Porthcawl's Old Pilot's Lookout Tower restored



Hen D?r Gwylio Porthcawl yn bwrw carreg filltir nodedig

However, thanks to National Lottery players, Porthcawl's Old Pilot's Lookout Tower has been given a new lease of life and with a team of dedicated volunteers taking their place in the Pilot's Lookout, sailors, fishermen and swimmers can now rest assured that there's a watchful eye protecting the shore.

Completely restored, following a National Lottery grant, the Tower has new windows, doors and roofing whilst the external staircase has also been replaced. Inside it is equipped with the latest onshore and offshore technology, designed to monitor the coastline and ensure the safety of its users.

Its supporters now have another reason for celebrating as it has recently been announced that it is to be given Declared Facility Status (DFS) meaning it will officially become part of the Search & Rescue organisations registered at the Coast Rescue Coordination Centre at Milford Haven.

Phil Styles is the Station Manager at Porthcawl and believes the secret of their success is the enthusiasm of their volunteers: "When we managed to bring the Lookout Tower back into use we made an appeal for volunteers to help us, expecting maybe one or two. We now have a crew of 43 delivering a crucial role providing a lookout along the coastline every day throughout the year. We are also officially part of the National Coastwatch Institution – a charity made up of volunteers with 50 stations around the coastline of England and Wales.

“We are also actively building up working relationships with local coastguard teams as well as having great support from our next door neighbours RNLI Porthcawl, who have been carrying out joint training exercises with us. Next year we are looking at how we can link with the RNLI lifeguard teams at Trecco Bay, Coney beach, Rest Bay and Ogmore to see how we can continue to make the Porthcawl coastline a safer place for all.”

Originally built around 150 years ago, the Grade II listed tower went on to play an important role during both the first and second World Wars. But sadly, since falling victim to extreme coastal weather conditions and rough tides, it stood until a few years ago in a state of disrepair meaning that Porthcawl was left without this life-saving coast watch service.

Bridgend Assembly Member Carwyn Jones welcomed this latest announcement: “It is great news that the Porthcawl watch station has been awarded Declared Facility Status. The many volunteers who give up their time to help spot potential dangers, do a tremendous job and are certainly a welcome presence for people who visit and use our coastline for business and pleasure.

“It is fantastic to see the Lookout Tower restored to its former glory thanks to funding from HLF together with contributions from Bridgend County Borough Council, Cadw and the NCI through the Porthcawl Townscape Heritage Initiative, and being used to play an important role in coastal safety.

“I have had the opportunity to visit the Lookout Tower on various occasions and have spoken to some of the volunteers who keep a close watch along our coastline. I would like to thank them for their efforts.”

Richard Bellamy, Head of HLF in Wales, added: “Thanks to National Lottery players, our investment in the Lookout Tower at Porthcawl has ensured that, not only has an important part of our architectural heritage been brought back to life, but that it continues to serve a very practical purpose over 150 years after first being built.”

Bridgend is a priority development area for HLF and organisations with ideas for new heritage projects are encouraged to get in touch to find out about the funding opportunities available.

Further information

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