewis, independent consultant; Professor Iwan Davies, Swansea University; Peter Collis, HM Land Registry (recently retired); Richard Jones, IBM (recently retired); Nigel Williams, Castell Howell Foods; Bob Croydon, Princes Foundation for the Built Environment; Cllr Chris Holley, City & County of Swansea; Cllr Ali Thomas, Neath Port Talbot CBC; Cllr Clive Scourfield, Carmarthenshire County Council. The Board is also fortunate to have as advisors Paul Smith, City & County of Swansea; Steve Phillips, Neath Port Talbot CBC; Dave Gilbert, Carmarthenshire County Council.

The Board's role is to oversee the direction of SBF, to ensure its effective operation and to promote its work more widely. We are seeking to add new members to the Board and would particularly welcome expressions of interest from our Partners and Associates.

### **And finally...**

2009/10 was not the easiest of years for any of us and there are still challenging times ahead. Swansea Bay Futures' role in bringing people together across the region and across the sectors remains vital for the future health of the region's economy. We would ask all of those with an interest – whether personal or business – in seeing the area develop and grow to work with us and help us deliver a stronger, better known, more consistently promoted Swansea Bay.

Fiona Rees  
Executive Director  
April 2010