

**REPORT OF VISITOR SERVICES MANAGER NORTH**

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**SUBJECT: ORIEL Y PARC VISITOR CENTRE AND GALLERY**

**Purpose of Report**

To update members on current operations at Oriel y Parc, recent developments, future plans and partner projects.

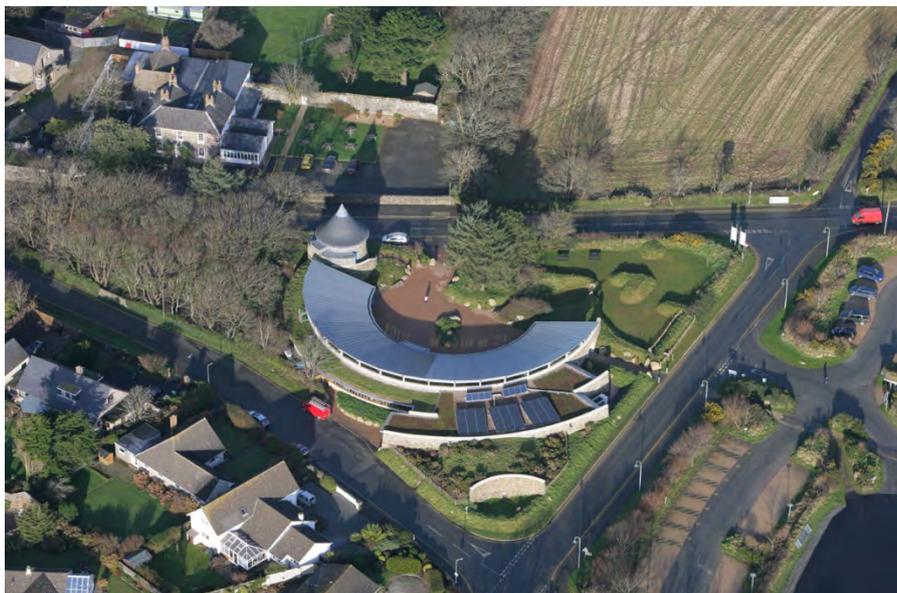
**Introduction/Background**

Oriel y Parc is a state of the art landscape gallery and visitor centre designed to interpret the Pembrokeshire landscape through art and to encourage visitors to appreciate the county's rich tapestry. It has been operating in its current format since 2008; the extension which was incorporated at this time was built in response to a call for a home for the work of Graham Sutherland.

An information centre has been situated on site since 1999, the additions in 2008 included a Grade A gallery (a gallery that has all the climate conditions to show fine art), and a café space.

Despite being such an exciting and ground breaking project, Oriel y Parc is a beautifully proportioned and modest building which sits discreetly in the landscape. Beneath its elegant façade, state of the art green technologies work hard to provide a comfortable and sustainable environment. This building is a living, breathing entity which contributes to the landscape in a positive way both aesthetically and functionally.

Details of its sustainable features and floor plans can be seen in Appendix A



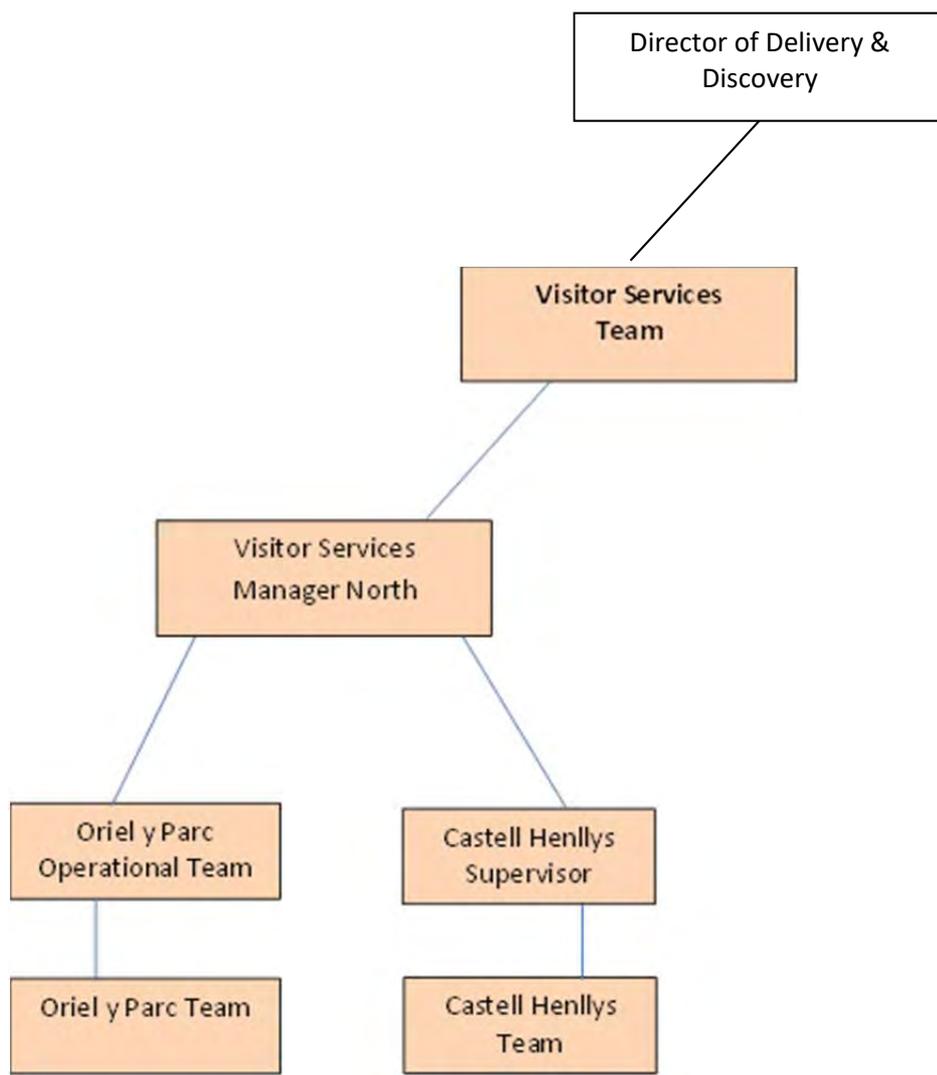
**Who we are and what we do.**

**Staff Structure**

Phil Roach the Head of Discovery took early retirement late 2015, his role was not directly filled with his work load being distributed amongst other staff. Rhonwen Owen the manager of Castell Henllys retired in September 2016, the decision was taken not to replace her role directly but to merge her responsibilities, which included Newport Visitor Centre and obviously Castell Henllys with those of the manager of Oriel y Parc.

This led to the structure set out below which is headed up by the Director of Delivery and Discovery James Parkin.

In terms of Oriel y Parc the structure that sits below the Visitor Services Manager North i.e. Operational Team – consists of a Site Warden, Administration & Events Coordinator, and a Visitor Centre & Gallery Team Coordinator all Grade 3 posts. As staff were currently in or acting up in these roles during the transition phase from the old structure it was decided not to go down the route of appointing a Supervisor (Grade 4) as in Castell Henllys and Carew.



## **Aims of Oriel y Parc**

- To inspire people to discover, value and conserve the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park; its landscape, culture and heritage.
- To make the collections of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales available to view in Pembrokeshire.
- To provide an appropriate setting in Pembrokeshire for the display of material from the Graham Sutherland and other collections.
- To link the wider Pembrokeshire landscape, culture and heritage with a unique learning experience and make this accessible to diverse audiences.
- To support local communities and the local economy including arts, education, local businesses and tourism communities in the St Davids Peninsula.
- To provide a warm welcome and offer an exceptional information service to both visitors and residents alike.

## **Centre functions:**

Information Centre	Grade A Gallery	Exhibition space – to include sales at a commission rate of 40%
Artist in Residence programme	Lease hold café	Lease hold booking office – car park hut
Room / space hire	Merchandise space – sustainable and local sourcing where possible	Interpretation space
Events and activities – public / groups and schools.	Public toilets	Community interaction and support

Some highlights of the above functions which reflects our community and business interaction and support as well as addressing the Health and Well-being Heritage and culture agenda includes:

- Attendance at meetings and support for the aims and objectives of the St Davids Community Forum.
- Provide space and support for monthly Memory Café – provision of space to enable access to trained support for those with memory issues.

- Promotion and support for community events and activities, poster promotion, ticket sales and physical attendance i.e. St Davids Fun Day, Fishguard Music Festival and The Cathedral Music Festival, St Davids.
- Links with local suppliers in terms of commission sales and general merchandise – space at events and activities i.e. Summer Fair / Christmas Fair.
- Café lease – currently in year one of new lease – proprietors are two local individuals who have some background in the sector.
- Car Park hut – second year lease for local boat owner has just come to an end, rental income from this is not attributed to the centre but is included in another department income; the lease is advertised through the usual channels.
- Staff are key members of the St Davids Peninsula Tourism Association and worked with the association in terms of the city wide public Wi-Fi, and also work with them in terms of promotion and marketing of the area.
- Dragon Parade – this is one of our key activities that celebrates St Davids day, this is a collaborative exercise with the City Council. It involves local schools and community groups developing dragons through any art form that they wish, these are then paraded around the city as part of wider St Davids day celebrations. There is an aspiration to develop activities further on St Davids day and discussions are ongoing with Pembrokeshire County Council and Visit Wales.

The Centre is home to / hosts:

- The St Davids Vacation Club – paid hire of room – promotion of the area
- A section of the St Davids community orchard.
- The chair of the St Davids over 50s eisteddfod – raising awareness of and promoting event.
- Plantos Penfro – baby and toddler group for Welsh language speakers and learners.
- Community Arts Class – was funded by local authority, now self-financing.

The centre also has an active Friends group, established initially as the Friends of Graham Sutherland; they were very influential in the desire to establish a home for the collection in Pembrokeshire.

They continue to work collaboratively with the centre staff, providing valuable volunteer, financial and advisory support, they also have a series of talks that they manage and promote throughout the year.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

### **Recent – 2015-17**

Moving of the Artist in Residence - development space to the Tower, this has given more space for exhibitions in the main building generating income through sales of exhibited goods at 40% commission, and through letting of the room.

Digitally provide visitor information - via two surface pro 4 – this has enabled us to store paper copies of documents and decrease the need for storage of such, and enabled better information sharing with visitors.

Partnership with the Tate - through our relationship with National Museum Wales – summer 2016 saw the gallery hosting Constable Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows. Funded through the Heritage Lottery, and the art Fund this exhibition gave the gallery and the centre the opportunity to host schools and events and activities related to the painting. This project came with a programme of training and support for the centre staff in terms of working with those with sight impairment, and upskilling site wardens in handling fine art.

This exhibition was a highly successful partnership venture which saw record numbers and percentage ratios of visitors to the gallery; it was also highly successful in meeting the objectives and targets of the funders. It was a project that through its notable success led to the centre being part of the Le Passeur funded tour in 2018.

Criw Celf Project – this is an Arts Council of Wales funded project to develop talent in visual and applied art for young people of school age, the programme introduces them to a rich and varied menu of artistic genres and opens their eyes to the breadth of career opportunities in Art & Design. In 2016 the centre ran three taster sessions for Criw Celf Portfolio years 10 and 11.

NAWR – Arts & Education Network Mid & West Wales - NAWR, the Arts and Education Network for Mid and West Wales is collaboratively run through **UWTSD** and **ERW**. The network is one of the central pillars of ‘Creative Learning through the Arts’ – a five year arts and education action plan created and implemented by the Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales. . The main focus of NAWR’s activity is the provision of high quality professional learning events for teachers and arts practitioners that support them to provide creative, engaging arts-based experiences for learners in schools.

The centre can benefit by being part of the network in Go and See

This scheme encourages schools to take young people to arts and cultural activities. A school can apply for up to £1,000 and can help to cover transport and entry costs.

Creative Collaborations

This scheme enables schools and arts, cultural and heritage organisations to work together to deliver unique and innovative projects. Schools can apply for up to £25,000

To date the Centre has delivered a workshop to Llechryd School through the Go & See scheme.

Central Stock system coordination – with the closure of Tenby the Centre took on the role of stocking and distributing stock / merchandise that is common to all the National Park retail outlets.

Event bookings – with the closure of Tenby the Centre took on the role of taking bookings for most of the events across the park – Castell Henllys and Carew still manage a percentage of their own bookings.

### **Future 2018 onwards**

#### Building reorganisation

Moving the main counter from its current position to the top of the gallery steps, an agreed budget of £10,000 has been allocated for this change, we are currently working with Andrew Muskett Buildings Project officer in respect of this improvement. It is expected that the work will be completed by the end of February 2018.

The advantages for doing this are numerous:

- It will lead those entering the building directly towards the gallery steps, thus hopefully increasing percentage attendance of visitors to exhibitions
- It will enable better support to staff invigilating in the gallery as they would be visible from the desk.
- Significant space will become available for displaying of merchandise in the space that becomes available with the movement of the counter, a larger and more diverse range of goods can then be stocked.

Opening up of the space will also enable the Centre to stock goods that are part of the Columbia agreement of all UK National Parks; the first tranche of merchandise will be delivered and offered for sale in spring 2018.

Criw Celf – running five Master classes delivered by art practitioners to year 5 & 6 pupils from across Pembrokeshire with an exhibition of the pupils work to feature in summer 2018.

TATE partnership exhibition, following on from the success of the Aspire project – Le Passeur, William Stott of Oldham – February 2018 to September 2018.

Funded through the Art Fund, Heritage Lottery and John Ellerman Foundation the exhibition will feature at Aberdeen, Oldham and Southampton, with St Davids being the only location in Wales. This project will come with its associated programme of learning and other activities, Interpretation are currently working on a 'film' piece of work that reflects the sonic trail currently running alongside the exhibition in London, see <http://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/kids-view/sonic-trail-crossing>

We are currently working on the training programme one element will feature training on working with those with memory issues.

NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES – review and agree on the Service Level agreement to ensure a calendar of significant and supported exhibitions going forward.

**FINANCIAL**

The government introduced universal free entrance to national museums and galleries in December 2001. By 2015/16 visits to all national museums had risen by 128%, and to those institutions that used to charge an entrance fee, visits had risen by 184%. Government restated their commitment to free entry in November 2015 as part of the 2015 Spending Review.

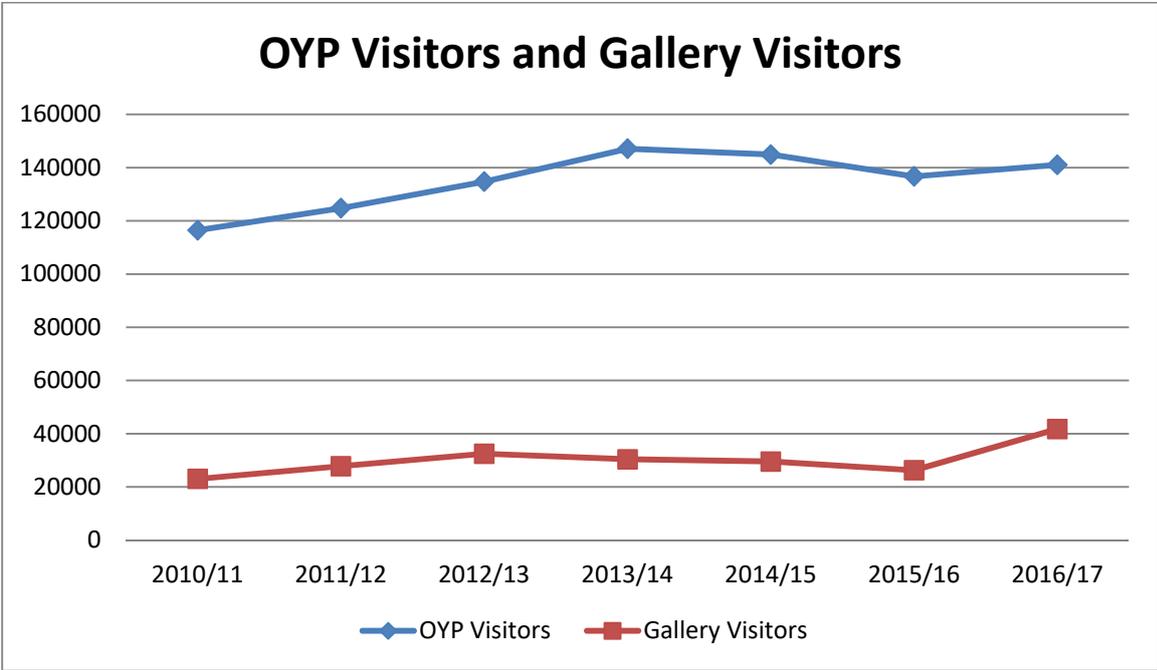
In terms of Oriel y Parc it is important to note the above statement by UK / Devolved Government as it has an impact on the sustainability and income generation of the site.

Visitor numbers do tend to fluctuate in response to the exhibition that is showing, this can clearly be seen in 2016 -17 when the Aspire project brought Constable Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows to the gallery through its relationship with National Museum Wales for six months in the Summer.

This funded project allowed for marketing support as well as other events activities at the Centre, it will be interesting to note the attendance figures in respect of the next Tate / NMW partner project Le Passeur by William Stott February to September 2018. This project does not come with such a high value package of support as the Aspire project – however this exhibition will not be seen elsewhere in Wales during the touring programme.

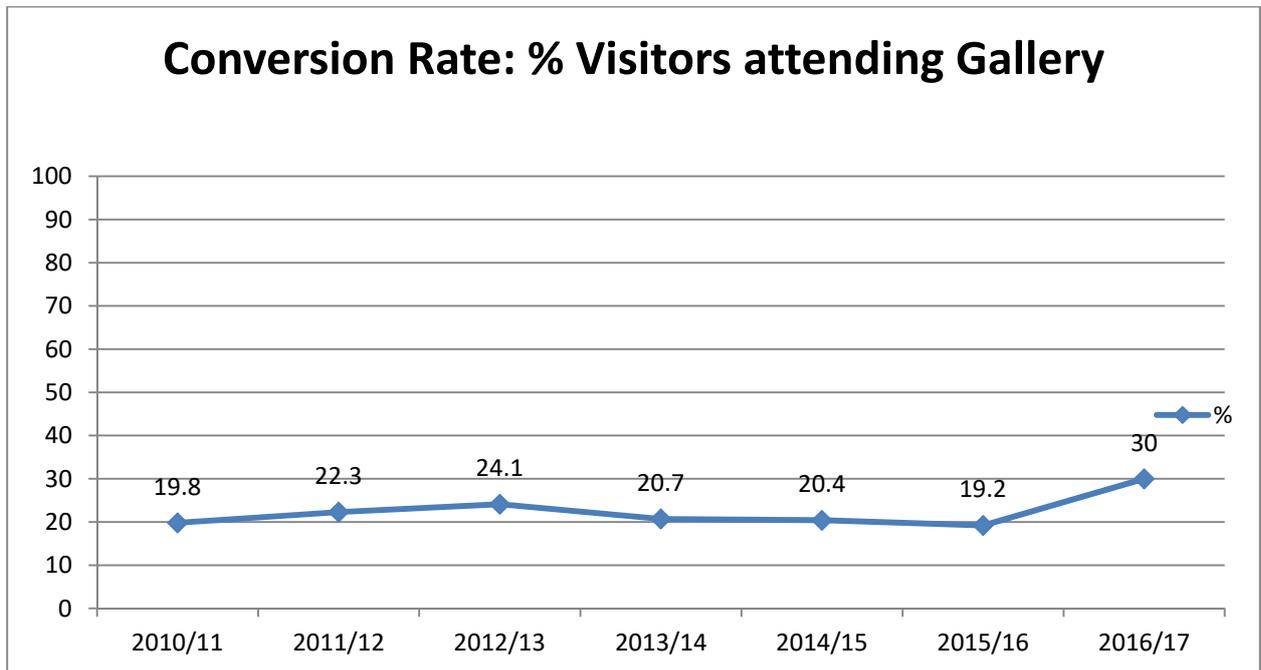
**Visitor Numbers and Gallery Visitors**

Financial years

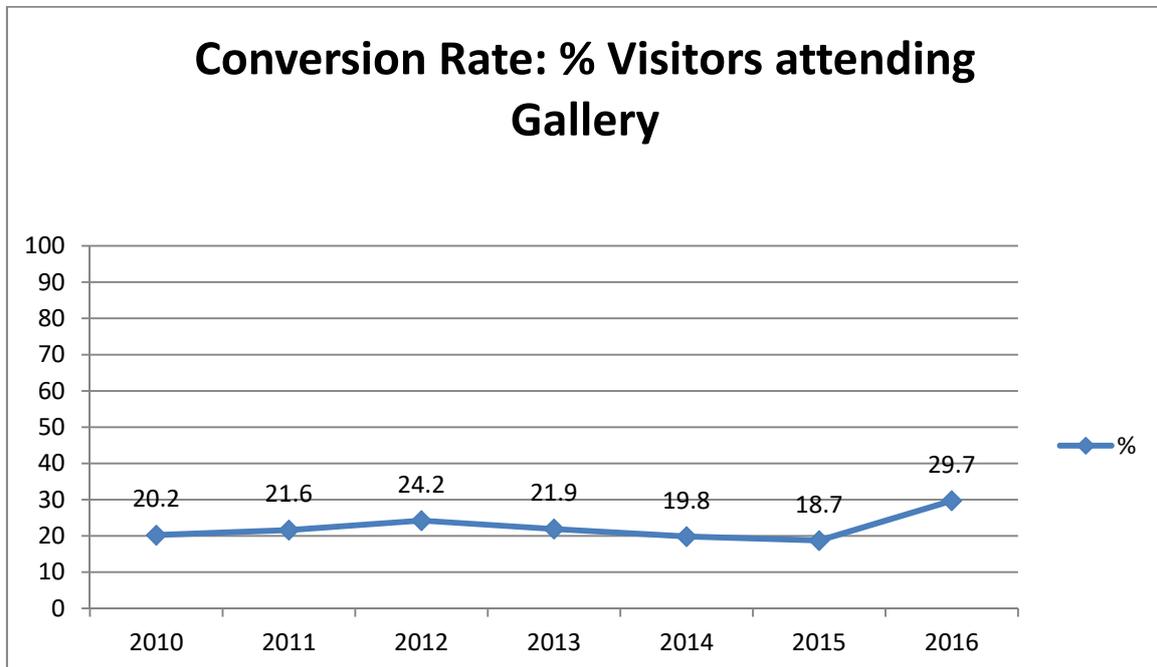


## Conversion Rate: % Visitors attending Gallery

Financial year to date



Calendar Year



## Income and cost

We continue to explore and develop ways of increasing income across the site, it is unfortunate that some income generating activities are not attributed to the Centre, but are included in other income headings for other departments.

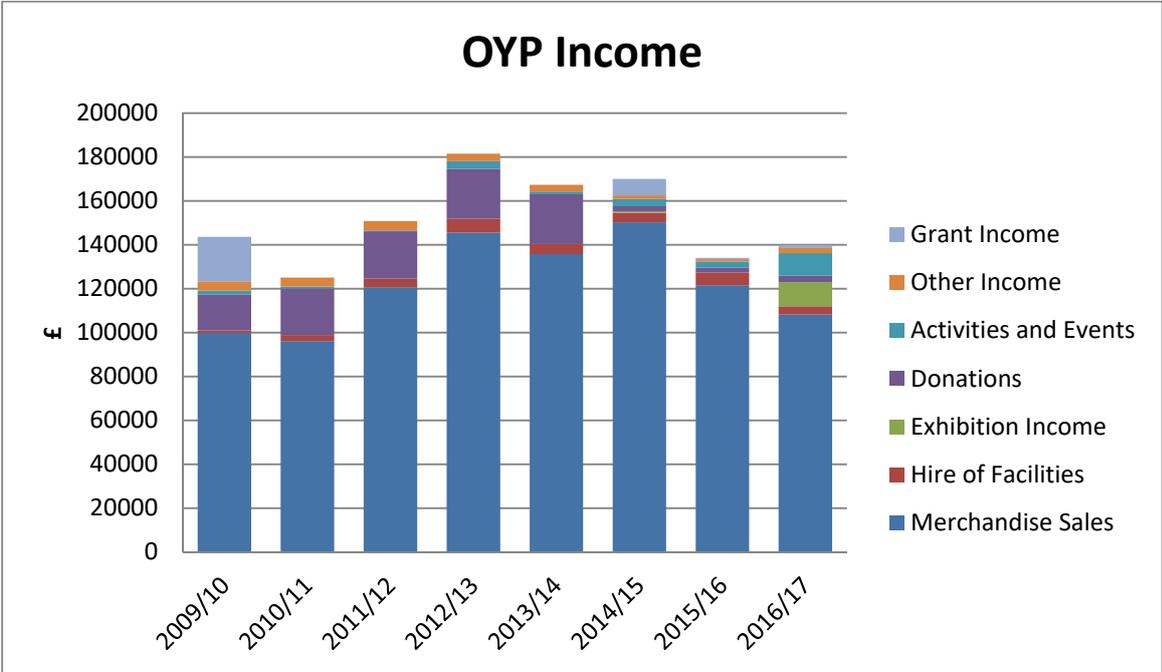
In the past two years with changes in staff we have reviewed the merchandise that we sell, shop and centre layout of goods and promotion. We have reduced and reviewed significantly the amount of artist paints and goods, which were occupying a large display area. To achieve this we had to reduce the selling price to clear stocks this had an impact on our figures, 13-14, 14-15 figures were also inflated by sales of nearly £20,000 in respect of a publication related to an exhibition.

The number of events and activities have been increased, ever mindful of the fact that budget spend on such needs to be within budget allocation, which is minimal.

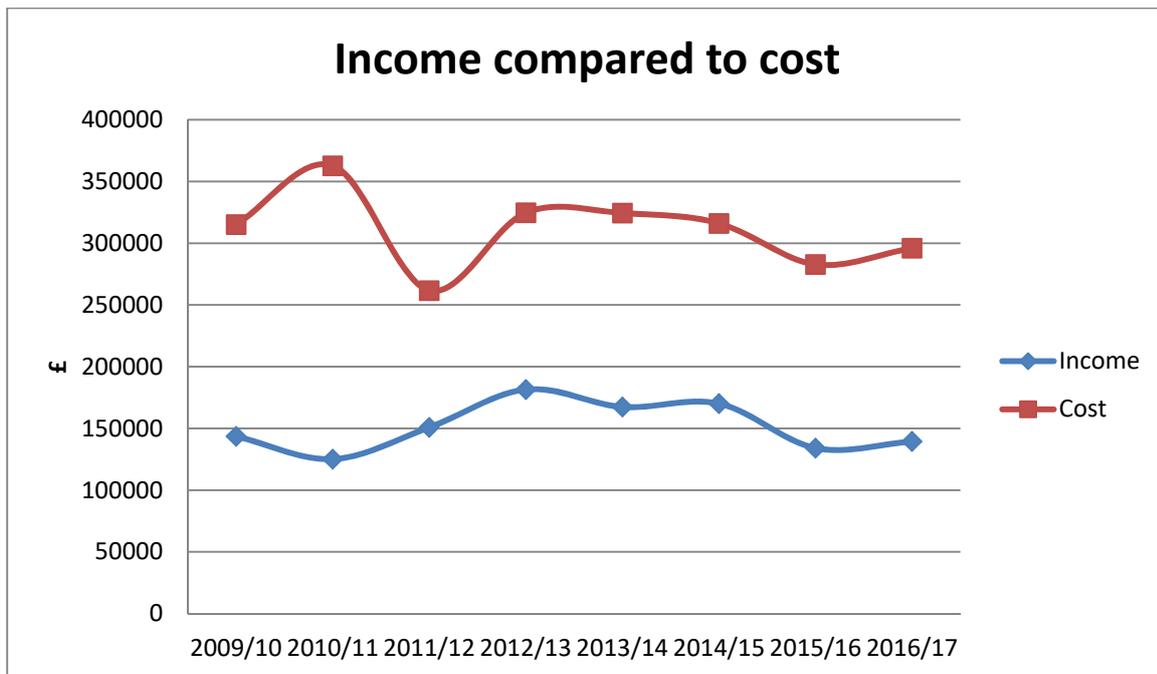
We have also become part of the Collectorplan <http://www.arts.wales/arts-in-wales/collectorplan> - Collectorplan is an interest-free credit service to help customers buy contemporary art and craft in Wales. Interest-free\* credit loans start at £50 and run to a maximum of £5,000.

It is important to note that there is no risk in loss of payment to the centre through this scheme, the risk is held by the plan administrators.

Year to date merchandise sales for this year reflects the positive changes that we have put in place with figures showing us ahead £16,533 on projected budget, it is hoped that this trend continues and that planned improvements / alterations assists in this objective.



Please note that 2009 -2013 Donations include Car Park donations



## COMPARISONS

In terms of service delivery in Wales the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority – Libanus Visitor Centre, is comparable in terms of a Welsh National Park, although its functions and mode of operation has changed considerably in the past two years. At date of submission of report no data requested had been received.

It is interesting to note that Northumberland National Park has recently opened a large visitor centre with interpretation and display / exhibition centre The Sill, <http://www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/places-to-visit/hadrians-wall/the-sill/> In terms of design and build it mirrors in some ways that of Oriel y Parc, they do not however have an attraction equal to the Grade A gallery. Visitor figures to date:

The Sill	August	Sept	Oct
Visitors to the Sill	26,527	17,796	13,821
Visitors to Sill Café	11,644	6,840	5,355
Visitors to Sill Hostel	2,146	1,649	1,730

Comparable Pembrokeshire / Wales gallery space visitor figures:

It is important to note that these are dedicated galleries, some council led others private sector / community or third sector (charities).

Attraction	2014 Visits	2015 Visits
Glyn Vivian - Swansea	59,014	29,178
Moma - Machynlleth	19,619	21,354
Newport – Museum & Art Gallery Gwent	38,898	28'562

Oriel Myrddin - Carmarthenshire	22,839	19,910
Tenby Museum & Art Gallery	16,957	17,082

Source: <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2016/160721-visitor-attractions-survey-2015-en.pdf>

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



### Excellent facility

Go there for information on all that is going on in the area. Free Wi-Fi. Short film and helpful staff. Gallery of paintings. Lots of leaflets and books of the area.

### Excellent place to start

An excellent visitor centre with extremely helpful and knowledgeable staff. Definitely the place to visit when arriving in the area to get information. Regular interesting exhibitions, when we visited there was a very good exhibition of Sutherland's paintings.

### Fabulous gallery and great info point

Oriel Y Parc is an easily found land mark building as you enter St Davids from the Solva direction. A great gallery housing paintings by world famous Graham Sutherland. There are regular other displays in the gallery and much to interest you. Books, maps and other info and staff with excellent local knowledge. There is a cafe next door which is under franchise.

### Excellent information centre

Beautiful building and grounds, clean, free public toilets, helpful, friendly staff. Our 2yo daughter particularly enjoyed the magnetic pictures on the wall for her to play with while we enjoyed the informative displays. An example for other information centres to follow!

## FUTURE PRIORITIES

Continue to raise awareness of the gallery and the centre in terms of its functions and capabilities in order to increase footfall and income

Renegotiate the Service Level Agreement with National Museum Wales ensuring that it benefits and supports the centre going forward.

Create a welcoming, informative and more efficient space for visitors with additional space released for merchandise.

Work collaboratively with partners on all aspects of delivery to add value to our functions, events and activities and further raise awareness of our gallery and the aims and objectives of the National Park.

Move further towards a digital experience using the Surface Pro 4, being more proactive in engaging the public through 'floor walking'.

## **CHALLENGES**

Securing investment in the site during a time of public sector budget cuts.

Ensuring that the on-going relationship with National Museum Wales is beneficial for both organisations.

Keeping up with and embracing new technology in terms of visitor interaction.

Marketing and promotion of the site with no budget allocation for such activities.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Oriel y Parc and Castell Henllys are now managed by one officer, this allows for sharing of personnel, knowledge and skills across sites, it also allows for better use of budget in terms of some marketing and promotion.

Continue to be part of all Wales / UK initiatives in the Arts in order to raise the profile of the centre and gallery, giving exposure to the National Park and its objectives as well as benefiting from funding and income.

Embrace Welsh and National strategies in order to grow and expand on the calendar of events and activities again benefiting from funding and income and giving exposure to the National Park and its objectives.

## **Conclusion**

Members are asked to note the report.

## **Background Documents**

Report No 05/17 - Overview of the recent Constable exhibition at Oriel y Parc

*Author: Jenn Jones - Visitor Services Manager North -  
Consulted/engaged with James Parkin (Director of Delivery & Discovery)  
Duncan Wise – The Sill, Northumberland National Park  
Richard Griffiths (Finance Manager)*

## APPENDIX A

Despite being such an exciting and ground breaking project, Oriel y Parc is a beautifully proportioned and modest building which sits discreetly in the landscape. Beneath its elegant façade, state of the art green technologies work hard to provide a comfortable and sustainable environment. This building is a living, breathing entity which contributes to the landscape in a positive way both aesthetically and functionally.

Its sustainable features include:

### Rainwater Harvesting

To reduce consumption of mains water and help to reduce the pressure on water resources, a huge 18,000 litre storage tank lies beneath the front courtyard; the rainwater from the roof is funnelled into the tank and used to flush the toilets.

### Orientation

The orientation of the building, together with its huge thermal massing, ensures use of most of the heat generated by the sun. The curve of the building is aligned so that the sun tracks around and warms the top of the massive spine wall from sunrise to sunset.

### Natural Ventilation

By using louvered vents, natural ventilation and air flow are allowed to flow through the building whenever it is required.

### Lighting

The use of natural light, low energy light bulbs and motion sensor switches ensure that energy consumption is reduced.

### Wool Insulation

Massive amounts of insulation have been built into the foundations and walls at Oriel y Parc to conserve energy.

### Energy Supply

To reduce our dependence on non-renewable energy sources and our carbon dioxide emissions, building relies upon three renewable energy sources to fulfil its energy requirements.

#### Ground Source Heat Pump

The Ground source heat pump consists of 12 100m lengths of pipe buried in bore holes deep beneath the ground. A few metres beneath the surface of the ground, the temperature is uniformly cool (around 12oC) throughout the year. By repeatedly pumping a mixture of water and antifreeze through the pipes beneath the ground, heat is absorbed, compressed and transferred to the building via underfloor heating.

#### Photovoltaic cells

Photovoltaic cells convert daylight into electricity, reducing the need to exploit fossil fuels and thereby reducing the impact we have on the environment. These cells convert sunlight directly into electricity.

At Oriel y Parc there are 3 banks of photovoltaic cells mounted on the roof of the gallery.

## Solar

As well as the photovoltaics, solar thermal panels mounted on the roof generate hot water by harnessing the power of the sun.

In its construction careful consideration was given to the materials used with Welsh oak used for the floor of the Visitor Centre, the stairs and the outside seats.

The structural beams that support the zinc roof are made from a substance known as glulam, a material composed of sections of softwood glued together, making it both incredibly strong and very sustainable.

## Stone

The columns supporting Oriel y Parc's roof and the blocks which cap the surrounding walls, are all made from stone dust. It is made by grinding waste stone into tiny pieces which are then mixed with cement and moulded into shaped locks for building. This means that whilst it is as tough as stone, it is easier and cheaper to mould into shape.

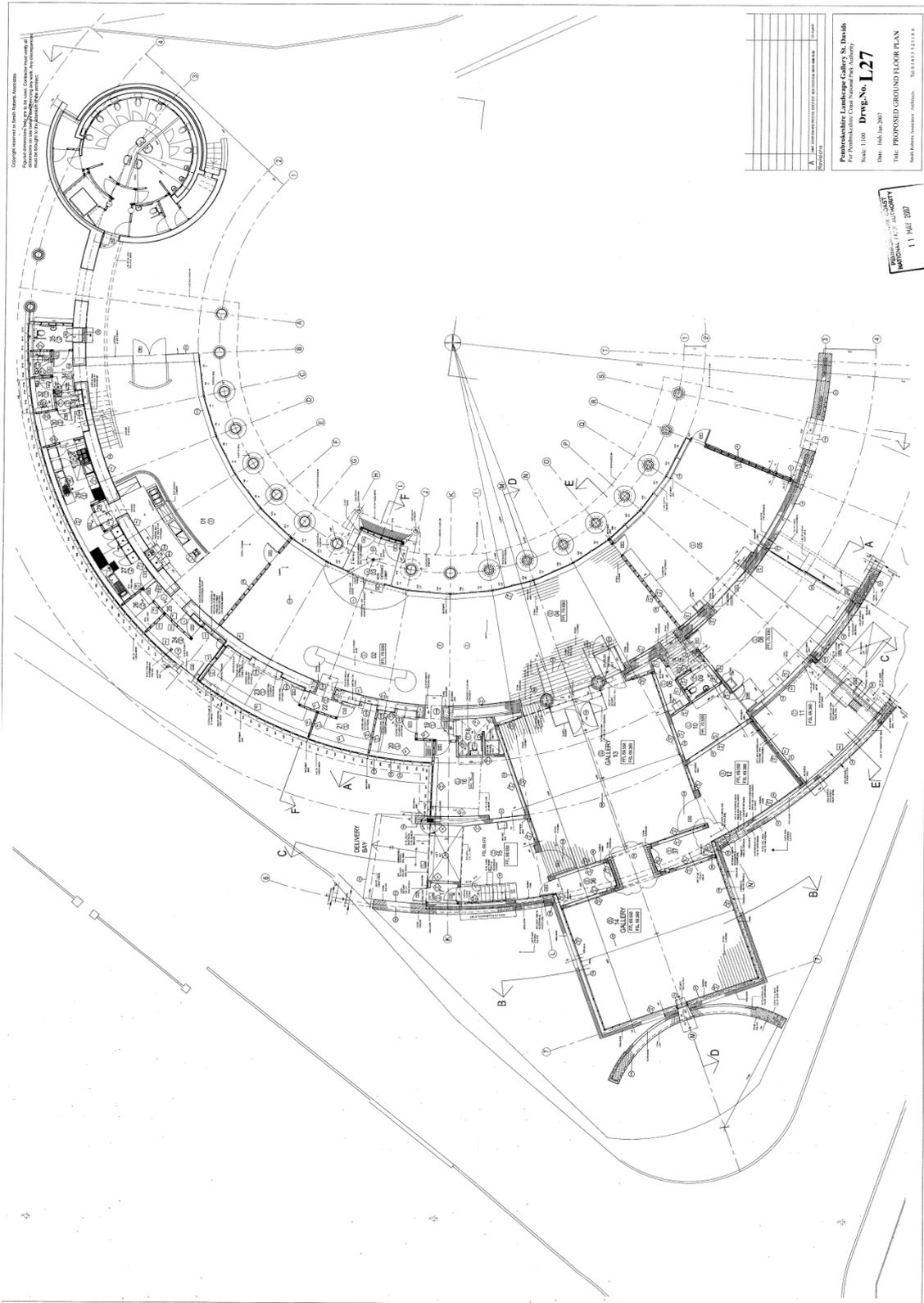
The stones used in the construction of the tower and the new building extension have also been sourced locally from reclaimed derelict buildings such as Lecha farm, two miles from St Davids.

Part of the roof is covered with grass and a little green plant called Sedum. Sedum is an indigenous plant which is supplied with nutrients throughout the year from a mat beneath it. Very little moisture and earth is required, which means that it is both lightweight and low maintenance. Sedum also acts as an additional habitat for insects and wildlife whilst removing harmful particulates from the air and so reducing airborne pollution.

## Car Park

Even the car park has been designed to blend into the landscape, with turf hedges designed to give visitors the feeling of walking down a rural Pembrokeshire lane.

Beneath each parking bay is a soak-away system. Soakaways are one of the key technologies for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. They enable storm water to be dealt with "at source" rather than being diverted into our over-burdened sewer systems. This carefully planned network of perforated pipes, trenches and gravel helps to drain any surface water which settles in the bays.



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NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE

Pembroke Landrage Gallery, St. David's  
 Scale: 1:100  
**Drawn No. L27**  
 Date: 16th Jan 2007  
 Title: PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
 David Harvey Architects, Architects. Tel: 01453 511144

11 MAY 2007